

# Kauhajoki School Shooting on 23 September 2008

Report of the Investigation Commission

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# Kauhajoki School Shooting on 23 September 2008

Report of the Investigation Commission

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On 23 September 2008, a school shooting took place in Kauhajoki when a student in the local polytechnic entered his school, shot nine students in his study group, a teacher, and finally himself. The perpetrator carried fuel with him which he used to start several fires in the building. Of the students who were in the classroom when the incident took place, three survived, one of whom received a gunshot wound in the head. The psychosocial damage caused by the incident was considerable.

An investigation commission was appointed to look into the incident and its background, as well as the activities of the authorities, other operators involved in the incident, and the media. The main results of the investigation are presented in the 28 conclusions and 9 recommendations included in the report. The purpose of the recommendations and the entire investigation process was to enhance general security by learning from the incident.

The fact that the perpetrator ended up committing this act was the result of a long process involving many factors. He had been suffering from mental health problems for approximately ten years and his condition had taken a turn for the worse. Several factors were involved during the course of the perpetrator's life which contributed to his problems. With hindsight, it seems probable that the perpetrator would have benefited from being examined by a specialist in psychiatry. In the light of the information currently available, it is impossible to establish beyond any doubt why the young man's mental health problems were channelled into an admiration for school shootings and, eventually, led to him committing the deed, which was clearly modelled on earlier school shootings.

The perpetrator used a self-loading or semi-automatic firearm, which was small-calibre but still capable of inflicting serious damage. The investigation commission recommends that firearms capable of firing multiple shots in a very short period of time be made illegal, and that only guns that do not allow the easy infliction of such carnage be available for hobby purposes. With respect to other types of firearms, the investigation commission recommends that a stricter licensing policy be implemented. A dissenting opinion on firearm recommendations has been recorded, however.

To enhance the mental health care services available for young people, the committee also recommends that antidepressants not be prescribed for persons younger than 23 years of age without a thorough examination by a specialist doctor. Other recommendations presented in the report concern the enhancement of student health care, particularly mental health care; the enhancement of interaction between generations in educational institutions; comprehensive security planning in educational institutions; shared command responsibility between authorities in operational situations; cooperation between authorities in preventive work; and the coordination of psychosocial support.



## FOREWORD

On 23 September 2008, a school shooting took place in Kauhajoki, with a student shooting 10 others and then himself in a school building. In this investigation report, the incident will be referred to by the everyday-language term 'school shooting' regardless of the definition of that phrase in criminal law. The crimes investigated by the police were 10 murders, 12 attempted murders, and an aggravated act of destruction.

On the basis of the Act on the Investigation of Certain Fatal Incidents (662/2008), the Government appointed on 27 November 2008 an investigation commission to investigate the incident.

The composition of the investigation commission was as follows:

Chairman	Pekka Sauri, chairman of the Finnish Central Association for Mental Health
Members	Pekka Aho, Inspector General of the Police, Ministry of the Interior, Security Sector Supervision Unit (currently Chief Inspector for the Central Finland Police Department)
	Mirjam Kalland, Secretary General of the Mannerheim League for Child Welfare
	Esko Kaukonen, Special Research Officer of the Emergency Services College
	Ullamaija Kivikuru, Professor, University of Helsinki
	Pauli Niemelä, Professor, University of Kuopio (now the University of Eastern Finland)
	Leena Suurpää, Research Director at the Finnish Youth Research Society
	Kai Valonen, Chief Accident Investigator, Accident Investigation Board
Secretary	Sini Järvi, Assistant, Accident Investigation Board

The expert for the investigation commission in structural fire safety and management of rescue activities was Rescue Director Jorma Westerholm of the Rescue Department of Northern Savonia. The psychiatry expert was Jari Sinkkonen, MD, Docent.

On the basis of the police investigation, the investigation commission drew up this investigation report, wherein the approach is similar to that of an accident investigation. The investigation report is divided into three main sections. The first, referred to as the factual section, recounts the events and their background. In the analysis section, the investigation commission analyses the facts that emerged in the investigation and discusses their significance. On the basis of the preceding analysis, the last section of the investigation report presents the conclusions and recommendations of the investigation commission.

The investigation was aimed at the prevention of similar incidents and the improvement of safety, so no consideration was given to questions of guilt or compensation. The investigation report was not written to be used in a court of law; therefore, its content and style do not correspond to legal practice.

The draft investigation report was circulated for comments in the Prime Minister's Office, the Ministry of Justice, the Ministry of the Interior, the Ministry of Education, the Ministry of Transport and Communications, and the Ministry of Social Affairs and Health. Additionally, interested parties and persons and organisations closely involved in the incident were invited to submit their comments on the report. The comments were taken into account when the finishing touches were being put to the report.

The investigation report is available for download on the Ministry of Justice Web site, [www.om.fi](http://www.om.fi). The investigation material is held by the Accident Investigation Board of Finland.

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Appendix 2. The realisation of measures initiated as a result of the school shootings

Appendix 3. Official opinions on the recommendations of the investigation report

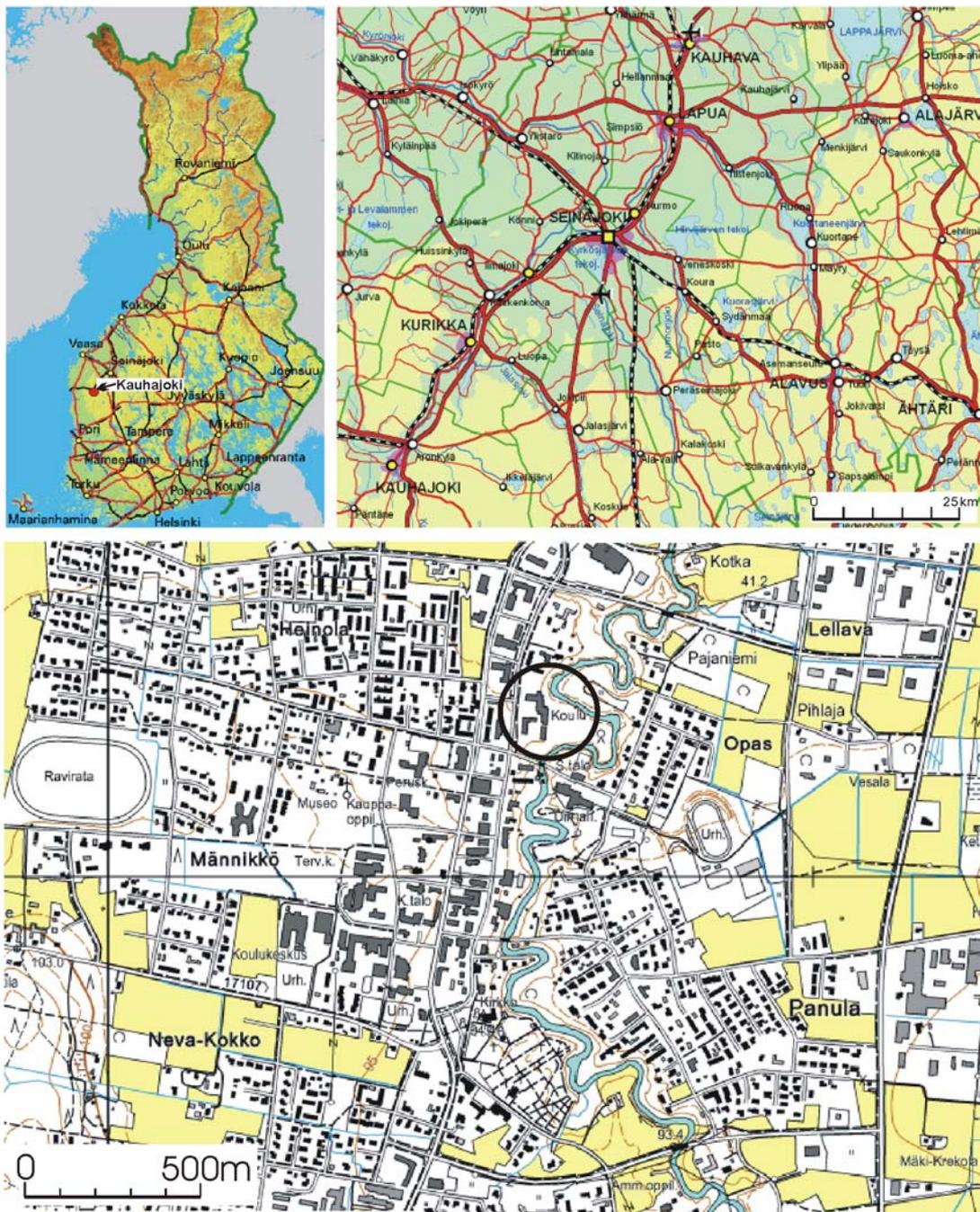


## 1. THE INCIDENT

### 1.1. General description

On 23 September 2008, a student at Kauhajoki polytechnic entered a classroom midway through an exam and, seriously wounding another student, shot the teacher and nine of his classmates with a handgun. He also set fire to the building, fired numerous shots in other parts of the building, and eventually killed himself.

### 1.2. The locale



Picture 1. The locale. (Map from KTJ/Ministry of Justice/NSL)

The municipality of Kauhajoki is situated in South Ostrobothnia, in the Province of Western Finland, approximately 60 km south-west of Seinäjoki and 100 km south of Vaasa. The distance between Helsinki and Kauhajoki is some 330 km. Kauhajoki has a population of approximately 15,000.

The site of the incident is in central Kauhajoki, on the bank of the Kauhajoki river, which flows through the town. To the west, the school building is bordered by Topeeka, a road passing through the town. On the northern side of the school there is a car park, and in the east a park-like forest on the riverbank. The school building houses the Hospitality Management branch of the Seinäjoki Polytechnic Unit of Business Administration, Food Management and Entrepreneurship. The Vocational Education Centre Sedu Wellness and Sedu Adult Education are also situated within the school complex.



Picture 2. The school complex. (Picture from police investigation material)

### 1.3. The course of events

On the morning of Tuesday, 23 September 2008, another school day was about to start for the Kauhajoki unit of Seinäjoki Polytechnic. Lessons and training sessions were under way in the classrooms and training facilities. Some students were having a break, the staff were busy with their work, and lunch was about to be served. In the morning, the president of Seinäjoki Polytechnic gave a lecture for the new Hospitality Management students, followed by a lecture for the staff.

In classroom 3, in the basement of the new section of the building, a lesson on the basics of entrepreneurship for Hospitality Management students started at 8:00am. The lesson was to consist of two-hour revision on the subject, followed by a test at 10:00am.

The students and the teacher agreed at the very start of the lesson, however, that there would be only an hour of revision before the test. At 9:00, there was a break, after which the test started at 9:15. At the start of the test, the teacher announced that everybody would have to work on the test for an hour at least before anyone would be allowed to leave. By 10:30, five students had left the classroom. The male teacher and the other 12 students were still in the classroom. All but one of the students who were still in the classroom were female.

Around this time, at about 10:30, a Hospitality Management student belonging to the same study group entered the schoolyard. He should have been taking the test along with the others. A few other students were absent, however; the absence of this particular student was not exceptional. The student was wearing the black clothes he customarily wore, but what was exceptional was the large black bag he was carrying. Some students and staff members saw the student arrive. Some recognised him, but nobody found the situation particularly exceptional in any way.

The student entered the school building, went back outside, and approached classroom 3 via a stairway. It is probable that he was not seen from the classroom, but at least three people saw him standing for a while outside the classroom door. Nobody saw him carrying a gun at this point. The man entered the classroom, firing his pistol toward the front part of the room. After this, he returned to the corridor, where he loaded a new clip into his gun.

The teacher supervising the test told all of the students to throw themselves to the floor and ran to push against the door, which opened inward into the classroom. He managed to hold back the gunman for only a short while before the student fired through the round window in the door. At around this time, he also fired at other people who had come into the corridor, but he missed. Having re-entered the classroom, the perpetrator fired several rounds at the teacher, then continued in a rage, swearing and shooting at the students who were scrambling for cover behind tables and chairs.

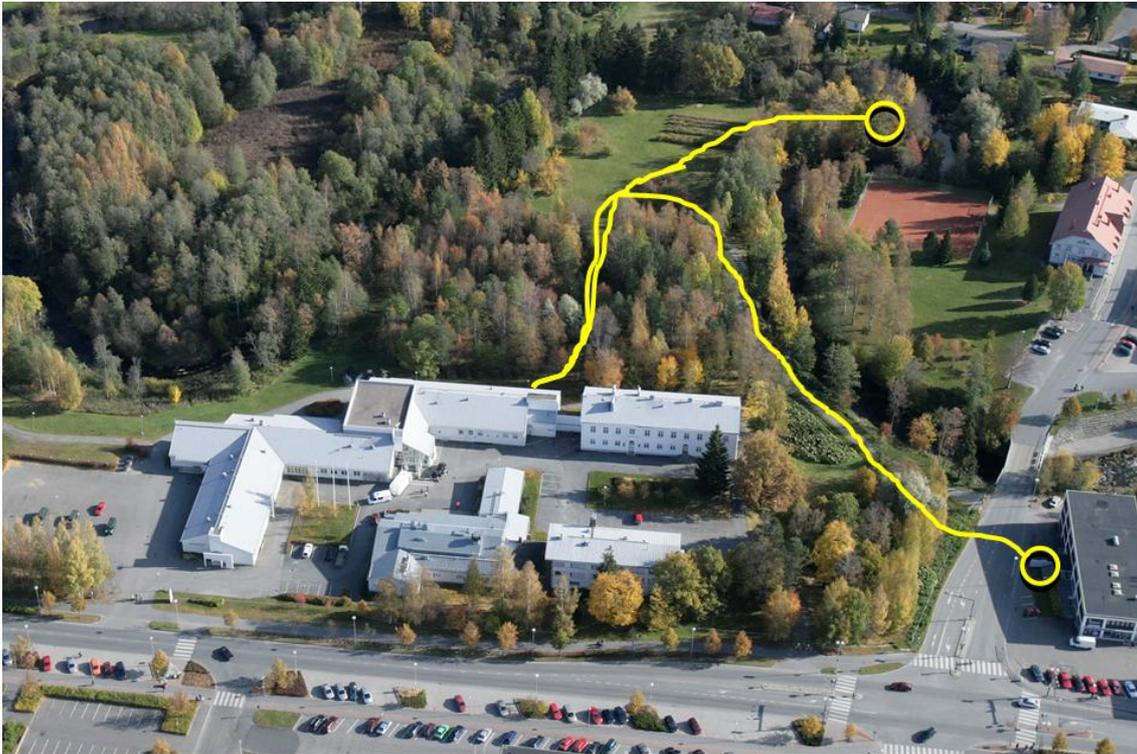
The perpetrator moved around the classroom, shooting whenever he noticed someone make a sound or move. Two of the students in the classroom managed to hide and remain still enough to avoid being shot. A third student survived even though she received a bullet to the head. Immediately after the shooting started, one of these three students called the Emergency Response Centre, at 10:43am.

At 10:53, the perpetrator spread petrol on the classroom floor, set it on fire, and exited through the door at the back of the room, toward the adjacent drying room. The three students hiding in the classroom got up from the floor and opened two ventilation windows. To get out, they also had to break some windows, which they managed to do by hitting them with chairs. Two of them escaped through the window and ran toward the river, hiding and remaining at the riverbank for more than an hour and a half. The student with a gunshot wound to the head could not keep up with the others, and she tried to escape in another direction. She collapsed on the way but was soon picked up by an ambulance crew and promptly taken to hospital. All three students had heard and in part seen what had happened in the classroom, so they were extremely frightened and worried about the perpetrator following them. In addition to these three students, another

student managed to escape from the classroom, through the door. She was, however, found dead in the corridor outside the classroom. She probably managed to escape from the classroom after the perpetrator had started the fire. The perpetrator apparently shot her both in the classroom and in the corridor.

For the next hour and 15 minutes, the perpetrator moved about unhindered in the school building, firing his gun, breaking things, and starting fires, which could be heard and seen also outside the school. The perpetrator failed to find new victims inside the building, however. At 11:05, he appeared at the front door, firing at the policemen outside. He came to the door again at 11:22, this time firing at rescue vehicles and emergency crews. At 11:53, the perpetrator called his friend, who lived in another locality, telling him during the ensuing phone conversation, which lasted nearly eight minutes, that he had shot 10 people and that there was nobody in the building anymore.

As he moved around the building, the perpetrator spotted, probably at 12:09, the policemen who had entered the building. It seems likely that at this point he realised he had no options left and shot himself in the head in the first-floor lobby.



*Picture 3. The escape routes taken by the students who escaped from the classroom around the time the perpetrator started the fire. The student escaping along the lower route was met by Emergency Medical Services personnel, but the other two remained hiding on the riverbank for about an hour and a half. (Picture from police investigation material)*

### **Self-rescue**

One of the students who had left the classroom earlier in the testing period went first to the lobby near the main entrance of the building but came back to the ground floor, en-

tering a toilet there. Coming out of the toilet, she saw through the glass walls that the perpetrator, a fellow student, was entering classroom 3. She heard sounds from the classroom that, because of the glass walls, she could not recognise as gunshots. Soon she saw the perpetrator leave the classroom for the corridor to load a new clip into the gun he was holding in his hand. Cries for help could be heard from the classroom. The student ran to the top floor, where she told a teacher what was going on, then continued to a classroom called Vinkkeli, shouting the same through the open door. There were fewer than 20 students in the classroom at that time.

At the same time, the 10 or so students in classroom 2, which was near classroom 3, heard strange sounds. Some of the students went into the corridor to find out what was happening and saw the perpetrator firing through the window in the door of classroom 3. The perpetrator also fired at these students, and some of them escaped down the stairs into the lobby while others remained in classroom 2. As a lesson was not in progress in classroom 2, there was no teacher present. A teacher turned up soon, however, but the students he met on his way did not tell him what was happening on the ground floor. The teacher and a couple of the students who had remained in classroom 2 hid behind a table for a while, but they soon decided to exit into the lobby, joining the others. A crowd started to gather in the lobby, but some left the building via the main entrance.

The events in the initial stages of the incident were also witnessed by three students who had been in the cleaning centre, and another who had come downstairs with a cleaning cart in a lift. The students who were in the cleaning centre did not notice or recognise the shooting, which is why they exited into the lobby only after a maintenance man arrived on the scene, looking into the classroom where the incident took place and telling them that it was for real. The maintenance man had arrived there from the monitoring room, which was in the same corridor. As he was leaving via the classroom door, the maintenance man called the Emergency Response Centre at 10:46.

Just before the maintenance man turned up, eight students coming from the Vinkkeli classroom had arrived at the door of classroom 3. They had left their classroom to see what was happening. The students saw cartridge cases on the floor outside the classroom. The perpetrator was still in the classroom at this point. Everybody had already escaped from the ground floor after the maintenance man saw the perpetrator in the classroom, but not all left or entered the lobby immediately; instead, they went to get their things from classrooms, warning other students as they came across them.

Having come back from the ground floor, two students from the Vinkkeli classroom went into a classroom where a first-aid course was in progress. The ambulance-driver in charge of the course told them to warn others and escape via the nearest stairway. Then he switched on the VIRVE network (Finnish Public Safety Network) phone he was carrying and assumed command of first aid.

In the auditorium near the lobby, the president was giving a lecture for the school staff. Exceptional noises were heard in the auditorium, and one of the teachers went outside to see what was going on. He was told that a gunman had entered the school. Another teacher called the Emergency Response Centre (ERC) and was instructed to remain in the auditorium. Some of the staff members who were in the auditorium hid in the stor-

age room for a while. The situation was very confusing, because the instructions given by the ERC were being passed on amongst the students and the staff while some of them had already left the building. If there were any people still in the building by the time the guidance counsellor entered the PA room and advised everybody through the PA system to leave, they made their way out of the building then. She gave added emphasis to her announcement by saying that she was not asking them but ordering them to leave.

The PA system did not cover all parts of the building, which is why one staff member did not learn of the incident and remained in the building. Going into the copying room, she saw smoke in the corridor and thought there was some kind of exercise in progress. The surveillance camera records show that she left through the main entrance at 11:01. She was the last person to exit through that door. The announcement was not heard in the other buildings in the complex, which is why someone working in another building tried to enter the school canteen through the main entrance at 11:04. People shouted at him to leave, however.

Some of those who left the building went to the laboratory building nearby, others went to the lower-level comprehensive school, and the rest remained near the school. Emergency Medical Services personnel were trying to find a suitable assembly point for the students. The lower-level comprehensive school was nearby, but it was agreed that it would not be a good idea to bring the students there among the children. So Emergency Medical Services personnel contacted the nearby commercial college. After a second phone call, they were given permission to use this as their assembly point. The students were instructed to head for the commercial college, where the teachers started to draw up a list of those who had not been contacted yet.

Self-rescue was affected by the fact that many people found it difficult to believe what was happening. This is why many people did not initially react at all or just laughed about it. Having left the scene, some returned to the school building. A few people imagined that the gun they had seen was not real or that the gunman was firing blanks. Some believed the sound of gunshots came from firecrackers or a fixing gun. Some sounds were described as having sounded like a lift falling. Many people seem to have believed the whole thing was an exercise, or that there was a self-defence or drama training session underway in classroom 3.

## **1.4. Police and rescue operations**

### **1.4.1. Alerts**

One of the students in classroom 3 called the ERC of Ostrobothnia at 10:43 and told the operator that somebody was shooting in the classroom. She whispered that she was calling from Kauhajoki. She used the abbreviation 'SeAMK' to refer to the school complex and said it was a vocational school on the Topeeka road. She also stated that the classroom where the incident was taking place was on the ground floor. The student told the operator many people were injured and that there were about 20 people in the room in total. At the request of the ERC operator, the caller kept the line open with hardly any interruptions for an hour and a half. In the initial stages of the call, the voices of the perpetrator and the students could be heard at the ERC. The announcement made at 10:51,

wherein everybody was asked to leave the building, can also be made out in the recording. The caller was hiding under a table up until the gunman started the fire. At 10:54, she told the operator of the fire. After the gunman left the classroom, the caller managed to escape with two other students. At this point, she told the operator the name of the gunman and that he was alone.

The ERC operator alerted the police at 10:44, two ambulance units from Kauhajoki and a rescue helicopter at 10:45, and Rescue Services units at 10:46. Initially there was some confusion about the address, and the destination first given was the nearby vocational school. This error was soon corrected, however. The ERC learned the exact name and address of the school at 10:46 when the maintenance man made an emergency call, reporting somebody shooting with a handgun. A head of a degree programme, who had been attending the lecture in the auditorium, also made an emergency call, at 10:47. The president of the polytechnic, who usually worked in his office in Seinäjoki, was also in the auditorium, so he had first-hand information on the incident.

At 10:45, the ERC also alerted ambulance units from Teuva, Isojoki, and Jalasjärvi. An ambulance unit from Kurikka volunteered for the mission on their own initiative at 10:53, postponing a non-urgent transportation mission until later. As a large number of casualties was to be expected, two more ambulance units were alerted, from Jurva and Ilmajoki, with an additional one from Seinäjoki at 11:21. Because of poor flying weather, rescue helicopter Pete could not take off from Vaasa, but the Pete doctor headed for Kauhajoki by car at 10:50, arriving at 12:06. The weather improved shortly thereafter, and the rescue helicopter made it to the scene at 1:20pm. During the crisis, several ambulances were moved from one station to another. Ambulance units were also placed in reserve and on alert in case reinforcements were needed or if there were simultaneous missions.

At 11:25, the Rescue Services requested the ERC to look into the possibility of getting more rescue helicopters to the scene to increase transportation capacity. This need was met when a Border Guard Service helicopter transporting a police readiness unit arrived in Kauhajoki at 1:09pm, with another arriving from Turku at 1:16. Army helicopters were also placed on alert until 2:25pm, when the alert was called off.

The ERC learned of the fire immediately after it was started, as the phone line to the classroom was still open. On the orders of the fire chief on duty, the ERC alerted rescue units from Teuva, Jurva, and Karijoki at 10:57. At 11:06, the ERC alerted a rescue unit from Kurikka, and at 11:10 a first-response unit from Isojoki. At 11:41, Kauhajoki Fire Brigade personnel were alerted for supply duties. At 1:28, the authorities decided more resources were needed for smoke diving, so rescue units from Isojoki and Jalasjärvi were summoned to the scene.

Apart from these two rescue units, all rescue units on the scene were reinforced. This means that the units set off with more personnel than in normal station service, even if the exact number of personnel participating in the mission may not be known when the alert is issued. In practice, the stations are able to send at least a minimum complement of an officer and three fire-fighters. Units can also be complemented and further reinforced with varying delays and strengths through the use of volunteer fire brigades. In

addition to the standard fire engine, the rescue units may be equipped with other vehicles, such as a fire truck, a first-response vehicle, or a crew vehicle. This arrangement was created because there are only part-time or volunteer fire brigades in the Kauhajoki region. Some stations do employ individual professional fire-fighters on a regular basis.

The ERC reported the incident to the Ministry of the Interior's Department for Rescue Services at 10:59 and to the Police Department just after 11am. Seinäjoki Central Hospital was alerted at 11:11, Tampere University Hospital via the ERC of Pirkanmaa at 11:33, and Satakunta Central Hospital via the ERC of Satakunta at 11:25. During the incident, the ERC maintained a log and an overall picture of the situation.

### **Alerting the police**

At 10:44, the ERC alerted the Kauhajoki police patrols by radio with the following message: 'Kauhajoki vocational school possible shooting incident underway'. The 'vocational school' mentioned in the alert was incorrect information, but the target was correctly identified as the 'polytechnic' in the text message that was sent in conjunction with the alert. The error was corrected also in a radio message at 10:53. A Kauhajoki District Police Department patrol accepted the mission immediately. The ERC then requested other police patrols in the area to head for Kauhajoki, informing them that there were several wounded and possibly casualties there. When the patrols asked for more information, the ERC operator told them that it was 'apparently a replay of Jokela, vocational school and one of the classrooms'. The information received at this point was that an unknown male had entered the school 'through the windows' and there was still shooting at the school. Several police patrols from Alavus and Kurikka, among others; dog handlers interrupting their training session in Seinäjoki; and five policemen from the Seinäjoki Police Department who had been in support weapons training in Ylistaro immediately headed for Kauhajoki.

Within five minutes, the policemen were speculating that the perpetrator could be the person whose firearm possession permit had only recently been under consideration. The Criminal Police lieutenant who acted as the situation commander in the early stages of the incident had played an instrumental part in the revocation of the perpetrator's firearm possession permit. This is why he asked to be relieved of his command at around 11am.

News of the incident spread through the police organisation. At 11:02, a Criminal Police lieutenant at the Kauhajoki District Police Department informed the Provincial Command of Western Finland of the incident. The Western Finland Provincial Police commissioner in turn submitted a situation report to the National Police commissioner at 11:05. At 11:10, the deputy police commissioner of the Seinäjoki District Police Department informed Provincial Police Command of the incident, and the Provincial Police commissioner ordered the deputy police commissioner to take charge of the situation.

The commanding officer of the Turku Regional Division of the National Bureau of Investigation was informed of the incident by the Western Finland Provincial Police commissioner at 11:12, at which point a decision was made to hand over the investigation of the incident to the National Bureau of Investigation. At 11:22, the deputy police commissioner who had assumed situation command informed the Police Situation Centre in Helsinki of the incident and ordered a police readiness unit to be deployed.

### 1.4.2. Police operations

When alerted at 10:44, a patrol of the Kauhajoki District Police Department was on its way from Teuva to Kauhajoki, approximately 10 minutes away from Kauhajoki. The patrol was led by a sergeant of the Kauhajoki District Police Department, who was also the police field commander for the area. On his way to Kauhajoki, the field commander contacted the officers of the Kauhajoki Police Department, requesting them to set up a situation command at Police Department Headquarters. At this point, at 10:49, one of the patrols from Seinäjoki informed the other patrols participating in the mission of the suspected identity of the perpetrator, which information later proved to be correct.

Initially, the Kauhajoki patrol was, as instructed by the ERC, on its way to the vocational school, but at 10:53, as a result of further police information-gathering efforts, another Kauhajoki patrol identified the target correctly as ‘the household school opposite the R [a Finnish chain of newsagents]’ – that is, the polytechnic.

The Kauhajoki patrol alerted by the ERC arrived at the southern entry to the polytechnic at 10:54 and found Rescue Services units already cordoning off the school building. At this point, a fire had been started inside the school building, confirmed by the smoke rising from behind the school.

The patrol had no idea where the perpetrator or perpetrators were at that moment. The patrol had been informed by the ERC that the shooting had started in classroom 3, but they had no idea of where the classroom was. When the patrol came upon the school’s maintenance man, he told the patrol what had happened and where.

Two patrol policemen donned tactical protective equipment and started to approach the school building, protected by an armoured shield. Their intention was to enter the school building to cover the evacuation and to rescue casualties and anybody else still inside. The patrol believed there were still students and teachers inside the building at this point. As the patrol set off from the corner of the hall of residence towards the school building, three or four shots were fired at them from the B entrance at 11:06. Having fired the shots, the perpetrator went inside again. The shots fired at the patrol did not hit the policemen, but they still returned to the corner of the hall of residence, behind which they took cover. As the other patrols neared the scene, the field commander instructed them to cordon off the sides of the building.

On the same day, support weapons men from the Seinäjoki District Police Department were training in Ylistaro, while regional dog handlers were attending a training session in Seinäjoki. The policemen attending the training were informed of the incident via radio and immediately left for Kauhajoki. Some of them drove police vehicles while others used their own cars. As soon as enough policemen had arrived on the scene, two of the policemen together set up two teams on their own initiative. At 11:30, the field commander issued instructions on the use of force in the current situation. All in all, some 100 policemen arrived on the scene.

After the teams had been formed and the entry into the building planned, the field commander ordered the first team to enter at 11:36, followed by the second team at 11:45. There were three policemen in the first team and five in the second. The teams entered

from opposite ends of the school building, one at the north and the other at the south end. The teams were instructed to check the whole building and to make sure they left no unchecked rooms behind them as they proceeded.

As the teams entered, the perpetrator was moving around in the building, shooting and starting fires. The first team soon radioed the field commander that they were unable to proceed because of the smoke. At 12:09, the second team reported having sighted through the armoured glass a person dressed in black with a gun in his hand on the first-floor landing. The team proceeded to the first-floor lobby and at about 12:10 found a male lying on his side with a gun next to him. There was blood next to his head. It was not apparent immediately that this person was the gunman, but the clips found in his pocket confirmed that the gun belonged to him. At this point, it was still uncertain whether there was just one gunman or whether there were explosives in the building. In reality, there was no danger anymore, apart from the fire.

Owing to busy radio traffic, it was not until 12:13 that, using a VIRVE network emergency call, the team managed to radio that they had perhaps found the perpetrator. The police carried the perpetrator to the exit, from which Rescue Services personnel carried him to the ambulance. At this point, the police did not allow Rescue Services personnel to enter the building, for safety reasons.

There were still copious amounts of combustion gases inside the building, and by order of the situation commander, the patrols were informed at 12:16 that they were to take into account in their operations that police gas masks are not effective against carbon monoxide. To overcome this problem, Rescue Services personnel guided the police in the use of SCBA masks.

At around 12:20, the police allowed Rescue Services personnel to enter the building to extinguish the fires. The police remained within the building, however – to safeguard the rescue activities while rescue workers extinguished the fires.

The police also continued checking the facilities in case there were still other people in the building. The school building was also checked thoroughly for any explosives or flammable liquids. As there was still a lot of smoke in the building, the police were unable to conduct a complete check of the facilities immediately. At 12:42, the police were able to report that so far, five casualties had been found in the building.

The first members of the police readiness unit arrived on the scene by helicopter from Helsinki at 1:09pm. At 1:30, the remainder of the readiness unit arrived by car from Tampere, where they had been attending a training session. The readiness unit was charged with making a final check of the building. They also checked the hall of residence and other school facilities. Because of simultaneous threats in Seinäjoki and Lapua, some readiness unit policemen remained on alert in the vicinity. The school's hall of residence was checked by a team consisting of policemen from the Seinäjoki Police Department.

At 2:27, the situation commander decided that cordoning off the other schools in Kauhajoki as a precaution was no longer necessary. At 3:34, the police confirmed that the number of casualties found in the building was 10.

Starting at 5pm, police personnel were provided with psychosocial support in a debriefing held at the Suupohja Vocational Institute. The debriefing was attended by the approximately 70 policemen who had participated in the action in Kauhajoki. Two further debriefings were held on the following day.

The police investigated the incident as 10 murders, 12 attempted murders, and an aggravated act of destruction.

### **1.4.3. Rescue operations**

Led by the Kauhajoki fire marshal, the first rescue units arrived on the scene from the Kauhajoki Rescue Department at 10:52. The rescue units started to cordon off the area because at that point there were many bystanders and escapees from the school building in the area. The Kauhajoki fire marshal radioed the units that were still arriving, telling them which direction to approach from and where to enter.

At 11:22, the perpetrator stepped outside to fire at the rescue units. One fire engine was hit by a bullet, and rescue personnel were instructed to take cover. The fire engine was left at the junction to prevent outsiders from entering the danger zone and to provide cover against bullets. The command vehicle and an ambulance, which were the first vehicles to arrive, had to be left in the area of the junction as it was too dangerous to approach any nearer.

The next five rescue units from neighbouring municipalities arrived between 11:27 and 11:45. The rescue chief (P2) of the Rescue Department of Southern Ostrobothnia arrived on the scene at 11:30 and the Suupohja fire chief on duty (P3) at 11:34. The rescue chief assumed command for rescue operations. He instructed the fire chief on duty to lead the troops participating in rescue operations and proceeded to set up a command centre for rescue operations at Kauhajoki Fire Department Headquarters. Rescue Services supply teams arrived in the area at 12:10.

Rescue workers assisted the school staff in guiding those who had left the building toward the nearby commercial college. They also assisted the police in cordoning off the school building. Passers-by were directed away from the area. Rescue workers gave orders to empty the commercial building and a couple of residential buildings nearby.

The staff at the nearby day-care centre were aware of the danger and gathered all the children together. Rescue workers guided them to safety at the commercial college, where a classroom was reserved for the day-care centre personnel. The staff of the nearby Sanssi School were instructed to keep their students indoors until it was safe to go outside again. Permission to leave the school building was given at 12:42.

From the emergency call made from the classroom, the rescue authorities were immediately aware that the perpetrator had started a fire in the building. The smoke was soon visible outside, as was the fact that there were several fires, in different parts of the

building. Rescue Services personnel prepared to start the fire-fighting and rescue mission as soon as the police gave them permission to do so after the threat of gunshots had been eliminated.

At 12:15, the chief of rescue operations was informed by the police that the gunman was wounded and the police had his gun. At 12:20, the police permitted the rescue workers to enter the building. As there was no definite information on the number of possible perpetrators or the presence of explosives at this point, the first Rescue Services smoke divers were covered by armed policemen wearing SCBA masks. By order of the police command, Rescue Services personnel had just before this shown the police how to use SCBA masks. As there were numerous fires burning in the large and sprawling building, extinguishing the fires proved problematic, particularly in the old part of the building. Many doors were locked, all of which had to be broken open to secure the facilities. The two additional rescue units called to the scene arrived at 2:02 and 2:52.

Gradually, the fire-fighters managed to get the fire under control, and by 2:55 all fires had been extinguished. Follow-up monitoring and clearing-up work were continued, however. The command centre for rescue operations at Kauhajoki Fire Department Headquarters had been dismantled by 1pm, after which rescue operations were led from a specially designated room at Kauhajoki Municipality Hall until 4:00pm. It was at this point that rescue operations on the scene were officially terminated.

Later that day, a debriefing session was held for Rescue Services personnel at Kauhajoki Fire Department Headquarters at 7:30pm. A similar debriefing was held in Karijoki for personnel from the fire departments that participated in rescue operations on the scene.

#### **1.4.4. Emergency Medical Services**

When the shooting started, a first-aid training session for students was in progress in the classroom above, led by a local paramedic-level ambulance-driver. An ambulance-driver with paramedic-level qualifications is capable of handling even demanding first-aid situations. Two students knocked on the classroom door, telling those present that somebody was shooting in the school and that everyone should leave the building. The ambulance-driver led the students out and used his VIRVE network phone to contact the ERC at 10:45. He told the ERC operator that he was already on the scene and that he would assume command of emergency medical services there. The first two ambulance units arrived on the scene at 10:47 and 10:49. The next six ambulances arrived between 11:04 and 11:12, with one more ambulance, alerted slightly later, arriving from Seinäjoki at 11:57.

As soon as a command centre for rescue operations had been set up, the Emergency Medical Services field commander assumed command there as the medical chief. He maintained a situation overview for Emergency Medical Services, informed hospitals beforehand, and kept them up-to-date on the situation picture. He also appointed a treatment, triage, and transportation leader from among the ambulance unit members on the scene. Triage refers to the assessment and classification or prioritisation of patients' need for treatment.

Within roughly two hours of the alert, a dozen or so ambulance units and five doctors had arrived on the scene. The doctors were responsible for medical treatment and triage. One of the doctors was stationed at the commercial college to receive the students who had escaped from the school building, while another was in the health centre to provide crisis assistance. A rescue helicopter, two Border Guard Service helicopters, and four Army helicopters were also available for the transportation of patients, for example. To ensure sufficient transportation resources, all non-urgent ambulance missions within the Suupohja region of Southern Ostrobothnia were postponed. Such missions include the non-urgent transportation of elderly patients from health centres to hospital or from their home to a health centre.

In relation to the available resources, there were few patients in need of treatment. A student who escaped through a classroom window was dispatched to Seinäjoki Central Hospital at 11:24, where she arrived at 11:50. There her injuries were found to be so severe that she was sent to Tampere University Hospital. In the early stages of emergency medical care, the seriousness of her injury was not immediately apparent, but a little later the patient was found to have a serious gunshot wound to the head. Additionally, a person in a state of shock was transported to Kauhajoki Health Centre at 11:30.

Two of the students who had escaped from the classroom where the incident took place had to remain in the small forest near the school for about an hour and a half. They were in almost continuous contact with the ERC, with the operator calming them down and advising them against swimming across the river. At 12:28, the police rescued them from the forest and escorted them to an ambulance unit, which took them to the health centre. One of them had received minor injuries when escaping through the window. These students' experiences of the events in the classroom and the time they had to remain in the forest, frightened of the gunman, were extremely distressing for them, which the authorities initially failed to appreciate in full. The students had to follow the police away from the forest without the physical assistance they required. When they arrived at the ambulance, one of the personnel there said aloud that he would go elsewhere to treat those who were really in need of help.

The perpetrator was found at 12:10. He had shot himself in the head and was unconscious but alive. He was taken to an ambulance, which headed for Tampere University Hospital at 12:35. There he was pronounced officially dead at 4:46pm.

Emergency medical operations were continued between 1:34 and 1:45, when two ambulances from Seinäjoki, an ambulance from Ilmajoki, and a Tactical Emergency Medical Service team were dispatched to the School of Health Care and Social Work of Seinäjoki Polytechnic because of a bomb threat.

**Wed., 17 Sep. 2008**

The perpetrator cancels his appointment for Friday with the depression specialist nurse.  
The perpetrator goes to a student party.

**Thu., 18 Sep. 2008**

The perpetrator visits his former home municipality of Pyhäjärvi.

**Fri., 19 Sep. 2008**

Video clips uploaded by the perpetrator are discovered on the Internet. The police decide to revoke his firearm permit. The police try to reach the perpetrator at home but fail to do so. The matter is postponed until Monday.

**Sat.-Sun., 20-21 Sep. 2008**

The perpetrator visits his relatives and friends in Pyhäjärvi.

**Mon., 22 Sep. 2008**

The perpetrator is interviewed by the police during the day. He is allowed to keep his gun. In the evening, the perpetrator shoots a video in the schoolyard.

**Tue., 23 Sep. 2008**

8:00am

8:00am: Lesson starts in classroom 3.

9:00am

9:00am: Break in the lesson.

9:15am: Test starts in classroom 3.

10:00am

10:30am: Five students have left the classroom, while 12 students and the teacher remain in the classroom. The perpetrator arrives in the schoolyard. He stands outside classroom 3 for a while, goes in, fires at the front part of the classroom, and returns to the corridor.

10:43am: Emergency phone call from classroom 3. The perpetrator fires into the classroom through the door and at the people who have gathered in the corridor. He returns to the classroom and starts shooting again.

10:50am: The guidance counsellor issues a command over the PA system, telling everybody to leave the school building.

10:53am: The perpetrator starts a fire in classroom 3 and exits. He moves about in the school building, shooting and starting fires. Three students escape from classroom 3 through a window.

10:54am: The first police patrol arrives on the scene.

11:00am

11:01am: The last person to exit via the main entrance leaves the building.

11:05am: The perpetrator fires from the main entrance at the policemen approaching the building with a shield.

11:22am: The perpetrator steps outside the building, firing at Rescue Services vehicles and personnel.

11:36am: The first police team are ordered to enter the building.

11:45am: The second police team are ordered to enter the building.

11:53am: The perpetrator makes an eight-minute phone call to his friend, telling him he has shot 10 people.

12:00pm

12:09pm: The second police team make visual contact with the perpetrator.

12:10pm: The second police team find the wounded perpetrator in the first-floor lobby.

12:20pm: The rescue workers are permitted to enter the building.

12:28pm: The police escort the two students hiding on the riverbank to safety.

12:42pm: The police announce that five casualties have been found in the building.

1:00pm

1:45pm: Hospitals stand down from alert.

2:27pm: The police remove cordons at other Kauhajoki schools.

2:55pm: All fires have been extinguished.

3:34pm: The police confirm that 10 casualties were found in the school building.

4:46pm: The perpetrator is pronounced officially dead at Tampere University Hospital.

Picture 4. A timeline of the events related to the school shootings in Kauhajoki.

### **1.4.5. Activities at medical institutions**

News of the incident was quickly relayed to Kauhajoki Health Centre, Seinäjoki Health Centre, Jalasjärvi Health Centre, Seinäjoki Central Hospital, Vaasa Central Hospital, and Tampere University Hospital, all of which immediately started preparing for the reception of patients. At this point, the hospitals and health centres were told they could expect some 20–40 patients.

#### **Kauhajoki Health Centre**

Kauhajoki Health Centre learned of the incident when the ambulance-driver who had been teaching at the school and who subsequently assumed command for emergency medical care called the ERC. Standard reception and emergency services were under way at the health centre. Health centre personnel started to prepare for the reception of patients immediately, even though they initially knew very little of what had happened. The First Aid ward manager alerted the chief physician, the head of nursing, the care work leader, and the Family Centre ward manager.

Standard reception activities were terminated at that point. The First Aid wing was emptied of patients and doctor–nurse teams were formed there to perform the expected triage. The First Aid wing was reserved for those with somatic injuries. The personnel prepared to empty 5–6 rooms in the acute ward in case there was need for beds there. The main lobby and the facilities surrounding it were reserved for the psychological first aid to be given to the next of kin. Apart from that, psychological first aid was to be given in the nearby café, which was turned into a temporary psychological first-aid station where the crisis workers were directed when they started to arrive. Later on, some crisis workers were stationed in the commercial college that was used as an evacuation centre. Having heard what was happening, most of those who arrived at the health centre for standard appointments at this stage turned away and cancelled their appointments.

In the first two hours, dozens of distressed people arrived at the health centre. Some of these were young people evacuated from the school building, but there were also people whose next of kin had been there at the time of the incident. All told, more than a hundred people arrived at the health centre in the course of the day. The triage nurses were there to meet the people arriving at the door to the First Aid section. At the main entrance and in the lobby, the patients and next of kin were guided by Family Centre and Community Nursing nurses. They also guided the crisis workers arriving from the Hospital District of Southern Ostrobothnia, the Finnish Red Cross, and the local parish, among others.

The nurses guiding people in the lobby informed the media that their presence was not welcome in the health centre, and that the police and municipality representatives would hold a media conference at Municipality Hall. As soon as more information on the situation at the school was available, health care personnel started to set up a crisis organisation in co-operation with crisis workers from various organisations. The mission of the crisis organisation was the comprehensive co-ordination of after-care in the weeks following the incident.

## Hospitals

At 11:15, Seinäjoki Central Hospital was placed on full alert in accordance with its readiness instructions, and 35 beds were made available for potential patients. Only the patient who received a gunshot wound in the classroom was taken to Seinäjoki, however, and this patient was eventually transported from here to Tampere University Hospital (TAYS). The Psychological First Aid Team of Seinäjoki Central Hospital was actively involved in the incident from the beginning.

Tampere University Hospital prepared to receive patients with head or chest injuries. Non-urgent operations were postponed, which left four general surgery operating theatres in readiness between 12:30 and 1:50pm – that is, until more specific information on the patients was available. Additionally, Tampere University Hospital informed Seinäjoki Central Hospital that, if necessary, five anaesthesiologist–nurse teams would be available and could be flown there in a Border Guard Service helicopter. It turned out that this was not necessary, however. In total, only two patients were transported to Tampere. One of them was the student with a gunshot wound who arrived there via Seinäjoki Central Hospital. The other patient taken to Tampere was the perpetrator with his serious head injury.

The ERC also alerted the Emergency Clinic of Vaasa Central Hospital. Seinäjoki Central Hospital requested that Vaasa Central Hospital prepare to receive patients with chest injuries if necessary. Accordingly, Vaasa Central Hospital placed in readiness five operating theatres, five intensive care beds, five cardiac telemetry beds, and an internal medicine surgeon.

Readiness was also stepped up in Satakunta Central Hospital, where key personnel were alerted, psychological first-aid readiness was stepped up, and a doctor's unit was placed on alert for a possible call to leave for Kauhajoki. Additionally, Northern Satakunta ambulances were placed in readiness for possible support needs.

At 1:45pm, the hospitals were stood down from alert. By this time, it was apparent that no more patients would arrive from Kauhajoki.

### 1.4.6. Other immediate action taken by the authorities

Border Guard Service helicopters from Turku and Helsinki Air Patrol squadrons provided operational support. An Agusta-Bell 412 helicopter from Helsinki arrived on the scene at 1:09pm with five policemen from Police Readiness Unit Karhu. Reaching Kauhajoki at 1:16pm, a Super Puma helicopter arrived on the scene from Turku. The Coast Guard was also in readiness to provide executive assistance if necessary.

At the request of the police, the Finnish Defence Forces sent five Pasi armoured personnel carriers to Kauhajoki, not all of which arrived on the scene in time. One of these vehicles carried a special response unit of the Pori Brigade. The Artillery Brigade in Niinisalo sent a platoon-strength unit and the Kauhava Training Air Wing a squad-strength unit. The Defence Forces helicopters in Seinäjoki and Oulu were in readiness for transport missions. Further Defence Forces executive assistance took the form of Air Force planes bringing National Bureau of Investigation investigators to the scene. From

3:00pm, a no-fly zone was established over Kauhajoki for approximately 12 hours. The no-fly zone was patrolled by various Air Force aircraft, including Hornet fighters.

### **The Municipality of Kauhajoki**

Municipality of Kauhajoki authorities were informed of the incident by the Rescue Department of Southern Ostrobothnia at 11:07. The news was relayed to the mayor, who immediately convened the Municipality Management Team. The mayor was also contacted by the ERC at 11:32. Because of the seriousness of the situation, it was decided to set up a command centre in the health centre meeting room, about 100 metres from Municipality Hall. In the health centre, the authorities had the VIRVE network at their disposal. The Management Team soon established that the municipality was in a state of emergency. It was decided to interrupt all non-urgent municipal functions and to channel all resources to provision of support for the operations of the various authorities. Using the VIRVE network, the medical chief provided the command centre with a situation overview via the health centre's chief physician. Information was also relayed by mobile phone.

Led by the police, media conferences were held at the Council Hall, where the reporters were given use of the Municipality Hall telecommunications network. The municipality also prepared to receive foreign media representatives and to respond to enquiries. Additionally, a 24-hour food service was established in the municipality.

#### **1.4.7. Operational command involving multiple authorities**

In a shooting incident such as this, the police usually are in overall command of the situation. The police patrol arriving first on the scene set up a police field command post at the corner of the school's hall of residence, where they were in visual contact with the school building. On account of the small number of policemen on the scene, the Kauhajoki District Police Department sergeant did not at that point set up a separate field organisation at the field command post; instead, he in practice led the operation independently on the scene. Later on, there was no longer any need to set up a field organisation, as the perpetrator was found dead inside the building and acute operational command was no longer necessary.

At 11:20, the Provincial Police commissioner appointed the deputy police commissioner of the Seinäjoki District Police Department as situation commander. Having arrived at Kauhajoki Police Department Headquarters at 11:50, the deputy police commissioner assumed the duties of situation commander after being briefed on the situation by the Kauhajoki Police Department Criminal Police sergeant who had been in command up until then. All others involved in the operations were informed of the change in command via the VIRVE network. The situation commander set up his command at Kauhajoki Police Department Headquarters. He also established a field organisation in accordance with the action plan for demanding situations.

To improve and enhance co-operation between various units, the situation commander sent, at 12:15pm, a policeman to act as a liaison from the Rescue Services command

centre at Rescue Department Headquarters. This policeman remained in the Rescue Services command centre until approximately 3:45pm.

The rescue director of the Rescue Department of Southern Ostrobothnia was informed of the incident in conjunction with the first alerts. He ordered the departmental rescue chief to lead local rescue operations and also left for Kauhajoki. While still on his way to Kauhajoki, the rescue director established external communication channels and provided support for the imminent rescue operation by arranging bullet-proof vests for the rescue workers, for example. He also ensured that there were sufficient resources available for incidents that might occur simultaneously, and a building fire did in fact occur in Kauhajoki, for which the alert came at 12:21pm. The necessary resources were sent from units that were involved in the rescue operation at the polytechnic.

The rescue director informed the State Provincial Office and the Municipality of Kauhajoki authorities of the incident. He also notified the Ministry of the Interior's Department for Rescue Services and provided that department with regular situation reports. As an example, the director-general of the Rescue Services was informed of the situation while most of the rescue units alerted were still on their way to the scene. The Department for Rescue Services relayed news of the incident to the Ministry of the Interior, the Ministry of Social Affairs and Health, the Ministry of Education, and the Government Situation Centre. On the basis of these reports and alerts and the information relayed later via the police administration, such portions of the State Crisis Management System as were considered necessary were activated.

The rescue chief on duty for the Rescue Department of Southern Ostrobothnia acted as the situation commander for rescue operations and emergency medical services in the field. Rescue operations and emergency medical services were led from the rescue operations command centre, which facilitated the co-ordination of the various activities. The medical chief was responsible for providing the medical institutions with the necessary advance information and situation reports later on. The maintenance of a sufficiently up-to-date situation overview, in terms of the measures taken by Municipality of Kauhajoki authorities, was also mainly based on the situation reports sent to the health centre by the medical chief.

#### **1.4.8. Communications**

The Public Safety Network (VIRVE) with its standard internal and co-operation call groups was the authorities' primary means of communication during the crisis. Rescue Services and Emergency Medical Services personnel operated in the call group meant for the Suupohja area, whose communications were recorded by the ERC of Ostrobothnia. In addition to VIRVE network radios, phones were used to some extent.

The ERC of Ostrobothnia assigned the mission to the police via the channel reserved for assignment of missions. Initially, the police field commander used the same channel, to ensure that all police patrols arriving on the scene would be able to monitor radio communications in the early stages of the operation.

After the police patrol that had arrived on the scene first had been fired at, the field commander switched channels at the request of the ERC of Ostrobothnia, using the field operations channel for radio communications concerning police operations. That made it easier for the ERC to assign missions to police patrols that were not involved in this operation.

After this switch of channels, all police communications were transmitted via the field operations channel. During the incident, radio traffic became cluttered, which hindered communication between the main operators, particularly the field commander and police teams. Furthermore, the field commander and the situation commander had occasional problems in contacting one another. On two occasions, the field commander even had to visit the command centre in person to give a situation report. The acute, operational stage of the incident was over at this point, however. Communications problems were exacerbated by the fact that, at any given time, there were many policemen either on the scene or on the way there. The patrols and individual policemen arriving on the scene all used the same channel to ask where to go and to request further instructions.

Another source of problems for the police was the collapse of the GSM network, which hampered communications between the situation commander and the field commander, regardless of several attempts. Police operations on the scene were hampered also by a shortage of VIRVE network phones.

#### **1.4.9. Action taken by central administration authorities**

##### **The Ministry of the Interior**

At 10:50, the rescue director of the Rescue Department of Southern Ostrobothnia reported by phone to the head of the Department for Rescue Services – that is, the director-general of the Rescue Services – on the shooting incident and the action taken by authorities. At about 10:55, the director-general reported the incident to the Ministry of the Interior's Internal Security Management Group, who were about to start their regular meeting at 11:00. The Internal Security Management Group is chaired by the Minister of the Interior, with the Permanent Secretary as vice-chair. The members of the management group are the director-general of the Police Department, the director-general of the Department for Rescue Services, the chief of the Border Guard, the director-general of the International Affairs Unit, the chief of the National Bureau of Investigation, and the director of the Emergency Response Centre Administration.

Between 11:05 and 11:15, an official was appointed to monitor the situation for the Department for Rescue Services and a situation centre was set up at the ministry. Between 11:15 and 11:30, the Ministry of the Interior's Department for Rescue Services informed the Government Situation Centre, the Ministry of Social Affairs and Health officer on duty, and the Preparedness Plan Officer of the Ministry of Education of the incident. At 11:36, the Internal Security Management Group decided that the police were in charge of the operation, including the provision of information and all situation reports. The Ministry of Social Affairs and Health and the Ministry of Education were informed of this by the Department for Rescue Services.

On the basis of the reports submitted earlier by the rescue director of the Rescue Department of Southern Ostrobothnia, the Department for Rescue Services declared at about 12:30 that the incident was over. Fires were still being extinguished, however, and the authorities continued to monitor the situation.

### **The Ministry of Social Affairs and Health**

The duty officer of the Ministry of Social Affairs and Health was informed of the shooting incident by the Department for Rescue Services at 11:17. At 11:35, the Ministry of Social Affairs and Health Preparedness Unit sent a text message to the management group of the ministry and phoned both ministers, informing them of the incident. Some 10 minutes later, the Ministry of Social Affairs and Health, the Government Crisis Communications Unit, and the Ministry of the Interior Police Department agreed on how publicity was to be handled and co-ordinated. At this point, the police were already in charge of the situation and the provision of information.

At 12:05, a phone call was placed with the preparedness physician of Seinäjoki Central Hospital to ensure that the hospital was in emergency readiness. The hospital confirmed that one injured person had already been brought there. It was around this time also that the Seinäjoki, Tampere, and Vaasa hospitals agreed on how patients would be assigned among them. The situation was assessed as not requiring any national-level support.

At 12:15, the Finnish Red Cross (FRC) chief of operations reported that the organisation had alerted its Psycho-social Support Team and psychologist in the Kauhajoki region. In addition, the Seinäjoki and Vaasa chiefs of operations were on their way to Kauhajoki.

The Ministry of Social Affairs and Health informed the medical chief of the Hospital District of Helsinki and Uusimaa (HUS) of the situation at 12:30 and received confirmation that HUS would be able to provide additional resources if necessary. To ensure availability of the necessary resources for psychosocial support, the authorities contacted the Vantaa Social and Crisis Emergency Centre, which promised to provide support. The Finnish Red Cross chief of operations in Finland announced that the FRC had set up a crisis hotline for the public.

On the day following the incident, the Kauhajoki Taskforce, appointed by the Ministry of Social Affairs and Health, met for the first time. Its task was to provide support for the Municipality of Kauhajoki in the organisation of support and crisis assistance for the victims, their next of kin, and the students and staff of the polytechnic. The taskforce was charged with ensuring that the necessary experts and support were available and that the division of responsibilities among the various support providers was clear.

The taskforce consisted of representatives of the Ministry of Social Affairs and Health, the National Public Health Institute<sup>1</sup>, the Hospital District of Helsinki and Uusimaa, Stakes (the National Research and Development Centre for Welfare and Health)<sup>1</sup>, the National Board of Education, Kauhajoki Health Centre, the Seinäjoki Joint Municipal Authority for Education, the Hospital District of Southern Ostrobothnia, the Tuusula After-care Team,

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<sup>1</sup> The National Institute for Health and Welfare from 1 January 2009.

the City of Vantaa, and the Finnish Red Cross. On Sunday, 28 September 2008, a team of experts summoned by the Ministry of Social Affairs and Health Preparedness Unit visited Kauhajoki to provide support for the municipal planning of psychosocial support and to determine the need for special resources. The organisation of psychosocial support in the initial stage of the crisis was also assessed during this visit.

### **The Ministry of Education and the National Board of Education**

The Ministry of Education's head of preparedness was informed of the incident by phone by the Department for Rescue Services at 11:31. The preparedness organisation of the ministry convened at 11:40. The Minister of Education, the Secretary of State, the Permanent Secretary, and the head of Vocational Training were also advised of the situation at this time. Operations were also commenced in the Communications and Public Relations unit of the ministry, where the developments were monitored via the government's situation overview portal, the media, and international news compilations issued by the Ministry for Foreign Affairs. The Communications and Public Relations unit gathered information and forwarded it via e-mail, from 11:50. The last message was sent at 6:53pm, at which point the total number of messages sent was about 100. The Ministry of the Interior's Department for Rescue Services informed the Ministry of Education at 12:10 that the police would be in charge of communications and publicity. The ministry contacted the government's head of security, who confirmed that up-to-date information on the measures taken by the authorities and the government would be available through the government situation overview portal.

At 12:35, the Ministry of Education appointed officials tasked with responding to media enquiries, and the Communications and Public Relations unit of the Ministry for Foreign Affairs was provided with a list of the responsible officials. The Communications and Public Relations unit was also contacted to co-ordinate communications and publicity with the police. Around the same time, news arrived that the General Synod had initiated action to help the victims' families.

The aim of the Ministry of Education was to ensure sufficient post-incident support not only for the management, staff, and students of Seinäjoki Polytechnic, the Vocational Education Centre Sedu, and Sedu Adult Education, which were the units operating in the school complex, but also for the staff and students of other units and branches of the Seinäjoki Joint Municipal Authority for Education. The information and guidance provided for the other schools and educational institutions was mainly the responsibility of the National Board of Education.

The preparedness personnel of the National Board of Education learned of the incident through the media at 11:50, and the head of preparedness contacted the Ministry of Education for more details and to agree on the division of duties between the two authorities. Simultaneously with this, the Preparedness Group of the National Board of Education started a meeting at which decisions were made concerning the division of responsibility within the unit. The personnel were first informed of the measures to be taken at 12:22, via the intranet.

The crisis support material for schools and other educational institutions that was published on the National Board of Education Web site after the November 2007 school shootings in Jokela was updated. The updated material was published on the National Board of Education Web site at 12:44. A direct link to the material was added on the Ministry of Education Web site. The material provided educational institutions with instructions concerning how to deal with the incident. According to Web site statistics, the pages focusing on the provision of support for schools and other educational institutions received the most hits, followed by those focusing on dealing with the crisis and after-care in schools. Many educational institutions also contacted National Board of Education experts directly after the incident.

### **Prime Minister's Office**

The Prime Minister's Office was informed of the incident by the Ministry of the Interior's Department for Rescue Services at 11:21. The news was relayed in a text message to the leadership of the Prime Minister's Office and the Finnish Security Police. A new topic was opened on the incident in the government situation overview portal at 11:33. At 12:01, the Government Situation Centre sent the government members a text message containing the current situation overview. The compilation of a report on the shooting incident and the gunman was commenced at around this time.

At 12:26, the Government Situation Centre received a text message from the Ministry of the Interior's Department for Rescue Services, informing them of the identity of the gunman and that he had shot himself. The situation centre also learned that first aid was being given to victims and the fires were being extinguished. The news was forwarded to the leadership of the Prime Minister's Office, and the government situation overview portal was updated accordingly. A moment later, the Defence Forces informed the Government Situation Centre that five Pasi armoured personnel carriers and an Army helicopter had been deployed to the scene. It was unclear at this point what the role of the helicopter would be.

A meeting concerning the Kauhajoki incident convened at 1:00pm in the Prime Minister's personal office. Present were the leaders of the governmental party groups, the Minister of Education, the Minister of the Interior, and Supreme Police Command representatives. The ministries' heads of preparedness convened a meeting at 2:00pm, during which they were informed that the current number of victims stood at nine. At 3:00pm, the government held a news conference.

During the afternoon and evening, the Government Situation Centre received several reports concerning the no-fly zone, the termination of the helicopter missions, the Defence Forces resources, preparedness, and the termination of various missions. The last update to the government situation overview portal was made at 11:40pm.

## **1.5. Identifying the victims and informing the families**

### **Identifying the victims**

Since 1991, a Disaster Victim Identification (DVI) unit specialising in the identification of victims has been in operation under the National Bureau of Investigation. Its task is

to identify disaster or other victims who cannot otherwise be reliably identified. The team is assisted by the investigators of police forensic science laboratories all over Finland. In its work, the Finnish DVI unit utilises a procedure approved by Interpol member states, which has proved reliable. In addition to the identification of victims, the unit informs the victims' families by utilising the family contact person system. In this system, the local police are only minimally involved in delivering the sad news or in interaction with the victim's family.

The DVI unit was informed of the school shooting soon after 11 o'clock. At that point, it was already apparent that victim identification would be necessary and that the investigators would have to be transported to the scene rapidly. The DVI unit managed to secure air transport exceptionally soon: two small Air Force planes would take them to an airport in Kauhajoki usually used by amateur pilots. Taking off from Helsinki at 2:30pm, the planes carried three DVI unit members, two forensic pathologists, and a National Bureau of Investigation PR officer to the scene.

The DVI team arrived at Kauhajoki Police Department Headquarters at 3:50pm, where they were briefed on the situation. Around 4pm, it was known that the probable number of victims was 11, including the perpetrator. The police had been collecting information from the school staff, the students, and the next of kin who had contacted them by then. On the basis of this information, at around 4:30pm the police had managed to compile a list of the people known to have participated in the test in the classroom where the incident took place and, on the other hand, of those the police had not been able to contact so far. The lists matched, so the police had a preliminary estimate of the number of victims, even though crime scene investigation had not yet commenced at that point, apart from documentation of the victims' locations and positions.

After the briefing, the DVI team left for the school, where police forensic science laboratory investigators were waiting for them. Because of the combustion gases, it was not safe to access all parts of the building at this point, so the DVI team and the investigators prepared for victim identification in the schoolyard. The DVI team were allowed to enter after all of the facilities had been checked, at about 6pm. At that point, there were 10 bodies inside the building, as one, the perpetrator, had been taken to Tampere University Hospital soon after he was found. There he was pronounced officially dead at 4:46pm.

First of all, the police forensic science laboratory investigators marked and photographed the victims at the locations where they were found. Next, an identification point was established in the training laundry near the classroom where the incident took place. Each victim was inspected externally and prepared for transportation. External inspection refers to the taking of body temperature and the documentation of clothing, jewellery, tattoos, and other distinctive marks to get initial data for the actual identification work. Any marks related to the incident, such as bullet marks, were also documented during the external inspection. The inspection of the first victim started at 7:35pm, and the inspection had been completed by 2am. Several victims were found to have been badly burned.

The DVI team had decided early on that the victims would be transported to Helsinki for a forensic post-mortem examination. The Air Force plane transporting the bodies took off from the Ilmajoki airport at 3:20am. The plane landed at Helsinki–Vantaa airport at 4:40am, and the bodies arrived at the Department of Forensic Medicine of the University of Helsinki before morning. The forensic pathologists travelled in the same plane.

On Thursday, 25 September 2008, at 6:20pm, all victims had been positively identified on the basis of their dental records. This was confirmed by DNA identification later that night. A forensic post-mortem examination had been performed on all victims by Monday, 29 September 2008. The official identification meeting was held at National Bureau of Investigation Headquarters on 30 September 2008.

### **Informing the families**

Two of the DVI team police officers who had flown to Kauhajoki were appointed as contact persons for the families. They first went to Kauhajoki Police Department Headquarters to get an up-to-date situation report at 3:50pm, then accompanied the DVI team to the school building to get an overview of the situation, also visiting the actual crime scene inside the building when it became possible to do so.

Shortly before noon, a hotline for the victims' families had been opened at Kauhajoki Police Department Headquarters by order of the situation commander. Another hotline for next of kin had also been opened, at Seinäjoki Central Hospital. The hotline numbers were published in the media, but, unfortunately, the central hospital number as given was incorrect. Furthermore, the central hospital terminated all of its media activities at 6pm.

The police received a large number of calls, and many callers had to remain on hold for long periods. Kauhajoki Police Department personnel answered the calls. The family contact persons arrived from the school soon after 7pm and started calling the victims' families, many of whom had already called the police. The family of one of the victims also arrived there. Guided there by crisis workers near the scene, many of the families of the other victims had found their way to the health centre.

From 4:30pm onward, the police had a preliminary list of the missing persons. As the list contained the names of people whom the authorities had not been able to contact since morning, school staff and the students had more or less the same information. At that point, no-one had had the opportunity to examine the bodies. The authorities did not contact the victims' families solely on the basis of the list, and they did not have the contact details for all families at that point either. As the external inspection of the victims, started at 7:35pm, progressed, the family contact persons were able to provide the families with the information the police had discovered while identifying the victims.

A policeman recording the identification data called the family contact persons every so often, sharing the information with them as it became available. The family contact persons relayed this information to the families, which also provided them with an

opportunity to ask the families about any distinctive marks, to facilitate identification. By early afternoon, the victims' families had realised that they were unable to get in touch with their loved ones. In the course of the evening, the family contact persons told the families that the situation did not look good for them. They also described the findings the identification team had made in the external inspection by then.

On the basis of the list of names at their disposal, the police accessed the National Population Register and obtained the contact details of the persons on the list. The family contact persons were able to contact the families of all the victims by 11:00pm. The next afternoon, 24 September 2008, the family contact persons decided to visit the families of all of the victims. The families were divided into two groups according to where they lived, and, with the exception of one, all families were visited in the evening of 24 September 2008. With the first group, the visits were made by the two policemen and a priest. For the other group, they were accompanied by a psychologist. During the visits, a police forensic science laboratory investigator took a DNA sample from a family member to facilitate positive identification.

The perpetrator's closest relative was his mother, who had been trying to find out what had happened to her son by calling Seinäjoki Central Hospital and the Kauhajoki Police Department before 3pm. The time of the call in police records is 2:38pm, and the mother was told that her son was a suspect but at that time no definitive information was available. The perpetrator's name was made public in the government news conference at 3pm. After this, the police asked the mother for any distinctive tattoos and dispatched a policeman and crisis workers to her home, where they, according to the mother, arrived around 4pm. So it was between 3 and 4pm that the mother learned of her son's involvement in the incident, as well as the fact that he was in hospital, seriously injured. The mother felt that there was more information publicly available than what was given to her personally.

The perpetrator's father, who lived in Southern Finland, rang the perpetrator's mother as soon as he heard about the incident, around noon. He searched for more information on the Web, and as early as in early afternoon he had a feeling that his son might have been involved. He called the perpetrator's mother again at this point and told her about his misgivings. The police confirmed these misgivings the next morning.

Most victims were badly burnt, which is why some families were advised not to go to see their loved one. The family of one of the victims told the authorities that the hospital had given them incorrect information in this respect, as it later turned out that their loved one's burns were actually minor.

## **1.6. Psychosocial support**

### **1.6.1. Acute crisis relief**

The incident was especially distressing for the families of the perpetrator and the victims, those who survived the shooting, the staff and other students of the school, and their circle of friends and acquaintances all over Finland. The incident had a significant impact on the inhabitants of Kauhajoki and the neighbouring municipalities. The whole country was shocked, and the incident triggered strong debate also abroad. The incident

placed a heavy burden on the authorities involved in it, as well as the crisis workers and their families.

The chief physician of the health centre and the specialist health-care first-aid psychologist were in charge of psychosocial support in the early stages. As soon as they learned of the incident, the first nurses from the family centre interrupted their standard duties and headed for the scene. They were soon at the nearby commercial college, receiving the students who had escaped from the school building some 200 metres away. Initially, psychosocial support was provided mainly by the municipal crisis team, nurses, social workers, and the Kurikka crisis team (which arrived on the scene on the same day). Further resources and expertise were provided on the day of the incident by Seinäjoki Central Hospital crisis psychologists, and by the Psychological First Aid team of the hospital on the following day. The Vaasa crisis team also provided support. The local population were informed of the available psychosocial support via the Municipality of Kauhajoki Web site and in the local paper.

On the day following the incident, a memorial event was arranged for the polytechnic's students and staff. The purpose of the event was to mourn the victims, to provide the students and staff with information, and to tell them where to find help. Both youth and adults who were clearly shocked by the events were actively encouraged to seek support. The authorities started to make telephone contact with the students who had left for their homes elsewhere. The first debriefing sessions for the staff were held in the afternoon, followed by sessions for the students the next day, two days after the incident. Screening interviews, which provided an overview of the psychological condition of all staff and the students, were commenced two weeks after the incident.

Kauhajoki and Ilmajoki parish workers were also soon on the scene to provide support. Kauhajoki Parish held a short memorial service at 7pm on the day of the incident. After this, the church kept its doors open from 9am till 9pm for five days to provide spiritual and psychological support. On the initiative of the Diocese of Lapua, the 10-member Vaasa psychological support team soon headed for Kauhajoki. Prayer meetings were held every night. Parish workers took to the streets and were available for spiritual and psychological support in various locations around the town. The next Sunday, five days after the incident, a memorial service was held for the victims. Kauhajoki Parish held numerous small services both at the polytechnic and at the other educational institutions nearby.

These activities were supported by volunteer workers with the Finnish Red Cross. The FRC opened a meeting point for psychological support in Kauhajoki, and an FRC national toll-free help line was also available to provide psychological support. The help line was in use for 48 hours, with a total of 360 calls. On the day of the incident, the FRC added to its Web site information concerning psychological support, such as the organisation of crisis sessions in schools, how to deal with fear, and instructions for morning assembly. Two psychologists belonging to the FRC Psychologists' Preparedness Group arrived in Kauhajoki on the day of the incident. On the following day, a total of 13 more preparedness group psychologists arrived. They were involved in the planning of operations and organised crisis sessions and individual meetings for teachers and students from various schools, the victims' families, and Municipality of

Kauhajoki personnel. The work of the psychologists was, for the most part, completed within two weeks.

In co-operation with schools and social services workers, youth workers acted as support persons for young people, keeping the doors of youth facilities open every night in collaboration with the FRC. A crisis support centre was established in the local youth centre, which also provided a media-free zone for children and young people. The facilities also served as a servicing area for executive assistance units of the Defence Forces.

For four weeks after the incident, a low-threshold crisis emergency clinic, set up jointly by authorities in primary health care and specialised health care, was operational in the health centre. The students and staff of the polytechnic and local residents were encouraged to seek support there. There were hundreds of visits, some of which went unrecorded. The personnel for the clinic were provided by the psychiatric operations section of the hospital district, and the health centre doctor on duty acted also as the clinic doctor. The clinic was manned by four workers on weekdays and two on weekends. It was possible to come to the clinic without a referral, and the clinic was open every day. The hospital district informed local residents of the service via a bulletin published in the media.

Psychosocial support for the victims' families was initially provided by a crisis team in their municipality of residence. This support took different forms in different municipalities. The Municipality of Kauhajoki advised the crisis teams in other municipalities to contact the families and to offer them help and support. Some families reported that they did not receive sufficient help in dealing with practical matters.

The municipality of Ilmajoki was particularly affected by the incident, as it was home to four of the victims and several other students. The municipality had to rely solely on their own crisis team, which placed a heavy burden on this small municipality. In November 2008, a steering group was set up in Ilmajoki to provide guidance for those involved in crisis work. The municipal council authorised the local authorities to recruit reinforcements for basic services. The municipal crisis workers co-operated with the Kauhajoki Project, described below.

Two of the students who escaped from the classroom received support from crisis workers in the health centre, as well as from crisis psychologists, in the first few days after the incident. The third student who escaped from the classroom was transported first to Seinäjoki and then to Tampere, where she received support from hospital personnel. After this, she received support from the crisis team in her municipality and the psychologists of the Kauhajoki Project, which was established later. Some of the survivors' family members told the authorities that they received support in their municipality of residence only after they had actively sought it.

A few days after the incident, the hospital district sent the health centres of the municipalities involved in the incident a letter, urging them to take an active role in crisis work. They were encouraged in particular to pay special attention to how those involved in the incident in one way or another were coping, as well as how the students

and staff of various educational institutions were coping. In its letter, the hospital district recommended that the municipal authorities gain a picture of the situation in the municipality and take the necessary steps. All municipalities were also sent information on the possible activation of earlier traumatic experiences and the need to prevent suicides after a shocking event.

Within two weeks of the incident, psychosocial support had been given to the police and rescue workers involved in the incident and their families, ERC personnel, the personnel of the organisations in the immediate vicinity of the school, the social workers, and Municipality of Kauhajoki personnel. Significant support was provided also for the students and staff of all Kauhajoki schools and other educational institutions.

Plans were made to keep the threshold low for seeking support, through co-operation between those in primary health care and the hospital district. In the plans, special attention was paid to the coping of nurses, education welfare officers, and school psychologists; the coping of the staff of educational institutions; fulfilment of the basic mission of Educational and Social Welfare and Health Services; the support provided by experts; work counselling; communications and PR work; and the provision of support in the future. Some of those involved in the crisis work had participated in the after-care following the Jokela school shooting, which was an asset in the planning of crisis work. There was also written material available on the provision of psychosocial support in conjunction with the Jokela incident.

In the weeks following the incident, people had strong feelings of anxiety, fear, and insecurity. People were particularly worried about the possibility that the perpetrator had not acted alone and that the incident could be repeated. These fears were allayed to some extent by the police opening a hotline that allowed people to tell them about the threats they had heard about. The fears caused by the incident also kept the child welfare authorities busy to some extent. There was increased demand for social and family work as well. However, the actual psychosocial support was mainly the responsibility of the crisis teams of the municipalities involved; the Hospital District of Southern Ostrobothnia; and, as far as the polytechnic was involved, the Seinäjoki Joint Municipal Authority for Education. Public discussions and parents' nights were organised in the various units of the Joint Municipal Authority for Education, the other educational institutions in Kauhajoki, day-care centres, and also many workplaces.

At the polytechnic, crisis work was commenced immediately, utilising the school's own organisations and multidisciplinary networks. On the day following the incident, an after-care co-ordinator was appointed for the school. The school staff provided the students with necessary information and guided those in shock to seek help and support. In the first few school days after the incident, the students and staff were informed of the various ways in which people react to a crisis situation. They were also instructed on ways to deal with anxiety.

Normal school activities were resumed two weeks after the incident, in substitute facilities, where the students and staff had to work for five months. The school was provided with additional resources, and the augmented Student Welfare Team met

several times a week at first, then weekly. School staff kept in constant touch with the parents of minor students in particular.

The students received support at both individual and community level. The polytechnic employed a full-time school psychologist to provide additional support for the students and staff. The Municipality of Kauhajoki also employed a part-time psychologist in the polytechnic's occupational health services to support the staff. The Hospital District of Southern Ostrobothnia, for its part, employed a part-time crisis psychologist for the students. Additionally, the Municipality of Kauhajoki employed a part-time student nurse. Education welfare officers were also involved in the crisis work.

The Mannerheim League for Child Welfare offers its 'Child and Youth Phone' service on a daily basis. In the first few days after the incident, more than 50 calls a day were received. Calls kept coming in even after two months. In addition to the anxiety caused by the incident, the callers expressed fear of going to their own school. Many of the callers were young people, closely connected to the incident in some way, who felt the need to share their grief and anxiety with somebody.

### **1.6.2. Psychosocial support in the following months and years**

#### **The Kauhajoki Project**

In a Ministry of Social Affairs and Health working group meeting held in Kauhajoki four days after the incident, it was decided that, owing to the magnitude of the incident, a multi-operator project should be set up to co-ordinate psychosocial support. The Hospital District of Southern Ostrobothnia, the Municipality of Kauhajoki, the Seinäjoki Joint Municipal Authority for Education, the Seinäjoki Region Health Consortium, and the Municipality of Ilmajoki joined forces in November 2008 to create a joint project and financing plan to organise the necessary psychosocial support. As of 1 January 2009, the Seinäjoki Region Health Consortium was replaced by the City of Seinäjoki and the Municipality of Ilmajoki by the Jalasjärvi, Ilmajoki, and Kurikka joint municipal commercial enterprise. The project is a continuation of the Kauhajoki Taskforce, which was set up by the Ministry of Social Affairs and Health immediately after the incident to monitor and co-ordinate after-care. On the basis of the project plan, the Ministry of Finance granted the necessary funding in December 2008 for the implementation of after-care.

The main aim of the project plan was to ensure that those who suffered in the incident would recover from the crisis and would be able to continue their everyday lives. In the project plan, after-care was divided into four stages – namely, first aid, acute care, after-care, and follow-up after-care.

Lasting one month, the first-aid stage focused on immediate crisis work, counselling, and the drawing up of plans for acute care and after-care. Ending on 31 December 2009, the acute-care stage placed its emphasis on finding those in need of help and support, on early crisis relief, and on modifications to the after-care plan. The seven-month after-care stage focuses on the identification and screening of delayed trauma symptoms and referral to treatment, as well as various forms of therapy. Co-operation with the

victims' families and professionally organised peer support meetings will also be continued systematically. After-care is currently being provided for more than 100 next of kin, all over Finland. The final stage will continue until the end of 2013. Any therapy and other psychosocial support still deemed necessary at that point will be continued, however.

All in all, some 20–25 people have been employed by the Kauhajoki Project to organise after-care services. Additionally, 35 therapists were employed through the purchased services system. More than a hundred people were still involved in therapy relationships in various parts of Finland at the end of 2009.

### **Church activities**

Several parishes reacted immediately to the crisis, organising brief services, prayer meetings, morning assemblies at school, periods of silence, confirmation school meetings, diaconal assistance, burial services, meetings with next of kin, home visits, discussions, concerts, work counselling, and visits by hospital priests.

To provide psychological support for the crisis victims, the Kauhajoki Project of the Church was set up under the auspices of the Diocese of Lapua, the steering group of which includes representatives of the Kauhajoki Project co-ordinated by the Hospital District of Southern Ostrobothnia, the Seinäjoki Joint Municipal Authority for Education, the Municipality of Kauhajoki, Kauhajoki Parish, and the Deanery of Southern Ostrobothnia. Within the framework of the project, the authorities have been in close contact with all 10 parishes that were directly affected by the incident. More than 100 people from these parishes are estimated to have participated in the work. The parishes of Kauhajoki and Ilmajoki played the most important roles. In Ilmajoki, the Orthodox Church participated in the work. Workers from Seinäjoki Parish were also active in the crisis teams. In October, the General Synod granted €500,000 for after-care.

There was significant co-operation between the Kauhajoki Project of the Church and the Kauhajoki Project described earlier, on both administrative and practical levels. The Church also co-operated with the polytechnic.

### **Activities at the school**

After-care at the school where the incident took place was planned by a co-ordination team that initially met weekly and then convened once a month. The team consisted of the after-care co-ordinator, teachers, the guidance counsellor, the school psychologist, the school nurse, a crisis psychologist, and a Church representative. Led by the president, a special team is active at Seinäjoki Polytechnic with the aim of securing the necessary resources.

In the autumn, into early 2009, the school implemented enhanced guidance counselling and reduced the length of the study week from five to four days. This made it possible to organise work counselling as well as health improvement and treatment services for the staff, and to offer them appointments with a crisis psychologist. The students and staff also underwent enhanced health examinations. The school also employed a

tutor-based teaching system, where each tutor was responsible for a group of about 10 students.

Discussion meetings for the victims' families were organised by the Kauhajoki Project, the polytechnic, and Ilmajoki Parish. Some families visited the school in autumn 2008, and after renovation work had been completed, in April 2009, all of the families were invited to visit the school. Two peer support meetings were organised for the students who had escaped from the classroom where the incident took place and their families. Kauhajoki Parish and members of the Kauhajoki Project of the Church were involved in the activities in many ways.

Numerous family nights were organised for the students' parents and other family members. The students were given sports vouchers, and jogging events were organised. A special activity programme was drawn up for the weeks following the incident, including such activities as ornamental forging and games. The aim was to organise supervised activities while maintaining a steady weekly routine.

Youth workers arranged recess activities, for instance. The school film club was reactivated, and concerts were held. Additionally, a so-called wellness corridor was built in the school. The after-care workers' offices are located in the corridor, which also serves as a low-threshold meeting point.

## **Youth Services**

With subsidies from the Ministry of Education, the Youth Services authorities in Kauhajoki enhanced their services by employing additional youth workers. Enhanced youth work services were offered between 1 October 2008 and 31 December 2009. This included the development of virtual youth work, club and other group activities, the provision of free sport vouchers for polytechnic students, and outreach youth work in the town. Enhanced youth work also made it possible to provide both financial and personnel resources for polytechnic student excursions. As four of the victims and several other students lived in Ilmajoki, it was necessary to enhance youth work services there also. Three weeks after the incident, Ilmajoki received a special grant from the National Board of Education for the enhancement of municipal youth work to provide crisis support for the friends and age peers of the victims.

Municipality of Kauhajoki youth workers, education welfare officers, and nurses formed a multi-profession network, which met regularly to look into the special problems faced by youth in their everyday lives, and to support them jointly, avoiding overlaps and increasing the flow of information.

## **1.7. Damage**

### **1.7.1. Personal injury**

The perpetrator shot a teacher, nine students, and finally himself. All told, 11 people were killed, eight women and three men.

The forensic post-mortem examinations revealed that, in all cases, the primary cause of death was gunshot wounds. The bodies had been hit by, in total, 62 bullets. Nothing could have saved them, even if first aid had been started immediately after the wounds were inflicted.

One of the students who managed to escape from the classroom was seriously injured by a bullet that had hit her in the head, while another received minor injuries from a broken window. The psychological injuries received by those involved were considerable, and the need for psychosocial support will continue for years to come.

There were approximately 260 people in the school building when the incident began. According to the rescue plan, the maximum number of people allowed in the old section of the building is 120 and 500 in the new section.

Some 30 policemen were exposed to combustion gases, dust, or other air impurities to such an extent that they developed symptoms and had to seek medical help via occupational health care. With 14 of them, the symptoms were prolonged, and one of them was found to have an illness that could be classified as a work-related disease. Most symptoms were developed by the policemen who had to work in the smoke-filled building before the fires had been extinguished. The symptoms were milder with those who only participated in the forensic investigation and victim identification after the fires had been extinguished. The police borrowed smoke diving equipment from the Rescue Department, and there were also some respirators available. Some activities were carried out without these, however. The policemen wore standard uniforms, which were not suitable clothing in a burning building. The uniform of one of the policemen caught fire while he was inside the building, but he received no burns.

The families of the deceased, including the perpetrator, whose lives would never be the same after the incident, can be considered indirect victims of the school shootings. They suffered psychologically and are in danger of developing long-term illnesses. Likewise, the friends and acquaintances of the victims, the teachers, school staff, and the other students and their families too can be regarded as indirect victims. The incident also left its mark on the first-line rescue workers, policemen, and crisis workers, even though as professionals in this field they are better equipped to face situations of this nature than the rest of us are. Many others suffered as a result of the incident, among them those who became a target for threats or accusations or whose feeling of security has been undermined.

### **1.7.2. Damage to property**

The perpetrator started several fires, in various parts of the building, causing considerable fire, smoke, and water damage. As judged by the number of cartridge cases, he fired 157 shots in the building or its immediate vicinity. In total, 118 bullet impact craters were found in the building, which damaged windows, doors, walls, other structures, and movable property.

The costs incurred in the renovation amounted to approximately €1.1 million, with an additional €100,000 paid in rent for substitute facilities.

### **1.7.3. Other damage**

Threats against schools and educational institutions are harmful to school communities in many ways. The increased number of threats received after the school shootings can be considered indirect damage caused by the school shootings.

There were occasional threats even before the Jokela school shootings, but in that event's immediate aftermath more than 20 were made within a month. In the months that followed, anywhere between one and six threats were recorded in the police information system every month.

The Kauhajoki school shootings were committed on 23 September 2008. Even though there was only about a week left in September, 41 threats against schools were reported to the police in the remainder of the month. There were 54 threats in October 2008, 40 in November, and four in December. Between January and April 2009, 35 threats – on average, nine per month – were made.

In total, 225 threats against schools were recorded in the police information system between the Jokela school shootings and April 2009, half of which led to a criminal complaint. As some threats were recorded only in the Emergency Response Centre information system, and as there is considerable variation in the recording procedures, the actual number of threats is probably somewhat higher. In some cases, the police assessed the incident to be of such a nature that there was no need to report it.

School shootings can be considered to have long-term effects on young people's group relationships and youth culture. For example, the Mannerheim League for Child Welfare has reported cases wherein a young person was falsely branded as a person who intended to commit a school shooting. In the IRC Gallery ('IRC-Galleria'), a Web service popular with young people, the question of the day in February 2009 was this: 'Have you encountered school-shootings-related bullying?' Of the 9,255 people who answered the question, 282 (3%) reported having been the target of such bullying, and some 1,500 (17%) knew of a person in their school or elsewhere who had been subjected to such bullying.

### **1.8. Communications and PR work**

While on his way from Seinäjoki to the scene, the police situation commander appointed the detective chief inspector of the Seinäjoki Police Department as PR officer. While still on his way, the situation commander dictated at 11:30am a first bulletin to be released by the Police Provincial Command PR officer. The situation commander also decided that the first news conference would be held in Kauhajoki at 1pm. He also announced that news conferences would be held every hour; this aim was not completely met, however. At 11:42am, the PR officer of the Police Provincial Command of Western Finland released a national bulletin on the incident. It was agreed that the PR officer would be responsible for media liaison activities even after the detective inspector, who had been appointed as the chief of investigation of the National Bureau of Investigation, had arrived. After his arrival, the chief of investigation was still present at the news conferences, however.

Four news conferences were held in Kauhajoki on the day the incident took place, the first of them in the Council Hall at 1pm. In the news conferences, the media representatives, who initially were mainly from nearby areas, were given a summary of the facts. More information was provided in the following news conferences, at 2:00, 3:30, and 6:00pm. The number of victims was given as nine in the 2pm conference. The name of the perpetrator was revealed in the government news conference at 3pm and at 3:30pm in Kauhajoki.

The news conferences were attended by representatives of the police, the Rescue Services, the school, the Municipality of Kauhajoki, and the Church. Also, the Minister of Health and Social Services was present at the last news conference. One further news conference was held on the day following the incident, at noon. In addition to the news conferences, the police PR officer and the National Bureau of Investigation's chief of investigation responded to the numerous requests for an interview submitted by the media. Before the news conferences, the police, the Rescue Services, the mayor, and the representatives of the parish and volunteer workers agreed on who would say what. On the basis of the interviews of participants in the events, the co-operation can be considered to have gone reasonably smoothly, even if there were a few breakdowns.

At 2:10pm, the Ministry of Social Affairs and Health released a bulletin in Finnish, Swedish, and English, informing the general public of the crisis Web site and the establishment of the Kauhajoki Project, which would co-ordinate crisis relief. The Ministry of Social Affairs and Health also provided the media with background information and experts' contact details.

The relevant government ministers convened to discuss the situation at 1pm, and the Prime Minister's Office held a news conference in the Government Palace at 3pm. In the conference, the government offered its condolences to the victims' families and announced that flags would be flown at half-mast all over Finland the next day. The Minister of the Interior announced that the police had been aware of the perpetrator's Internet videos as early as the previous Friday.

The Kauhajoki health centre held its first news conference at noon. Seinäjoki Central Hospital also held one at 1:45pm, followed by Tampere University Hospital at 3pm. After the Seinäjoki Central Hospital news conference, the situation commander contacted the hospital, informing the staff of their media responsibilities.

### **The conduct of the media**

The first emergency call concerning the incident came through to the Emergency Response Centre at 10:43am, and the newspaper *Ilta-Sanomat* reported the incident via its Web service at 11:12. YLE and the *Helsingin Sanomat* Web site broke the news half an hour after the incident, and soon thereafter most of the media reported it on their Web sites.

Journalists were provided with workspaces, meals, and interviews with various authorities in Municipality Hall. What the journalists were not happy with was that, apart from the authorities, they found it difficult to find anyone to interview. The

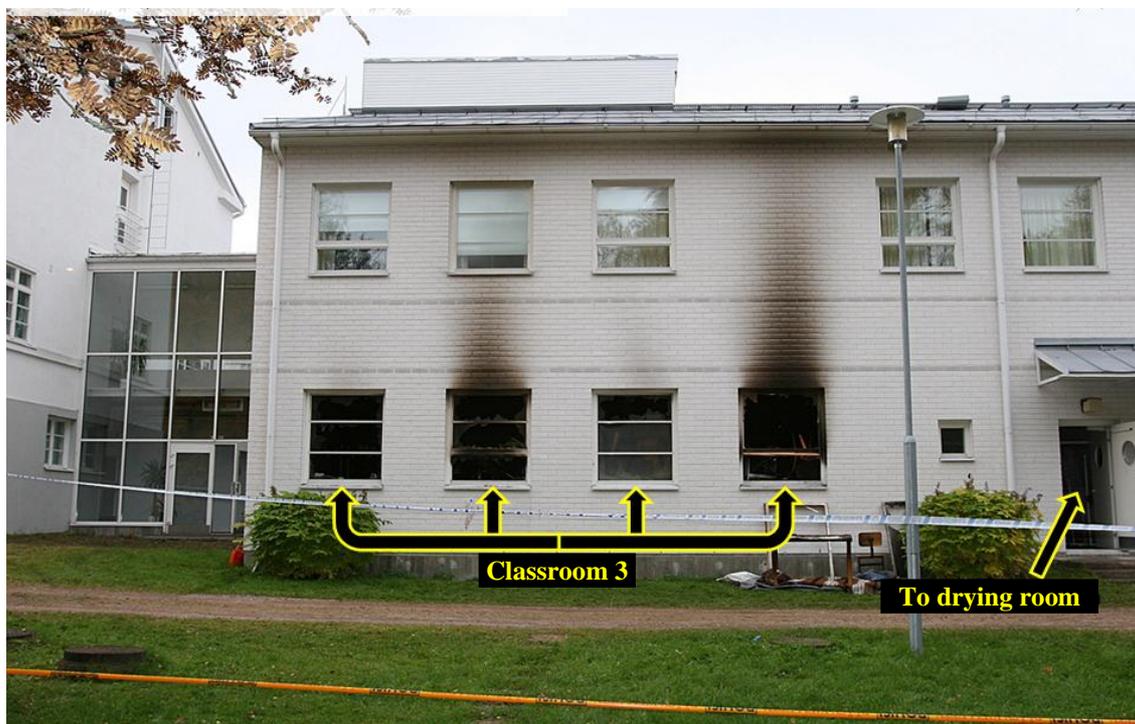
inhabitants of Kauhajoki did not have much information on the subject and were reluctant to speak. There was no hostility toward, or criticism of the conduct of, the media, however. An exception to this was the families of some of the victims, who considered the way some foreign media representatives tried to get into their homes inappropriate. It is likely that the news conferences held during the afternoon directed the publicity received by the incident. The media were also slowed down by the fact that many journalists had to travel to Kauhajoki from the Helsinki metropolitan area. Accordingly, they were able to start their news coverage only after the news conferences had been held.

## 2. BACKGROUND INFORMATION

### 2.1. Description of the site and the instruments of crime

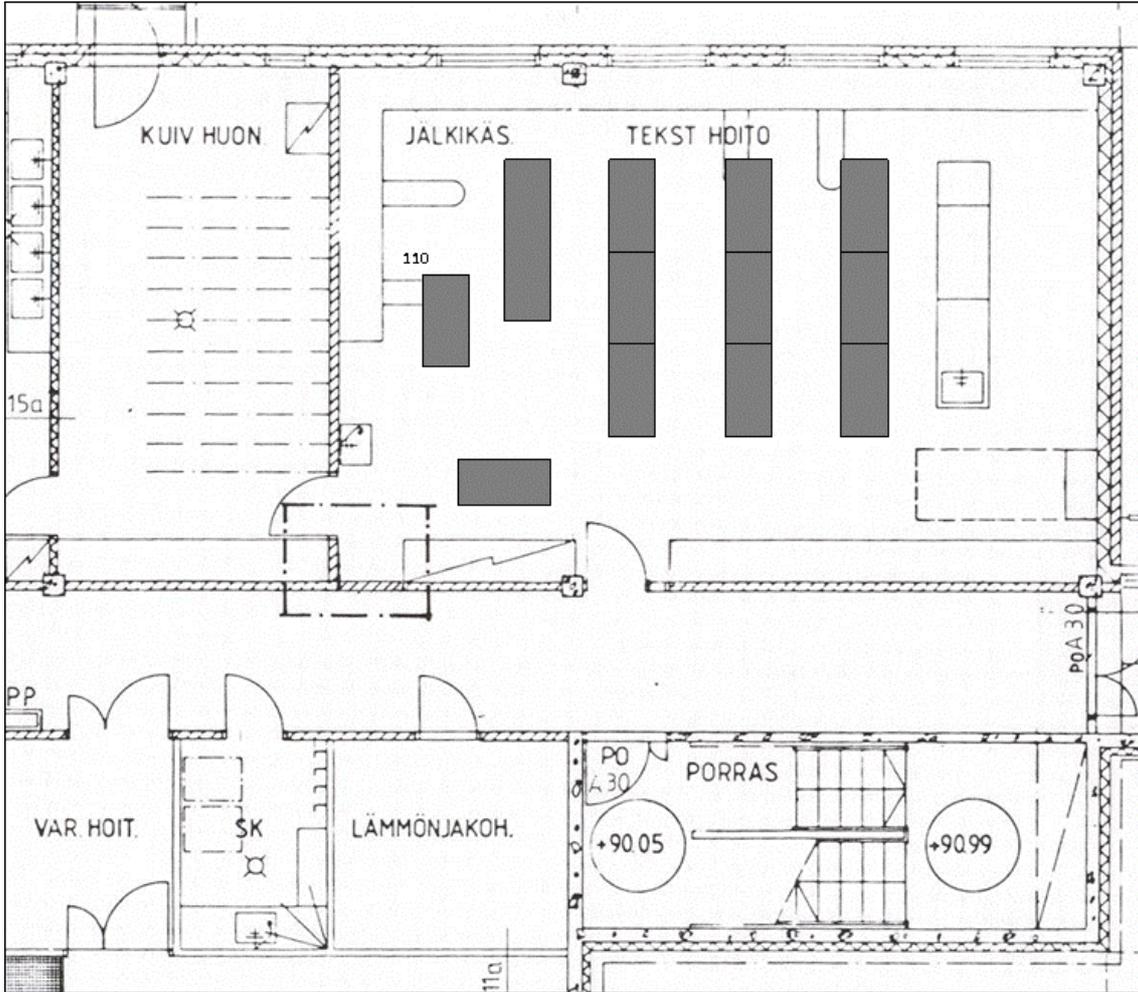
#### 2.1.1. The school building

The school building consists of a new and an old section, with a combined gross floor area of 5,785 m<sup>2</sup>. The sections are connected by a corridor some seven metres long. The old section, at the southern end of the plot, was built in 1929. The new annex was built in 1992. The old section was thoroughly refurbished in conjunction with the building of the annex. The events started to unfold in the annex, in classroom 3, which is on the ground floor, right next to the corridor.

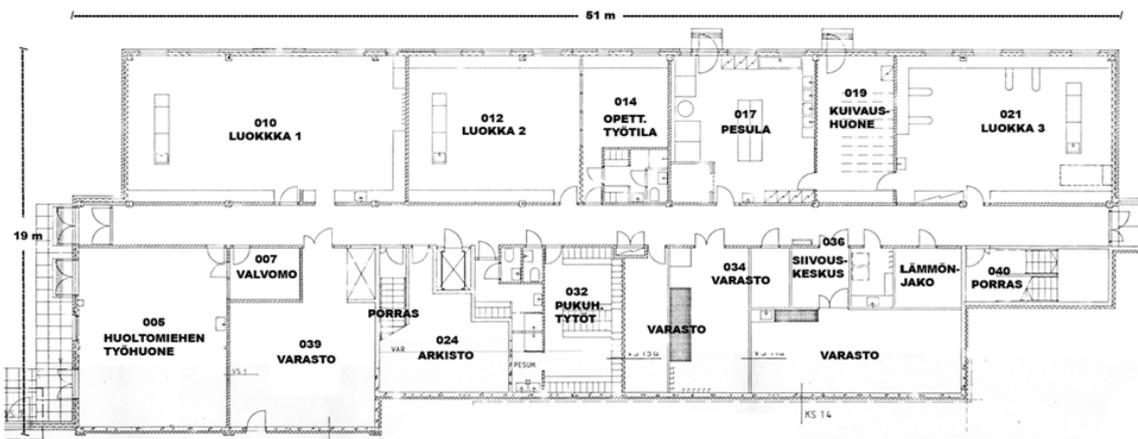


*Picture 5. The windows of classroom 3, seen from the rear of the school. The old section and corridor are on the left. The outer walls of the building are made of stone. (Picture from police investigation material)*

The annex is a two-storey building, with classrooms on both floors. The ground floor constitutes one fire compartment. The first floor is divided into two fire compartments, and the attic is divided into sections with structures that have a fire resistance rating of 15 minutes. The ground floor is a stone structure, while the first floor has a lightweight structure. The wall, roof, and floor structures of the building are flame-retardant. The escape zones on both floors have access to three separate exits. The new section can probably be considered a building with a fire rating of P2, which means that the bearing structures must withstand the effects of a fire for 30 minutes without collapsing.



Picture 6. Floor plan of the new section at ground-floor level. Classroom 3 is shown in the picture, with students' tables marked in grey. The tables are not to scale. (Picture from police investigation material)



Picture 7. Floor plan of the new section at ground-floor level, with classroom 3 in the top right corner. (Picture from police investigation material)

Tapahtumaluokka 3 oli tavanomainen luokkatila, jonka etuosassa oli opettajan kiinteä Classroom 3 was an ordinary classroom with an immovable teacher's desk at the front, a blackboard, and a projection screen. The students sat mainly in twos at adjacent desks. All in all, there was room for approximately 25 people. On the window side, beneath the windows, there was a table that extended from one end of the room to the other. There were some built-in cupboards below the table top, but there were also empty spaces between the cupboards. On the corridor side, the classroom was lined with tall cabinets. The classroom had four windows.

There were two doors, one of which led to the corridor and the other to the drying room next door, and further to the training laundry. Both the drying room and the laundry had access to the school's yard. There was a round window, at a height of approximately six feet, in the top section of the door leading to the corridor. The door could be locked mechanically. Both doors were at the back of the classroom, less than four metres from each other. The classroom was approximately seven metres wide and some 10 metres in length.



*Picture 8. Classroom 2, on the ground floor. The furniture in this classroom is similar to that in classroom 3. In classroom 3, the windows were on the left-hand side in relation to the students. (Picture from police investigation material)*

The old section has a ground floor, first floor, second floor, and attic. There are classrooms on three of these floors. The attic houses team work areas and the air-conditioning equipment room. The building is largely made of stone. The intermediate floor structure and the uppermost floor slab are upstand beam systems made of reinforced concrete. The upstand beam system insulation is peat moss, and the floors are made of wood. The internal walls are mainly of stone. Some of the

non-load-bearing walls are made of wood and covered with plasterboard and fibreglass wallpaper. The internal wall and ceiling surfaces in the building are flame-retardant. The floor surfaces are plastic or massive wood, tongue-and-groove, which can be considered flame-retardant. Each floor constitutes its own fire compartment. The exits and the air-conditioning equipment room in the attic also constitute separate fire compartments. There are three exits on the ground floor and two on the second floor. The team work area in the attic had access to only one exit. After the incident, an emergency exit was added there. The outer wall facing the new section is built in the manner of a fire-rated wall. Despite the flammable insulation in the intermediate floors, the building can probably be considered equivalent to a building with a P1 fire rating. In essence, a fire rating of P1 means that the structures are expected to withstand a fire without collapsing, and that there are no limitations as to the size of the building or the number of people inside.

By means of wire net doors, fire compartments have been built at both ends of the corridor connecting the two sections of the building. Both sections of the building are equipped with first-aid extinguishing equipment, emergency exit signs, and safety lights. Fluorescent emergency exit signs were added after the incident.

### **2.1.2. The weapon, the ammunition, and the materials used to start the fires**

#### **The firearm purchase permit, acquisition of the weapon, and the firearm possession permit**

On 25 June 2008, the perpetrator delivered a personal firearm permit application to the Kauhajoki Police Department for the acquisition of a Walther P22 Target small-bore pistol. According to the application, the perpetrator intended to practise precision shooting on the Sotka shooting range in Kauhajoki. The perpetrator stated in his application that he had joined the local shooting club on 30 January 2008. This was actually incorrect information, as it later transpired that the fee the perpetrator had paid to the shooting club only entitled him to use the shooting range.

In accordance with standard policy, the perpetrator was invited to arrive for a personal interview with the detective chief inspector at the Kauhajoki Police Department on 7 August 2008. According to departmental division of duties, the granting of firearm permits was the duty of the police commissioner of the police department or, if he was absent, the detective chief inspector. In the interview, the perpetrator stated that he had practised shooting with his father's .22-calibre pistol, which was probably not true, even though his father had had several weapons when the perpetrator was still a child. After the interview, the detective chief inspector made the decision to grant the perpetrator a firearm purchase permit.

Using this permit, the perpetrator ordered on 12 August 2008 a Walther P22 small-bore pistol, a laser sight, and a silencer from a Web shop. The latter items were not used in the school shootings, however. The perpetrator also purchased eight 10-round clips, 1,000 rounds, small-bore-rifle targets, and stickers to cover the bullet holes.

On 2 September 2008, the perpetrator visited the Kauhajoki Police Department to present his new Walther P22 small-bore pistol for inspection in accordance with the

Firearms Act. The policeman who inspected the gun found it in accordance with the conditions laid down in the purchase permit. The policeman was bothered, however, by the perpetrator's odd behaviour. For example, he had been giggling and snuffling while presenting the gun. After the perpetrator had left, the policeman checked who had granted the purchase permit. Seeing that the decision had been made by the experienced detective chief inspector, the policemen let the matter rest. The policeman who had performed the inspection did take the matter up in the police department later that day, saying that he hoped this was not the next school killer.

### **The events of the weekend preceding the school shootings**

Around 7:30am on the morning of Friday, 19 September 2008, a Municipality of Kauhajoki park employee was on his way to work in the park area near Kauhajoki Upper Secondary School. The park employee came across the upper secondary school caretaker near a deserted building opposite the school. A lit grave candle had been placed near the building.

The candle bothered the park employee to such an extent that, while at home on his lunch hour, he started to search the Internet for things connected to Kauhajoki and a grave candle. He seemed to recollect that, about a year earlier, the Jokela school killer had uploaded material related to school shootings to a video Web site. Among the search results for 'Kauhajoki' was a video uploaded less than 12 hours ago, showing a boy shooting a pistol. There were other shooting-related videos on the Web site. What caught the park employee's eye in the videos was that, in the latest one, the shooter's appearance had changed and he was now wearing a black leather jacket. Clicking on the screen name, the park employee discovered the age, place of residence, and hobbies of the person who uploaded the video, along with the lyrics of a song the park employee found horrifying.

Back at work, the park employee told the upper secondary school caretaker about his observations, and the caretaker immediately went to report the matter to the Kauhajoki police. The policemen at the Kauhajoki Police Department started to collect data on the person who had uploaded the material, who later was revealed to be the perpetrator. One of the perpetrator's postings on the discussion forum mentioned that he was going to spend the weekend in Pyhäjärvi, where he had lived previously.

The perpetrator's material worried the policemen, so at around 3pm on Friday the Kauhajoki field commander, a sergeant, called the deputy police commissioner of the Seinäjoki Police Department, who was the officer on duty then. The deputy police commissioner watched the videos on the Web and found similarities between them and the videos uploaded by the Jokela school killer. The deputy police commissioner ordered his staff to find the perpetrator and take the gun away from him.

At around 4pm, the Kauhajoki Police Department field commander called the deputy police commissioner, saying that the perpetrator was not at home and there was nobody there. The deputy police commissioner considered it tactically wiser not to have the policemen enter the house. He told the field commander that the matter would be

handed over to the officers of the Kauhajoki Police Department, who would address it on Monday.

On Monday, 22 September 2008, the matter was discussed in a morning meeting at the Kauhajoki Police Department, where the officers were told what kind of material had been found on the Web. The documents concerning the perpetrator's firearm permit were brought out, and the observations of the policeman who had inspected the gun were discussed.

The detective chief inspector managed to reach the perpetrator by phone, and he promised to arrive immediately at the Police Department to settle the matter. At the Police Department, he denied having left a grave candle near the upper secondary school, which indeed he had not. As to the videos he had uploaded, he said that there were plenty of other shooting videos on that particular Web service. On the basis of the discussion, the detective chief inspector decided to give the perpetrator a verbal warning. According to the detective chief inspector, he found no grounds for a written admonition or the removal of the firearm as laid down in the Firearms Act.

### **Other materials or equipment carried by the perpetrator**

To start the fires, the perpetrator used petrol that he had poured into 1.5-litre lemonade bottles. As some of the bottles may have burned completely in the fires, the investigations revealed no definite data on the number of bottles or the amount of petrol used. He took the bottles to the school in a sports bag.

The perpetrator also carried in the bag a hammer he had bought in a hardware store, but there is no information on its purpose. The perpetrator may have intended to use it to break movable property, to break down locked doors, or in acts of violence in an unforeseen situation.

### **2.1.3. The Internet as part of the crime**

Many school killers have utilised the Internet in connection with school shootings to gain publicity for their acts. They have published texts on school shootings and their own views. In the Kauhajoki school shooting, the Internet played a minor role, although the perpetrator did otherwise spend a lot of time at the computer – seeking information on previous school shootings, for example. The perpetrator uploaded pictures of himself with a gun and also published videos shot on a shooting range. There was very little textual content in these, however, and, apart from the guns and shooting, there were no references to school shootings. However, many of the pictures and videos did resemble the ones that have become familiar in conjunction with the publicity surrounding previous school shootings. On the day before the incident, the perpetrator had used his camera to shoot videos in the schoolyard. In the videos, he said that he was going to kill many people in the school on the following day. The video was found among the deleted files on his camera, and he apparently never published or showed the video anywhere.

## **2.2. The circumstances**

According to information received afterward from the school, there were 260 people in the school building at the time of the incident. Lessons were under way as usual. Some polytechnic staff were in the auditorium, listening to a talk given by the president of the school. A test was in progress in the classroom where most of the shootings took place. Some of the students had already handed in their test papers and left the classroom. As the perpetrator entered, there were 12 students and the teacher in the classroom.

According to the Kuja-Kokko observation station in Kauhajoki, at 11am on the day of the incident, the weather was clear, calm, and dry. The temperature was 10 °C and the relative humidity 90%. The weather had no effect on the incident.

## **2.3. The organisations and people involved in the incident**

### **2.3.1. The perpetrator**

The police were able to establish at an early stage the identity of the 22-year-old male who committed the school shootings. The perpetrator had been living in Kauhajoki for approximately a year, which was also the time for which he had studied at the polytechnic.

According to the police investigation, the perpetrator planned and carried out the deed alone. The perpetrator had made verbal references to both school shootings and suicide. This was considered strange and worrying, but the references did not really give an idea of what the perpetrator was about to do.

The perpetrator had behaved violently or aggressively on a few occasions, but he had not been accused of violent crime or convicted. The only entries in the police records concern drink-driving and an incident at a grill kiosk, where the perpetrator had been threatened. It has also come to light that, on a boat cruise in the summer of 2008, the perpetrator was imprisoned aboard the ship after behaving violently toward a friend.

### **Childhood**

Born in 1986, the perpetrator was the second child in the family. The family were living in Oulu at the time of his birth. In his early childhood, the perpetrator was under monitoring because of his slow growth and development, which caused considerable concern. He had to be hospitalised a few times before he started school. He has been described as lively and happy as a baby but shy, withdrawn, and quiet as a child and later in his life. According to the mother, the perpetrator was quite normal as a baby and child, although he did cry a lot because of his frequent illness.

According to the mother, the family situation was not stable at the time of his birth or after it, as the parents' relationship had become strained. The perpetrator's parents separated when he was approximately a year old, but the divorce did not become effective until the perpetrator was three years old. After the separation, the mother looked after her two children on her own. That the perpetrator's brother, four years his senior, had a congenital illness placed an additional burden on the mother. The mother

was single for six years, after which she remarried. The perpetrator had three half-brothers, in their teens at the time of the incident, from his mother's new relationship. The perpetrator's relationship with his stepfather and half-brothers has been described as not exceptional in any way.

The perpetrator had a close relationship with his elder brother. However, the brother died of his illness in 2003, when the perpetrator was 17. This was a tremendous blow to the perpetrator.

At the time of the incident in Kauhajoki, the perpetrator's mother, stepfather, and three half-brothers were living in Pyhäjärvi. The mother has a reputation for being industrious and hard-working, and, after some initial difficulties, nothing unusual has ever happened in the family. The family also provided support for many other children. However, the family have had to move quite often because of the father's work. The perpetrator had officially lived at 12 different addresses. He moved away from home a little before his 18th birthday but remained in close contact with his mother. The perpetrator's official place of residence was Kauhajoki, where he lived in a rented flat near the school. During the previous summer, he had had problems in paying the rent, and his financial problems caused some anxiety for him. His mother came to his rescue then.

After his parents' divorce, the father moved elsewhere and started a new relationship. According to the father, his new spouse did not take kindly to his children from his previous relationship and had a negative attitude toward them. In his childhood, the perpetrator saw his father infrequently, but they began to see each other more often when the perpetrator was in his teens, after the father started a new relationship. This new, closer relationship continued into the perpetrator's adulthood. The perpetrator's father has a son and daughter who are the perpetrator's half-siblings.

### **School attendance**

The perpetrator's school record was never below fair; in vocational school and at the polytechnic, it was even good. He has been characterised as a conscientious student. His lower-level comprehensive-school teachers described him as quiet and well-behaved. There were some difficulties, however. According to his mother, the perpetrator was bullied in his lower-level comprehensive-school years. In upper-level comprehensive school, he was physically assaulted. In upper secondary school, bullies threatened to break his moped, so he sold it. He was also called disparaging names in upper secondary school, and his classmates used to draw caricatures of him on the classroom blackboard. Some also spat in his face. Because of these acts of bullying, he rang his mother several times in the middle of the school day, asking her to come and take him home. During his upper-level comprehensive years, the perpetrator started to spend his evenings in the town, and his mother caught him committing petty theft and using intoxicants. In a health questionnaire completed between lower- and upper-level comprehensive school, the perpetrator stated that he was suffering from sleeplessness, concentration problems, melancholia, depression, and timidity. He dropped out of upper secondary school but liked things better in vocational school. He completed his studies in vocational school successfully.

There are no records or references indicating that the perpetrator had been discriminated against or bullied at Kauhajoki Polytechnic. His studies went well there. The perpetrator had told his mother and friends that he liked it in Kauhajoki. He also had a few friends at the polytechnic, with whom he spent some of his leisure time. According to his fellow students, in autumn 2008 he was more often late for lessons than before or left earlier. In early autumn, just before the school shootings, a fellow student noticed that the perpetrator was having problems in completing his cooking-related tasks at a food fair.

In spring 2008, the perpetrator attended a practical training course in Hungary with a number of other polytechnic students. According to both the perpetrator's personal assessment and the supervisor's assessment, his performance there was excellent. However, his fellow students wrote to the polytechnic teacher in charge of practical training about some problems that manifested themselves especially during leisure time. The problems were the perpetrator's use of alcohol, playing with a knife, and references to suicide. He had also seemed depressed and lonely, and he had expressed admiration with reference to the Jokela school shootings. The contact persons at the Hungarian sister school addressed these problems, and they seem to have disappeared. The problems were not taken up again once the students had returned to Finland.

### **Health status and personal qualities**

During his early development, the perpetrator was under special monitoring because his height-weight curve was lower than expected. He remained slight in build for a long time but later gained weight. His height was below the average for Finnish males. The mother regarded him as basically quiet, helpful, and tidy, in some respects even excessively tidy and almost obsessive about having everything arranged in an organised way. The perpetrator took failure to heart, and setbacks were difficult for him. One such setback preceding the school shooting occurred in early September 2008 in Pyhäjärvi, when some acquaintances of the perpetrator were killed in a serious road accident. Furthermore, a brief relationship with a girlfriend ended just before the incident. The perpetrator was quoted as saying that he would probably become depressed as a result of this.

The first records of the perpetrator's mental health problems dated back to his time in upper-level comprehensive school at the age of thirteen. There are numerous entries concerning quite serious mental health problems in the years preceding the school shooting. The perpetrator suffered from anxiety and panic attacks and from depression, and he also had suicidal thoughts and sleeping problems. According to his mother, there were sudden shifts in his psychological condition.

The perpetrator had gone to England for a couple of months of practical training in late 2006. After his return in January 2007, there was a sudden and dramatic change in his behaviour. According to his mother, he lay motionless and apathetic in his bed, refusing to eat or drink anything. The mother took him to a doctor, after which the perpetrator's behaviour soon became normal again. On a visit to the health centre, he was diagnosed as showing symptoms of depression.

In addition to anxiety- and depression-related problems, his circadian rhythm had been disrupted during the summer preceding the incident. According to the results of a questionnaire he completed in August 2008, the perpetrator was moderately depressed, and his score in the AUDIT (Alcohol Use Disorders Identification Test) test was high enough to merit referral to treatment. His fellow students told the authorities that when he drank, he was often in an advanced state of intoxication, which made it difficult to talk to him. His intoxication was occasionally accompanied by aggressive behaviour, fisticuffs and language his friends considered frightening. The perpetrator was not under the influence of intoxicants during the school shootings. He had occasionally – in late summer 2008, for instance – expressed feelings of undefined anger toward a hotel in Pyhäjärvi and a teacher in Kauhajoki. He never explained the reasons behind this. His family had not been aware of his aggression.

Some of the perpetrator's friends think his behaviour changed approximately two years prior to the school shootings, while others feel that this happened only a couple of months before the incident. According to his friends, the perpetrator had been interested in school shootings after the Jokela school shootings and was sympathetic towards the perpetrator of those shootings. Some considered the Kauhajoki perpetrator somewhat abnormal, while others seemed to think he was just another youth. He was considered a rather withdrawn person who would not discuss his personal life, except when drunk.

In the week preceding the incident, the perpetrator had attracted attention at a student party by imposing himself on women while intoxicated, talking about school shootings and, having been rejected, saying threateningly: 'You'll be sorry.' According to a member of the restaurant staff who interfered in the situation, the perpetrator had seemed strange: he had not responded when talked to, and it was impossible to make eye contact with him.

The perpetrator's mother had not noticed any particular changes in her son during the months preceding the incident. He had bought new furniture for his flat and got himself a kitten a few weeks before the incident. His father, however, had been worried about his son's psychological condition during spring 2008 and had told his spouse that he was hoping his son would not harm himself or anybody else. The father has not been able to put his finger on what exactly was worrying him back then. In spring 2008, the perpetrator had said to his half-sister that everybody would be better off if he were gone, hinting at his suicidal intentions. She had also told her half-sister about this anxiety a week before the incident.

The perpetrator's hair and dressing style had undergone a change during the summer preceding the incident. He now combed his hair back and wore a black leather jacket, which attracted attention. His new style was reminiscent of that of the Jokela school killer, which had caused the sales assistants in the gun shop where he bought his clips and cartridges to call him a copycat. The owner of the gun shop described him as expressionless and stony-faced.

At the request of a depression nurse specialist, a health centre physician had prescribed medication for the perpetrator both for depression (SSRI medication) and for anxiety attacks (alprazolam) without seeing him personally. The anxiety and panic attacks

manifested themselves both in public performance and social situations and in solitary situations. In a network screening test performed on the perpetrator in the months preceding the incident, the perpetrator's personal network was shown to be quite small. The perpetrator apparently took his medication as prescribed and had a positive and seemingly open attitude towards treatment. He did, however, avoid eye contact with the depression nurse specialist. He remained in treatment up until the incident but had postponed an appointment he had for the Friday preceding the incident. He was never examined by a psychiatry or adolescent psychiatry specialist. The perpetrator had low concentrations of the medication prescribed for him in his blood when he carried out the deed.

On its own initiative, Valvira, the National Supervisory Authority for Welfare and Health, conducted a study of the appropriateness of the treatment received by the perpetrator. The conclusion was that the treatment had been appropriate in all respects. The Defence Forces health care services were excluded from the study, as they lie outside the scope of Valvira's authority.

### **Hobbies**

The perpetrator had a few hobbies in his adult years. He liked swimming and played electric drums. He also spent a lot of time at the computer, watching videos, listening to music, and viewing material on the Columbine and Jokela school shootings, for example. He had not downloaded any games to his computer, but there were references to him playing a standard Internet war game in the Web material. The perpetrator also had an interest in music. Before the school shootings, he took up indoor air-gun shooting, followed by firearm shooting at outdoor ranges.

The perpetrator had no particular social views or religious conviction, and his mother described his values as not exceptional in any way. The mother's image of the perpetrator was that he frowned upon school shootings and was not particularly interested in computers or guns.

### **Military service**

The perpetrator started his military service in Kajaani on 10 July 2006. Before his entry into service, he had been found fit for service in a physical examination carried out in conjunction with the call-up. His service started in the usual way with a basic training period, which the perpetrator managed to complete. His scores in physical tests were poor, however. As far as can be established, the perpetrator's motivation to complete his military service was initially high, but five weeks into the service, the possibility of the perpetrator interrupting his service was first taken up during a doctor's appointment.

The perpetrator told the garrison doctor that he had been forced to distance himself from the other conscripts. He told the doctor that he had been bullied not only in the army but also in his upper-level comprehensive and upper secondary school years. He told his mother that somebody had urinated in his bed. At a training camp, the perpetrator had also been involved in a situation where he had pushed and shoved another conscript while holding a gun in his hand. The perpetrator also told the doctor about his mood

swings, suicidal thoughts, sleeping problems, and anxiety attacks. His problems were exacerbated by a physical injury to his foot, which made running painful. In accordance with the partnership agreement between the Defence Forces and Specialised Health Care Services, the perpetrator was referred to the Psychiatry Department of Kainuu Central Hospital.

He visited a psychiatric nurse in the hospital a week later, telling her he was not sure he could cope with it all. The nurse recommended making an appointment with a psychiatrist. This did not happen, however. After a week, the perpetrator visited the doctor again, who proposed that his fitness classification be downgraded to class E for 1–2 years for psychological reasons. The perpetrator himself wanted to interrupt his service. The proposal was forwarded via the unit commander and the Fitness Review Board to the brigade commander, who made the decision to carry out a service fitness review. The perpetrator's service was interrupted on 31 August 2006, and on the basis of his foot injury and adaptation-related diagnoses, his fitness classification was changed to E. This meant that his fitness for service would be reviewed in two years' time. Before the school shootings, the perpetrator had received a summons to a follow-up examination to be carried out on 12 November 2008, organised by the Ostrobothnia Regional Office, where his fitness for service would have been reviewed and determined in accordance with the new Conscription Act that had become effective on 1 January 2008.

### **Leaks**

Reports on school shootings abroad suggest that, prior to their deed, school killers often leak information to people around them on the act they are about to commit. This information is often referred to as leaks.

The Kauhajoki school killer indeed told his age peers things that can, with the benefit of hindsight, be construed as leaks. For example, in 2006 the perpetrator showed a friend a video clip on school shootings, saying that he wanted to do something like that, too. Three months after the Jokela school shootings, he said to his half-sister: 'Maybe I should go to my school and start shooting.' The half-sister had thought he was joking. In August, the perpetrator took photographs of himself and his gun with his computer's webcam. The pictures were modelled on some of the pictures related to the Jokela school shootings. At a student party on 17 September 2008, the perpetrator approached a female student but was rejected. The perpetrator repeated many times that she would be sorry. At the same party, the perpetrator asked a fellow student for his opinion on American school shootings. The perpetrator was generally interested in school shootings, and maybe it was because of this that on a trip to Southern Finland, he went to and took some photographs of the Jokela School Centre on 5 August 2008. He may also have visited the Jokela gun shop where the Jokela school killer had bought his gun. Two days later, the perpetrator placed an order for a gun on the Web site of the same shop. The police investigated whether the perpetrator had any connections with the Jokela school killer, but none were found.

On Thursday, 18 September 2008, the perpetrator paid a surprise visit to his mother and her family. His stepfather noticed that the perpetrator did not bring any laundry with

him as he usually did. Otherwise, there was nothing unusual about the perpetrator's behaviour. He also went to visit his grandmother; she was not at home, however. According to his friends, the weekend was spent drinking, and the perpetrator had stopped people in the streets, asking them: 'Humanity is overrated, isn't it?' The same question was printed on a t-shirt worn by the Jokela school killer. According to his friends, the perpetrator was very drunk at the weekend. With regard to the events in Jokela, to his friends it had seemed that, instead of condemning them, the perpetrator seemed to understand and admire them.

He had filmed shooting videos at a shooting range, publishing them through a Web video service. On the evening preceding the school shootings, he shot new videos on the shooting range and one in the polytechnic yard. The videos he shot at the shooting range show him saying: 'You will die next' and 'Goodbye.' Approximately an hour before leaving for school, the perpetrator uploaded these videos to a file-sharing service on the Internet. Files cannot be directly browsed there, but anybody who downloads the files is provided with a link he or she can share with others by e-mail or via another Web service, for example. The perpetrator had named this file package 'Massacre in Kauhajoki', and he enclosed some pictures of himself. Most of the pictures show him carrying a gun. Half an hour later, he uploaded three of these pictures to his profile in the IRC Gallery community. In the pictures, the perpetrator points a gun at the viewer.

In the video he shot in the schoolyard, the perpetrator said: 'So that was my school then ... tomorrow ... I'm going to kill a lot of people here ... die, all you fucking bastards.' As far as can be established, the perpetrator never published this video or sent it to anyone.

His threats were often veiled or indirect. He also assured the above-mentioned friend on several occasions that he would never actually do anything. What made the threat even more serious was that the perpetrator had acquired a gun and a firearm permit and practised shooting.

He left behind two messages, which both say he had been planning the deed since 2002 and that his motive was hatred of people and bullying-related revenge. He rang a friend during the incident, saying that he had been planning the deed for a couple of years. No concrete evidence of him planning the deed has come to light.

### **2.3.2. The schools attended earlier by the perpetrator**

The perpetrator started comprehensive school in 1993. At the end of his first autumn term, he moved to another school, where he remained until the end of his third school year. He went to a different school for both his fourth and fifth year and started the sixth in yet another school. After his sixth year, he started upper-level comprehensive school in another locality but returned after only a month to continue his upper-level comprehensive studies at the same school centre where he had completed his sixth-year studies. So, in his lower-level comprehensive years he changed school six times. The information received from the schools and the mother's interviews indicate that the changes were mainly a result of the family moving often.

According to the schools he attended, there was nothing unusual about the perpetrator's academic record or his integration into the school community, and he did not require any special health care or student welfare measures. The teachers – where the authorities managed to track them down – described the perpetrator as quiet and well-behaved. According to his mother, there were some problems with his time in school, related to social relationships in particular. It is not known to what extent the schools were aware of these problems. According to the mother, the perpetrator did talk about them while at upper-level comprehensive school, to the education welfare officer at least.

Having completed comprehensive school, the perpetrator started vocational school, but he dropped out after a week, on his own initiative. In autumn 2002, he started upper secondary school. After a few months, in late November, the perpetrator moved and had to change schools. The perpetrator studied for one period at the new school and dropped out in February 2003. It has been suggested that the reason behind this was poor academic performance, on one hand, and his starting his studies at another educational institution, on the other. Having studied in upper secondary school for less than a year, the perpetrator completed vocational school in three years without any interruptions, he and graduated with good marks in June 2006. After this, he started his military service, which was interrupted after a few months. Next, he worked in a hotel in England for some time. Having returned to Finland in January 2007, he was unemployed for a while, then worked at restaurants and cleaning companies owned by his relatives.

Starting his studies in the Kauhajoki unit of Seinäjoki Polytechnic in autumn 2007, he managed to complete one full academic year. In April 2008, he completed the above-mentioned period of practical training in Hungary, which was an optional but recommended part of his studies at the polytechnic. He was personally willing to attend the practical training. When he committed the school shootings, the perpetrator had recently started his second academic year. The shootings came as a complete surprise to the staff.

### **2.3.3. The Kauhajoki Unit of Seinäjoki Polytechnic**

Seinäjoki Polytechnic is a Southern-Ostrobothnia-based institution of higher education maintained by the Seinäjoki Joint Municipal Authority for Education. The main campus is in Seinäjoki. The other branches are situated in Ilmajoki, Jurva, Kauhajoki, Kauhava, and Ähtäri. The total number of students is some 4,600, of whom 800 are adult learners. The fields of study offered at the polytechnic include cultural studies; social sciences, business and administration; tourism, catering, and domestic services; technology, communication, and transport; natural sciences; natural resources and the environment; and social services, health, and sports. These fields of study were placed under the leadership of five different leaders. The entire institution is led by its Seinäjoki-based president.

The Business, Entrepreneurship and Hospitality Management Unit has branches in Seinäjoki, Kauhava, and Kauhajoki. The total number of students in the unit was 1,400, with some 90 staff. The Kauhajoki unit offered degree programme studies under the title 'Hospitality Management'. The degree programme produced graduates with a

Bachelor of Hospitality Management degree for the hospitality field. The total number of students in the Kauhajoki Hospitality Management branch was about 250, 60 of whom were adult learners. The full-time staff numbered 15, with four support services staff. They shared the building with upper-secondary-level students of the Sedu Vocational Education Centre. The total number of Sedu students was 140, with 46 staff. The Sedu students were aged between 15 and 25.

In addition to the polytechnic unit manager and the teachers, the main operators in student welfare were the head of students services, responsible for student welfare services throughout the polytechnic; the head of degree programme, responsible for Bachelor of Hospitality Management training; the part-time guidance counsellor, responsible for career counselling; and the study secretary, responsible for secretarial duties.

#### **2.3.4. Health care organisations**

Health care services for the students were provided by Kauhajoki Health Centre. The students could see a public health nurse on any day, between 8:00 and 10:00am with no appointment necessary. The services of the public health nurse were also available in the school facilities by appointment on two afternoons each week. Calculated on the basis of these times, the services of a public health nurse were available for 14–17 hours per week for every 250 students, which was sufficient to fulfil the recommendations issued by the Ministry of Social Affairs and Health. When necessary, the public health nurse could refer students to a psychologist or a health centre physician. The public health nurse attended the monthly meetings of the Student Welfare Team.

During their first year, the students were asked to fill in a questionnaire to determine their need for a health examination. A health examination was performed if it was deemed necessary or a student requested it. In the summer of 2008, the system was revised, however, and all first-year students now underwent a health examination. The use of health care services is optional for adult students.

With regard to the services of a doctor, the system was that emergency cases were treated in Kauhajoki, while in the case of long-term illness the students were required to see a doctor in their home locality. Flexibility was the key word in problem situations. For example, if a student lived far away, he or she was allowed to see a doctor in Kauhajoki.

In a meeting held in 2006, it had been concluded that the need for mental health services had increased in recent years, which is why additional resources were called for. This meant that the services of public health nurses; health centre psychologists; education welfare officers; and, in some instances, specialised health care – in the psychiatry department nearby, for instance – had better availability than usual. As far as is known, basic health services personnel were also able to consult the psychiatry department when necessary. A system utilising the services of a depression nurse specialist had been developed in Southern Ostrobothnia with the aim of enhancing outpatient care for patients suffering from depression. In Kauhajoki, the depression nurse specialist worked alongside doctors, and each patient's care arrangements were discussed within a team.

### 2.3.5. The Defence Forces

Before entering military service, the perpetrator underwent a standard medical examination, wherein he was found to be fit for service. The services of the garrison hospital and a social welfare officer were available to the conscripts – and, accordingly, the perpetrator – during their military service with the Kainuu Brigade. The conscripts were also told that if they had any problems, they could turn to the unit's sergeant-major or the unit commander. These channels are relatively easily and equally available to all conscripts, but, in practice, getting help may not be so easy. Additionally, the threshold for seeking help varies, depending on the individual's knowledge and social skills.

In 2009, the Finnish Youth Research Society conducted and published a study on military service in Finland. It was in the Kainuu Brigade that the material for the study was collected. According to the study, the methods and medical criteria of the garrison hospital and the doctors working there are different from those of civilian life. The difference is explained by the exceptional nature of a military institution and, for example, the malingering some conscripts engage in. The identification of an actual medical need and getting a referral to Kajaani Central Hospital has been found to be a cumbersome process. In some cases, most of them concerning physical complaints, the conscripts had to be extremely determined and persistent in order to get a referral to appropriate further examinations. In practice, this often meant several visits to the garrison hospital, and insistence on further examinations. Some conscripts simply gave up and let their complaints go untreated, while others, thanks to their persistence, did manage to get appropriate treatment.

The general conclusion of the study was that, with regard to the most serious medical complaints, getting appropriate treatment was more difficult than in civilian life. This phenomenon could not be verified on the basis of documents; instead, it is apparent as part of conscripts' everyday life and their unofficial culture. Official rhetoric emphasises that all individuals are responsible for their own health, but in a unidirectional command relationship, the individual's real opportunities to make his or her voice heard in practice are limited. The official line of the Defence Forces is that, in practice, conscripts have easier access to specialist health care than the rest of the population. It also maintains that medical criteria are the same as in civilian health care.

According to the study mentioned above, social welfare officers are readily accessible and a quick way to find help. Social welfare officers offer assistance, for example, with mental-health-related issues, which have not been dealt with in the garrison hospital as hoped. In this respect, the Kainuu Brigade is well equipped to deal with personal problems. It is not possible, however, to assess on the basis of the study to what extent the social welfare officers can assist their patients in getting treatment for their mental health problems.

The unit commander and the unit sergeant-major are also possible channels for seeking help, but the kind of assistance they provide varies with the unit. According to the study, the basic unit that was studied met the conscripts' needs quite well, but interviews indicate that the perpetrator's basic unit was, at least in 2008, clearly less flexible. This inflexibility is apparent in the conscripts' descriptions of the officers'

attitude towards the needs of the conscripts. This observation is not directly related to mental health problems; instead, it sheds light on how individual needs are met in general. It should be borne in mind, however, that the observations made in 2008 do not necessarily correspond to the situation prevailing during the perpetrator's service in 2006.

After the perpetrator's service had already been interrupted in September 2006, the 'Aikalisä' ('Time-out') project was initiated in the Kainuu Brigade with the aim of providing assistance to those whose service had already been interrupted. The project concentrated on monitoring the circumstances and psychosocial well-being in civilian life of the conscripts whose service had been interrupted because of mental health problems. The project provides valuable assistance to those young people who have, during their military service, been found to suffer from psychosocial problems.

### **Intervention in bullying**

In the Finnish Youth Research Society study on the Kainuu Brigade and the Armoured Brigade, significant differences were discovered in how units intervened in bullying. In the basic unit that was the target of the study in Kainuu, officers took bullying seriously and repeatedly reminded the conscripts of this. However, in the unit in which the perpetrator served, intervention was described in interviews as more 'chaotic' or 'not working'. The perpetrator served in the unit in 2006, but the research material is from 2008, when several officers and all conscripts had been replaced. Bullying in the military is not always related to the standard practices of an institution. In a large group, the social dynamics make it possible to bully individual conscripts. Peer pressure may, however, prevent conscripts from telling anyone, as the conscript may fear that reporting the incident could just make matters worse. If the officers in a service unit appear indifferent, refuse to discuss such issues with conscripts, or seldom offer an opportunity for discussion, the victim of bullying may not feel confident about the officers intervening in the matter. However, on the basis of the study it seems that bullying is mostly a thing of the past in Finnish garrisons.

## **2.4. Organisational preparedness and preventive work**

### **2.4.1. The school**

A rescue plan as referred to in rescue legislation had been drawn up for the school. In addition, the polytechnic had a crisis plan, drawn up on the school's initiative, and a crisis operation plan in the Vocational Education Centre Sedu.

### **Rescue plan**

The rescue plan is property-specific, so the polytechnic and Sedu share the same plan. The rescue plan is based on a safety plan, the drawing up of which had been initiated in 2002. The first safety plan was approved and distributed in 2003, after which the plan was updated several times. The last update was in April 2008. The Rescue Services were involved in drawing up of the plan. The rescue plan was mainly distributed to the safety organisation, but, according to instructions, such sections of it as were deemed

necessary were to be at the disposal of staff at various work stations. According to the instructions, every staff member was to familiarise him- or herself with the plan.

The rescue plan includes general information on the property, building capacities, and points of contact with public rescue services. The rescue plan also comprises a safety analysis, which in practice contains detailed ratings of ergonomics, accident hazards, factors concerning work and environmental hygiene, the work community, workflow, and the special characteristics of the property. The risk assessment produced a list of corrective measures, each of which was assigned to a person specifically responsible for implementing them. The realisation of the measures was monitored and documented, and a risk assessment was carried out every few years. The risk assessment included, for example, the assessment of first-aid extinguishing equipment, emergency exits, first-aid and rescue preparedness, and the threat of violence. The threat posed by a violent student had been recognised in conjunction with the assessment carried out in the career guidance facilities, and it had been proposed that an alert button be installed there.

The rescue plan also lists possible hazards and their effects. The hazards listed are a fire hazard, the threat of violence, the transport of dangerous substances in the nearby street, and burglaries. With regard to fire safety, structural fire safety and fire safety equipment are described in the plan, with instructions on how to prevent fires. To prevent accidents, the staff are instructed to observe all safety regulations concerning machinery, equipment, and chemical substances; to wear personal protective equipment correctly; to work ergonomically; to maintain cleanliness; to report slipping hazards to maintenance personnel; and to notify a superior or a member of the safety organisation of any hazards and safety-related defects detected.

The plan provides instructions on what to do in the event of an accident or sudden illness, and also how to act in the case of a fire, a radiation hazard, or a threatening situation. In addition, the plan provides instructions on how to make an emergency call in case of accident or an emergency. The fire instructions follow the standard formula of: rescue, extinguish, alert, retard, and guide. When one is leaving a burning building, the assembly point is the large car park next to the main building or that next to the hall of residence. These assembly points could not be used during the shooting incident. A threatening situation refers to a bomb threat or a situation wherein an object is found that is suspected of being a bomb. For situations such as these, the plan includes instructions for identifying such an object or what to do in the case of a threatening phone call.

Internal emergency instructions are given a chapter of their own. According to these, each employee must be familiar with the rescue plan; know how to make an emergency call; know how to act, and follow instructions, in cases of accident and hazardous situations; know the location of exits and assembly points; know where to find the nearest first-aid extinguishing equipment and first-aid kit; know how to use first-aid extinguishing equipment; know how to work safely; and report any risk factors to a superior. With regard to fires, the emergency instructions further provide instructions on how to make an emergency call; how to close doors and windows and shut off ventilation; how to exit the building and find the assembly point, with the guidance of the rescue leader or a teacher; and how to guide the fire brigade to the scene. In case of

fire, there is also an announcement template, telling everyone to stay calm and leave the building through the nearest exit marked with an exit sign.

In the rescue plan, the safety organisation is led by three leadership members. Additionally, the plan lists a rescue leader, a deputy rescue leader, and seven rescue supervisors for various parts of the buildings. Their duties are specified in the appendix to the rescue plan. The rescue plan also comprises a staff training plan and a list of completed training sessions.

Internal safety inspections, plan updates, and safety training to be arranged for the students and staff were also listed in the plan. School staff had not yet organised a rescue drill for new students when the school shootings were committed on 23 September 2008. In safety training, not only the staff but also the students had been informed of whom to contact in relation to safety issues. These persons were the rescue leader, the deputy rescue leader, and the rescue supervisors in each part of the school complex.

### **Well-being activities and preparedness for a crisis**

Seinäjoki Polytechnic, and the Kauhajoki unit as part of it, has, since the Myyrmanni shopping centre explosion in 2002, prepared itself in many ways to support the well-being of its students. The bomber in that incident was likewise a polytechnic student. In 2002, the first multidisciplinary well-being working group was set up, with members from some 10 distinct organisations. The aim was to get an overview of the various units' crisis plans and to develop solutions to ensure and enhance the well-being of the students. In 2003, an initial assessment was carried out, and teams were set up to prepare to address various matters, such as student welfare, substance abuse work, crisis work, sport and leisure activities, co-operation with the parish, and career guidance. It was standard practice in the school to assign every student a teacher as a tutor providing additional support.

The first crisis plan was approved in April 2004, followed by an update in March 2007. Instructions for substance misuse cases were approved and updated, following roughly the same schedule. Likewise, reports on student health care and co-operation with the parish were completed in April 2004. The plan for guidance and counselling services was approved in a meeting for heads of units in November 2005, and it was integrated into the Seinäjoki Polytechnic quality system. The plan was updated in 2008. A well-being programme for the students for 2008–2011 was approved by the school board in February 2008. According to the well-being programme, the units are sent a crisis plan, on which the units then model their practical applications. The programme further states that the students will be informed of the contact details of the unit's crisis work personnel, an information session will be organised for all personnel, and such parts of the plan as are deemed necessary will be translated into English.

The polytechnic crisis plan was meant for the whole polytechnic, but in February 2008, new instructions for the Business Administration, Food Management, and Entrepreneurship unit were added. These instructions outlined the composition of crisis teams and their duties in various situations. The part of these instructions that was

applicable in the shooting incident was the one concerning an immediate threat of violence. In such a case, an announcement should be made; the building emptied; and, if possible, the head of the unit or immediate supervisor informed of the situation. Informing the head of the unit and convening the crisis team were all that was mentioned in the item 'Incidents involving violence'.

According to the instructions, the purpose of the actual crisis plan was to outline how to act in a crisis situation, where to find outside help, and how to support the students and staff in a crisis situation. The aim is to maintain the community's functional status, to support the recovery of the students and staff, and to prevent any adverse psychological or physical effects. The plan discusses the different ways in which people respond to traumatic crisis situations and how to deal with them. Additionally, the plan defines the duties of the crisis team and the duties of leadership, with examples of how to act in a crisis situation. The sections applicable to an incident such as a school shooting include instructions on how to deal with potential mental health problems, a serious accident, or a situation involving violence. The section addressing how to deal with mental health problems emphasises discussion with the student and referring the student to student health services. The possible need for psychosocial support arising from the situation is also mentioned here, as is the fact that the student in question or the student's parents must be consulted regarding how the situation will be dealt with within the unit.

The instructions applying to a serious accident emphasise the role of the crisis team and its duty to see that the necessary psychosocial support is provided for those who need it. The plan states that rescue activities are carried out in co-operation with the building protection committee and the first-aid team, and that first aid must be provided and alerts issued. The section discussing situations involving violence states that, in addition to the assessment of the need for psychosocial support, the president / unit leadership and occupational safety personnel must be informed of what has happened. The technical aspects must also be taken into account so that the necessary steps can be taken.

At the end of the crisis plan, instructions are given for after-care, preparations for a memorial event, and communications. It is assessed as necessary for the crisis team to meet once per term to determine the composition of the team and to assess the activities during the previous term. The crisis team should also review the crisis plan and make the necessary changes. The crisis team informs the students and staff of the instructions. The appendix to the plan includes the distribution of duties in a crisis situation, a list of important phone numbers, and a list of references.

The Vocational Education Centre Sedu and Sedu Adult Education have a corresponding plan, the contents of which are more or less the same.

### **Physical safety of the building**

The schoolyard was monitored by a recording camera surveillance system. During school hours, most of the school doors were unlocked. In the evenings and on weekends, the doors were electronically locked and the door alarms were activated. Locking the doors also activated the motion detectors within the building. There is no

actual surveillance within the school facilities while the students are attending lessons. Announcements can be made over the PA system, but at the time of the incident, the PA system did not cover all parts of the complex. Announcements could be issued from the caretaker's room in the main entrance corridors and the office room in the old section. After the incident, the number of announcement points was increased to four, and announcements are now heard throughout the school complex.

#### **2.4.2. The Municipality of Kauhajoki**

Approved by the municipality executive board in June 2007, the Municipality of Kauhajoki had a valid emergency plan in place. The emergency plan is drawn up with the purpose of preparation for special situations and disturbances both in normal conditions and in exceptional circumstances. Additionally, special command centre operation instructions have been drawn up for leadership in special situations and cases of disturbances. According to the operation instructions, the command centre is manned by the mayor, sector leaders, and representatives of the Rescue Services and the police.

Kauhajoki comprehensive schools and the upper secondary school have their own rescue plans, which also address situations involving violence. The authorities have endeavoured to update the plans annually. In addition to rescue plans, crisis plans have been drawn up for unexpected and unforeseen situations, such as accidents, deaths, and other serious accidents.

In late 2007, a preparedness drill was carried out in Kauhajoki. Municipality emergency plans were also revised and updated at that time. During the drill, time was set aside to provide training for the municipality management team. Schools' rescue plans were revised simultaneously in co-operation with the Rescue Services. The Nokia water crisis and the Jokela school shootings were still fresh in people's minds, so matters concerning communications and the distribution of duties were discussed in detail. Potential risk factors in Kauhajoki were also assessed, and electricity distribution issues were reviewed, with the result that a stand-by supply system was installed in the health centre.

The new, local safety plans provided for in the Internal Security Programme are to be discussed in municipal councils by the end of 2010 at the latest. This time, the aim in the planning is to address accidents and incidents involving violence in particular. In Kauhajoki, the police are in charge of local security planning. At the time of the school shootings, the plan was not yet in place in Kauhajoki, however, as it is to be discussed in the municipality council in summer 2010.

The Rescue Services have drawn up an evacuation plan for the Municipality of Kauhajoki area, which was approved by the Kauhajoki municipality executive board in March 2006. It is to be implemented in situations where the population – or parts of it – have to be evacuated from a danger zone. The assembly points specified in the plan are the swimming hall / sports hall and one of the comprehensive schools. Under normal conditions, the evacuation is led by a rescue or police authority, assisted by the Finnish Red Cross or voluntary rescue services. In the school shooting incident, the students and staff were instructed to take shelter at the commercial college nearby.

Together with the City of Seinäjoki and the municipalities in the Suupohja region, the Municipality of Kauhajoki is part of a regional social on-call system, which is utilised to prepare for urgent need for social services. The on-call system, initiated through a development project in May 2005, has, through a joint agreement, been in operation since May 2006. The social on-call system refers to on-call services outside office hours, where the social workers in a region take turns being on call. All alerts are issued by the Emergency Response Centre of Ostrobothnia via the VIRVE network. Most assignments are dealt with on the phone, but occasionally it is necessary to leave for the scene in person. When this happens, the police usually are already on the scene to provide assistance.

### **2.4.3. The police**

#### **Police preparedness for incidents of this general nature**

In demanding circumstances, police operations are usually built around standard, everyday police activities, and preparedness for incidents such as the Kauhajoki school shootings is rather poor. Police departments do, however, prepare and drill for demanding situations, and this training can be utilised in school shooting incidents, for example. It has not been possible to establish dedicated teams for demanding situations in most police departments.

If possible, the first patrol on the scene should take command, cordon off the area, and form a situation picture of the incident. If necessary, more policemen with tactical training are then dispatched to the scene. If human lives are not in immediate danger, the police try to resolve the situation through negotiation. In demanding situations, it is often necessary to call for additional forces from nearby police departments. When necessary, the Helsinki Police Department's police readiness unit can also be asked for assistance.

At the time of the incident, the Kauhajoki District Police Department was in charge of police duties in the municipalities of Kauhajoki, Isojoki, Karijoki, Teuva, and Jurva. The police department had a single police station, situated in Kauhajoki. There were also service offices, providing mainly licensing services, in Isojoki, Teuva, and Jurva. The distance between Kauhajoki police station and the polytechnic, where the incident took place, is approximately one kilometre.

At the time of the incident, the Kauhajoki District Police Department employed some 20 policemen and sergeants and two commanding officers. Additionally, five guards were employed by the police department. The police department did not have a 24-hour on-call system.

#### **Preventive measures employed by the police**

Early intervention is part of preventive police work, and, accordingly, the focus in community policing has in recent years been on children, adolescents, and families in danger of becoming marginalised. In practice, early intervention has been carried out through co-operation with the Social Services and other authorities and organisations involved in child welfare matters, for example. Child welfare reports are a concrete example of the means applied in early intervention. Local security planning serves as a

platform for agreeing on the means of early intervention. The planning process involves all of the relevant co-operating authorities.

Finland has a long tradition of co-operation between the police and schools. This has always been an essential part of preventive work, even if its volume and intensity has varied according to local conditions and the availability of resources. On a national level, the police engage in co-operation with the Ministry of Education, the National Board of Education, and the Association of Finnish Local and Regional Authorities. An example of joint projects is the annual declaration of ‘school peace’ in Finnish schools. The police also produce a lot of preventive material, which is available on the Web – also for schools. On the provincial level, the co-operation is co-ordinated by community policing contact persons. The police stations, for their part, ensure that police co-operation with schools is agreed on with municipalities.

At the Kauhajoki District Police Department, the preventive police work was the responsibility of the public order department’s superintendent, who was assisted by a sergeant. Additionally, two senior constables had been appointed to provide legality education. The police department did not have a separate plan concerning the provision of annual legality education; instead, the department policy was to provide this education if and when the resources were available. Occasionally, detective department personnel also participated in preventive work – by giving anti-drug lectures, for example. Most requests came from the educational institutions in the area, and the police endeavoured to visit each of them every second year.

The extent and allocation of preventive police work is affected by the fact that in basic police training, the training for this is dispersed across several study modules. What preventive police work actually consists of has been a matter of debate. In practice, preventive work is not always part of everyday activities. The crucial elements in preventive police work are co-operation with other authorities, interest groups, and the third sector, as well as early intervention whenever problem areas are discovered.

#### **2.4.4. The Rescue Services**

##### **Preparedness of the Rescue Services for accidents in schools**

At the time of the incident, the Rescue Department of Southern Ostrobothnia was in charge of rescue services in 26 municipalities within the province. There are 30 fire stations in the Rescue Department area, divided into six fire station groups. Together with Teuva, Isojoki, and Karijoki, Kauhajoki belongs to group 6. The Seinäjoki fire station has an officer and five rescuers on call. At other stations, the professional staff are complemented with 15–40 part-time firemen when necessary. At these stations, the fire brigade deployment time is approximately five minutes.

The service level decision for the Rescue Services for 2007–2008 was approved by the board of the Southern Ostrobothnia Rescue Department on 12 December 2006. Rescue co-operation agreements have been concluded with the Ähtäri Explosives Centre and the Kauhava Training Air Wing.

The polytechnic was in the Kauhajoki town centre, which in the service level decisions of the Rescue Services is classified as being in risk area 2. This means that the rescue unit leader and five rescuers must arrive on the scene within 10 minutes of the alert, along with a fire engine and a fire truck. A rescue platoon – a platoon leader and three rescue units – must reach the scene within 30 minutes of the alert.

The fire station is located in the town centre, approximately one kilometre from the polytechnic. According to the service level decision, the regular personnel at the Kauhajoki fire station consist of a fire marshal, a fire inspector, and four fire-fighters. Additionally, 30 voluntary firemen, paid on a per-mission basis, participate in operations. During office hours, one officer, two sergeants, and two fire-fighters are in readiness. The volunteer firemen are also summoned in the event of an alert. Outside office hours, a sergeant and three fire-fighters remain on call until 10:00pm. The same personnel are on high-readiness reserve at night, which means that they are at home, ready to respond to an alert. The Kauhajoki fire station equipment consists of two fire engines, two fire trucks, two command vehicles, a crew carrier, an inspection vehicle, and other equipment. Latterly, the Kauhajoki fire station acquired an aerial platform.

The Rescue Services have drawn up instructions for the Emergency Response Centre, according to which additional resources are summoned to Kauhajoki, if and when the need arises, from several stations within the province. In the school shooting incident, rescue units from five fire station groups were dispatched to the scene. In addition to the Kauhajoki fire station, rescue units arrived from fire stations in Ilmajoki, Teuva, Isojoki, Jalasjärvi, Jurva, Kurikka, and the Kauhava Training Air Wing. With regard to Rescue Services operative leadership, an officer is on high-readiness reserve at all times at the Kauhajoki fire station. Additionally, the fire chief on duty and the head of rescue services responsible for the Kauhajoki area are on high-readiness reserve.

### **Preventive measures employed by the Rescue Services**

According to the service level decision, the Southern Ostrobothnia Rescue Department carries out education work for the prevention of accidents and also instructs the public in how to act correctly in the event of an accident. The beneficiaries of this educational and informative work are mainly schoolchildren and the personnel of medical and welfare institutions and other large institutions, offices, and factories. General education and information work is carried out in conjunction with national campaigns.

A general fire inspection is performed annually in buildings requiring special attention. Special fire inspections and later inspections are performed according to regional needs. Rescue plans are inspected in conjunction with general fire inspections. If a building does not have a rescue plan in place, an order will be issued to rectify the matter. The rescue department provides guidance on how to draw up the plans and update them. Self-preparedness training is provided in co-operation with other rescue organisations.

Rescue authorities also act as experts on building fire safety. A rescue authority works in co-operation with the authority issuing the building permit, issuing statements upon request.

The rescue department has guided and supported safety planning, self-preparedness, and related training activities at the polytechnic. A fire inspection had been performed for the polytechnic annually, or more often when necessary. Safety-related co-operation between educational institutions and the rescue department has been close.

#### **2.4.5. Medical services and first aid**

Kauhajoki has a health centre, maintained by Municipality Health Services, with two wards, a laboratory, and an X-ray section. Eight doctors work in the health centre, and between 8am and 10pm there is a doctor on call. Seinäjoki Central Hospital provides on-call service between 10pm and 8am. Additionally, the Kauhajoki health centre offers family centre, occupational health, and health centre psychologist's services.

The Municipality of Kauhajoki is part of the Hospital District of Southern Ostrobothnia. The central hospital of the hospital district is in Seinäjoki, 59 km from Kauhajoki. The central hospital had an emergency plan, as referred to in the Emergency Powers Act, which had last been updated in November 2008. The plan specifies three different alerts for major accidents:

1. A standard alert during on-call hours (2:30pm–8:00am)
2. A standard alert during office hours (8:00am–2:30pm)
3. A full alert (the number of seriously injured patients exceeds 10)

The plan also states that Seinäjoki Central Hospital is obliged to dispatch a medical team to the accident site. The team can be dispatched either at the request of an authority or on the hospital's own initiative. A medical team consists of a doctor, a nurse, a paramedic, and a rescuer from the rescue department. The rescuer's duties consist mainly of transportation and communications. If and when the need arises, the team can be augmented with two doctors and nursing personnel, for example. The decisions on the augmentation of the team and its dispatch are made by the chief medical officer or the head of medical services.

The Hospital District of Southern Ostrobothnia is part of a special area of responsibility of Tampere University Hospital, which means that patients requiring demanding and specialised medical care are treated at Tampere University Hospital. The distance between Kauhajoki and Tampere is 165 km.

In addition to Seinäjoki Central Hospital, the other central hospitals in the region are Vaasa Central Hospital, in the Hospital District of Vaasa, 95 km from Kauhajoki, and Satakunta Central Hospital, in the Hospital District of Satakunta, 125 km from Kauhajoki.

A Kauhajoki-based private ambulance company is in charge of emergency medical services in Kauhajoki. In accordance with an agreement concluded with the Municipality of Kauhajoki, the company maintains two paramedic-level ambulance units in immediate readiness on weekdays between 8am and 4pm. At other times, the unit is ready to be deployed within 15 minutes. Additionally, on weekdays another ambulance unit is ready to be deployed in 15 minutes. 'Paramedic-level' means that the

unit is capable of treating the patient at intensive care-level and can maintain the patient's vital functions during transport. The personnel and equipment have been defined as paramedic-level by the Hospital District of Southern Ostrobothnia.

The Hospital District of Southern Ostrobothnia has issued instructions on the provision of first aid outside hospitals. These instructions specify command relationships, call signs, communications, and duties, and they also list operator-specific duties. The Social Welfare and Health Department of the Province of Western Finland has issued instructions on the use of the VIRVE network for social welfare and health authorities.

### **Rescue helicopter Pete**

Pete is a Vaasa-based rescue helicopter maintained by a volunteer association. A multipurpose helicopter in constant 24-hour readiness, it is used on fire-fighting, search, and executive assistance missions, such as oil spill containment and other special missions, in the Ostrobothnia region, Central Ostrobothnia, Southern Ostrobothnia, and the northern part of the Gulf of Bothnia region.

#### **2.4.6. Emergency Response Centre**

The Emergency Response Centre (ERC) of Ostrobothnia is in Vaasa and serves some half a million people, a significant proportion of them Swedish-speaking. The ERC's area of operation consisted of 55 municipalities at the time of the incident. Various authorities have issued alert instructions for the ERC, which the ERC operators use to issue the necessary alerts.

#### **2.4.7. The Finnish Defence Forces' preparedness and preventive work**

The duties of the Defence Forces as set forth by law include the provision of support for other authorities. This includes, among other elements, the provision of executive assistance to maintain public order and security, to prevent and interrupt terrorist acts, and otherwise to protect society at large, as well as the provision of assistance in rescue operations by contributing equipment, personnel, and expert services.

The Defence Forces are prepared to participate in rescue operations when necessary, provided that these activities do not endanger the execution of its national defence duties. The Defence Forces resources available for use in rescue operations include, for example, military fire brigades, experts on leadership and communications, communications equipment, field accommodation and food equipment, first-aid and emergency medical care equipment, other special equipment and special experts, vehicles, vessels, aircraft, and transportation systems.

The Defence Forces endeavour to support the well-being and mental health of conscripts. In the Kainuu Brigade, for example, this means that the services of the garrison hospital and the social welfare officer are available for the conscripts when necessary. All conscripts also undergo a standard health examination when entering service. If necessary, conscripts are referred to appropriate further treatment. Additionally, the conscripts can turn to the unit's sergeant major or the unit commander in problem situations. If the health status of a conscript is considered to prevent him

from participating in military training, the conscript's service fitness classification can be downgraded or service interrupted. Garrisons offer numerous leisure activities to promote the well-being of conscripts. Their well-being is also enhanced through the physical exercise that is part of service.

#### **2.4.8. The State Provincial Office of Western Finland**

The Provincial Police Command of Western Finland plans, develops, and leads police operations in the province. As the regional rescue authority, the rescue department has an obligation to ensure that the service level of the Rescue Services is sufficient in the municipalities, to plan and develop the Rescue Services, to see to it that adequate leadership resources are available for major accidents and exceptional circumstances, and to promote good security culture. The social welfare and health department is charged with the guidance and supervision of social welfare and health services at regional administration level. The education and culture department is charged with enhancement of the quality of education and cultural services, and with ensuring that they produce good results. The department has teams for vocational education and training, the assessment of educational services, continuing education for teaching staff, legal protection, construction matters, library services, sport services, youth services, and the EU's structural funds. Furthermore, the State Provincial Office of Western Finland co-ordinates regional preparedness planning.

#### **2.4.9. The National Board of Education**

After the Jokela school shootings, committed on 7 November 2007, educational institutions received dozens of threats of varying nature and level. As the number of threats increased, the National Board of Education deemed it necessary to provide schools with instructions in case they received further threats.

Instructions on how to respond to violent behaviour or the threat thereof were published on the National Board of Education Web site. Educational institutions were informed directly by e-mail of the existence of the support material on how to deal with crisis situations that was published on the Web site. Additionally, the Internet address of the National Board of Education was published in several media. Experts of the National Board of Education's preparedness group contacted educational institutions by phone and e-mail on security issues.

Less than a week after the incident, the National Board of Education reminded educational institutions by e-mail to ensure that they had updated rescue plans in place. The educational institutions were also requested to emphasise in their education work the individual's responsibility for general safety, and to take all school threats seriously and always inform the police of them.

In spring 2008, the National Board of Education organised, in co-operation with state provincial offices, 14 training sessions on the theme 'Security and preparing for crisis situations' in various parts of Finland. The sessions focused on crisis preparedness, how to respond in a crisis situation, dealing with a crisis, after-care, and media coverage of crises.

#### **2.4.10. Psychosocial support organisations' preparedness**

##### **The municipal crisis team**

The Kauhajoki Social Welfare and Health Services have had a crisis team for more than 20 years. The activities of the team are based on Social Welfare and Health Services personnel, co-operation between authorities, and volunteer workers. Municipality of Kauhajoki personnel involved in this work include, among others, psychologists, doctors, public health nurses, social workers, and nurses. Some members have been part of the team since it was established, while others have been rotated. Team membership is completely voluntary. The employer has provided the team members with support, organising practical and theoretical training and work counselling for them. The crisis team have carried out debriefing activities. Requests for help have mainly been submitted during office hours, sometimes also in the evening via an on-call phone line. In the evenings and on weekends, the crisis team can be contacted via the health centre emergency clinic or emergency medical services.

##### **Psychosocial support provided by the Church (parish)**

In major accident and crisis situations, the Church is a functional part of the rescue system, because the Church is an important partner for the Social Welfare and Health Services in contingency planning and preparedness. In cases of major accidents and crisis situations, the Church help line is open 24 hours a day if necessary. The Church also maintains a Web help service, where people can leave messages anonymously and discuss things that are worrying them. If requested to do so, priests and other crisis workers can assist the police in delivering the sad news to next of kin.

On the national level, the crisis relief co-operation is led by the permanent secretary of the General Synod, who is also the chairman of the Church's preparedness committee. At the regional level, the Church's emergency planning and preparedness are co-ordinated by diocese cathedral chapters, which co-operate with state provincial offices. Locally, parishes or parish unions are responsible for emergency planning, preparedness, and psychological support. Kirkon henkinen huolto (the psychological support provided by the Church) employs an organisation that is mainly active in the Helsinki metropolitan area. It is a part of the psychosocial support system, providing psychological support to accident victims; their families; and, if necessary, rescue workers.

More than 2,000 priests and some 1,500 diaconal workers have been trained for crisis situations. Priests are also active in various educational institutions, including those of higher education. Additionally, special youth workers are active in youth work.

##### **Local branches of the Finnish Red Cross (FRC)**

In cases of major accidents, local FRC branches can be utilised to plan and organise psychological support. They can also provide assistance if necessary. Preliminary welfare and psychological support is provided by local emergency units, which offer material and psychological support during the first few days after accidents and in other special situations. The activities are largely based on the operators and resources of

local branches. Professional staff are assisted by volunteer workers, who have been trained for their duties through basic and advanced courses in psychological support. The emergency unit is part of the organisation and alert system of the Voluntary Rescue Service. The psychological support teams of the Voluntary Rescue Service and their services are co-ordinated by the Finnish Red Cross.

### **The FRC Preparedness and Response Unit**

The FRC Preparedness and Response Unit consists of 25 experienced crisis psychologists, in various parts of Finland, who all meet the unit's selection criteria. Unit members have an agreement with their employers whereby they can temporarily leave their duties within 24 hours if they are needed, for example, to provide crisis support after a serious accident. Four levels of text message alert can be used to alert the unit. The level of the alert determines how many psychologists are summoned for crisis work. Usually, not all of them are summoned, as usually they are not all needed simultaneously and, at the same time, resources have to be reserved for crisis work lasting longer than a week. For major accidents, the need for crisis relief provided by the unit has usually lasted some two weeks.

Established in 1993, the unit has participated in acute crisis work for all major accidents involving Finnish citizens, both in Finland and abroad. The unit plans, co-ordinates, and provides crisis relief at the request of various authorities and also supports local crisis teams.

## **2.5. Rules, regulations, instructions, and other documents**

### **2.5.1. Rules and regulations concerning polytechnic schools and preventive work**

In 2009, there were 26 polytechnic schools in operation under the Ministry of Education, of which three were municipal, seven owned by joint municipal authorities, and 13 privately owned. Fewer rules and regulations concerning safety, crisis preparedness, and students' well-being, have been issued for polytechnic schools than, for example, comprehensive schools, upper secondary schools, and universities.

The most relevant provisions are those of the Polytechnics Act of 2003. It provides for the status, administration, and duties of polytechnics; the instruction provided by them; the number and selection of students; fees; teachers; and funding. The participation of students is mainly provided for in the provision concerning the student body. In universities, the students automatically belong to the student body, but in polytechnics this is not obligatory. One of the duties of the student body is to elect student representatives for the polytechnic board. According to the law, the mission of the student body is to act as a uniting body for its members and to promote their self-development and societal and social aspirations, as well as those related to studying and the students' status in society.

According to the Primary Health Care Act, each municipality is responsible for the provision of health care services for polytechnic students. The dimensions of student health care are governed by Ministry of Social Affairs and Health recommendations, which are laid down in its *Handbook on Health Care during Studies*, published in 2006. According to the handbook, in higher education, which includes polytechnics, there should be a public

health nurse for every 800–1,000 students under normal conditions. Similarly, one full-time doctor is required for every 2,500–3,000 students.

At the time of the school shootings, there were no security-related provisions in the Polytechnics Act or the Polytechnics Decree. However, early in 2010, a new provision was introduced, according to which polytechnics must prepare themselves for disturbances, special situations, and exceptional circumstances by drawing up emergency preparedness plans and making advance preparations.

### **2.5.2. Provisions for mental health services**

Mental health work refers to the promotion of an individual's psychological well-being, functionality, and personal development, as well as the prevention, treatment, and alleviation of mental illness and other mental health disorders. According to the Mental Health Act, Finnish municipalities are responsible for the provision of mental health services for their inhabitants.

Mental health work includes the social welfare and health services that are targeted at persons suffering from mental illness or other mental health disorders. The services are provided for an illness or disturbance that is assessed on medical grounds. Mental health work also includes the development of the living conditions of the Finnish population in such a manner that they better prevent mental health disorders, promote mental health work, and support the provision of mental health services.

The Ministry of Social Affairs and Health is responsible for the general planning, steering, and supervision of mental health work. On the provincial level, these duties are carried out by state provincial offices. For their part, municipalities are responsible for the provision of mental health services as part of public health work and social welfare services. The extent and quality of the services must be commensurate with the need for services within the municipality of the joint municipal authority. Primarily, mental health services must be provided in the form of community care and in such a manner as to promote the patients' initiative in seeking help and managing on their own.

According to the Act on Specialised Health Care, the mental health services provided within the framework of specialist health care are the responsibility of each hospital district's joint municipal authority. These activities are provided for in the Act on Planning and Government Grants for Social Welfare and Health. Each hospital district's joint municipal authority, its health centres, the social welfare services, and those providing specialised services must see to it that the mental health services available form a functioning system.

Mental health services for children and adolescents are provided for in the Mental Health Decree. According to that decree, each municipality must see to it that necessary and sufficient support measures are available to enable an individual to cope with the situation at home. Each hospital district's joint municipal authority and the municipalities in its area must agree on the regional distribution of duties and their implementation.

### **2.5.3. Provisions on municipal activities**

In public administration, a municipality is at the lowest administrative level, governed by the Local Government Act. On the basis of the principle of self-administration, a municipality carries out the duties it has assumed, as well as those provided for by law. New obligations can be imposed on municipalities, or their duties diminished or rights revoked, only through the enactment of new legislation. On the basis of an agreement, municipalities can, however, assume other duties than the public duties belonging to their self-administration. Each municipality may carry out its duties alone or in co-operation with other municipalities.

Municipalities can establish, for example, foundations, organisations, or business enterprises jointly with other municipalities to handle various matters. Municipalities can also form joint municipal authorities for the provision of joint services. This is particularly common for small municipalities. To perform their statutory duties, municipalities can also purchase services from other service providers.

There are many provisions concerning municipalities, pertaining to, for example, social welfare and health services, day care, and basic education, as well as the infrastructure, such as town planning, heat and electricity distribution, sewerage, sanitation, building permits, and building control. Municipalities are responsible for the maintenance of the road and street network and for the rescue services, as well as duties related to culture, leisure, and youth services. Special municipal duties include child welfare, income support, elderly care, care of the disabled, and services addressing substance misuse.

All in all, municipalities are the basic units in public administration and as such are trusted with the key duties in terms of the lives of the inhabitants. Membership of a municipality and the benefits it offers to its residents are available to those living in its area of operation.

### **2.5.4. Provisions concerning police preparedness and prevention**

#### **Provisions concerning police preparedness**

The duties of the police are provided for in the Police Act, according to which the duty of the police is to ensure judicial and social order, maintain public order and security, prevent and investigate crimes, and forward cases to a prosecutor for consideration of charges. Police measures shall be taken without causing more damage or inconvenience than is necessary for carrying out the duty at hand. The measures shall be justifiable in relation to the importance and urgency of the duty and the factors affecting overall assessment of the situation. The police shall attempt to maintain public order and security primarily through advice, requests, and orders. The police shall not interfere in anyone's rights more than is necessary for carrying out their duties. The police shall perform their duties with all due efficiency and expediency. If circumstances so require, duties shall be prioritised in order of importance.

According to the Police Act, police officers have the right to use necessary forms of force that can be considered justifiable to overcome opposition, remove a person from the scene, carry out an apprehension, prevent the escape of a person who has lost his or

her liberty, eliminate an obstacle, or avert immediate threat of a crime or other dangerous act or event. In judgement of the justifiability of forcible measures, the importance and urgency of the duty, the danger posed by the opposition, the available resources, and other factors affecting the overall assessment of the situation shall be taken into consideration.

A Ministry of the Interior decree provides for the use of forcible measures and the means to be employed in the use of force. According to the decree, the probable effects and consequences of forcible means on the person in question, and the safety of bystanders in particular, shall be considered in the selection and use thereof. The decree also provides for police training in the use of force and the means to be employed in the use of force.

The Ministry of the Interior's Police Department, the police departments of state provincial offices, and local police departments have issued various regulations and instructions concerning police operations and demanding situations.

In 2002, the Supreme Police Command issued instructions on operational activities and their leadership. The instructions focus on various concepts and definitions, as well as legislation and police ethics. The main emphasis is on leadership in everyday field operations and demanding situations that are closely connected with police tactical negotiation, the tactics employed in the use of force, and occupational safety issues. The instructions also address communications and executive assistance issues.

In 2006, the Supreme Police Command issued an order concerning operative command readiness and communications, which deals with the command readiness system, command outside office hours, and communications. The command readiness system consists of the command readiness of local police, the supreme police command, and national police units.

In 2004, the State Provincial Office for Western Finland's police department issued instructions on the organisation of 24-hour command readiness and the submission of reports to the Provincial Police Command of Western Finland. The instructions concern the activities and duties of police officers in command readiness in provincial police command or among local police.

A separate plan of action for demanding situations, concerning the police departments of Seinäjoki, Alavus, Kauhajoki, and Lapua, had been drawn up for the operational area of Southern Ostrobothnia. The plan was last updated in 2005 and was up to date at the time of the school shootings. The plan includes operation principles and instructions on how to initiate and lead actions in a demanding situation. Additionally, the plan comprises instructions on how to create a situation organisation, description of its duties, and communication instructions.

In 2004, the Ministry of the Interior's police department issued an order concerning the police readiness unit. According to the order, the Helsinki Police Department maintains a readiness unit with special training and equipment. The order lists the duties of the readiness unit and provides instructions on how to alert the unit.

### **Provisions concerning preventive police work**

Community policing is an important part of preventive police work. It involves systematic co-operation among the police, authorities, local residents, citizens, and other interest groups. Community policing is part of the basic duties of the police, so it is not considered a separate activity. The aim is to enhance security and the feeling of security, as well as to reduce and prevent crime and public disturbance, and thus maintain a positive image of the police, while ensuring that public confidence in the police remains high.

Community policing was introduced in Finland in the 1980s and was influenced by developments in international community policing. The principles of community policing were described as early as in 1987, in a report submitted by the strategic working group on preventive police work. They were also mentioned in two documents published in 1999: *Guidelines for Community Policing* and *Good Results through Security Co-operation*. In the early 2000s, the aim in police administration has been the establishment of community policing as part of standard police operations all over Finland.

Community policing is also an element in the national vision and strategy of the police. The objectives of the police are defined in the Police Vision for 2014, according to which 'Finland is the safest country in Europe, which is guaranteed by a police force that is professional, eager to serve, reliable, co-operation-oriented, and efficiently organised'. The essential elements in the social efficacy of police operations are the citizens' confidence in the police and the status of the safest country in Europe. In the police strategy for 2008–2012, the key areas and operational policy outlines include, as the first item, the prevention of crime, disturbances, and accidents in co-operation with other authorities and organisations.

#### **2.5.5. Provisions concerning Rescue Services preparedness and prevention work**

Fire safety in buildings is regulated by building regulations within the administrative jurisdiction of the Ministry of the Environment. The prevention of fires and other accidents, rescue operations, and civil protection are provided for in the Rescue Act and the Rescue Decree. Rescue operations refers to measures to be taken urgently for the protection and rescue of people, property, and the environment; the minimisation of damage; and the alleviation of negative consequences in cases of accidents or threats thereof. On the basis of these provisions, the Ministry of the Interior has issued further decrees, regulations, and instructions.

According to the Rescue Act, buildings that are at special risk are obliged to draw up a rescue plan. Accordingly, the polytechnic had in April 2008 updated its rescue plan for accidents and threatening situations in normal and exceptional circumstances.

The Ministry of the Interior has issued an order concerning the decisions on the service level in the area. According to the order, all Rescue Services areas are obliged to draw up service level decisions on the prevention of accidents, the arrangement of rescue services, and civil protection. Based on these provisions and the above-mentioned order, the Rescue Department of Southern Ostrobothnia had a valid service level decision for

2007–2008 in place, approved by the board of the Rescue Department of Southern Ostrobothnia on 12 December 2006.

Concerning fire inspection, the Ministry of the Interior's fire inspection instructions were valid at that point. These were based on the Act on Rescue Services, preceding the Rescue Act. The Ministry of the Interior has issued a decree on the marking of emergency exits and another decree on the marking and lighting of emergency exits in buildings.

The general principles of preparedness for accidents are laid down in preparedness instructions. The service level decision of the Rescue Department of Southern Ostrobothnia outlines the regional organisation of the Rescue Services and its objectives. Instructions on fire brigades' smoke diving operations are given in smoke diving instructions, which can be applied in smoke diving and other rescue diving operations alike. According to the Occupational Safety and Health Act, smoke diving involves special risk factors, such as the possibility of accidents or occupational diseases, which demand special care and competence.

The planning and preparedness obligations concerning evacuations are laid down in the Rescue Act and the Government Decree on Rescue Services. Regional rescue departments are charged with drawing up, in co-operation with the other municipalities and operators in the region, plans concerning civil protection and evacuation. Evacuation is also included in the obligation concerning the drawing up of rescue plans for residential buildings, business enterprises, institutions, and similar buildings. Further specifications are given in the Ministry of the Interior instructions on the planning and implementation of population evacuations. On the basis of these instructions, the Rescue Department of Southern Ostrobothnia had drawn up, on 14 March 2006, an updated evacuation plan for Kauhajoki, which was approved by the municipality's executive board on 27 March 2006. Evacuation is also included in the polytechnic's rescue plan.

Proceeding from the Rescue Act and the Government Decree on Rescue Services, the Ministry of the Interior has issued instructions on accident alerts and the relaying thereof to the Ministry of the Interior, state provincial offices, and the Accident Investigation Board.

The purpose of the Rescue Equipment Act is to ensure that all Rescue Services equipment is safe and appropriate for its purpose. It also states that the correct installation, maintenance, and inspection of rescue equipment guarantees that it works efficiently and reliably. In this context, Rescue Services equipment refers to 1) fire detection equipment to be installed in buildings, other equipment used to indicate potential hazards, and alarm and warning equipment; 2) in-built fire-extinguishing and smoke extraction equipment; 3) first-aid extinguishing equipment, such as hand extinguishers and fire-smothering blankets; and 4) products used to mark and light emergency exits in buildings.

Emergency response services are provided for in the Emergency Response Centre Act, which is applied to the organisation of Emergency Response Centre activities and

emergency response centres for the Rescue Services, the police, and Social Welfare and Health Services, as well as emergency calls and alerts. The Emergency Response Centre Administration has published a guide for emergency response centres on the classification of missions.

#### **2.5.6. Provisions concerning Emergency Medical Services preparedness and prevention work**

The obligation of Finnish municipalities to provide ambulance services is based on the Primary Health Care Act. The same act obliges municipalities to maintain medical rescue services and a level of preparedness to transport patients that is commensurate with local circumstances. The Decree on Ambulance Services specifies the duties of health centres and hospital districts, and it provides definitions of emergency medical services and both basic- and paramedic-level ambulance services. The decree also obliges hospital districts to steer and supervise paramedic-level ambulance services within municipalities' areas of operations. The Hospital District of Southern Ostrobothnia has drawn up operation instructions for ambulance services and emergency medical care provided outside hospitals. Additionally, the hospital district has issued separate instructions for major accidents, concerning command relationships, communications, and the duties of various health care personnel.

#### **2.5.7. Firearms legislation**

The firearms legislation valid at the time of the Kauhajoki school shootings dates from 1988, after which the act was amended to a certain extent. According to the Firearms Act, the following activities are subject to authorisation: transfer and import to Finland; transfer and export from Finland; transit for commercial purposes or trade; and acquisition, possession, and manufacture of firearms or of firearm components, cartridges, and especially dangerous projectiles. According to the Firearms Act, a licence or permit for these activities may be granted if there is an acceptable reason for granting the licence or permit, and if there is no reason to suspect that the licence or permit, or the objects acquired or possessed under it, would be misused.

According to the Firearms Act, the permit for the acquisition of a firearm or a component thereof is granted by the police department for the applicant's municipality of residence. The acquisition permit also entitles the applicant to the temporary possession of a firearm or firearm component. The application for a permit must be submitted to the police department in person. The permit is granted for a maximum period of six months.

According to the Firearms Act, an acquisition permit may be granted for the following purposes of use: 1) shooting of animals permitted by hunting legislation; 2) target shooting or practice; 3) work where a weapon is necessary; 4) a show, filming, or a corresponding presentation; 5) keeping in a museum or a collection; 6) keeping as a souvenir; and 7) signalling.

An acquisition permit may only be granted for a firearm or firearm component that, on the basis of the number of cartridges in the magazine, the calibre, or other properties, and with regard to the purpose of use indicated by the applicant, is not unnecessarily

powerful or efficient, and which is suitable for the purpose of use stated by the applicant.

According to the Firearms Act, an acquisition permit may be granted to a person who has reached the age of 18 and who, on the basis of his or her state of health and behaviour, is to be deemed suitable for possessing firearms or firearm components. With the consent of parents or guardians, a permit may, however, also be granted, for shooting of animals permitted by hunting legislation or for target shooting or practice, to a person who is 15 but not yet 18 years old and who otherwise fulfils the requirements set for an acquisition permit applicant.

A possession permit for a firearm acquired under the acquisition permit must be applied for within 30 days of the acquisition. The permit is granted and revoked by the police department for the applicant's municipality of residence. A possession permit is usually granted indefinitely, but for a special reason it may also be granted for a fixed term.

An acquisition or possession permit may be revoked if the permit holder is guilty of an offence indicating violent behaviour, drug-related crime, or another offence that proves him or her to be unsuitable for acquiring or possessing firearms, firearm components, cartridges, or especially dangerous projectiles. An acquisition or possession permit may also be revoked if the permit-holder has violated the permit terms or otherwise shown disregard for compliance with the provisions on firearms, firearm components, cartridges, or especially dangerous projectiles.

According to the Firearms Act, the police shall, without delay, make a decision on taking temporary possession of the objects if there are reasonable grounds to suspect misuse of a firearm, firearm components, cartridges, or especially dangerous projectiles, or if a procedure for revoking a related permit has been initiated. Additionally, a policeman shall take a firearm, firearm components, cartridges, or especially dangerous projectiles away from their holder if there is an apparent risk of misuse. The policeman shall, without delay, notify the police department for the place in whose territory the objects have been confiscated from their holder, or the police department for the permit-holder's place of residence, of their confiscated.

The Police Act entitles the police to acquire information from other authorities concerning the permit-holder's state of health, use of drugs, or violent behaviour if there are grounds to suspect that the permit-holder no longer fulfils the requirements for holding a firearm permit. The decision on the acquisition of secret information is always made by an officer.

In autumn 2007, the Ministry of the Interior issued instructions for the standardisation of firearm permit procedures. The purpose of the instructions is to ensure that the firearm permit procedure is the same in all police departments, and that all applicants and permit-holders are treated equally in accordance with the principles of good governance.

According to the instructions, one of the key objectives of the permit procedure is prevention of the serious consequences of the misuse of a firearm, and firearm offences

in particular. The instructions on the standardisation of firearm permit procedures focus, for example, on an individual's suitability for a firearm acquisition or possession permit, and the suitability of the firearm for its stated purpose of use.

They also briefly deal with the suitability of a firearm for shooting practice or training. According to the instructions, in some shooting sports, a large magazine capacity is required, whereas in others, such as precision shooting, a smaller magazine capacity – usually five rounds – is sufficient.

On the basis of the Firearms Act and the Ministry of the Interior's instructions, in total, 49,322 firearm acquisition permits were granted in the approximately 11 months that separated the Jokela and Kauhajoki school shootings. Most of these, some 40,000, were for shotguns, rifles, and small-bore rifles. There were 7,525 permits granted for handguns. Of these, 3,057 were for pistols, 2,920 small-bore pistols, 933 revolvers, and 615 small-bore revolvers. The firearms used in the Jokela and Kauhajoki school shootings were small-bore pistols. In total, in early 2009 there were 591,714 shotguns, 410,915 rifles, 251,531 small-bore rifles, and 29,724 combination weapons in Finland. Additionally, there were 109,013 pistols, 103,594 small-bore pistols, 25,355 revolvers, and 13,735 small-bore revolvers. All told, there were 1,574,731 firearms in the police firearms registry, excluding the firearms used by the authorities and the Defence Forces. Finland is among the top five countries in the world in terms of guns in proportion to population.

In the time between the Jokela and Kauhajoki school shootings, 3,041 firearm possession permits, in total, were revoked. More than 2,300 of these were for shotguns, rifles, or small-bore rifles. Approximately 600 possession permits for handguns were revoked. Of these, 280 were for pistols, 201 for small-bore pistols, 80 for revolvers, and 45 for small-bore revolvers.

### **2.5.8. Rules, regulations, and instructions concerning computer games and the Internet**

Western democracies recognise the principle of freedom of speech, which extends to individual citizens, civic groups, the mass media, and the Internet. Governments aim to eliminate harmful and damaging content through legislative means, regulation of the media, and self-regulation. In comparison, for example, to our western neighbour Sweden, there is little of the comprehensive and wide-ranging media policy in Finland that is so much in evidence there. Owing to its nature and global scope, controlling the Internet has proved difficult and in some respects even impossible both in Finland and elsewhere.

The penal provisions on, for example, child pornography, racism, and defamation are also applied to Web activities. The authorities have extensive rights of access to electronic communications identification data, and the so-called Lex Nokia, enacted in 2009, provides employers too with this right of access to some extent. The Coercive Measures Act and the Police Act grant the authorities the powers to track down the perpetrator of a criminal act committed on the Web as long as the provisions of the law are fulfilled.

## Legislation

The content in publishing and programme activities is regulated by the Act on the Exercise of Freedom of Expression in Mass Media, which became effective in 2004 and repealed the Act on the Freedom of the Press and the Broadcasting Liability Act. It is based on the concept of medium neutrality, which means that the liabilities and responsibilities of the person or body maintaining the medium are the same regardless of medium. With regard to the Internet, the Act on the Exercise of Freedom of Expression in Mass Media mainly applies to network publications, which refers to a set of network messages, arranged into a coherent whole comparable to a periodical, from material produced or processed by the publisher.

The use and operation of electronic communications networks is provided for in such laws as the Communications Market Act and the Act on the Protection of Privacy in Electronic Communications. The Communications Market Act addresses matters such as the liabilities and duties of telecommunications enterprises in offering electronic communications network services. The Act on the Protection of Privacy in Electronic Communications deals with the confidentiality of electronic communications, the handling of electronic communications identification data, and electronic communications' information security.

The electronic communications operator's and administrator's responsibility for the information provided via their services is provided for in the Act on the Provision of Information Society Services. According to said act, the service provider is not liable for the content of the information transmitted if he or she does not initiate the information, does not select the receiver of the transmission, and does not select or modify the information contained in the transmission.

A court may order a service provider to disable access to information stored by him or her if the information is clearly such that its continued availability to the public or its transmission is prescribed as punishable or a basis for civil liability. If a court has ordered the service provider to disable access to the information stored by him or her or if the service provider is notified of a copyright or related rights infringement, the service provider shall, to avoid liability for the content of the information provided by him or her, act immediately and without delay.

Thus, it is an established principle of the current legislation that the service provider or operator is not liable for the content of the information. Neither is the operator responsible for the content or required to supervise it. The operator is under obligation to remove content only if it is made known to him or her that the content is illegal. The potential illegitimacy of the content is always determined by a court of law at the request of the police. In a case such as this, it is possible for the court to pass judgement in less than 24 hours. The police will inform the relevant telecommunications enterprises of any material to be deleted.

Child pornography and racist content are an exception. If the content includes pornographic images depicting a child, violence, bestiality, or incitement to racial

hatred, the service provider shall, by law, immediately disable access to any such information on his or her server.

### **Self-regulation**

Established in 1968, the self-regulatory body for mass media content and so-called good journalistic practice is the Council for Mass Media in Finland. The members are journalists and representatives of publishers and the general public, and the council's task is to provide interpretation of good journalistic practice and to defend the freedom of speech and publication, mainly through actions submitted by the general public. The Council for Mass Media in Finland published 'Guidelines for Journalists', drawn up by the Union of Journalists in Finland. The guidelines were last revised in 2005, and the decisions of the Council for Mass Media in Finland are based on these. They cover all aspects of journalistic work in newspapers, on the radio, on television, and on the Internet.

Internet content that is deemed harmful is overseen also by the Ethical Committee for Premium Rate Services, the Ethics Working Group of the Finnish Information Processing Association, the Council of Ethics in Advertising, the Consumer Agency, and the Consumer Ombudsman. Finnish operators jointly released a so-called Netiquette document, which provides parents with tips on how to supervise their children's use of the Internet, warns children themselves of the dangers associated with the Internet, and guides them toward responsible use of the Internet.

In recent years, the Internet has played an increasingly important role in communication studies in comprehensive schools and upper secondary schools. Instead of focusing on techniques of Web behaviour, the trend is more and more toward responsible use and production of content.

### **Online discussion sites**

There are numerous discussion boards available on the Internet, and this type of interaction has quickly become extremely popular. The publisher of a network publication may, in addition to the published material, operate discussion boards or host other material for which the publisher acts as a transmitter. The discussions on the discussion boards cover a wide spectrum of topics, ranging from social issues to personal matters.

There are a great many discussion boards, of various types, both in Finland and abroad, and the operators' rules governing moderation vary greatly. On some sites, the participants use their real names, but usually people are not required to reveal their true identity. Some services require registration, but in practice it is impossible to control the authenticity of the registration data. Many discussion boards do, however, have their own set of rules concerning, for example, use of a false identity, threatening behaviour, harassment, and inappropriate language. However, a participant can simply start using a discussion board that has fewer restrictions. There are no general or universally applied principles for discussion board supervision or verification of identity, and the staggering

number of messages alone makes it extremely challenging in technical terms to supervise discussion boards or forums.

In recent years, traditional discussion boards have been replaced by various virtual communities, such as IRC Gallery, Habbo Hotel, Facebook, and MySpace, for example, whose popularity has increased dramatically. In practice, these are global and virtual meeting places where it is possible to engage in conversation, play games, or share images or any other content. The rules of these communities vary. People do not always reveal their real identity in the virtual world, with the exception of small communities with a limited number of users. Assuming virtual identities, the authorities, such as youth leaders, psychologists, and the police, have also gradually started to participate in virtual communities, where they follow the same rules as everybody else.

The right to express one's opinion anonymously is an essential part of the freedom of speech. For this reason, the means to supervise Internet discussions comprehensively are limited. The Act on the Protection of Privacy in Electronic Communications provides for protection of some communication systems, such as telephone, e-mail, and voice mail communication, which makes them better protected than the messages on discussion forums. According to the Finnish Constitution, everyone's private life, personal honour, and the sanctity of the home are guaranteed, and the secrecy of correspondence, telephony, and other confidential communications is inviolable.

## **Games**

According to the law, computer, console, and video games are defined as interactive audiovisual programmes and as such are exempt from mandatory inspection. However, all games distributed in digital format must be submitted to the Finnish Board of Film Classification to be classified in accordance with the scheme of recommended age limits or a binding age limit. The recommended age limits involve ages 3–16 years, and the binding age limit in question is 18. Most games are classified according to the Pan-European Game Information age rating system. Such games are automatically approved and registered by the Finnish Board of Film Classification. If a game has not been classified according to said system, a Finnish age limit label is required. In other words, every game must be classified on the basis of its harmful effects. The lower age limits are usually recommendations, but the age limit of 18 is always binding. In practice, the observance of the age limits is up to the parents or guardians of a minor.

The Finnish Board of Film Classification has the right to demand the inspection of a game if it is likely to contain material harmful to a child's development. Should they deem it necessary, the importer or producer of a game may also have it inspected. If the Finnish Board of Film Classification inspects a game, the age limit becomes binding, and distribution to a person who has not reached the required age is illegal. Only so-called utility programmes – such as educational programmes – and online and Internet-downloadable games are exempted from this requirement.

Computer games can be played on individual computers or game consoles, but nowadays more and more players engage in playing against each other and/or in teams with other players online. Some of the games are 'edutainment' games, offering an

educational element, whereas others are purely for entertainment. The same rules that apply to all Internet content apply to these games.

In addition to entertainment games, money games, where winning is based on chance, have become increasingly popular in recent years. Participation in these games is not without cost. Operating, marketing, or otherwise promoting gaming activities in Finland without a licence is forbidden by the Lotteries Act. In practice, such games can be played via foreign Internet services.

### **2.5.9. Provisions concerning psychosocial support**

Psychosocial support refers to activities that aim to prevent, limit, and alleviate negative psychological consequences of a major accident or other traumatic incident. Psychosocial support is provided for in the Rescue Decree. According to the decree, the authorities and institutions responsible for various administrative sectors in municipalities and joint municipal authorities shall, in co-operation with other experts, provide psychosocial support and services for those who have been involved in an accident.

The terms of psychosocial support are not fully established yet, as, in addition to the psychological support offered by the Church and other operators, also social work and social services can be considered to belong in this category. Furthermore, the concept of victim remains undefined to some extent. The term 'victim' traditionally refers to those who die or are injured in an accident or a corresponding incident, but also those who are involved in the situation but do not sustain physical injuries can be considered victims. Additionally, there are often many indirect victims.

A document published in 1998 addresses psychosocial support and psychosocial services in relation to traumatic incidents. The same issues are discussed in a memorandum submitted by an expert working group in 2006, which focuses on major accidents.

According to a working group memorandum published in 1998, relief work can be divided into four stages: 1) preparation, 2) rescue and recovery, 3) reparation, and 4) reconstruction. Psychosocial support and services vary with the situation and stage. In the preparation stage, a plan of action is drawn up and personnel are trained. The rescue and recovery stage includes the provision of immediate psychological first aid. The reparation stage consists of the provision of information and counselling, crisis interventions, and support for the victims and their families. Finally, the reconstruction stage involves follow-up and, if necessary, long-term psychosocial support. The memorandum states that every citizen who has been involved in an acutely traumatic incident has the right to receive psychosocial support and services. This also applies to Finnish citizens who are involved in accidents abroad. These services are free of charge.

The expert working group submission in 2006 offered detailed recommendations, one of which was that the status of crisis teams be guaranteed and established through legislative action. The working group stated that the appointment of crisis team members should be made through official channels, the teams should be provided with

the necessary resources, and contact details should be kept up to date. According to the memorandum, the tasks of local crisis teams include:

- The assessment of the need for crisis relief and the availability of resources in a major accident
- The provision of immediate psychological first aid
- Crisis interventions that support coping with the situation, aimed at families, extended families, and schools and other communities
- The identification of those in need of further support and referring them to appropriate services
- Informing the health centres and crisis teams in the victims' places of residence of the need for crisis relief
- Ensuring that the alert system is functional. Constant training and communication between the crisis teams and those in the first line of crisis relief is necessary to bring this about

The memorandum provides a detailed description of the various aspects of psychosocial support both during the incident and after it. The description is based on a theory, on the stages of psychological adaptation, according to which an individual goes through several stages of recovery after a traumatic crisis.

Psychological first aid (for the shock stage) during weeks 0–1 consists of active listening, including being there and being available, restoring the feeling of control over one's life, practical help, and provision of comfort. The victim should not be left alone. Particular attention should be paid to children, adolescents, those suffering from mental health problems, and other special groups. Every effort should be made also to identify those in need of more extensive assistance or actual psychological treatment.

Early intervention (in the reaction stage) during weeks 2–4 will help the victims to face what has happened as well as the emotions and reactions arising from this. Guidance and counselling should also be provided during this stage to facilitate coping with the crisis. Early interventions are community, group, or individual interventions, and they are aimed at families, including extended families, as well as school, work, or other communities. According to the working group, the crisis workers should actively offer their help, and those who do not wish to receive it can always turn it down.

The third stage is crisis and trauma treatment (the processing stage). If an individual who experienced a traumatic event still shows symptoms three months after the event, there is a real risk of the condition becoming chronic. According to the recommendation of the working group, these individuals should always be provided with the necessary and appropriate after-care treatment. The responsibility for the provision of continued treatment lies with the official health care system. According to the working group, professionally led peer support is an excellent form of support in this stage, and it has yielded good results, provided that the participants share the same traumatic event and the groups are homogeneous. Professional supervision is, however, a necessary condition for successful peer support. Currently, no national authority is responsible for the provision of this form of support, but, according to the recommendation of the

working group, it could be part of the Social Insurance Institution of Finland's discretionary rehabilitation.

The working group drew attention especially to psychosocial support provided for children and adolescents. Children and adolescents are particularly vulnerable to traumatic experiences, and, in comparison to adults, the risk of disturbed development is far greater with them. The working group proposed that a special section on psychosocial services for children and adolescents be included in local and regional emergency plans. The emergency plans of schools, day-care centres, and similar institutions should include unit-specific crisis plans. The general principles of psychosocial support for children and adolescents are similar to those employed with adults, but the special needs of children and adolescents must be met in provision of this support.

In December 2009, the Ministry for Social Affairs and Health published its new guidelines for psychosocial services. Additionally, the Finnish medical society Duodecim published a guide in 2009 for psychological first aid, entitled *Hädän hetkellä* ('In the Hour of Need'), which provides information on how to encounter and help people who have experienced a traumatic event.

### **Provisions concerning the activities of the Church**

In December 2005, the General Synod approved the document *General Instructions for Emergency Planning for the Church and Instructions on Drawing up a Parish Emergency Plan*.

The instructions were distributed to church councils, parish councils, and the joint church councils of parish unions. According to the instructions, the parishes are under obligation to carry out their basic duties in all circumstances. To be able to do this, each parish must have a valid emergency plan in place. The plan specifies the emergency arrangements for the parish in case of social disturbance or exceptional circumstances. The instructions emphasise the importance of co-operation in drawing up the emergency plan and in planning the emergency arrangements. Each deanery must have a team, appointed by the provincial dean, to co-ordinate emergency planning. Diocese cathedral chapters, in turn, co-ordinate and supervise the emergency planning carried out by the parishes in their region. A copy of the parish emergency plan is sent to the cathedral chapter, where it is inspected, and, if necessary, the parish is requested to provide additional information.

In 2005, the General Synod published the guide *Henkisen huollon toimintaohje seurakunnille* ('Instructions for Parishes on the Provision of Psychological Support'). At the end of these instructions, which focus on emergency planning in parishes, there are nine proposals for action concerning the organisation of psychological support. Additionally, in 2004, the General Synod issued instructions on how to encounter grief in a booklet called 'Onnettomuuden tapahduttua – suruhartauden toteuttaminen' ('After an Accident – Organising a Memorial Service').

### **2.5.10. The Policy programme for the well-being of children, youth and families**

In addition to two other policy programmes, the government launched in 2007 the Policy programme for the well-being of children, youth and families. The programme is based on the Development Programme for Child and Youth Policy 2007–2011, approved by the government in 2007. Both policy programmes focus on preventive work among young people. The aim is to enhance co-operation and co-ordination among various administrative sectors in matters concerning the well-being of children, youth, and families. The more recent policy programme is divided into three key areas: a child-oriented society, the well-being of families with children, and the prevention of marginalisation. Additionally, the knowledge base on the well-being of children and youth will be developed further, and assessment of the effects on children of decision-making will be promoted in accordance with the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child.

The aim is to allow children and young people to make their voices heard and to promote opportunities for their participation in decision-making. Enquiries made in early 2009 revealed that the degree to which children and young people are allowed to make their voices heard varies a great deal in Finnish municipalities. In only around 30% of the municipalities was the situation considered excellent. The Youth Barometer also shows that the development has not been favourable in all respects in terms of the inclusion of youth in decision-making and the promotion of communality.

The policy programme aims to make more low-threshold services available and to increase openness in all activities, which should lead to better life control and the prevention of marginalisation spanning generations. The aim is to create a service system that supports communal bonding for children and youth, and thus build a seamless network that promotes their well-being.

In the policy programme, the reduction of violence aimed at children and youth is visible through an extensive network with an emphasis on preventive work, including such operators as youth workers, schools, family centres, and families. In 2009, the interim report on the implementation of the government programme stated that, so far, little information is available on violence aimed at children. A study on child victims conducted in 2008 did, however, add to the knowledge base to some extent. The last such study had been carried out in 1988.

The programme aims to increase the opportunities available to children and youth for leisure activities, and to enhance their inclusion in sports, art, and culture, all of which are important aspects of general well-being. The means employed to meet these objectives include support for schoolchildren's morning and afternoon activities, club activities, basic art education, hobbies, and civic activities.

Additionally, the policy programme aims to enhance media literacy among youth and Web-based support for their well-being and inclusion. In recent years, the Ministry of Education has provided support for the development of youth work carried out through the Web. According to the 2009 interim report on the implementation of the government programme, municipal information and counselling services are available for young people in 240 Finnish municipalities, and some 75% of Finnish youth have access to these

services. In accordance with the national core curriculum, one of the key objectives in basic education has recently been the development of media literacy skills.

### **2.5.11. Internal security programmes**

#### **A safer community – the Internal Security Programme 2004**

The first Finnish internal security programme was completed in summer 2004. The aim of the programme was to create, for the first time, a cross-administrative, multi-year development plan for the enhancement of internal security. The government ratified the programme with its decision-in-principle of 23 September 2004, and the programme thus received the support of the higher political echelons. The programme was prepared by seven drafting committees, each focusing on a different area. The preparation work was supervised by a steering group, consisting mainly of key personnel from various ministries. The ministerial group for the programme consisted of the Minister of the Interior as chair and three other ministers as ordinary members.

The programme assessed the current state of internal security in Finland, defined the key objectives, and presented 79 proposals for action. According to the general objective of the programme, Finland was to be the safest country in Europe by 2015. This would be guaranteed by a well-functioning public sector with its focus on preventive work. High-quality internal security services that meet people's security expectations would be ensured by co-operation between public authorities and contacts with interest groups and the private sector. Marginalisation was seen as the key challenge. Other challenges were described as posed by everyday security, accidents, the growing impact of 'hard crime' led from abroad, the vulnerability of the information society, and issues of prevention of terrorism. Toward the end of the programme, a number of other threats to security were listed whose development into serious threats was considered possible. One of these threats was the increased use of firearms in criminal activity.

Measures that have a bearing on school shootings are discussed mainly in the section concerning work to prevent crime and public disturbances. The key measure was to provide young people in danger of becoming marginalised with special forms of youth and social work that enhance young people's integration into society. Other measures included the development of early intervention, local security plans, pupil and student welfare, and 24-hour social services. What was considered particularly important was ensuring the healthy and safe development of children through prevention of the marginalisation of families. In terms of the social security of children and youth, schools, the Youth Services, and operators organising sport and other leisure activities were considered to play key roles. Marginalisation and exclusion from society were considered mainly a result of unemployment, poverty, inequality, the insufficient integration of immigrants into Finnish society, illness, and substance misuse.

The programme has been implemented through cross-administration co-operation, and its implementation and results have been monitored according to the methods and timetables specified in the programme. According to a follow-up report completed in May 2007, some progress had been made toward the objectives concerning the prevention of marginalisation, and security was increasingly seen as a factor that has a bearing on

people's well-being. There was still a lot of work to be done to reach the objectives, however. The objectives set for the amount of violent crime had not been reached yet either. One of the aims of the policy programme was to increase co-operation, where some progress was found to have been made, in spite of the fact that no additional resources had been made available.

### **Safety first – the Internal Security Programme 2008**

The drafting of the second internal security programme was initiated in August 2007, and the government issued a decision-in-principle on it on 8 May 2008. The proposal for the programme was drawn up through extensive co-operation under the auspices of the Ministry of the Interior. The management team for the drafting process consisted of six ministers and the permanent secretaries of five ministries. The drafting process was supervised by an extensive steering group, led by the Ministry of the Interior's permanent secretary. The management team and steering group also had a secretariat at their disposal. The drafting work was carried out in seven expert groups, each of which also submitted a separate final report.

The objective for the second internal security programme was still for Finland to be the safest country in Europe by 2015. Social exclusion was still considered to be the biggest threat to internal security. Other challenges included the number of accidents, relations between population groups, violence, major accidents, the vulnerability of society, cross-border crime, cybercrime, and terrorism and violent radicalisation. According to the programme, one of the threats related to violence was that the level of violence would grow because of increased apathy toward violence, greater social inequality, growing violence in close relationships, the binge-drinking culture, and technological advances. Of the possible effects of technology, the programme mentions online harassment, bullying, and sexual abuse. Additionally, technological development may lead to a weakening of social contacts, which, in turn, could lead to loss of a sense of community. Ratified six months after the Jokela school shootings, the programme covered no threats or challenges that could be identifiably connected with school shootings.

The programme outlined, in total, 74 measures for the maintenance and improvement of internal security. The common objectives and measures focused on:

- The prevention of social exclusion and the harmful effects of alcohol
- Training and competence improvement
- The development of internal security research
- The improvement of situational awareness
- The improvement of local security planning
- The improvement of security and safety through environmental design

Particular objectives focused on:

- Improving safety in the home, during leisure time, and in moving about
- Improving the security of immigrants and ethnic minorities
- Reducing violence
- Boosting competitiveness by increasing business security
- Preventing major accidents and environmental disasters

- Ensuring border security, the prevention of illegal immigration, and customs security
- Preventing human trafficking and related crime
- Fighting organised crime
- Addressing cybercrime and prevention of risks associated with Internet use
- Combating terrorism and preventing illegal extremist activities and violent radicalisation

The prevention of social exclusion was mentioned in the section that dealt with prevention of the harmful effects of alcohol. This section listed seven measures, one of which was the enhancement of early intervention. The aim in early intervention is to prevent the marginalisation of children and youth and their being recruited into criminal activities. The programme also recommends the provision of support for sparsely populated areas, the development of workshop activities for young people, and the creation of potential for NGO activities for prevention of the marginalisation of youth. It was decided to include information on violence and how to intervene in it in school curricula at all levels of education. To enhance preparedness for accidents and other situations, a joint national programme for security exercises was to be drawn up. To enhance situational awareness of the operating environment, it was decided to develop cross-administrative-boundary situational awareness further. The data thus produced can be utilised in local security planning, for example. Five measures were presented for the development of local security planning.

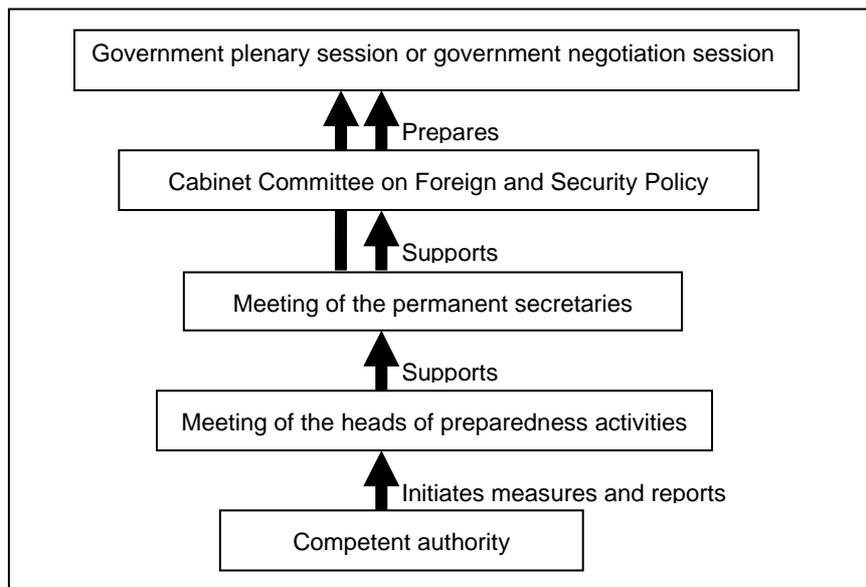
The measures recommended in the programme for the reduction of violence focus on increased security awareness education, providing the victims with the necessary assistance, establishment of the cause of all deaths of children under two years of age, addressing sexual violence, and dealing with violence in close relationships and families. The measures mentioned in conjunction with information networks were to ensure the up-to-dateness of legislation and the means of investigation, enhance police resources, increase reporting activity, and ensure the necessary resources for the prevention of cybercrime. Terrorism-related measures included thorough examination, by the authorities and through research, of the factors contributing to violent radicalisation, along with creation of the structures necessary to combat it.

#### **2.5.12. The Strategy for Securing the Functions Vital to Society**

On 23 November 2006, the government made a decision-in-principle on keeping the functions vital to society secure in all circumstances. The vital functions discussed in the strategy include, among others, the maintenance of internal security and, at the same time, the population's capability to function and psychological crisis tolerance. The decision-in-principle outlines the responsibilities and duties of the various ministries' administrative arms both in disturbances and special situations amid normal conditions and in exceptional circumstances.

The strategy also outlines the principles governing state crisis management. As the vulnerability of society increases, it is essential that initial situation management and the co-ordination of various administrative sectors' operations in unexpected and rapidly developing special situations be implemented without undue delay. A necessary condition for successful situation management is the existence of a crisis management model that is

familiar to all relevant operators and has also been the subject of sufficient drills. The principle of legality and the statutory division of duties among various administrative sectors are to be observed in crisis management. The division of responsibility and procedures for operations in normal conditions are to be retained for as long as possible. The level of integration and management is determined by the seriousness and extensiveness of the circumstances. Situations are to be managed according to an anticipatory approach, and sufficient resources are to be employed immediately. A flowchart of state crisis management is shown in Picture 9.



*Picture 9. A flowchart of state crisis management.*

A competent authority initiates measures in accordance with instructions and informs the preparedness organisation of the relevant administrative sector. The competent ministry then takes charge of the process and, if necessary, co-ordinates the co-operation of various ministries. The Prime Minister's Office ensures that a competent ministry has been appointed. Additionally, the Prime Minister's Office provides support related to situation picture, status, and communications matters.

The permanent co-operation bodies include the meetings of ministries' heads of preparedness, which are chaired by the government's security manager, and meetings of permanent secretaries, which are chaired by the secretary of state, appointed for the duration of the prime minister's term of office. The measures taken by various administrative sectors and, if necessary, business enterprises and NGOs are integrated and co-ordinated in the meetings of permanent secretaries. In operational activities, the meeting of heads of preparedness provides support for the permanent secretaries.

The state crisis management model has been tested both in drills and in real-life situations. In conjunction with the Kauhajoki school shootings, the situation was addressed at the top level of the crisis management model in its early stages when the prime minister, the chairmen of government parties, and the relevant key ministers convened to discuss the situation. The process was then continued at the level of work by heads of preparedness.

### **2.5.13. Provisions concerning communications in public administration**

There are numerous provisions concerning or touching on communications in public administration, such as the Act on the Openness of Government Activities, the Constitution of Finland, the Act on the Exercise of Freedom of Expression in Mass Media, the Administrative Procedure Act, the Copyright Act, the Personal Data Act, the Emergency Powers Act, and the Defence Act. Especially in the 2000s, visions and practices concerning communications have been outlined in the following documents: 'Recommendation for Public Information in State Administration', 2001; the Communications Plan of the Prime Minister's Office, 2004; 'State Administration Communications in Crisis Situations and Exceptional Circumstances', 2007; the section on communications in 'The Implementation of State Crisis Management Model in Regional and Local Administration', 2008; and the practical instructions based on these publications. The Monitoring and Assessment Group for Communications in State Administration has conducted strategic analyses of communication in various ministries by interviewing political and administrative leaders and by analysing strategic communications operators. Common themes that have emerged in these analyses include the clarity of communications and guaranteeing the receipt of messages.

With regard to municipal level, the Communications Guide for Municipalities was published in 2004. The LocalFinland.fi Web site provides instructions and visions concerning municipal communications. Approximately half of Finnish municipalities have drawn up such a plan. Municipalities with more than 10,000 inhabitants have been more active in drawing up a communications plan than have the smallest municipalities.

The basic idea behind all vision reports is quite similar. They all see the objectives and principles for operation of communications as being based on basic human rights, such as freedom of speech, the right to education, rights of participation and inclusion in decision-making, legal protection, and the right to a language and culture. The function of communications in public administration is to inform the population of official activities.

Communication plays an increasingly important role in society, which is likely to increase the expectations of the population in terms of information. Each authority has an obligation to handle communications appropriately within its administrative sector. Communication is an essential element in the handling of various matters. Accordingly, communications form part of the duties of every civil servant, not just PR officers. Communications must be reliable, quick, regular, and systematic. The role of the media is important, but those in public administration also need to communicate directly with the population. Public information should be based on the needs of the recipients. The underlying principles are the openness of government activities and the interactive role of communications. The Internet provides a more natural and interactive medium for this than before.

The importance of the key principles of communications in public administration is highlighted in crisis situations and disturbances. The administration needs to be able to respond quickly and as openly as possible to the increased need for information on the part of the media and the population. Society is more vulnerable than before; therefore, it is imperative to be able to operate also in special situations that arise suddenly and unexpectedly. Whether a situation is led on local level or co-ordinated on regional,

ministerial, or governmental level is dependent on the seriousness and extensiveness of the circumstances. The main responsibility for local communications lies with municipalities, local authorities, and joint municipal authorities (such as hospital districts and regional rescue departments).

It is vital, particularly in crisis situations, that the population be informed quickly and reliably. To minimise damage, it is important to give instructions that are clear and appropriate for the situation at hand. As the need for information increases and the general communications atmosphere changes, authorities must be able to co-operate with other authorities in their sector of administration and other key operators. A written communications plan, which clearly outlines the forms of co-operation and the authorities responsible for communications, must be drawn up for special situations.

### 3. OTHER STUDIES

#### 3.1. Violence in Finnish society

Finland has one of the highest homicide rates in the European Union. According to a study investigating homicide in Finland, published by the National Research Institute of Legal Policy in 2008, twice as many homicides per capita are committed in Finland than the average in other EU member states. The data in the publication are based on data gathered by the National Research Institute of Legal Policy, the Police College of Finland, and the Ministry of the Interior's Police Department for the Finnish Homicide Monitoring System (FHMS) between 2002 and 2007. The data include only homicides actually committed, not attempted homicides or other acts of violence. On average, some 120–130 homicides are committed in Finland every year. There has been a slight decrease in the number of homicides over the last decade. In comparison to global statistics, the number of homicides in Finland is quite low, however.

Finnish society as a whole cannot be considered more violent than any other Western European society. The high homicide rates in Finland, on which the perception of Finland as a violent society is based, are mainly explained by the violent behaviour of one social group. Working-age men commit most of the aggravated homicides in Finland. In 90% of the homicides, the perpetrator is male, and the clear majority (70%) are committed in private homes. Most homicides are committed on weekends. Most of the perpetrators have become marginalised in terms of working life – only one in five takes part in working life. The number of homicides committed by people in working life is at the same level as in other Nordic countries. In terms of acts committed by other socio-economic groups belonging to the active population, Finland differs little from other Nordic countries, where the social structure and population are similar to Finland. There are great regional differences in homicide rates in Finland.

There is no single, easily identifiable explanation for the exceptional distribution of perpetrators in Finland. The current situation is the result of several factors. Homicide rates were at their lowest in Finland in the 1960s. The current trend of high homicide rates started in 1969. The age distribution of those who commit most of the homicides has also changed over the last 50 years, with most homicides nowadays being committed by middle-aged perpetrators instead of those in their 20s or younger.

It is typical of Finnish violence that, in most cases, the perpetrator and the victim knew each other, at least on some level, before the act. In approximately 85% of the cases, the victim is the perpetrator's spouse, other relative, or acquaintance. The perpetrator and the victim are often around the same age, except in cases of homicides committed by relatives. In more than 45% of the homicides, there had been some form of violence or threatening behaviour between the perpetrator and the victim, and in 70% there had been some sort of anticipatory symptoms. Most cases, 81%, involve a single perpetrator and a single victim. Multiple victims are involved in less than five per cent of homicides.

Most of the homicides occur in the context of drinking-related quarrels (26%), relationship problems (16%), jealousy (14%), or a mental disturbance (13%). An

estimated 23% of the homicides in the database were pre-meditated. Compared to those of other EU countries, suicide rates are also high in Finland. Even though suicide committed by young people has been on the decrease in recent years, the rates are still higher in Finland than in other EU countries. What makes Finland unique is that, unlike in other countries, suicides are not publicly condemned.

In seven per cent of the homicide cases in the database that had been solved, the perpetrator had killed him- or herself after, including immediately after, committing the deed. As in other Nordic countries, a slow change has been evident in the Finnish homicide structure. The number of homicides committed by relatives and family members has decreased slightly, while the number committed by acquaintances has increased.

Alcohol plays a major part in Finnish violence. In almost 80% of homicides, the perpetrator was under the influence of alcohol. In most cases, the perpetrator was in an advanced state of intoxication. Several victims were also under the influence of alcohol. The increased use of alcohol has had a slight effect on alcohol-related violence, such as restaurant violence. Almost 70% of the perpetrators had a history of violent behaviour, which in many cases had been alcohol-related.

With regard to milder forms of violence, it seems that the victims are most often young people. A comparison between cities of similar population reveals that Finland is no more violent than any other EU country. On the whole, there is more violence in cities than in rural areas, but violence in rural areas is more often alcohol-related than in the cities. The authorities, however, learn of violent incidents committed in rural areas a greater proportion of the time than of those committed in cities.

Most homicides (approx. 40%) in Finland are committed with an edged weapon or by assaulting the victim without use of a weapon (approx. 25%). A quarter of homicides by males are committed without a weapon. Although the number of firearms in proportion to the population of Finland is high, the number of violent acts committed with a firearm is no higher in Finland than in other countries in Western Europe. In recent years, 16% of all homicides in Finland were committed with a firearm. Seven per cent of all homicides were committed via a firearm. About 41% of the handguns used in criminal activity had a valid permit. In 58% of all homicides committed with a firearm in recent years, the perpetrator did not have a valid permit for the firearm. In two thirds of the homicides carried out with a firearm, the victim was killed with a single shot.

In the past few decades, regional differences in the number of homicides committed in Finland have become bigger. In the provinces of Eastern Finland and Northern Finland, the number of homicides in proportion to population is not only higher than in the rest of the country; recently, it has taken a slight upward turn as well.

The Second World War did not have an identifiable effect on the development of the structure of violence in Finnish society. The violence statistics clearly show that the generations that lived through the Finnish wars of 1939–45 were not exceptionally violent. In theory, the male generation that fought in the wars should, statistically, have been at its most violent in the decades following the wars. However, the 1950s and

1960s were the most violence-free decades of the entire 20th century in Finland in terms of homicides and also milder forms of violence in proportion to population.

In the past few decades, new forms of violence have emerged also in Finland. The new forms of communication created by the information society have led to new threats of violence. The general tendency to extend and subdivide the concept of violence makes comparisons with older statistics more difficult. With regard to the entire population, the amount of actual physical violence has not increased; what has changed, however, is the kinds of situations perceived as threatening and how often they are reported. The increasing coverage of crime news in the media and the fact that it tends to focus on violent crime may have had an effect in the increasing number of people who are frightened of violence. One form of violence that can be singled out is violence aimed at women at work, which is clearly on the increase, particularly in the nursing sector. Generally speaking, it would appear that Finland is no more violent than other countries in Western Europe. The crime rates for more serious forms of violence are higher, however.

### **3.2. Homicides committed by young people in Finland**

The number of homicides committed by persons who have not reached the age of 21 is quite small in Finland – usually less than 10 per year. Most of these are committed by 19–20-year-olds. Milder forms of violent crime are usually more common among young people. Homicides are most often committed by middle-aged males, but, in proportion to age group size, the most homicides were committed by 21–24-year-old males. The differences in homicide rates between the various age groups among 21–44-year-old males have been very small in the past few decades. Depending on the year, there has been considerable variation in terms of the age group that has committed the most homicides.

In Finland, the amount of juvenile violence is partially linked to economic trends. There is an increase in the amount of juvenile violence during economic upswings, while there is a decrease during economic recessions. One quarter of the homicides committed by young people are linked to some other form of crime, such as property offences, burglaries, or robberies. About 12% of all the homicides in the database were linked to some other form of criminal activity. In proportion to population, the number of homicides committed by young people is no bigger in Finland than in other Nordic countries or in Western Europe.

Most homicides committed by young people are alcohol-related. Some 80% of the juvenile perpetrators of homicide in recent years were under the influence of alcohol when committing the crime. The homicides typically committed by young people are different from the average in Finland in terms of their circumstances and manner of execution. In homicides committed by young people, the perpetrator often does not know the victim personally. Additionally, some kind of weapon or other instrument is used more often, and the crimes are more brutal than are homicides committed in other age groups. On the whole, homicides committed by young people are more surprising and the victims selected more randomly than in older age groups.

Most juvenile perpetrators of homicide often share a history of early substance misuse, an underprivileged childhood, violent behaviour, and mental health disorders. In most cases, at least one parent is a problem drinker. Even though there is no evidence of violent behaviour being hereditary, one in 10 juvenile perpetrators of homicide have a relative who has been convicted of homicide. A significant proportion of them also have relatives who were victims of homicide.

Criminal offences committed by young people – including violent crime – are committed as groups more often than in other age groups. Furthermore, the sites of homicides committed by young people are more public than for older age groups, which means that the acts are more public and the number of people involved in them, either directly or indirectly, is large. Therefore, this type of crime affects the surrounding community in different ways than do homicides committed in private homes.

### **3.3. Violence in the life of Finnish youth**

An analysis of the Jokela school shootings, published by the Finnish Youth Research Society, emphasises the importance of multidimensional concepts of violence in research into school shootings. The WHO (World Health Organization) defines violence as existing in three dimensions: self-directed violence, interpersonal violence, and collective violence. It is also essential to differentiate between the various forms of psychological and physical violence, which are often intertwined. Violence may be easily identifiable, such as physical violence between individuals or groups. Violence can also take other, less easily identifiable forms and be embedded in social structures or institutions. Examples of this kind of framework are the school as an institution and Web communities.

According to a survey conducted by the Police College of Finland and the National Research Institute of Legal Policy, children and young people face violence more often than adults do. In most cases, the perpetrator and the victim are the same age. Youth research suggests that violence may enhance a young person's membership in a group and the feeling of belongingness. In this form, it does not necessarily define the activities of the group; instead, it may be random. Violence can also be the determining factor in the way hierarchies are formed among young males. It is believed that friends who have a reputation for being violent, or even guns, make one safe. In some cases, violence is viewed as a way to rectify injustices suffered in everyday life, or to resolve situations involving violence in families, for example. This kind of action is often the last resort for young people who cannot find any other way to solve a problem.

Violent crime is gender-specific, which is also borne out by reports on school shootings abroad. In analysis of the connections between gender and violence, it is justifiable to use the term 'misguided masculinity' to refer to the way boys become socialised into being tough and defending themselves with violence if necessary. Men and boys develop a tough shell, an armour, that on the one hand protects them but on the other isolates them from intimacy and caring by preventing them from expressing their feelings of uncertainty. Also girls and women sometimes adopt this 'shell'. The gender-specific character of school and other violence should be taken into account in preventive work.

In terms of the gender-specific nature of violence, special attention should be paid to situations where males' masculinity is challenged or disparaged. This can take the form of insults from friends, parents, or teachers, or any situation where a boy or man feels that he is incapable of meeting expectations related to his masculinity. Violence can be a way to prove one's masculinity to oneself and to others, or to show that everything is under control. Thus, violence can be employed to enhance a male's masculinity when his image as a male capable of making his own decisions has, for one reason or another, been called into question.

According to data from various countries, the threshold for seeking help and support for violence-related problems is lower for women than for men. According to a study carried out in Finland in 2009, 85% of the customers in support services for victims of crime were female. By contrast, there is little information available in Finland on the consequences of violence faced by men. Male-on-male violence is not always even considered a crime; instead, it is often seen as part of growing up to be a man. This is why many men feel they do not need help or support in dealing with their experiences of violence.

Violence should always be seen as part of the culture and social context surrounding it. This is connected to the observation that most school shootings occur in small localities. The explanation offered for this is that in a closely-knit community, it can be more difficult for an individual to be different or stand out than in an urban environment. This can make the challenges to a male's masculinity even more demanding. The Finnish Youth Research Society publication on school shootings shows that an atmosphere demanding uniformity places certain limitations on the kinds of support youth who feel they are somehow different manage to get for their identity.

According to Finnish youth who participated in a research project funded by the EU, school violence is clearly a problem but school conflicts often go unnoticed and are not necessarily dealt with in an appropriate way. A research report on the violence faced by children and youth, conducted by the Police College of Finland and the National Research Institute of Legal Policy, states that the sexes differ significantly in terms of the site where the violent act was committed. About 12% of the violence faced by girls occurred in schools, with the remaining 88% occurring elsewhere. The percentages for boys were 31% and 69%, respectively. This shows that boys face violence at school clearly more often than girls do. In a study conducted by the Mannerheim League for Children, schoolchildren were asked whether they had been subjected to violence at school in the past 12 months. About 24% of the boys and five per cent of the girls said they had. These studies also show the gender-specific nature of school violence: boys are targeted by violence more often than are girls.

On the basis of interviews of 13–16-year-olds conducted in Eastern Finland, local youth violence can be seen to depart in many respects from the characteristic features of cases that have been in public discussion. School shootings or other extreme acts of violence do not feature prominently among the topics discussed by young people. Instead, the topics that emerged in the interviews included non-physical violence, gender roles, immigrants' experiences, acts of violence that went unnoticed, the insufficient measures taken by schools to deal with violence, and the unclear limits of bodily integrity.

In Finland, civic organisations have to a large extent been responsible for addressing the social problem of violence that affects the lives of young people. On the national level, there are few models for operation, and little training available, in Finland for the treatment of perpetrators and victims of violence. Nowadays, people report violence more often than before, however, which has resulted in more cases being processed by the authorities, even if the amount of violence has not, according to victim research, increased in Finnish society.

### **3.4. School shootings as a phenomenon**

#### **3.4.1. Special characteristics of school shootings**

One of the facts that has emerged in discussion on school shootings, both in Finland and abroad, is that a multidisciplinary and multi-perspective approach is necessary for understanding the complex phenomenon of school shootings. Therefore, it is necessary to approach school shootings as a social and communal phenomenon and from a far-reaching perspective by considering all the different factors as a whole, instead of looking for individual explanations. Consideration of the backgrounds and motives is not aimed at finding justification for the act; instead, the purpose is to determine, in a preventive sense, the factors that increase or decrease risks.

The factors that have an impact on school shootings can be divided into four dimensions, which are mutually complementary.

1. The dimension of life cycle: the growth and development of a child and a young person and the individual and social factors involved in it; the strategic transitions in life
2. The dimension of youth culture: peer relationships and belonging to a group vs. feelings of loneliness and disconnectedness; habits; social factors related to individuality and communality
3. The dimension of culture: cultural-historical characteristics as well as those typical of modern culture, such as globalisation, individualisation, virtualisation, and commercialisation; violence as a culture-bound way of solving problems
4. The dimension of society: structural factors and those related to living conditions, such as phenomena and factors associated with social inequality; political decision-making; the functionality of the system supporting the well-being of youth and families

The perpetrator in both the Jokela and Kauhajoki school shootings was a young person. The perpetrators were part of the community, which has caused considerable concern as to the well-being of the entire age group. This also generated public discussion, not only on the relationships among youth but about those between adults and youth as well. There is indeed a lot of room for discussion on whether this phenomenon says something special about youth, the youth of today, and relationships between generations. In general terms, many problems attributed to young people are actually determined by what was considered right or wrong, good or bad, moral or immoral at any given point in time. These perceptions have driven the control and support measures aimed at young people that have been considered problematic in one way or another.

What makes studying the phenomenon in depth particularly challenging is the young age of the perpetrators. This is because youth is considered by some people to be a period of growth and maturing, while others see it as a time of instability and rebellion against authorities. Furthermore, there is always a special responsibility and anxiety in the background when one is dealing with young people. On one hand, youth are seen as a threat to public order and the continuity of society, but young people emerge at the same time as particularly vulnerable victims of social problems.

School shootings are a multidisciplinary and extensive subject of research. Foreign research into school shootings has shown that the creation of profiles on the individual level is insufficient. Likewise, control or support measures that are carried out at the individual level were also considered insufficient.

Several terms are used to refer to school shootings in international studies and reports. Rampage-type school shootings refer to attacks that are aimed at institutions and where victims are incidental. Another type is targeted school shootings, where the attack focuses on a selected target. The target may be a school, a person working at a school, a group of students, or an individual student. The concept of ceremonial violence has been used to refer to a school shooting that imitates a previous school shooting by following a similar pattern. Thus, a school shooting can be a kind of initiation ritual into the community that idolises school shootings.

Study of school shootings highlights several questions, such as whether a single shooting occurring in a school is related to this phenomenon or whether there have to be multiple victims for a shooting to constitute a school shooting. Or whether the randomness or symbolic meaning of victims is related to this phenomenon while the act itself is planned and premeditated. Alternatively, can the phenomenon include an element of personal revenge on a specific victim? Is this just a logical continuation or culmination of other school violence?

An incident involving firearms on the University of Texas campus in 1966 has traditionally been regarded as the prototype for all subsequent incidents, but this interpretation can be called into question. In this incident, a marine and university student climbed into a tower on the campus, killing 14 people and wounding more than 30. Prior to this, he had killed his mother and wife. Eventually, he also shot himself. The autopsy revealed that he had a malignant brain tumour. It is unlikely that he was seeking publicity through his act; instead, he was probably suffering from a serious mental disturbance. Still, the incident may have inspired others to emulate him.

Following the Texas incident, school shootings have occurred at least in the United States, Sweden, Germany, Bosnia, Australia, Argentina, Canada, Israel, and Finland. The largest number of lives was claimed in the Virginia Tech school shootings in the USA in 2007, where the perpetrator killed 32 people and, eventually, himself. Also in the USA, the Columbine, Colorado, school shootings in 1999 are often considered the archetype of recent school shootings. In this incident, two students killed 12 students and a teacher.

One reason the Columbine incident has received so much publicity in the context of school shootings may have been that the killers created a kind of media strategy beforehand and endeavoured to convey a message. The killers left behind a number of tapes on which they justify the act they were about to commit. Additionally, one of the perpetrators had published his views on a Web site. The two were positively seeking publicity and got what they wanted. The killers, who belonged to the majority population, were figures young people could relate to, and they created a cultural screenplay wherein a bullied underdog turns the relationships of power upside down. The opportunities available for the dissemination of information via the Internet have been multiplied since the Columbine incident, and these opportunities have indeed been used extensively.

### **3.4.2. School shootings in Finland**

Two school shootings had occurred in Finland prior to the Kauhajoki incident. The first occurred in an upper-level comprehensive school in Raumanmeri in 1989, where a 14-year-old schoolboy shot two students during the first lesson of the morning, fleeing the scene soon thereafter. A motive, experienced on an individual level, could be established for the shooting. The student told the police that the motive had been bullying. This incident is not usually remembered very well, and it is indeed quite different in nature from the next school shooting, in Jokela. The Raumanmeri killer was not seeking publicity, the victims were not random, and the shootings were not politically or ideologically motivated in any way.

The school shootings in Jokela on 7 November 2007 left deep scars in the collective memory of the nation. According to the investigation report, they had many similarities with school shootings abroad. The shootings were meticulously planned, the perpetrator had been interested in earlier school shootings abroad, he was seeking publicity, and he modelled his act on the Columbine school shootings. The Kauhajoki school shootings just added to Finns' feelings of insecurity. This was no longer an isolated incident.

### **3.4.3. The background to school shootings**

In 2000, the U.S. Federal Bureau of Investigation published a report on school killers' background. The U.S. Secret Service, for its part, published in 2002 a report that provides an analysis of 37 school shootings and their background. Additionally, some books on school shootings have been published, the most often quoted among them being a volume written by a U.S.-based research team in 2004.

The studies have, among other things, attempted to create a profile of a person who might commit a school shooting. This profile could then be employed to identify potential school killers. According to various reports, however, it has proved impossible to compile a reliable profile in advance. Profiling might easily lead to innocent people being branded as potential school killers. It also problematically reduces the phenomenon to individual level and provides actual school killers with a screen behind which to plan their act.

Some factors in school killers' backgrounds are strongly over-represented. In a scientific sense, these could be referred to as strong links or correlations, which do not,

however, enable us to identify a potential school killer in advance. In other words, we may look into school killers' backgrounds to determine the common factors, but we have to bear in mind that not all people with the same qualities or experiences are potential school killers. The method of profiling was initially developed to be utilised in determining the psychological characteristics of a perpetrator after he or she has committed the crime.

No single underlying factor – or even general cause-and-effect relationships, for that matter – for school shootings has been discovered so far. On the whole, it is difficult to pinpoint factors in human development that are both absolutely necessary and sufficient for predicting an event. It is, however, possible to isolate individual and social factors in school shootings that increase the risk of a similar incident.

According to a U.S.-based research team, the factors common to all school killers include the following:

1. The perpetrator feels marginalised or excluded from his community.
2. The perpetrator has psychosocial problems and is vulnerable as an individual, which is exacerbated by the perpetrator's poor skills in dealing with problems.
3. There exists a cultural model providing the means and a form to a phenomenon that in this case involves the idolisation of guns and attacks as a way out of the perpetrator's marginal position. This type of problem-solving may be inspired by media products, such as violent films, or other school shootings.
4. The perpetrator had violent visions and produced violent material, or displayed other warning signals that were not noticed early enough or were not dealt with appropriately.
5. The perpetrator had a gun or easy access to guns.

There are some points in the Secret Service report with special relevance for the Kauhajoki school shootings and therefore worth mentioning here. First of all, school shootings are usually committed in the daytime and the school is often in a small locality. The act is not committed on the spur of the moment; instead, it is usually planned in advance. In four out of five cases, the perpetrator leaked details of the event to an outsider, and in a few cases another young person assisted the killer in planning the deed. Those in the know were usually young people. The victims typically did not receive direct threats. One of the victims may have been selected in advance, while the others were collateral victims.

Even though the perpetrators do not share a common profile, there are a few things that are over-represented in the background of American school killers. All of the attackers were male and students or former students at the school they attacked. The perpetrator was often a teenager, or at least aged between 11 and 21. According to another report on American school shootings in 1999–2007, this phenomenon cannot, however, be considered to involve only teenagers or young people on the verge of adulthood. In the United States, in three cases out of 12 the perpetrator was 21 or older. Likewise, in the incidents that occurred outside the USA, in three cases in 11 the perpetrator was aged 21 or older.

According to the Secret Service report, nearly all (93%) school killers had aroused anxiety in other people before the incident, and many of them had faced bullying or rejection or had been harmed in some way. The majority (78%) had suffered from depression and had had suicidal thoughts or attempted suicide. Almost all of them (98%) had suffered a serious loss immediately prior to the incident. These losses involved a close relationship or the perpetrator's status in the eyes of others, such as public humiliation. Approximately one third had a history of violent or criminal behaviour. However, the public misconception that the perpetrator is always a loner and without friends does not seem to be correct. Only about 12% were without any friends whatsoever, and approximately one third were withdrawn by nature. The Secret Service report offers scant information on school-related factors or family backgrounds.

Some analyses emphasise certain risk factors related to personality and the maturation environment that are known to be linked to juvenile delinquency. The school killers do not seem to belong to this group. The typical school killer may have a middle-class background, he may not belong to an ethnic minority or be poor, and his school performance may be average or even above. Instead, the school killers considered were often a target of violence or discrimination at school, had an exceptional interest in weapons and violence, were interested in death-related themes, and suffered from depression. A school killer's aggression is often considered to be instrumental, which means that the act is planned in advance and a certain outcome is expected. In addition to negative feelings, the act may be tinged with positive emotions such as pleasure or satisfaction. The aggression in this case is not characterised by a loss of self-control.

The perpetrators' family backgrounds are not homogeneous, but some of their parents clearly did not know what their children were doing, where they spent their time, or what their interests were. These parents are often emotionally distant, are not very interested in their children's lives, and belittle their own significance or the importance of showing interest in their children.

Some studies also analysed schools with an increased risk of a school shooting. There are two kinds. At one extreme is a school with clashes among pupils, organised gang activities, teachers who are dissatisfied and feel powerless, insufficient co-operation between the school and parents, serious disturbances, unclear authority relationships, fear, school drop-outs, and a large number of schoolchildren whose performance is poor. The other extreme is an elite school dedicated to academic success, where the existence of problems is denied or they are downplayed. The students do not feel attached to their school, and safe relationships are not valued. Both school communities suffer from a lack of clear and efficient plans for the prevention of bullying and intervention in it. To analyse schools as the scene for school shootings, we need to analyse the social atmosphere in schools, which means that we should approach schools as a key venue not only for learning but also for growing up and making friends.

#### **3.4.4. Young adulthood and school shootings**

Young adulthood is a difficult subject of research, because many background factors have not become established yet. For example, the study of isolated phenomena, such as well-being or deprivation, is not enough to explain inequality among young adults. It

seems that young adults' choices in terms of education, work, and family are becoming ever more individual, and these often remain in constant change until the individual reaches the age of 30.

The Kauhajoki school killer was aged 22, in many ways at a delicate stage in life. The same goes for the 18-year-old Jokela school killer. In 2007, the Finnish Youth Research Society published a report on research into welfare services for young people. According to the report, it seems as if the current service system of the Finnish welfare state does not meet the support needs of young people. This has been brought about by the extension of adolescence, more complicated transitions, and the changing living environment. Young adults are no longer recipients of youth work and child welfare services, even though the Youth Act applies to young people up until the age of 29.

On the basis of statistical data, it seems that communal ties are weakening, especially in the lives of young adults. The 2007 Youth Barometer shows that seeing friends becomes clearly more infrequent around the age of 20: 76% of 15–19-year-olds see their friends almost daily, while the corresponding percentage for 20–24-year-olds is only 47%. In a Stakes (now the National Institute for Health and Welfare) survey, schoolchildren and students were asked how many friends they had with whom they could confidentially discuss personal matters. According to the survey, a significantly larger percentage of boys than girls in comprehensive school and upper secondary school had no close friends.

According to the 2008 Youth Barometer, 20–24-year-old males feel less attached to their school, home community, or family than other age groups. Young men's emotional ties to their family and school are weaker than those of women in the same age group. Thus, it seems that the communality of young men on the verge of adulthood is fragile, both quantitatively and qualitatively. The same applies to membership in society at large, which is also affected by youth unemployment. Young men also drop out of school more often than women do, which is especially evident in polytechnic education.

According to youth barometers, contentedness with one's life situation takes a plunge at around the age of 20; 20–24-year-olds are also less content with their state of health and, most of all, their financial situation. This is not just young adults' personal view: the fact is that the risk of low income is at its highest in the 16–24-year-old age group. Within the age group of young adults, the risk of poverty has increased for single parents and single-person households. Also, 20–24-year-olds are the least content with their education. With age, they become less content with their leisure time while their job satisfaction increases. In terms of well-being, young adults are easily caught in the middle: they have yet to establish their status in the education and labour market, but the pressure is immense, and the networks of childhood or early adolescence are not there to support them anymore.

The 2007 Youth Barometer shows that 42% of 20–24-year-olds feel that there is a gap between the younger and older generations, while that sentiment is shared by only 33% of 25–29-year-olds. From the viewpoint of young adults, the risk of generations failing to understand each other is considerable.

Unfavourable circumstances do not cause a cause-and-effect chain reaction in the years to come, although several studies clearly show that various factors in childhood and adolescence do have an impact on the course of one's life. Furthermore, we must bear in mind the difference between factual and subjective deprivation: an individual may appear marginalised and rejected in many areas of life without actually experiencing feelings of anxiety or of losing control. This difference is especially noticeable in young people.

### **3.4.5. Assessment of the seriousness of school threats**

In total, 225 threats against schools were recorded in the police information system between the Jokela school shootings and April 2009, half of which led to a criminal complaint. The number of threats seems to increase significantly a few months after an incident, which is also borne out by the increased number of threats received after the Kauhajoki school shootings. The fear aroused by these threats is very real, as the occurrence of another attack is considered most likely after a school shooting. Another school shooting did indeed occur in Winnende, Germany, on 11 March 2009, some six months after the Kauhajoki incident. The death toll in this incident was 16, including the perpetrator.

The U.S. Federal Bureau of Investigation introduced in its report a model that can be utilised to assess the seriousness of a school threat. The author points out, however, that the assessments are not necessarily applicable to all situations. This method of assessment can be applied to situations where a pupil or student has made a direct or indirect threat against a school. It is necessary to become familiar with the pupil's personality traits, behaviour, and background before an assessment is made.

In assessment of a threat, attention should be paid to the following:

1. The student leaks information on his intentions – in other words, reveals clues, intentionally or unintentionally, to thoughts, fantasies, or attitudes that point to the use or idolisation of violence at school. The leakage may occur in writings, poems, videos, pictures, or tattoos, for example.
2. The student has a low tolerance for frustration. He is easily hurt and feels that an unforgivable injustice has been done to him.
3. The student is depressed, which may manifest itself in various ways. The student may show signs of physical fatigue, has a dark outlook on life, or loses interest in activities he once enjoyed. The student may display unpredictable and uncontrolled bursts of anger, behaving aggressively and violently. He may also suffer from sleep and eating disorders.
4. The student may display signs of a narcissistic personality: he is self-centred, embraces the role of a victim, lacks insight into others' feelings, and may be either extremely thick-skinned or thin-skinned in responding to criticism. The student appears unconcerned about anyone else's feelings or treats them with contempt or ridicule. He may view other people as 'non-persons' or objects to be thwarted, and they have absolutely no value whatsoever in his eyes. He has a sense of superiority to others and expects special treatment or consideration. The student shows an exaggerated, even pathological, need for attention. He refuses

- to take responsibility for his actions and externalises blame by faulting other people, events, or situations.
5. The student lacks resiliency, and his conduct may veil low self-esteem. The student may appear arrogant, but in reality he uses this to conceal his feelings of worthlessness.
  6. The student consistently behaves as though he feels different or estranged from others, and he can be profoundly lonely even though he may have friends; in other words, he is alienated from his community.
  7. The student often expresses intolerant attitudes towards religions and ethnic or other minorities; he also appears rigid and opinionated.
  8. The student's humour is constantly inappropriate. His jokes are insulting, mean, or macabre.
  9. The student demonstrates an unusual interest in school shootings and other heavily publicised acts of violence.
  10. The student may be drawn to negative, inappropriate role models such as Hitler or others associated with violence and destruction.
  11. The student's behaviour and interests have undergone a change. The student has taken up shooting practice.
  12. The student has recently suffered a loss, such as the end of a love relationship.
  13. The student has joined a Web community idolising violence.

According to the report, the student's family background is characterised by a lack of intimacy, a turbulent parent-child relationship, and a lack of supervision. The parents do not, for example, monitor the student's use of the Internet, and they accept pathological behaviour as normal. The family has often or recently moved, and the student has access to guns. Typical school-related problems include a lack of discipline, insufficient or inequitable punishments, students' inequality, and an inflexible culture. Additionally, a code of silence may prevail in a potentially problematic school community; in other words, the students are afraid to talk about their observations.

In the report, threats are classed in four categories: direct, indirect, veiled, and conditional threats. A direct threat refers to a situation wherein the threat identifies the target, the time, and the manner of execution. An indirect threat suggests the possibility of an act being committed. An example of an indirect threat could be: 'I could do that if I wanted to.' A veiled threat leaves it to the reader or listener to interpret the message, an example being: 'The world would be a better place without you.' A conditional threat is the type of threat often seen in cases of extortion cases: 'If you do not pay me a certain sum of money, I will blow up the school.'

Threats can be analysed also according to the level of risk. With a low level of threat, the threat is vague, unrealistic, and lacking in detail. The student may, for example, threaten to shoot a teacher because of poor marks without actually intending to follow through on the threat or without having access to a gun. A medium-level threat is more direct and concrete. Wording in the threat suggests that the threatener has given some thought to how the act will be carried out. There may be a general indication of a possible place and time, but no concrete plan exists. There is no strong indication that the threatener has taken steps by, for example, acquiring a firearm permit. There are indications, however, that the threatener is serious.

A high-level threat is direct, realisable, and detailed. There is a plan, and the threatener has taken direct steps toward carrying out the deed, by acquiring equipment and practising, for example. The more direct and detailed the threat, the more serious is the situation. In this case, the police had better intervene immediately.

The Finnish Psychological Association studied a protocol developed in Germany for the assessment of the threat of violence in schools. The protocol is based on a report prepared by the U.S. Secret Service. The main objective is to assess the level of threat and to make decisions on further steps to be taken. The assessment is carried out in a meeting chaired by an expert. The participants include individuals who know the threatener personally, the persons targeted, and persons who are authorised to intervene. The objective is to draw up a plan of action with the purpose of increasing the feeling of security at the school, to support the desperate student, and to make him stop his threatening behaviour.

#### **3.4.6. Background data on school threats**

The school threats made in Finland after the Jokela school shootings were distributed evenly among all five provinces. The absolute number of threats was smallest in Lapland and the Province of Oulu, which is probably explained by the lower population density. The threats were similar in all parts of Finland. They threatened individuals or groups mainly orally, via the Internet, or via another medium. Some threats had been written on school walls or furniture. In many cases, educational institutions were temporarily evacuated.

Within the limits of their resources, the police have attempted to identify the persons behind the threats, interrogated them, and performed house searches. The police have also talked to parents and teachers. In a few cases, the threatener has been referred to health care services, and at least in one case a child welfare report was submitted. Many threateners had access to guns, which were duly confiscated. Many threats included references to the Jokela school shootings. Another factor attesting to the impact of the Jokela incident is that there was a significant increase in the number of threats received around the anniversary of the Jokela school shootings.

Many threats were nothing but misjudged humour and, apart from an educational discussion, required no official action. In the more serious cases, the threatener had access to a gun that enabled him or her to realise the threat.

Immediately after the Kauhajoki school shootings, the police commenced a Web investigation, as a result of which several screen names associated with school shootings and related material were found. The police were assisted in this by e-mail tips from anxious citizens. The police characterised the persons behind the screen names as seriously planning a school shooting and undertook similar measures against them as were taken against those who made threats targeting schools. The police have the powers to take the necessary measures to prevent a criminal act. Police activities are, however, hampered by the fact that preparation for the commission of homicide does not constitute a criminal act.

### 3.5. Marginalisation and discrimination

In the investigation concerning the Jokela school shootings, the killer was found to be marginalised in quite a special way, which was the combined result of several factors. The Kauhajoki school killer had more social contacts than the perpetrator of the Jokela school shootings did, but he has also been characterised as a reserved personality. The fact that he often changed schools as a result of moving to another locality probably undermined his sense of belonging to a community.

Marginalisation, or social exclusion, refers to being deprived of significant relationships and the various functions of life, as well as being in a marginal position in a community and society. According to objective indicators, marginalisation is often defined as multiple deprivation, whereas its opposite, well-being, is traditionally defined as the satisfaction of needs or the possession of various resources. Nowadays, a lack of participation and social inclusion is also associated with marginalisation.

In the past, the preferred term was ‘alienation’ in its various forms. One of the main forms is so-called self-alienation. This refers to a psychological state wherein an individual becomes distanced from him- or herself, his or her character, and even his or her existence. The individual gradually loses his or her sense of proportion. Depending on the theory, the causes of alienation have been explained in various ways.

Man has an innate need for survival, a need to get along, and to feel he is in control of his own life. He also has the need to be part of a social group and to take his place as a sovereign member of a human community. One of man’s developmental needs is to become psychologically of age and to realise his potential to the full. The process is long, and sometimes also difficult. Even many adults have not completed this process, mainly because of various relationships. We need safe and close relationships in which we feel accepted to grow into good human beings. If this development is significantly hampered, the end result may be self-alienation and, eventually, marginalisation.

Unfavourable circumstances and relationships may result in a marginalisation process that starts in early childhood and lasts a lifetime. An individual is most likely to become permanently marginalised if he or she drops out of school and fails to learn the skills necessary, for example, in seeking employment. Many people can and want to, however, endeavour to repair the psychological damage through psychotherapy, psychoanalysis, or some other method that supports the individual’s inner growth. Changes in personal circumstances, such as new relationships or meaningful hobbies, may have a crucial role in improving the situation. With adults, marginalisation may manifest itself in the form of unemployment, which naturally can be relieved through new activities and hobbies.

Defining and measuring marginalisation is difficult, as it is influenced by what is considered important and why at any given point in time. Traditionally, young adults’ marginalisation has been measured by the degree of their exclusion from education and working life, although, according to the Youth Barometer, youth themselves see this differently. They consider a lack of friends the most important cause of marginalisation.

According to them, marginalisation is closely linked to social exclusion in everyday situations.

### **Marginalisation and discrimination in early childhood education and schools**

A child may become a target of discrimination as early as in early childhood education. In day-care centres, it usually takes the form of a child being excluded from a group; in other words, other children refuse to play with him or her. Research shows that a child who has been excluded from a group in day-care centre is also more likely to face similar exclusion at school. The risk for an excluded child of becoming a target for bullying or violence is also higher.

In schools, discrimination may manifest itself as the bullying of an individual who is considered somehow different. He or she may face ridicule or even violence. Other students may also adopt an indifferent attitude towards this student and behave as if he or she did not exist. People are increasingly vulnerable to marginalisation in transitions involving failure, such as the loss of a relationship.

If a student has become or is in the process of becoming marginalised, he or she may start behaving in a manner that will only add to his or her problems. The student may find it difficult to observe the rules of the school, which may lead to failure and negative feedback. In this case, there is a real danger of the student losing hope and becoming depressed. He or she may also adopt a negative outlook on life. The student may become inward-looking in a destructive way, which may ultimately lead to suicide. The student may become even more alienated from his or her fellow students as the student's self-esteem is extremely low. The student may feel there is no purpose to his or her life.

A marginalised individual may join a community or circle of friends for whom the values and norms are completely different and with whom he or she can find a new purposefulness to his or her life. This process may, of course, be reversed, and it may be the membership in a certain group that can lead to alienation from the mainstream culture. A member of such a subcultural or counter-cultural group may display the kind of arrogant and aggressive mode of operation and behaviour that has been witnessed in conjunction with school shootings, for example. When marginalisation has reached this point, an individual may feel he or she has nothing to lose anymore. The individual may feel he or she can gain the respect of others by committing an act admired and approved of by the group. This brings a new purpose to his or her life, even if it is considered criminal in the mainstream culture.

### **School as a social environment**

School is the place not only for learning but also for growing up and creating friendships, both of which have a significant role in the development of children and youth. In comparison to other countries, the learning outcomes of the Finnish school system are very good, but in terms of school satisfaction and well-being Finnish youth are near the bottom of the list among OECD countries.

Many studies indicate that a positive school and class atmosphere correlates with good school performance and high self-esteem. By contrast, a negative atmosphere is linked to stress and psychological problems. The most important factors affecting the atmosphere in a school are the school's values, leadership, positive feedback for children and youth, social inclusion of the children, and factors related to psychological safety – such as the prevention of and intervention in school bullying. Schools are in a key position in the prevention of youth depression and delinquent behaviour. Young people need personal positive feedback, and it can prove rather challenging to offer this equally to all students, especially in large units.

Communal spirit and caring about others is learned first and foremost by doing things together and getting to know each other. Common activities outside lessons contribute to this much more than ordinary lessons do. According to research results, social support is also a communal matter: the social support provided by the school community has a positive impact on the well-being of young people regardless of the extent to which the students themselves feel they are receiving support. One report on school shootings, published by the Finnish Youth Research Society, states that the development of school culture through increased dialogue between youth and adults is an essential security factor. The same point is emphasised by a working group studying school security in the United States.

According to the Finnish Youth Research Society study, pupils should feel they are being taken seriously, their identity and dignity are respected, they are listened to, and they have an opportunity to make their voices heard. With respect to lessons, this could mean that students are given more opportunities to participate in the course of the lesson. It is also essential to pay attention to interaction outside lessons. School clubs, for example, are a way to increase social interaction between students and teachers. Multi-profession operating environments can also provide comprehensive support for students and contribute to the creation of open interaction. The methods of communal support developed in youth work could be utilised also in a school environment.

### **3.6. Mental health disorders in adolescence**

Covering the years between puberty and approximately the age of 22, adolescence is a challenging stage of development, which in its own right is often considered a risk factor for various disturbances in the psychological development of a young person. The diagnostics are also particularly difficult, as risk behaviour, mood swings, and behavioural changes are part of adolescent behaviour in general. Finding a study place, moving out of the childhood home, and getting started in working life are potentially difficult stages for young people on their way to becoming independent. These stages are particularly challenging for those young people whose childhood was marked by insecurity. Another challenging stage for young people is military service. Approximately one in five young men fails to complete his military service. One in 10 of those called up for service either receives a postponement or is exempted from service permanently. Likewise, one in 10 of those who have already started their military service fails to complete it. Approximately half of the exemptions or service interruptions are based on mental health reasons.

An estimated 20–25% of young people suffer from a mental health disorder. Typically, they may suffer from several disorders simultaneously, such as depression and a substance abuse problem. This may lead to the underlying illness remaining undiscovered; instead, just one of the symptoms or problems is identified. The most common problems affecting young people are substance abuse problems, depression, eating disorders, and conduct disorders of varying extents. Suicide attempts and suicide, criminal behaviour, and the outbreak of severe illnesses such as schizophrenia occur more infrequently.

### **Substance abuse disorders in adolescents**

About 5–10% of adolescents suffer from harmful substance abuse or substance dependency. The substance in this category most often used by Finnish adolescents is alcohol. The most significant risk factor for the development of a substance abuse disorder is to start its use at a young age. The drinking habits of those who started their use of alcohol before turning 15 are more intoxication-oriented, and they often also display problem drinking behaviour later in life.

Substance abuse is linked with mental health problems. For example, it is typical of those who suffer from mood disorders, attention deficit disorder, bulimia, or schizophrenia. On the basis of clinical experience, it has been concluded that the substance abuse behaviour of a young person suffering from mental health problems may be some sort of self-medication – in other words, he or she attempts to alleviate the symptoms through substance abuse. Research data on this remain insufficient, however, and it seems probable that the relationship between substance abuse disorders and mental health disorders is complicated and case-specific. There is also some evidence indicating that substance abuse may cause a variety of mental health problems, such as anxiety or depression.

### **Depression and self-destructiveness in adolescence**

At its mildest, depression is characterised by a temporarily depressed mood, whereas at its most severe it leads to depressive states, in which the depression lasts longer, is more severe, and also includes other symptoms and reduced ability to function. In the classification of diseases, depression is classified according to its severity, with the purpose of thus being able to distinguish between normal reactions and disorders that require medical attention. A depressed person may display self-destructive behaviour. Self-destructiveness refers to thoughts, tendencies, or behaviours that involve a life-threatening risk, self-destructive thoughts, suicide attempts, and suicides. Indirect self-destructiveness is characterised by long-term risk behaviour, which may be conscious or subconscious. Examples include reckless behaviour in traffic; substance abuse; dangerous hobbies; and problems in taking care of oneself, such as insufficient nutrition or untreated illnesses.

In Finland, suicide rates are clearly higher than in EU or OECD countries in general. What is characteristic of Finland is the large percentage of males – in particular, young males – among suicide cases. Of all Finnish males who die at age 35 or younger, one in three has committed suicide. Some 10–15% of all young people have serious and recurrent suicidal thoughts. According to WHO statistics, Finns aged between 15 and 24 are significantly more prone to suicide than are their counterparts in other Nordic countries. The motives behind suicide attempts vary, as does the seriousness of the intention. Risk factors include

cultural and social factors, internal disturbances in the family and childhood experiences, personality-related factors, and psychological disorders and illnesses.

The cultural and social risk factors include rootlessness, identity problems, weak social status, and non-mainstream sexual orientation. In Finland, this phenomenon may also be linked to a kind of cultural script on suicide as the ultimate problem-solving tool. Risk factors within the family include a parent's psychological illness, a previous suicide or suicide attempt within the family, substance abuse problems, family violence, mistreatment or neglect of children, frequent moves, rejection of a child, and other problems related to family interaction.

Personality-related risk factors include aggressive behaviour, antisocial behaviour, a tendency to be easily disappointed, a poor sense of reality, feelings of inferiority and insecurity, and rejecting or provoking behaviour. The most common psychological disorders suffered by persons who have attempted suicide include depression, anxiety, drinking problems, personality disorders, and – particularly among girls – eating disorders. These disorders may often coincide. Of all males who committed suicide, one in two had a drinking problem. Male alcoholics are especially suicide-prone in situations where even the final significant relationship has ended.

Risk factors that predict suicide are the expression of suicidal thoughts and previous self-destructive behaviour. Most of those who committed suicide tried to communicate their intentions to people around them in one way or another, but the messages were not interpreted correctly. There is usually a triggering factor that causes suicidal thoughts to evolve into a concrete suicide plan, leading eventually to a suicide attempt. Suicide is almost always the end result of a long process, although young people have a tendency to put their thoughts or plan into action at an earlier stage than adults.

Of all mental health disorders, it is severe depression that is most closely linked with suicide. According to data collected in Finland, depression patients typically employ some other means than their own medication to commit suicide. About 25% of those who committed suicide suffered from psychotic disorders. Suicide is also committed by people with personality disorders involving accumulating difficulties and negative changes in their lives. The term 'personality disorder' refers to a mental health disorder wherein a person's abnormal personality traits adversely affect his or her life and social relationships. Concomitant illnesses, such as depression and substance abuse in particular, worsen the prognosis and increase the risk of suicide.

In Finland, there has been a reduction in mortality from suicide, from 1,500 in 1990 to approximately 1,000 in 2006. Improved diagnostic capabilities and better treatment are believed to have had a significant impact on the reduction of suicide. New-generation antidepressants are also believed to have a positive effect, even though there is no clear scientific evidence of this as yet. Data gathered in Finland show that maintenance treatment with antipsychotic medication significantly lowers the risk of suicide in patients suffering from psychosis.

## **Schizophrenia and schizoid disorders**

Classified as a psychosis, schizophrenia usually breaks out in early adulthood and occurs in both men and women. Psychosis refers to a mental disorder wherein an individual loses his or her sense of reality and finds it difficult to distinguish between what is real and what is fantasy. Schizophrenia is regarded as a severe mental illness affecting approximately one per cent of the Finnish population at one time or another in their lives. It is particularly common in young people and people of working age, as men typically succumb to it between the ages of 20 and 28 and women between 24 and 32. The causes of schizophrenia are far from unambiguous, and it is impossible to point to any single factor behind it. Schizophrenia is regarded as a disease of the brain affecting an individual's mental activity.

Brain damage caused by a lack of oxygen during pregnancy or birth may increase the risk of the outbreak of the disease. Another potential cause for the outbreak of schizophrenia is influenza during pregnancy. Owing to hereditary factors, schizoid patients are more vulnerable and prone to develop the disease under stress or in crises. Experiences during childhood and adolescence may lead to earlier onset of the disease or make it more severe. Young people prone to schizophrenia are often more sensitive in their relationships. This type of person is prone to develop symptoms of the disease when moving out of his or her childhood home, or starting to study or work in a new environment. The psychosis often also breaks out for the first time during the recruit stage in military service. Thus, schizophrenia develops as a combined result of biological susceptibility and various stress factors.

Schizophrenia in young people would seem to be on the decrease in Finland. However, it is typically the early stages of the psychosis or symptoms predicting a psychotic break and affecting an individual's ability to function that are detected in adolescence. The most common predictive symptoms include anxiety, depression, mood swings, apathy, a shortened attention span, work-related difficulties, sleeping problems, lack of appetite, weakening of ability to function, and social withdrawal. The person may also become more impulsive or aggressive.

Additionally, young persons may suffer from a schizotypal disorder, involving inappropriate emotions, strange behaviour or appearance, or worsening relations with other people. They may also experience cognitive disorders of varying degrees, such as unusual beliefs or vague, stereotypic thinking. Schizoid personality, on the other hand, is halfway between a personality disorder and a schizophrenic psychosis. It is characterised by abnormal cognitive processes and emotions that resemble schizophrenia proper. The emotions of an individual suffering from schizoid personality may be cold or inappropriate and involve inappropriate laughter, for example. His or her behaviour is strange or unusual, and the patient may also suffer from paranoid or otherwise abnormal thoughts. The patient's speech may be incoherent or repetitive, and he or she may also show a superficial and stereotypic interest in religion, philosophy, or abstract topics. Any psychotic-level symptoms are at most temporary and passing.

### **The psychotropic medication most commonly used by young people**

In the treatment of mental health disorders in young people, comprehensive psychosocial rehabilitation has a key role, and, unlike for adults, medication plays a secondary role. The occurrence of harmful side effects is also more common in the treatment of young people. The SSRI medication used in the treatment of depression and anxiety has been found to increase the risk of self-destructive behaviour in adolescents in particular. This type of medication can be used by adolescents only under supervision.

Alprazolam is a benzodiazepine drug used to relieve anxiety and excessive worrying, especially if these are accompanied by depression. It also is used in the treatment of panic disorders. Alprazolam is addictive and must not be mixed with alcohol. Its side effects include tiredness, sleeplessness, depression, agitation, and aggression.

Suitable medication for adolescents suffering a first episode of psychosis consists of neuroleptics, such as haloperidol or risperidon, which are also used to treat attention deficit disorder in children. The medication should always be phased out but only after a long period with no symptoms. After the first episode of psychosis, the medication should be continued for at least two years.

### **3.7. Research data on the development of children and adolescents and the risk factors involved**

Studies conducted in England have contributed significantly to our understanding of how the innate qualities of a child and the environment interact in quite a unique way. Naturally, the genetic inheritance of a child has an impact on his or her development, but the interactive and physical environments also play an important part.

Children are particularly sensitive in receiving stimuli from their environment. Depending on biological factors, children also shape their environment and seek stimuli differently. Combined with a maturation environment where favourable factors prevail, a child's inborn sensitivity may promote exceptionally positive development. On the other hand, in combination with unfavourable factors in the growing environment, it is decidedly a risk factor in an individual's development.

The most important risk factors in the development of children that emerge in long-term studies are the quality of parenting skills and parents' educational philosophy. Five factors have been found to be linked with antisocial development in a parent-child relationship: lack of supervision, inconsistent and harsh punishments, marital conflicts, rejection of the child, and lack of interest or participation in the activities of the child. Factors that seriously endanger the development of a child in general include neglect and abuse, family violence, and parents' substance abuse and mental health problems.

Experience of early losses and divorce have an adverse effect on children's development, and children living with a single parent, for example, have a significantly higher risk of developing a psychological illness. Furthermore, they also have a higher risk of substance abuse and attempting suicide. With boys, the risk of mortality is also higher. In comparison to the majority of the population, the risk of premature death is many times greater for a child or adolescent who has been taken into care. The risk is equally high for boys and girls. Long-term institutional care started at an early age is

clearly another risk factor in the development of a child, and it has been found to make parenting later in life more difficult for the individual in question.

Parenting skills do not remain constant; instead, they are dependent on the family situation and the parents' psychological resources. Outside the family, the current circumstances in society, the effects of which the parents transmit to their children, also have a significant impact on parenting skills. Poverty has been shown to be a risk factor in the development and marginalisation of children and adolescents. According to a long-term study, parents who are experiencing financial difficulties become impulsive and rough with their children and are not able to provide them with the support they need. Additionally, fathers' unemployment has been found to have a correlation with their sons' increased substance abuse. Their school performance also suffers.

Group sizes in day-care centres and schools influence the development of children. Large groups may lead to a poor classroom atmosphere, which, in turn, may lead to an increase in psychological disorders. It is therefore not surprising that after the home, the most important factor in the development of a child is school. As children grow, their social networks outside school become more extensive, and friendship assumes an increasingly important role.

The great significance of early childhood experiences in terms of the development of a child is explained by the fact that a child's brain is extremely adaptable. Early experiences modify the structure of the brain, and these changes have a tendency to become permanent. During early childhood, a child also creates internal behavioural patterns, which have an effect on how the child interprets interpersonal communication. Painful experiences lead to the emergence of protective mechanisms, which then prevent the child from having new experiences. This is why insecure children often behave in a manner that creates a negative response in parents, teachers, and other children. Negative responses reinforce children's negative behavioural patterns.

Serious, long-term school bullying has been found in many studies to have a connection with symptoms of depression, marginalisation, and feelings of hopelessness. The consequences of bullying may follow the victim well into adulthood. The symptoms displayed by a child who has been subjected to constant harassment are similar to those displayed by a victim of violence or a person who has witnessed a violent incident. Additionally, a constantly bullied child may adjust his or her internal model for interpreting interaction in such a manner that the child becomes sensitised to interpret any type of interaction as negative. This is why it is extremely difficult for a bullied child to eliminate the situation on his or her own.

Research shows that putting a stop to the bullying is not enough; special attention must be paid to the treatment of potential mental health problems. What also needs to be understood is that the problem is in the community, not the individual. The situation becomes even more difficult if the victims are branded as psychologically or socially disturbed and are transferred to another group while the rest in the community continue as before. So, bullying is clearly a group- and community-level problem, which usually involves a twisted power struggle. Bullying can be used to seek status, popularity, or attention within a group. The so-called silent condoners or bystanders are the ones who

allow the bullying to go on. The bully does what his or her audience allow him or her to do.

### **3.7.1. Explanatory models for juvenile delinquency**

There have been numerous attempts to find explanatory models for juvenile delinquency. The attempts have focused, for example, on the individual level, psychosocial dimensions, and the relationship between the individual and society. One of the most recent explanatory models is the viewpoint of cultural criminology, where the object of study is the relationship between human societies, crimes, and crime control. This model also attempts to enhance our understanding of the individual and the cultural meanings of committing a criminal act in a certain historical context. As this phenomenon is perceived differently by youth and adults, this approach emphasises young people's own views of crime, which otherwise are in danger of being ignored by adults.

According to a National Research Institute of Legal Policy publication, the explanatory models that attempt to shed light on the sociological causes of crime are the strain theory, social control theory, social learning theory, and labelling theory. The strain theory emphasises the conflict between an individual's aims and the means for reaching them as one of the underlying causes of crime. This model explains the criminal acts committed by adolescents in relation to their poor social status, poor economic prospects, and the various negative experiences they face in the course of their lives. These negative experiences may relate to violence, various types of loss, feelings of injustice, frustration, or changes in their lives (such as the termination of a friendship, relationship problems, or moving house). Feelings of injustice may also arise from the fact that the media offer everybody the same ideals of prosperity and success, while financial, regional, and social differentiation make it impossible for many young people to attain these ideals. There is another explanatory model related to the strain theory, according to which subcultures may develop their own systems of values and morality, based on crime and violence. Just as in the strain theory, here the underlying cause may be frustration brought about the marginalised status of one's own reference group.

According to the social control theory, the risk of crime increases in a situation where an individual's social ties to his or her community are severed. In this situation, efficient social control is aimed outside the individual, at the other operators in his or her community. To understand this theory fully, we need to make a distinction between official and unofficial social control. Official control refers to the norms of society, from school rules to the penal code. Unofficial or informal control is more vague, but it still pervades all activities. The social support and control provided by one's friends or parents is an example of unofficial social control.

According to the social learning theory, criminal behaviour is learned through direct or indirect interaction with the society around us, via social networks, the media, and the Internet, for example. Learning refers to both the techniques of committing a criminal act and the motives, attitudes, and justification related to it.

According to the labelling theory, the motives behind a criminal act and its justification are affected by an individual or group being labelled somehow deviant. This label may

adversely affect the individual's identity and perception of the self, as well as the individual's social status at school or in the labour market. This may result in the individual becoming marginalised, which, in turn, increases the likelihood of him or her committing a criminal act.

Models for the psychosocial development of criminality are based on long-term studies, wherein the development of the same individuals is monitored from childhood to adulthood. Researchers have been especially interested in violent crime. Like the risk factors related to the development of a child, the risk factors in the development of a criminal relate to the personal qualities of the child, family factors, school-related risks, the individual's circle of friends, and the influence of the environment at large (as in the living environment, the media environment, and society in general). Of the factors related to the child, the ones that are commonly mentioned include neurological damage, a strong temperament, hyperactivity and impulsiveness, fearlessness, irritability, aggressiveness, behaviour problems that manifest themselves as defiance, and learning difficulties.

The mother's diet, smoking, substance abuse, or stress during pregnancy may affect the child's health and produce symptoms even in the long term. Children whose mothers smoked during pregnancy are more likely to display antisocial behaviour or suffer from attention deficit disorders. Birth complications resulting in neurological problems may have an indirect effect on criminal development through learning difficulties, for example. The mother's age is also a factor, and there is a connection, for example, between teen pregnancy and the child's later chronic behaviour problems and criminal behaviour.

Within the family, the same factors that are harmful to a child's development in general are the ones that predict the child having a criminal record later in life. Factors that are harmful to a child's development include a cruel upbringing, rejection, neglect, parents' substance abuse and mental health problems, and family violence. Adult perpetrators often have experiences of having been seriously mistreated in their childhood. These experiences are often underreported: according to studies, some 40% of victims do not report documented assaults. The explanation offered for a mistreated child developing into a mistreating adult is trauma. The individual undergoes a change, and the victim becomes an attacker; the frightened child becomes a frightening adult.

A divorce as such does not increase the risk of a child becoming a criminal. Still, the risk of violent, repeated crime has been found to be twice as high for men whose parents have divorced. The corresponding risk is eightfold for men whose mother was a single parent at the time of the child's birth. Fatherlessness is a recurrent theme in many studies exploring the factors behind violent behaviour of men. However, the link between a child's behavioural problems and subsequent criminality is dependent on the family circumstances before the divorce and after it. Serious conflicts within the family and parents' antisocial behaviour are clearly more significant factors than divorce is.

An unstable family situation; parents changing partners; or negative life events such as accidents, losses, or parents' unemployment may lead to the development of behavioural problems and subsequent criminality. Instability may be created by frequent

moves, for example. It has also been found that frequent changes of custody or placement during childhood have an adverse effect on a child's development and make it more difficult for the child to build safe attachment relationships.

The attachment relationship theory suggests that an attachment relationship in childhood is followed by similar relationships in adult life. According to this theory, a child becomes safely attached to his or her parent when the parent interacts with the child tenderly and warmly in a predictable manner. A lack of such experiences leads to an insecure attachment model. In this kind of model, an individual's perception of him- or herself may be negative, and the child may feel that he or she is not worth caring for. Neither does the child feel able to turn to anyone else or show his or her needs or feelings. This kind of situation involves serious development-related risks, such as an increased risk of self-destructive behaviour and marginalisation, as well as inability to feel empathy. Attachment relationship disorders typically span generations, leading to a situation within the family where the disorder is considered normal behaviour in close relationships.

It is alarming if a child learns that certain feelings cannot be expressed without the parent responding aggressively, or if the child cannot trust his or her own observations of the environment – i.e., if the child is lied to or manipulated. This type of environment when one is growing up may lead to a distorted picture of close relationships. This can manifest itself in adulthood as psychopathic behaviour, wherein a seemingly adaptable individual has a twisted relationship with the people around him or her, resorting to pretence and lies.

Not all children exposed to risk factors in the environment where they grow up become criminals, however. The child may be protected by his or her individual qualities and positive life events, such as performing well in school, finding a good hobby, or therapeutic intervention. Additionally, the child may be protected by a safe attachment relationship with someone other than his or her parents, such as another relative or a foster parent. The child's circle of friends can also have a positive impact on his or her development.

### **3.7.2. Why would a young person commit evil acts?**

On the basis of research, it seems that the essential risk factors involved in the development of criminality are quite well known. When one investigates the factors underlying a school shooting, the picture is somewhat different, as a school killer is not always a marginalised or aggressive young person. Compared to fistcuffs, for example, the violence in these extreme cases is often totally different in nature. Instead of feelings running high, the violence is based on meticulous planning. In some cases, it has been shown that the perpetrator bore a grudge against at least some of the victims and the shootings have been interpreted as an act of revenge committed on behalf of an individual or a community. Innocent bystanders who just happened to walk in or even friends have been killed in many school shootings. The representative of an institution, such as a head teacher, may also become a victim. Thus, a victim may not necessarily be a specific target of the act; instead, he or she might be just part of a mission aimed at the killing of as many people as possible.

People are constantly faced with situations where they have to exercise their conscience, to make a judgement between good and evil. In a situation such as this, an individual reflects on his or her thoughts and actions from the viewpoint of another person or a moral system. Most people identify with the common good and generally know when they are acting rightly or wrongly. The perpetrator of a violent crime may also know he or she has acted wrongly and regret it. Most school killers idolised earlier school shootings. For a young person to be able to kill several age peers and adults in his or her own school, he or she must have identified with a moral code according to which the act is in some way justified. Evil has become a good, desirable, and heroic thing. When a young person idolises evil, he or she has undergone a moral inversion, or, in other words, the young person has embraced an inverted moral system. The question arises of how and why a young person embraces evil.

Every person has an individual temperament and personality, which are affected by the maturation environment in particular. We learn and develop through conditioning and reinforcement, which means that our brain develops for what it is used for. Excessive computer use and exposure to violent material, as well as the resulting lack of social contacts, may lead to a distorted view of the world. In this situation, the difference between a violent computer game and reality may become blurred.

In social learning, an individual identifies with a person with a stronger or higher status than him- or herself, the first such people being the individual's parents and later ones being a teacher, a coach, a friend, a film star, a sports hero, and/or a community. In extreme circumstances, a child can identify even with the person abusing him or her, or a violent custodian. When a person is overcome by fear, he or she may identify with the perpetrator rather than the victim in order to cope with the situation.

Social interaction is all about people caring for one another, which entails having the ability and resources to be considerate toward others, the ability to wish others well, and the ability to act in a constructive way. Part of caring is the ability to feel guilt and to take responsibility for one's actions. In recent years, psychiatric research has focused on mentalisation, an increasingly important element in the healthy psychological development of an individual, which refers to taking an interest in another person's mental processes, feelings, and experiences. Mentalisation is what makes us human, as it enables an individual to reflect on what is going on in another person's mind, his or her intentions and emotions, and the individual's part in the other person's suffering. If this interest in another human being is absent or is not fully developed, a result may be a disturbed view of the world, difficulties in social interaction, and violent behaviour.

Our ability for mentalisation is something that develops only in interaction with other human beings, and the early childhood years are crucial in terms of this development. When a parent is there for the child and shows an interest in the child, this development takes place of its own accord and without special attention being paid to it. Together with the parent, the child learns to identify various feelings in him- or herself and other people. The child learns how moods and emotions interact between two human beings, how to share emotions, and how to become understood. The child also learns the distinction between him- or herself and another person, as well as that between the real and the imaginary. As yet, there is, however, not enough data on the circumstances in

which mentalisation abilities that have already developed may become damaged. According to research, the ability for mentalisation develops throughout life, but it is particularly vulnerable to damage as a result of rejection or cruelty experienced in childhood or adolescence. Additionally, certain mental health disorders, such as depression, borderline personality disorder, or a psychosis, may be linked to poor mentalisation ability.

Defective mentalisation ability may result in a young person identifying with evil and, simultaneously, a community of evil. The identification may be caused by the young person becoming distanced from the community he or she lives in, such as a school. The young person no longer cares about the community, and he or she feels that the community does not care about him or her either. This young person seeks other communities, where he or she can find objects for identification, feel part of a group, and contribute to the community. In a community such as this, a young person may believe he or she will gain admiration and publicity by committing an act such as a school shooting.

Our new perception of evil acts and the idolisation of the committing of evil acts can be explained in part by cultural factors, such as the increasing plurality and individualisation of society. As it becomes increasingly difficult to agree on common criteria for what is right and what is wrong, or what is good and what is evil, we may start looking for morality within ourselves, our feelings, and the media environment. This means that the responsibility for the creation of an identity rests more and more often on the shoulders of a young individual. In extreme cases, an evil act may be construed as a means of self-expression, even a solution or an answer.

The tension between good and evil is also an important issue in religions. Religious phenomena may involve fascinating, earthshaking, and sometimes even frightening experiences of holiness. The essential point here is the extreme character of these experiences. In secularised cultures and societies, people frequently seek extreme experiences in, for example, sports, which often involve danger, overcoming one's fear, and similar extreme experiences. If this kind of channel or hobby is not available, a young person may end up looking for the excitement of danger and passionate, extreme feelings in evil phenomena. The young person may regard a particular phenomenon as a promise of a mysterious power reminiscent of the holiness of a bygone era. Thus, interest in evil may be deeply rooted in our culture, a phenomenon wherein a young person experiences something that is larger than life and earthshaking. A young person may not feel drawn to good or doing good, as these things do not always seem to be meaningful enough or are not accompanied by the kind of publicity that makes one feel powerful.

### **3.8. The Internet, Web communities, and games**

There are various angles from which to view children and adolescents' relationship with the Internet. Sociologists focus on the fact that for those youth who use it often, the Internet offers a channel for social participation and information on things to which they otherwise would not have access or be interested in. Young people not only use the Web as a source of information more often than older people do; it also comes more naturally to

them. Thus, a medium that young people find interesting provides them with information, familiarises them with the values of their society, and offers them a channel for social participation and communal behaviour even when communication between generations does not work well or is non-existent. The Internet also provides us with new opportunities for education, new encounters, and the availability of support for young people.

There is a lot of variation in how intensive Web communities are. In most cases, using them is easy and harmless but time-consuming. Examples of these communities include Facebook, Twitter, MySpace, Habbo Hotel, YouTube, and Wikipedia, all of which have millions of users. There might also be a certain amount of defiance and testing of one's limits involved in the use of these global communities, and also smaller, local ones, by children and youth.

The use of the Internet is not without its problems. Several studies have been conducted within the EU area concerning children and youth as Internet users, participants, and operators. These studies have focused on how they incite people to commercialism, aggressive or self-destructive behaviour, pornography, racism, or misanthropy. The Internet offers an opportunity to join local or international communities that embrace these things. If the use of the Internet is excessive and other social relationships are few, the risks increase significantly. Web communities have capitalised on the special qualities of this new medium effectively, so addictive relationships are created easily.

The means suggested by the latest research for minimisation of the harmful effects of the Internet are along the same lines. At the societal level, it is hoped that legislation might prove effective in controlling content providers, whereas the media education given in schools and the guidance provided for parents are aimed at young Internet users. Owing to the network's international nature, controlling the Internet is difficult. Therefore, inappropriate content must be combated by emphasising information and individual responsibility. Most researchers warn against categorical rules and regulations, as they only serve to widen the gap between generations, among other things.

As digital games grow in popularity, they have become a subject for research. The roots of game research lie in the games people played in historical cultures, as well as the cultural history of games such as chess. The development psychological and social meanings of games have been studied in the fields of educational sciences, psychology, and social psychology. Along with the advances made in digital technology, researchers have started to study games from the perspectives of information technology and planning sciences.

Studies of the relationship between violent games and violent behaviour have often yielded different conclusions on the harmful effects, usefulness, and meanings of games. There are political tensions in this field of research, and research data have been used to justify legal action to limit the playing of games or to defend its current status. In the U.S., numerous claims for damages have led to a situation where views have become polarised in public discussion on games. In Sweden too, there has been heated public discussion on the effects of games. In Finland, the discussion has not become quite as polarised. Here, the researchers to a large extent agree that children must be protected from violent game entertainment aimed at adults, for example.

So far, there has been little research into the practical utilisation and effects of PEGI, the Pan-European Game Information system. Another subject in need of further study is the game-playing habits of children and youth of varying ages. For example, it would seem that in studies, 10-year-old boys with a poor relationship with their parents are more vulnerable to the effects of games than are girls in the same age group or slightly older boys. There is no certainty as to the direction of the cause-and-effect relationships, however. Some studies indicate that the excessive playing of games that focus one-sidedly on violence may reinforce violent patterns of thought or action. When assessing the effects of violent games, we should bear in mind that the player also actively creates meanings for the game. Focusing on, for example, social or strategic dimensions, the player may be able to see through the surface structure of the game, and violence may lose meaning altogether.

### **3.9. The connection between the media environment and violent behaviour**

The effects of communication – and media violence in particular – on children and youth has been studied since the 1920s. Not only educators but also advertisers and producers of propaganda have been interested in the effects of the media, which are generally believed to be significant. Traditionally, educators have been the most suspicious of newcomers in the media. In terms of violence, this has applied to films, comics, television, video, and now the Internet and computer games. A medium that the adult population does not know well is bound to cause concern.

Originally it was believed that the effects of the new media would be extremely strong, and the hypodermic syringe theory was born. According to this theory, receivers of media content would unquestioningly accept the message conveyed by the media and change their opinions and behaviour accordingly. The other extreme in the theory was reached in the U.S. in the 1960s with the so-called catharsis theory. This theory suggests that viewers who watch violent films or television programmes undergo an emotional cleansing as a result of watching these programmes. They do not need to engage in violent behaviour in reality, because they can sublimate their need to use violence into the experience of receiving the programme. Both schools of thought still have their supporters, but the main focus of research is elsewhere nowadays.

As our knowledge of the effects of the media has increased, so our views of them have become more complicated. The main line seems to follow the view that it is extremely rare for media content to have a direct and immediate effect on the behaviour of the recipients. There have been a few isolated but well-publicised cases where such effects have been observed, especially in children and youth who use violent media excessively and one-sidedly, and whose other social networks are weak and non-stimulating. Most receivers of media content compare their media experiences to the environment they live in and media content alone does not change their behaviour or opinions.

However, repetitive and polyphonic media suggest and create an agenda in the mind of the receiver. The receiver finds the things and phenomena conveyed by the media important and feels the need to comment on them. While concentrating on this, the receiver ignores many other things as if by accident. The media alone cannot define the

receiver's comments; instead, the receiver brings his or her life experience, environment, and knowledge into the process.

This has led to a situation where people's opinions on distant countries and people are based more on media content than on their opinions on things they can easily check in their environment. They are forced to base their opinions solely on images of distant places and people created by the media. Similarly, children or youth who are often exposed to violent material may start to see violence as a way to solve problems, either for themselves or in their environment. This effect is multiplied if a child lives in an environment with many risks. For example, a child who has been subjected to family violence interprets human interaction differently from a child who has grown up in a safe environment.

Conducting both laboratory-type and statistical research, experts have found links between excessive consumption of violent media content and increased aggressiveness. Friendliness and the willingness to help other people are diminished, and the young person becomes inured to violence, which enables him or her to watch ever more brutal violence. The person's views of what is right and what is wrong may also become blurred. Individuals have a tendency to end up watching exclusively violent scenes particularly if their environment or life situation is difficult. For example, games that seemingly contain a lot of violence may, for the players, promote the communal and interactive sides of a subculture. The various therapeutic and hate communities active on the Internet operate in many dimensions but follow their own sets of rules.

The basic problem in studying the effects of media on individuals is that even study of the short-term effects of violence is possible only in laboratory-type conditions that are somehow unnatural by default. Conducting research into the long-term effects is more difficult still. We constantly experience, see, and receive various influences both consciously and subconsciously, and it is simply impossible for researchers to isolate all influences from outside the media entirely.

Instead of dealing with structural violence or analysing the causal relationships of and reasons for violence, the media, to a large extent, just show us aggression and individual acts of violence. Research has also shown that excessive reporting of violent incidents may create, in the minds of the general public, the illusion that we are living in a much more frightening society than we actually are. Thus, at issue is also the nature of media content and how it is selected.

There is a link to both terrorism and school shootings here. Individual events are widely publicised, and the perpetrators are consciously seeking publicity. Therefore, the existence of the media as such can act as both an incentive and a demonstration of how to commit these acts. The increasing significance of the Internet has created global communities with their own rules and ethics: their sympathy is on the side of not the victims but the members of the community who share the same ideals. Often, communities even compete with each other in the significance of their acts. Videos and messages that were once removed from the Internet appear again every time a new school shooting or act of terrorism is committed. In the investigation of school

shootings, many killers were found to have consciously sought publicity, but it is difficult to establish a direct connection between media content and the shootings.

### **3.10. Crisis communications in the era of the Internet**

In conjunction with the natural disaster in Asia in 2004, it transpired that most ministry and official Web sites as well as other public information channels were unidirectional. Phone lines were jammed, and even if a citizen managed to get through, the message he or she was conveying was not passed on. Neither did the Web sites provide a column for citizens who wanted to learn either about the consequences of the event or, for example, where they could get after-care for their injuries. The basic idea behind the official information services was that the media would act as a buffer between the authorities and the citizens. The event also revealed that public information services for citizens are usually unidirectional, from the authorities to the citizens. In less than five years, a noticeable change has taken place – at least formally. Today, the Web sites of all Finnish ministries and other authorities feature a link that citizens can use to contact the relevant authority directly.

The problem was not solved in its entirety, however, as was seen in conjunction with the events in Kauhajoki. A person who had engaged in online discussion with the perpetrator had, before the school shootings on 18 September 2009, left a message on the police Web site, to say he was concerned about the perpetrator and his gun. The message was anonymous and did not identify the perpetrator by name, but it did provide the police with a link to the perpetrator's profile on a Web discussion forum. The anonymous message was overlooked, however, partly because, owing to virus protection, the official dealing with the message on the following day did not have access to the Web site linked to. After the school shootings, the National Police Commissioner received e-mail reminding him of the earlier message. This message too was overlooked.

When asked about this, the police commented that hundreds of people contact the police in situations like this, and that most e-mail messages are either irrelevant or even inappropriate. This is undoubtedly true, as research in Finland and abroad clearly shows that the increase in opportunities for contacting the police lowers the threshold for sending a message. Still, the police should have a system for handling and analysing Internet messages from the general public. This system should remain operational also in crisis situations. This was one of the aims of the crisis communications instructions ratified in 2007.

It has been alleged that two friends of the perpetrator had sent the police a message, saying they were concerned about the perpetrator and his gun. This message was never sent to the police, however.

### **3.11. Identification of young people's problems and cross-generation communication**

Prediction of school shootings has proved impossible, but, with the benefit of hindsight, it has in many cases been possible to find indications of the perpetrator planning the act beforehand and dropping hints on his intentions to people around him. In FBI reports and elsewhere, these hints are referred to as leaks, as described above. In school

shootings both in Finland and abroad, it has turned out that it was other young people who had the most up-to-date information on leaks and made the most accurate guesses on the perpetrator's potential intentions.

Not only leaks but also school shootings as a phenomenon raise questions on cross-generation communication or, more precisely, the lack of it. Even though Finland has an extensive system of indicators and statistics in place, that still fails to point out all relevant details and problems in young people's daily life. According to well-being and youth studies, what we need is information-gathering methods of a type that can record young people's experiences and hopes that remain outside statistics, surveys, monitoring, and other official methods of gathering data.

In recent years, the promotion of cross-generation dialogue has been emphasised in Finland. In 2007, the government ratified the Development Programme for Child and Youth Policy, which was prepared by an extensive team of experts. The Youth Act of 2006 obliges authorities to provide all citizens aged 29 and younger with opportunities to participate in the handling of local and regional matters. The new Child Welfare Act, for its part, emphasises the importance of the social inclusion of children and listening to what they have to say. Listening to what children have to say also has a prominent position in the government's Policy programme for the well-being of children, youth and families.

In practice, the acquisition of silent information on the everyday life of Finnish youth is hampered by the fact that, because of problems in interaction and a lack of trust, this information is generationally differentiated. The flow of information in various institutions has been found to be hindered by the diversity of secrecy regulations and, in particular, difficulties in the interpretation thereof. Furthermore, the flow of information between various institutions has its own difficulties. Examples of this include the flow of information between school and youth work, as well as the differences between official information and information provided by the general public.

According to various youth studies, the status of Finnish youth is poor in cross-generation, everyday decision-making, at both local and national level. In the 2008 Youth Barometer, young people were asked whether they felt they could really have their say in matters concerning their municipality of residence. Only one fifth of them felt they could participate sufficiently, while 42% were of the opinion that they could not make an impact in practice. This was in spite of the fact that, according to the Youth Barometer, their eagerness to participate in decision-making is not diminishing – far from it.

Their opinions on the attitudes of the decision-makers in their municipality or city towards young people as co-operators do not seem to be very flattering, either. One in six felt that decision-makers regarded young people as potential discussion partners or decision-makers in relation to all or almost all matters. One in 10 was of the opinion that young people are not taken seriously in decisions on any matters. Accordingly, we need to pay special attention to both the factors hindering young people's participation in decision-making and actual obstacles to this, such as the attitudes of grown-ups, which can be considered a major one. The frustration experienced by young people when faced with these difficulties in making their voices heard does not necessarily lead

them to look for alternative channels of participation in decision-making. Quite the contrary, as a matter of fact.

All too often, young people are left on their own with their problems, which often involve negative emotions. For example, studies of experiences of racism show that young people seldom share their experiences of segregation with their parents or even their friends. According to these studies, young people would rather turn to other adults than their parents for advice if such a person is available. The studies also show that young people often find it easier to discuss their problems with their friends than with their parents.

According to a comparative Nordic study, Finnish children and youth have fewer contacts with adults than Norwegian or Swedish children and youth do. Additionally, Finnish children and youth's opinions of their parents and adults in general are more critical than those in our neighbouring countries. According to a study on school communities, violent behaviour and mental health problems are partly caused by insufficient social capital, which is often accompanied by lack of inter-generation trust and interaction. The 2009 Youth Barometer shows social confidence to be unequally distributed, with those youth whose parents lack a vocational qualification clearly displaying less confidence in their contacts with other people. The effect of this on the youth is as strong as their own level of education.

We know quite a lot about the complicated relationships between the problems facing young people in Finland, such as the link between depression and delinquent behaviour. Still, the comprehensive prevention and treatment of these problems, as well as the open flow of information, is not as structured as it could be. An example here is multi-profession student welfare work, which in conjunction with the investigation of the Jokela school shootings was found to have room for development. Official information is not stored in a single database, and the local information on young people that remains outside official channels – in civic organisations, for example – is not utilised effectively enough. Our picture of young people's problems may remain scattered and kaleidoscopic, and there is a real risk of information on, for instance, young people's everyday lives and relationships being overlooked.

In the Kauhajoki school shootings, the perpetrator's close friends and schoolmates had some clues as to the perpetrator's everyday problems, which he had told them about or which had surfaced during their time spent together. These young people knew the perpetrator had a gun, and he had hinted at his intentions, even if an offhand manner and later downplayed. His friends had been concerned about the gun and told him as much. This information was never passed on to grown-ups, however. Neither did any of the adults who were close to the perpetrator have an idea that he had sought help from municipal mental health services a couple of months prior to the school shootings. The student health care services staff at the perpetrator's school were likewise unaware of this piece of information.

In an FBI report on school shootings, the term 'code of silence' is used to refer to the phenomenon of young people's unwillingness to share with adults information that might facilitate prevention or early intervention. This is explained by the fact that young

people do not feel that cross-generation relationships are safe or confidential enough, or they may feel that sharing the information with adults might have an adverse effect on their status in the community. Breaking the code of silence is crucial for prevention of acts of violence that have already proceeded to the planning stage, which is clearly shown by the fact that in most of the incidents in the U.S. that were prevented, the hint was submitted by a young person. With reference to this, a study commissioned by the Finnish Youth Research Society stated that, in addition to the security plans in schools, we should also endeavour to move the entire school culture in a direction more conducive to the social inclusion of youth and cross-generation dialogue. This might help us to break the code of silence, both in traditional communication and online. This means we should try to encourage more trustful relations between young people and adults in a way that would be identifiable as such also by young people.

### **3.12. Defining communality**

A community is made up of people who have something in common. This common thing might be, for example, membership in a family, tribe, or nation. A common goal may also be the unifying factor behind a community. Membership in a community can be natural, compulsory, or voluntary. A family is an example of a natural community. The membership of, for example, a municipality or state may be compulsory. Voluntary communities include NGOs and parishes. Different communities play different parts in a person's life.

Membership in a community is an important factor for any individual and his or her development and life. Communality is based on man's innate need for interaction with other human beings. A child does not develop into a social individual unless his or her interaction and contact with his or her mother and other educators has a sound basis. Family is the foundation on which our community, communality, and social skills are based. In addition to family and relatives, friends are important for a human being, as we have the need to share our joys and sorrows with someone. Additionally, children and youth form groups with others their age in playgroups, play communities, and school. An individual grows up, develops, and functions in a community and a group.

Those who share an ideology or have a similar set of values or beliefs join together to form churches or political parties, for example. People also join together to look after their interests through NGOs, interest groups, or movements. While studying, a young person is a member of a school community and a circle of friends. Likewise, we are part of a community at work. Hobbies and leisure activities also bring people together in sports clubs, for example. Alongside the development of interactive media, our sense of community has gradually started to change. People move and travel more frequently than before and also are often active in various Web communities. Communality has become more global and, simultaneously, more differentiated.

Those participating in the activities of the community feel a sense of unity, which is essential to any well-functioning community. The identifying features of the development and realisation of a communal spirit include the presence of people, dialogue between individuals, time spent together, staying in a shared space often, and the birth of a common tradition. What is necessary for the development of a communal

spirit and communality is the kind of interaction wherein an individual can feel he or she is accepted and valuable. An ideal community accepts and tolerates the differences between individuals and does not frown upon individuality.

The members of such a community trust and respect each other in different ways and to a varying degree. Those who enjoy the confidence of the community are elected to represent it as elected officials, for example. This accumulation of confidence can be compared to the accumulation of property, and it is often referred to as social or human capital, in contrast to material capital. The use of social capital is ultimately use of power within a community. Accordingly, those who wish to gain power in a community endeavour to act in the best interests of the community, thereby gaining the social confidence of the members. Membership in various NGOs brings additional publicity, which, in turn, increases the community's confidence in a person who performs his or her duties well.

As a concept, a community is not the same as a society, which is more like an entity of formal, public economy-related organisations. A community is made up of people. A state can, however, also be considered a community, in the sense that its foundation is a people living in a certain area. There is a theory suggesting that communal spirit and team spirit are the binding force behind all communities and societies. At its most extreme, this phenomenon creates an us-against-them situation, which, of course, is all about attitudes toward strangers, aliens, or other nationalities in general. Historically, this attitude has been useful in terms of the survival of the community, leading to the birth of the concept of self-defence. This attitude still manifests itself in wars, the current 'war' against terrorism in particular: our side is good and the other side is evil. So, in addition to its positive qualities, communality does have its dark side – and it is sometimes very dark indeed, as witnessed by the Holocaust during the Second World War.

### **3.13. Young people's leisure cultures and the new communality**

As society develops, organisations where people simply spend time together are often replaced by official organisations, leading to interaction that is more official in nature and based on professional specialisation. Commerce and doing business has actually become a new way for people to meet, which can be seen in the increasing number of jobs available in the service sector. In young people's lives, this phenomenon is represented by educational institutions. The organisation where family members spend time together – the home – is replaced by an official academic organisation – the school – where the parents' role as an authority is now assumed by experts or teachers. In every school community, each class of students creates a communal phenomenon of its own, where young people can learn how to acquire social status. The better the integration from the home community into the status hierarchy of school and a new role succeeds, the easier it is for a young person to integrate into the new community and find gratification at school.

The greater the difficulties a young person faces in trying to integrate into a school community and acquire a status among his or her schoolmates, the greater the risk of that student becoming alienated and being left outside this basic community. If a young

person becomes a target for bullying or is publicly humiliated, he or she may experience feelings of extreme alienation. Losing face, becoming a target for bullying, and being humiliated in public may wound a young person to the very core of his or her being. It can also lead to the individual's integration into another, possibly subcultural or anti-establishment community. If a young person cannot fulfil his or her need for social interaction in a so-called normal community, the young person is likely to start looking for another community.

A young person may become a member of another type of community even if he or she is performing reasonably well at school. This new type of communality can also take the form of a Web community, for example. It may also be based on a different set of values and ideology, such as misanthropy fuelled by the idolisation of violence or of games that contain violence, or a preoccupation with guns. The more deeply a young person identifies with this set of values and ideology, the greater the chance that he or she will start acting in accordance with the new set of values. The commission of a radical act may be the final rite of passage into such a community. It also offers the person committing it immortality in the eyes of the community or, by extension, via the media.

The well-being and marginalisation of Finnish youth have been assessed on the basis of their integration into school and working life as well as the quality of their family relations. According to the Youth Barometer studies, young people consider lack of friends to be the most important factor behind marginalisation. They feel that, in terms of making it in everyday life, social skills are more important than participation in decision-making or cognitive abilities. These results highlight the importance of leisure as a significant factor in the well-being of Finnish youth.

It is difficult to reach young people and their everyday life, communality, social inclusion, or leisure activities through statistics or political guidance. Youth studies show that, in addition to the increased importance of leisure, the opportunities and environments available for the young's leisure time have multiplied and their active participation in leisure activities seems to accumulate. Those who are actively involved in NGOs, for example, are also active in other areas in their leisure time. The same goes for social networks, as those who often see their friends face to face also have an extensive social network online.

In spring 2009, the Finnish Youth Research Network and the Advisory Council for Youth Affairs conducted a survey on young people. According to the results, a change is clearly taking place in the communality of young people in their leisure time, such as in seeing their friends and parents. Even though good friendships are still regarded as the foundation for social well-being, Finnish youth see their friends less and less often. This change is particularly noticeable among young people on the verge of adulthood, between the ages of 15 and 19. By contrast, indirect communication with peer groups is, with the introduction of the Internet and mobile phones, on the increase. All told, young people's feelings of communality in terms of society, their municipality of residence, and leisure communities has been steadily declining during the 2000s. Additionally, it seems that the youth are less committed to these communities than before.

According to the survey, many young people feel they have few opportunities to participate in decision-making concerning leisure activities. Only about 10% feel they can really make an impact on which leisure activities are organised for them in their area. Youth in Northern Finland are the worst off in this respect. There is inequality in financial matters as well, as approximately one fifth say their participation in leisure activities is limited by their lack of money. This is caused by the fact that leisure services are increasingly provided by commercial enterprises and, accordingly, are not free of charge.

Young people are clearly less committed to NGO activities, which may have a bearing on their well-being. What is particularly noticeable is that 10–14-year-old boys and 20–24-year-old young men are less active in NGO activities. Additionally, the trend in NGOs is toward more free, project-style modes of operation. More than before, young people in NGOs increasingly want the organisations to accommodate their individual preferences and want to remain less committed. The decrease in participation in NGO activities was the greatest in the Helsinki metropolitan area, which is also an indication of the commercialisation and virtualisation of leisure activities. Commercialisation can be seen in the fact that nowadays shopping centres are the focal point for young people's leisure activities.

It has been suggested that a key factor in the reduction of school violence and, by extension, juvenile violence would be the provision of meaningful nurturing environments for young people also after the school day is over. 'Meaningful' here refers to a safe environment where young people are supported and inspired. In practice, this means more support for club and other hobby activities, as well as young people's autonomous and youth-culture-related activities. This is considered especially important in areas where resources for leisure activities are scarce. In urban environments, there are plenty of opportunities to pursue various hobbies, but in small communities the schools, NGOs, municipal and parish youth work organisations, and sports clubs have a key role in the arranging of leisure activities. At issue here is not just the quality of leisure activity environments and peer relationships but also the promotion of good inter-generation relations.

#### 4. THE CONDUCT OF THE MEDIA

Research reports were prepared on the events in Kauhajoki both in the University of Tampere and at the University of Helsinki. The study of the conduct of the media is mainly based on these research reports and a few newspaper and other articles.

The focus in the study was especially on the conduct of the media in the first few days after the incident. One report concentrated solely on the first 24 hours following the incident. Another covered the first 10 days and seven newspapers: *Helsingin Sanomat*, *Hufvudstadsbladet*, *Ilkka*, *Iltalehti*, *Ilta-Sanomat*, *Pohjalainen*, and *Kauhajoen Kunnallislehti*. Additionally, news and magazine programmes on all four television channels (YLE TV1, YLE TV2, MTV3, and Nelonen) during the week following the incident were analysed. The study also covered the Web versions of all the media mentioned above.

Both studies presented a comparison of the conduct of the media in Kauhajoki to the conduct of the media in connection with the Jokela school shootings. There were clear differences in what the reporting mainly emphasised, but in the two cases the extent of the coverage was approximately the same. In total, 1,166 newspaper stories (in seven newspapers) were published in the 10 days following the Kauhajoki incident, while the corresponding figure for the Jokela school shooting was 1,335 newspaper stories (in 10 newspapers) in three months. In both cases, most of the coverage was published in the week following the incident. After this, stories on the incidents were published only occasionally. This also means that the media did not pay much attention to the provision of after-care related to the incidents. On the whole, the Kauhajoki incident was covered least of all by *Ilkka*. This was a conscious decision on the part of the newspaper. *Helsingin Sanomat*, however, featured the Kauhajoki incident on its front page, along with a picture of the perpetrator. This was the first time since the early 2000s that the front page featured something other than advertisements. Back then, the news story was the 9/11 terror attacks in 2001.

One major difference between the coverage of the Jokela and Kauhajoki incidents seems to have been that in Jokela, all media – for the first time in the recent history of journalism in Finland – used their network services to publish the most recent information, following the principle ‘as much as possible and as soon as possible’. This created many problems among the editorial staff, as it was unclear who was responsible or in charge. In Kauhajoki – undoubtedly at least partly as a result of the criticism levelled at the coverage of the Jokela incident – the media, to some extent, took a step back. Naturally, material was published continuously on the Web, but the essential items were reserved for publication via the main medium. The fact that the distance between Kauhajoki and Helsinki is considerable could also be seen in two ways. On their way to Kauhajoki, media personnel had the time to work out their distribution of duties, so editorial command relationships were much clearer than in Jokela. Initially, field reporters were often less well informed of the overall picture than those back in the editorial office. For example, in the first stand-ups on the scene, the reporters simply repeated the information that had been relayed to them from Helsinki by phone.

On the whole, the corporations behind the operators in Kauhajoki were covered quite equally in the media. Among the police, publicity was shared equally by the National Police Commissioner, the National Bureau of Investigation, the situation command for police operations, the victim identification unit, and the PR officer. As the situation progressed, the National Police Commissioner, who had to deal with the widely publicised issue of the perpetrator's firearm permit, bore the brunt of the media attack while the role of local operators became less prominent. In addition to the police and the representatives of the Municipality of Kauhajoki and of the polytechnic, the vicar, the parish PR officer, and a representative of the Finnish Red Cross were involved. The Jokela incident was still fresh in people's minds, as witnessed by the fact that the youth work director of Tuusula Municipality was fourth on the list of operators to have received the most coverage. In the coverage of the Jokela incident, the victims were featured prominently. By comparison, in Kauhajoki the only representative of those involved in the incident was the maintenance man of the polytechnic, and even he disappeared from view after the second day. On the whole, the basic viewpoint in the media coverage was based on official information provided to the media by the authorities.

Table 1 shows the operators who received the most coverage. By far the most coverage during the first two days was received by the perpetrator, who featured prominently in every fourth story. In Jokela, the perpetrator was covered even more frequently, as he featured in four stories in 10. The differences between these two incidents levelled out during the following week. The Kauhajoki gunman received approximately the same amount of publicity as the Jokela school shooter, even though the Kauhajoki perpetrator's videos were not shown quite as frequently. This material was used most eagerly by the tabloids and the television channel Nelonen.

*Table 1 The operators who received the most coverage between 24 and 25 September 2008 in the media material on the Kauhajoki school shooting, as found in a study conducted at the University of Tampere (n=465)*

Gunman	113	Church	16
Police	63	Representative of another school	14
No actor speaking	47	Minister	14
Representative of the school	36	Child / young person	12
Other private person	21	School killer / threatener	12
Representative of state administration	18	Politician	12

Outside the traditional media, there occurred a phenomenon that is well documented in conjunction with the coverage of school shootings abroad: when a similar incident takes place, the Web material and groups – so-called hate and comfort groups – associated with previous school shootings become active again. Much of the video material related to the Jokela school killer was removed after the Jokela incident, but some of it was uploaded again in connection with the events in Kauhajoki. This type of cyclic activity is likely to occur in conjunction with various dramatic events in our network society in general.

The eagerness of different media to publish the perpetrator's name varied greatly. Initially, YLE was the least eager and Nelonen the most eager, but these differences evened out on the second day. The perpetrator was portrayed as a criminal, a victim of school bullying, and even a hero to certain Web communities, but the role of criminal was the most prominent. School bullying was not presented as the motive for the crime, but it could be interpreted in such a manner as to make the act somehow more understandable. The common features of Jokela and Kauhajoki were highlighted by showing pictures of both simultaneously that resembled each other as much as possible, and the Jokela incident was constantly linked with Kauhajoki in the coverage. For example, on the first day MTV3 kept repeating an insert showing children running for safety in Jokela. YLE, on the other hand, had an insert showing the Jokela gunman aiming and shooting at the viewer through a red frame in all its news broadcasts shown after 1pm on the day of the incident. What makes the YLE coverage interesting is that, although the company avoided excessive coverage of the gunman, it kept repeating an insert compiled from Jokela material.

Some differences between the coverage of the Kauhajoki and the Jokela gunman are presented in Table 2.

*Table 2 Comparison of news coverage of the Jokela and Kauhajoki gunmen and their acts, from a study conducted at the University of Tampere*

	<b>Jokela</b>	<b>Kauhajoki</b>
<b>General image of the gunman</b>	Strange, withdrawn, intelligent, academically successful. Admired school killers. Recently underwent a change.	Ordinary, inconspicuous. Average student, contradictory descriptions. Led a double life on the Web. The act came as a surprise.
<b>Gunman's relationship with friends</b>	No friends, victim of bullying and discrimination.	Victim of bullying, had friends nonetheless.
<b>Coverage of family</b>	The parents' occupations and active participation in social matters.	Next to nothing said about the family.
<b>Use of gunman's material</b>	Plentiful, used often.	Little material, a couple of pictures and video clips shown repeatedly. Different media used differently.
<b>Internet content used in coverage</b>	World view, ideologies, shooting.	Shooting, misanthropic but no clear ideology apparent.

Most newspaper articles were written in standard news style, especially in the first few days. There was little emotive content in the papers, and the reporters and photographers had – and this undoubtedly was mostly a conscious decision, with the criticism they received after the Jokela incident still fresh in their memory – distanced themselves, hiding behind a veil of professionalism. They tried to recount the events in a matter-of-fact style, and, as the victims were almost entirely left alone, they did in fact succeed in this to begin with. As the events unfolded, the balancing act between standard news style and flashy, emotive writing became increasingly more difficult, particularly for tabloid papers. Live newscasts took a more dramatic approach as they targeted politicians, who were treated to an array of difficult questions.

In comparison to coverage of the Jokela incident, one of the major differences was that in Kauhajoki, the journalists offered possible explanations, questions, and further discussion of the subject in addition to just reporting the incident. This is shown in Table 3. The list of topics covered was long: the conduct of the Kauhajoki Police Department in conjunction with the perpetrator's firearm permit application process, firearm permits in general, and particularly the activities of the Minister of the Interior in relation to it, as well as school bullying and schools' ability to support their students in dealing with their anxiety. In Jokela, the school shooting remained a 'pure' news item for several days more, with its details in time becoming more specific and filled with emotive descriptions of the scene. Speculation on the reasons behind the school shooting and its consequences started only later.

*Table 3. The occurrence of nine types of explanations given in the media for the Kauhajoki school shootings in the initial stages of news coverage, from a study conducted at the University of Tampere (n=425).*

<b>Explanation</b>	<b>Number</b>	<b>% of explanations</b>
Firearms legislation and practices related to it	100	23.5
Emulation of other school shootings	53	12.5
Actions of the Minister of the Interior	53	12.5
Conduct of the police officer who interviewed the perpetrator	53	12.5
Deficiencies in mental health services and school health care	52	12.2
The Internet, Web communities, and computer games	49	11.5
The general atmosphere of society, lack of communality, and values	29	6.8
School bullying and other school-related factors	21	4.9
Other media (film and music)	15	3.5

The coverage of the Kauhajoki incident reflected the criticism aimed at the media after the Jokela incident and was therefore careful and avoided mentioning the victims. Afterwards, many journalists had the feeling, however, that they might have focused too much on the gunman in their effort to avoid emotive reporting. They also emphasised that it is the duty of a journalist to report what is going on in the world – even if the topic is unpleasant. In interviews, the journalists emphasised the relative nature of their professional ethics. They rejected traditional moral principles and emphasised the importance of an individual's conscience. The variation in practices among media companies means that journalists end up working for the company whose moral codes are closest to their own. But it is also true that 'house policy', passed on as silent information, often has an impact on a reporter's moral principles.

All told, the publicity received by the Kauhajoki school shootings was more versatile and less emotive than the coverage of the events in Jokela. According to the study conducted by the University of Tampere, both were representative of the discreet crisis journalism of the 2000s, where the main focus is on public grieving and individualised, but still protected, death. The names of the victims of the Koivulahti flight accident in 1961 and the Lapua explosion in 1976 were published immediately, along with details related to various persons. The death toll in the *Estonia* disaster in 1994 was so high that

the victims were not named. The names of those who were rescued were, however, published in the media. The names of the victims of the Konginkangas bus accident in 2004 were published, but not as flashily or soon as was seen in earlier major accidents. However, the names of the victims of the Jokela and Kauhajoki school shootings were not published immediately after the accident. Some of the victims' families announced the death of their loved one months afterwards. Even here, the decision was made by the families, not the media. This was also reflected in the fact that in autumn 2009, the media published the names of all the victims at the wish of the relatives, immediately prior to the commencement of the trial of the superintendent who had handled the perpetrator's firearm application.

## 5. ANALYSIS AND CONCLUSIONS

### 5.1. An analysis of the events

#### Planning of the deed

While committing the deed, the perpetrator phoned a friend, telling him he had been planning the deed for two years. He also left a note at home, saying he had been planning the deed since 2002. There are no direct references to the planning of the deed in any other written messages that were available for the police investigation.

The perpetrator's family and friends had been concerned about him already for some time, as he had been suffering from self-destructive thoughts and mental health problems. Additionally, not only did he show an interest in previous school shootings; he positively condoned them and identified with the perpetrators. He had also hinted at the possibility of committing an act of violence. As far as can be established, however, he had not told anyone about the deed he intended to commit. On the weekend preceding the deed, the perpetrator visited his home town. This can be assumed to have been some sort of last farewell, but there is little evidence to support this.

The only concrete facts related to the perpetrator's preparations for the deed concerned his acquisition of a gun in the preceding months and the video he shot in the schoolyard on the day before the shootings. Before purchasing the gun, the perpetrator went to a shooting range to practise shooting a few times with an air-gun. He also practised shooting with the small-bore pistol he had acquired. This shows that he engaged in recreational shooting at least to some extent, so the acquisition of the gun cannot be shown to have been definitely connected to the planning of the school shootings.

There is no information on why he chose to commit the deed at that particular time. On the Friday preceding the deed, a grave candle had been placed near Kauhajoki Upper Secondary School, causing some anxiety and concern. The candle was probably not connected with the deed in any way, but, as the police investigated its origin, they learned of some shooting range videos the perpetrator had uploaded to the Web. As a result of this, the police attempted to contact the perpetrator already over the weekend. They managed to contact him on Monday but let him keep his gun. It is possible that the attention of the police made the perpetrator hasten the execution of his plan. If the perpetrator's visit to his home town at the weekend is considered to have been a farewell, he was probably more or less determined to actually carry out the deed. The perpetrator was still totally unaware of the police trying to contact him at that point.

#### **Conclusion 1**

*There is little information available on the planning of the deed. The perpetrator had been interested in school shootings for years already and possibly had been harbouring some kind of idea of the deed in his mind for a long time. The final decision to carry out the deed may have been made quite late, however – possibly in the preceding week or even as late as the preceding day.*

### **Implementation of the deed**

Before committing the deed, the perpetrator had acquired a gun, cartridges, and petrol for lighting fires. He did not bring the silencer or the laser sight with him to the scene of the crime, however. On the morning of the day he was going to commit the deed, the perpetrator bought a hammer. He may have used it to smash the furniture, but it might also have been reserved for some contingency he anticipated. There was nothing unusual about the perpetrator's clothing.

He entered the school and the classroom where he committed the deed through the routes he normally used. He knew his study group would be taking an exam when he entered. Earlier that morning, the teacher and the students had made some changes to the schedule, however, such that some of the students had already left when the perpetrator entered. The perpetrator was seen to prepare himself for the deed in front of the classroom door. He entered the classroom and fired a few shots, but he soon returned to the corridor, possibly to load a new clip into his gun or to sort out a problem he might have had in using the gun.

Having re-entered the classroom, the perpetrator fired lethal shots at the teacher and nine students. Despite having received life-threatening gunshot wounds, one of the students managed to escape to the corridor, where the perpetrator fired at her again. The shooting lasted for some 10 minutes, after which the perpetrator started moving around in the school building, starting fires and smashing furniture. The perpetrator did not manage to locate anybody else in the building, so the only gunshot wounds in the incident were sustained by the victims in the classroom and the perpetrator himself.

### **Conclusion 2**

*The perpetrator carried out the deed systematically and determinedly. Once inside the classroom, the perpetrator went on a rampage, attempting to kill everyone inside. All victims' lethal wounds were sustained within approximately 10 minutes.*

### **Self-rescue**

As the perpetrator entered, there were 12 students and the teacher in the classroom. As the perpetrator returned to the corridor for a while, the teacher pushed against the door, trying to prevent the perpetrator from re-entering. The perpetrator managed to re-enter nonetheless. Three students survived the incident by remaining motionless behind some furniture. No-one managed to escape from the classroom during the incident. The three survivors managed to escape through the windows only after the perpetrator had left the classroom.

Several students around the school reported having heard gunshots, shouting, and a rumble in the school. Some of them believed there was a drill of some sort in progress, while others thought the commotion was caused by an unusual type of lesson. Some students went together to see what was going on and found, among other things, cartridge cases on the floor. The maintenance man also arrived on the scene, and he saw the gunman in the classroom. Those who realised what was happening started to run away from the scene and managed to get other students and staff to join them. Some remained in classrooms or the corridor, however, and could not believe the incident was

real. Others went to fetch their belongings from other classrooms, in various parts of the building. However, everybody did leave the building eventually, the last of them when an announcement told them to do so.

The school had valid rescue and crisis plans in place, and exit drills had been performed. The school clearly considered security a priority and was well prepared for various types of accident situations. Planning, drills, and the rapidly made announcement, in particular, facilitated the early exit of the students and staff and the commencement of official action.

A school shooting situation was not among the risks listed in the rescue or crisis plan, and, accordingly, there was no operation plan available for this type of event. The exit-related events did not proceed unidirectionally or according to plan in all respects. Some confusion was caused by the fact that the Emergency Response Centre instructed the people inside the building to take cover behind locked doors, which had worked well in conjunction with the Jokela school shootings. The teachers decided, however, that it was best for everyone to leave the building. In view of the fires in particular, this proved to be the right decision in this case.

The Rescue Act, school legislation, the National Board of Education instructions, and occupational safety regulations provide for the drawing up of safety plans. Since early 2010, the Polytechnics Act also has obliged polytechnics to prepare for emergencies. There may also be other local safety planning rules and regulations pertaining to educational institutions. This may lead to several different plans being drawn up, some of which often overlap and may not cover all the relevant details. From the viewpoint of schools and the persons implementing the plans, the situation is rather confusing.

### **Conclusion 3**

*All those inside the building managed to exit rapidly enough to prevent the perpetrator from finding anyone else in the building after exiting the classroom where he had committed the shootings. The announcement that told everyone to leave the building was very clear and played an important role in the events. Some tardiness and unnecessary hazard was caused by the fact that many people initially refused to believe what was really happening.*

### **Conclusion 4**

*Even though the polytechnic had engaged in extensive and meticulous safety planning, the rules and regulations providing for this planning are not explicit and uniform. Self-preparation and systematic preventive work may significantly enhance safety in educational institutions in general.*

### **Emergency Response Centre activities**

While the incident was in progress, one of the students managed to call the Emergency Response Centre very early on. Accordingly, the ERC received a lot of information on the events in the classroom and was able to raise the necessary alerts without delay. The student's emergency call while the incident was in progress and keeping the line open while escaping was an important, determined, and brave act. The record of the phone

call was also an indispensable asset for the police in the ensuing investigation. It enabled the ERC to provide support for the caller and another student, who ended up on the riverbank after their escape. The ERC also received numerous other emergency calls from the school.

### **Conclusion 5**

*The ERC was informed of the incident in its initial stages and was, accordingly, able to summon numerous police, Rescue Services, and Emergency Medical Services units to the scene. The Municipality of Kauhajoki management and various administrative sectors were also informed of the incident without delay.*

### **Police operations**

The first police patrol arrived on the scene within 10 minutes of the alert. Having arrived on the scene earlier, Rescue Services units had already started to cordon off the area. The first police patrol approached the school building but had to turn back as the perpetrator fired at them at the main entrance. Having retreated to safety, the police set up a field command post some distance away from that of the Rescue Services. The police field commander did not set up a separate field command headquarters; instead, he led the situation independently for the duration of the incident. This caused some delays in reaching the field commander and in the organisation of certain activities. Inadequate situation management caused a delay in the rescue of the students who had escaped to the riverbank.

When arriving on the scene, the police assumed there were still people awaiting rescue inside the school building. However, everyone had probably left the building by the time the first police patrol attempted to enter it. The police were left with cordoning off the area, entering the building to apprehend the perpetrator, and preventing the dangerous activity from continuing. As soon as more policemen arrived on the scene, two teams were formed. Having donned protective gear, the teams entered the building, where they made visual contact with the perpetrator some 30 minutes after they had received the order to enter. It was at this point that the perpetrator realised he had no options left and shot himself in the head.

Once inside the burning building, the police teams were hampered by the lack of breathing apparatus and other fire-fighting gear. Later on, the Rescue Services provided the police with SCBA masks and a crash course in how to use them.

### **Conclusion 6**

*In the initial stages of the incident, there were few policemen available, so it was not possible for them to enter the school and terminate the activities of the perpetrator. This had no bearing on the number of casualties, however. As soon as the police teams caught up with the perpetrator, he shot himself in the head.*

### **Conclusion 7**

*In terms of facilitating the flow of information related to the evacuation and the school facilities, it would have been helpful for the police to have had a joint field command post with other authorities. Police operations and the flow of information would have*

*been facilitated had the police field commander had other policemen to support him in leading the operation.*

### **Emergency Medical Services operations**

The fact that a local paramedic-level ambulance-driver was teaching at the polytechnic at the time of the incident significantly expedited the commencement of Emergency Medical Services operations. He immediately assumed responsibility for field operations, and it was on the basis of his reports that the Kauhajoki health centre and the hospitals in the area stepped up their level of readiness at an early stage. During the incident, ambulance unit personnel mainly prepared themselves to treat possible victims and guided students and staff to safety.

The Emergency Medical Services field commander located a facility to which the rescued students and staff could be guided. He also contributed to the co-ordination of rescue operations and Emergency Medical Services operations. Thanks to the VIRVE connection between Emergency Medical Services and the health centre's chief physician, the Municipality of Kauhajoki management team had the necessary situation picture at their disposal.

In addition to the casualties, two students sustained physical injuries. The student who received a gunshot wound in the head was promptly directed into an ambulance and taken to hospital. The medical staff failed to locate the bullet or the wound immediately, but this did not cause additional harm to the student. The other injured student received wounds from the window glass when she escaped from the classroom, and these were soon treated by the ambulance-drivers and health care personnel. The other student who had to hide on the riverbank was also taken to the health centre. The events in the classroom and subsequent hiding in the little forest for more than an hour and a half were extremely distressing for the students, which the police and Emergency Medical Services personnel initially failed to appreciate in full. The police could have escorted the students from the riverbank earlier, and the rescue workers could have shown more consideration for what the students had just gone through.

### **Conclusion 8**

*There were only two physically injured patients, which is a low figure in relation to the extent of the incident. There was little for Emergency Medical Services personnel to do on the scene, apart from guiding students and staff to safety at the nearby commercial college, where an evacuation centre was set up. The first ambulance units arrived on the scene soon, and enough units were summoned there for the operation.*

### **Rescue Services operations**

Rescue Services personnel arrived quickly on the scene and, in co-operation with school staff and other authorities, were able to guide students into the commercial college building nearby. Rescue personnel also assisted the police in cordoning off the school building. Initially, the police and rescue personnel had to evacuate people and cordon off the area in the danger zone where they were exposed to gunfire. There were also numerous bystanders in the danger zone in the early stages. One of the fire engines was struck by a bullet fired from the school building, and protecting the personnel

performing the evacuation and cordoning off the area became an even higher priority for the police.

Rescue workers had to wait for permission from the police to start fighting the fire and perform rescue operations. As there was no definitive information as to the number of possible perpetrators at this point, the first Rescue Services smoke divers were covered by armed policemen wearing SCBA masks. As there were numerous fires burning in the large and sprawling building, extinguishing the fires proved problematic, particularly in the old part of the building. Many doors were locked, all of which had to be broken open to secure the facilities.

### **Conclusion 9**

*The first rescuers on the scene started cordoning off the area on their own initiative already before the arrival of the police, which facilitated co-operation and expedited the commencement of other authorities' operations. Other duties performed by rescue workers included guiding the evacuees into safety and extinguishing the fires. The threat of armed violence hampered fire-fighting and initially prevented it altogether.*

### **The Municipality of Kauhajoki**

Co-operation between the municipality management, the authorities, and the media was smooth. That the municipality management had the wisdom to utilise the Municipality of Kauhajoki preparedness organisation designated for exceptional circumstances in this special situation occurring in normal conditions may have contributed to this. The plans and the organisation had been revised and updated in conjunction with a preparedness drill in autumn 2007. The Emergency Powers Act, however, obliges municipalities and cities to prepare only for exceptional circumstances, or situations where general powers are insufficient. In this particular case, there were no problems in summoning the members of municipality management. A uniform, national system to alert municipal management does not exist, however. The availability of key personnel, substitute arrangements, and securing the uninterrupted flow of information vary from one municipality to another.

### **Conclusion 10**

*The Municipality of Kauhajoki's management did well in activating its preparedness organisation for exceptional circumstances, even though the incident was a special situation in normal conditions. Accordingly, municipal preparedness should cover not only exceptional circumstances; all eventualities should be prepared for, which was already recommended in the investigation pertaining to the Nokia water crisis in 2007.*

### **Co-operation between authorities**

The authorities involved in the incident would have benefited from better knowledge of each other's principles of operation and equipment. Rescue units provided support for police operations in the initial stages of the incident by assisting them in cordoning off the area. Before entering the school building, policemen were provided with Rescue Services respirators. Covered by the police, the rescue units started fighting the fires later on. The policemen had no previous experience in the use of respirators. Meanwhile, rescue workers were carrying out their mission in a new type of situation, which involved the threat of

violence. Joint training and drills for rescue and police personnel would have been advantageous. The practical operations of all authorities would have been greatly facilitated if better floor plans of the building had been jointly available. Additional problems were caused by the fact that school entrances were marked on the doors with different symbols from those used in the floor plans.

While the incident was in progress, the authorities agreed on co-operation at field command level. Rules, regulations, instructions, or training does not sufficiently address matters related to the powers of various authorities and general leadership in a situation involving multiple authorities. As a result, command relationships, co-operation, and operational procedures are agreed upon as each situation develops, which cannot be considered a satisfactory solution.

Rescue Department headquarters informed the Ministry of the Interior Department for Rescue Services of the incident, and they, in turn, contacted the Government Situation Centre, the Ministry of Social Affairs and Health, and the Ministry of Education. It took 35–40 minutes for the information to go through the channels from the Ministry of the Interior's Department for Rescue Services to the Government Situation Centre, but outside office hours it would probably have taken even longer. Quick contacts with higher authorities were essential for the commencement of support operations.

### ***Conclusion 11***

*Co-operation between authorities was mainly agreed upon at field command level as the situation developed. In this particular case, the operations were successful, and any other measures taken by authorities arriving on the scene would not have reduced the number of casualties. Existing provisions do not specify in sufficient detail the duties of the authority in charge in all respects, and training for joint operations is insufficient.*

### **Victim identification and informing the families**

During the afternoon, the police and rescue workers joined forces in counting the number of victims in the school building. Meanwhile, school staff had managed to compile a list of all students who had, as far as could be established, been at school that day but who had not been contacted as yet. Owing to combustion gases, victim identification personnel were able to enter the school only at 6pm, and they started their work by examining one victim at a time. There were 10 bodies in the school building, the external examination of which took some eight hours. The identification was carried out in accordance with standard victim identification procedure. Some of the victims were badly burnt. As the external examination proceeded, the families of the probable victims were informed. It also took some time to find the contact details of the families.

### ***Conclusion 12***

*In a public incident such as this one, the need for information on the part of the families of the victims and the perpetrator is urgent, so it is understandable that they wish to be informed as early as possible, even if the identification is not definite. The victims were identified in two ways. Firstly, there was a list of presumed victims whom the authorities had not managed to contact. The second method of examining the bodies to establish their identities was more reliable but also slower.*

### **Health care operations**

In the first two hours, dozens of distressed people arrived at the Kauhajoki health centre. Some of these were young people evacuated from the school building, but there were also people whose next of kin had been there at the time of the incident. The health centre had to take special measures to organise the reception of such a large number of people. In all, more than a hundred people arrived at the health centre in the course of the day. Several hospitals were informed of the shooting, the fires, and potentially multiple victims, so they prepared, in accordance with their plans, to receive a large number of severely injured patients. Additionally, the hospitals prepared to send personnel to the scene.

### **Conclusion 13**

*In addition to the casualties and the perpetrator, who was still alive in the early stages, there were two persons with physical injuries. Accordingly, health care operations consisted mainly of the provision of psychosocial support. The Health Care Services personnel and structures were well prepared to treat even a large number of patients.*

### **Psychosocial support**

There was a need for psychosocial support immediately after the incident, and this need is likely to continue for years to come. Municipality management and health care authorities learned of the incident early on, and operations were commenced without delay. Located near the polytechnic, the health centre was able to send crisis relief personnel immediately both to the polytechnic and to the commercial college, where the evacuees were arriving. There were many people in need of psychosocial support arriving at the health centre. The same need was immediately felt in many other municipalities, as all of the victims and many polytechnic students lived outside Kauhajoki. The polytechnic also contributed to the provision of support, for its students and staff in particular.

The evacuees' passage to the evacuation centre at the commercial college was mainly free of problems, but there, as in the health centre also, the organisation of support – especially for the families – left much to be desired. The families were forced to go around the facilities in search for their loved ones and to take matters into their own hands in trying to find information in various places. They would have wished to be shown into a special room, where they would have had the opportunity to comfort each other and share any information they had on the victims. On one hand, those whose loved ones are missing should be cared for as a group, but, on the other, special information services should be organised for those who are indirectly affected by the incident. The involvement of the police in these activities is necessary, as they are able to both relay information and receive it from those who have first-hand experience, as well as collect contact details.

Crisis psychologists, crisis workers, and other personnel from various organisations providing psychosocial support were involved in the operations. These workers came from primary health care services units in various municipalities, the specialist health care services of the hospital district, the Finnish Red Cross, the parish, and the psychologists' preparedness group. Youth workers and social workers provided additional support. Some of those participating in the crisis work had been involved in provision of after-care for the

Jokela school shootings, which proved a valuable asset in the planning and implementation of operations.

The first priority was the victims' families, the perpetrator's family, and those who had witnessed the events at close range, such as the three students who had managed to escape from the classroom. They all would have needed more help with various practical matters, such as learning how to get access to various services and filling in applications for damages.

Others in need of psychosocial support included, most of all, the polytechnic, other schools, and the inhabitants of Kauhajoki but also, to a significant extent, those inhabitants of other municipalities who were shocked by the incident. Young people are particularly vulnerable. The incident also placed a considerable psychological burden on the support providers and other professionals who were involved in the incident. Finnish municipalities are obliged to make the necessary arrangements for the provision of crisis relief in various accident situations, for example. The fact that Kauhajoki and its neighbouring municipalities had previously engaged in co-operation in the provision of psychosocial support proved helpful in the commencement of operations.

In practice, the expertise and resources available for crisis work were different in the municipalities involved, with the result that the level of support provided varied greatly. Small municipalities, in particular, did not possess the means to provide the necessary short- or long-term support. The focal point for the events was Kauhajoki, and it was from there that the entire relief effort was co-ordinated under the auspices of the Kauhajoki Project. The project was led by a hospital district director of nursing. A project plan was drawn up, and funding was applied for. Project personnel urged the crisis teams in various municipalities to contact directly those possibly in need of support and offer it to them. Additionally, the Diocese of Lapua established a project of its own.

#### **Conclusion 14**

*The victims' families considered the support provided by professional personnel important, but what they find especially helpful is peer support, which was something they would have liked to receive immediately on the day the incident took place. The need for both individual and supervised peer support will continue for years to come. Those involved in the incident did not receive the support they needed to take care of practical matters.*

#### **Conclusion 15**

*The resources and expertise available for the provision of psychosocial support were sufficient. However, the necessary command structure was lacking in a situation that involved several municipalities, authorities, and volunteer organisations. The situation was brought under control to a reasonable extent through the Kauhajoki Project and the funding it received. This arrangement had to be created while the incident was in progress, however.*

## **5.2. An analysis of the background factors**

### **The target of the act**

The perpetrator had suffered from bullying both at school and in the army. The investigation did not reveal any indication of the perpetrator having been mistreated, bullied, or in other ways discriminated against at the polytechnic in Kauhajoki. On the contrary, he seemed to like it at the polytechnic and in Kauhajoki, and he had some friends there. There is no indication of the act being an act of revenge as such. The students who became the victims just happened to be in the same group and in the classroom at the time of the incident. As far as can be established, the perpetrator did not like the teacher who was in the classroom or the subject he was teaching, but presumably this fact had no bearing on the events.

### **Conclusion 16**

*The deed was primarily aimed at the perpetrator's study group, even though the group did not, as far as is known, mistreat him in any way. The perpetrator also shot a friend of his. He moved around in the school building, firing shots here and there, and also fired at the policemen and other authorities in the vicinity of the school.*

### **The purpose of the act**

The perpetrator did not identify the purpose of the act, but he modelled the act on previous school shootings. In most cases, the immediate purpose of a school shooting is to kill a large number of people and to cause large-scale destruction. Some earlier school killers had strong views on society and some sort of belief, albeit poorly grounded, in making the world a better place through school shootings. The perpetrator of the Kauhajoki school shootings had not expressed any such views, even though he did repeat some of the phrases used by previous school killers.

### **Conclusion 17**

*Unlike for some earlier school shootings, no ideological background for the act has come to light, even though the perpetrator repeated some of the slogans used by previous school killers.*

### **Circumstances at home and social relations**

The perpetrator's parents divorced when he was very young, and his father lived elsewhere. Because of the new family situation, the perpetrator's contacts with his biological father almost came to an end, but the two resumed contact later, when the perpetrator had come of age. The perpetrator's childhood family were his mother; the stepfather; and, later on, stepbrothers. The family moved quite often, apparently for work-related reasons.

The perpetrator was particularly close to his brother, who died when the perpetrator was 17. This was a heavy blow. Apparently, the perpetrator was also devastated by a traffic accident that occurred just prior to the school shootings. The perpetrator knew some of the young victims personally.

The perpetrator's closest relationship was with his mother, with whom he did not, however, share all his thoughts and opinions. He has generally been characterised as reserved about his personal matters. He did have friendships, which he maintained quite actively. Some of his friendships went back a long time, while others were more recent. He went with his friends on cruises and to rock festivals, and he spent evenings with them. His hobbies included his computer and music. Shortly before his death, he took up shooting and went to shooting ranges with his friends, initially shooting an air-gun and later using a firearm of his own.

### **Conclusion 18**

*The perpetrator's family cared for their son, and there is no reason to assume he was particularly lonely. However, he did have to face some losses and changes in his life, which are statistically known to increase developmental and behavioural risks.*

### **School attendance**

During the perpetrator's nine years of comprehensive school, he changed schools six times in total, all of which were the result of moving house. After comprehensive school, he started vocational school but transferred to upper secondary school after only a week. He dropped out of upper secondary school during his first year, then managed to complete a three-year course in vocational school. After vocational school, the perpetrator started his military service, but his service was interrupted and he went to work in England. His last place of study was the polytechnic in Kauhajoki, where he had studied for more than a year before the school shootings. His polytechnic studies included a period of practical training in Hungary.

As far as is known, the perpetrator liked it in Kauhajoki, but he had been a target for bullying in his previous schools. This bullying was reported by his mother and also a friend of his.

### **Conclusion 19**

*Changing schools several times during his childhood, frequent moves that continued up to his final years, and his experiences of being bullied probably made it very difficult for him to really put down roots in any community. He did have several friends in various localities, however, and he was in touch with them regularly.*

### **Military service**

The perpetrator started his military service two years before he committed the school shootings. As far as can be established, his motivation was initially high but his performance was not very good. The possibility of his service being interrupted was first discussed during a doctor's appointment five weeks after he entered service. His service fitness classification was downgraded for psychological reasons, and his service was interrupted. He was to get a medical certificate by November 2008, when the possible continuation of his service was to be reconsidered. The perpetrator had said that he had problems in fitting in with the rest of the conscripts, which were manifested as bullying and a feeling of being an outsider.

### **Conclusion 20**

*The perpetrator's mental health problems were identified in conscripts' health care. The psychiatric nurse recommended an appointment to see a psychiatrist. This appointment was never made, however; instead, the garrison doctor suggested that the perpetrator's service be interrupted, which was also his own wish. The perpetrator was sent home, and the process and monitoring were terminated, with the result that the perpetrator was left to his own devices in this respect.*

### **Acquisition of the firearm**

The perpetrator became interested in recreational shooting a few months prior to the incident, and he went air-gun shooting with his friends at an indoor range in Kauhajoki. The perpetrator was granted an acquisition permit for a firearm for recreational shooting purposes, and he purchased a small-bore pistol on the Internet. The gun was delivered by post.

Standard firearm permit policy requires that a newly acquired firearm be taken to the police department for initial inspection. The policeman who inspected the gun found it in accordance with the conditions laid down in the acquisition permit. The perpetrator's behaviour in conjunction with the inspection was, however, considered somehow odd.

The perpetrator went to the shooting range to practise shooting as many as several times a week, both alone and with his friends. On the weekend preceding the incident, the police were tipped off about some shooting videos the perpetrator had uploaded to the Web. Over the weekend, the police tried to contact the perpetrator at his home but failed to do so. The perpetrator was asked to report to the police department on Monday. He was interviewed, but the police found no grounds to confiscate his gun. The school shootings were committed the next day, Tuesday.

### **Conclusion 21**

*A school shooting on this scale, involving such a large number of casualties, would not have been possible without a gun. The permit conditions made it easy for the perpetrator to acquire a gun. Having seen the shooting videos on the Web, the police attempted to confiscate the gun on the Friday preceding the school shootings. The police had an opportunity to take temporary possession of the gun on Monday, but the policeman who made the decision did not find sufficient grounds to do this.*

### **Mental health and health care**

The perpetrator suffered from mental health problems, the first records of which dated from his upper-level comprehensive days, some 10 years earlier. According to these records, the perpetrator had suffered from anxiety attacks, panic symptoms, sleeping problems, and at times obsessive cleanliness. His military service was interrupted in autumn 2006 for mental health reasons. In January 2007, the perpetrator suffered from major anxiety, depression, and deep apathy, which seemed to have disappeared after he saw a doctor. The perpetrator clearly had a positive attitude to medical treatment, as he sought medical assistance in Kauhajoki on his own initiative. There he saw a depression nurse specialist, whose test forms indicate that the perpetrator was suffering from moderate

depression and drank heavily. At the request of the depression nurse specialist, a doctor prescribed medication for the perpetrator for both his depression and the anxiety attacks, but the doctor did not meet the perpetrator personally. According to the National Supervisory Authority for Welfare and Health, a doctor may prescribe medication without meeting the patient in person if the doctor considers the information he receives for the prescription to be reliable, and if the patient does not object to the treatment.

According to the other students, the perpetrator's behaviour was normal, apart from the fact that lately he had started to become aggressive when under the influence of alcohol, saying strange things about, for example, school shootings. Other students had been sufficiently concerned about these symptoms to mention them to a teacher during practical training. Additionally, an acquaintance of the perpetrator conveyed his concern about the perpetrator to the police in an anonymous message, sent via the Internet. The message did not identify the perpetrator by name, so no further action was taken. The perpetrator's parents and siblings had also been worried about his mental health status. He had expressed self-destructive thoughts in military service, in conversations with his sister, and in health care.

In autumn, just prior to the school shootings, his school performance had deteriorated. Additionally, he was more often late for school and he left earlier. He also had some financial problems, which caused him a lot of anxiety. These financial difficulties were not insuperable in any way, however. He exhibited a certain amount of ambivalence both in his speech and in his actions. He behaved differently in different situations, and he got himself a kitten and some new furniture just prior to the shootings.

The perpetrator's life and, accordingly, his mental health were affected by several factors, including his infrequent contact with his father, being a target for bullying both in military service and at school, the loss of his elder brother, and frequent moves to new localities. The perpetrator had also experienced a threatening situation when queuing in front of a grill kiosk. His relationship with his girlfriend had recently come to an end, and the perpetrator had lost people he knew in a car accident.

As far as is known, the perpetrator never talked about his feelings to anyone unless intoxicated. It seems that he was battling a mental illness he was himself aware of by isolating himself emotionally. He tried to lead a normal life, was planning his future, and tried to protect his family by not telling them about his problems. In the end, he could not control the situation anymore.

### **Conclusion 22**

*The perpetrator suffered from serious and manifold mental health disorders and received medication for his depression and anxiety. With the benefit of hindsight, it seems possible that the perpetrator's symptoms were predictive of a more serious condition. In all likelihood, the perpetrator would have benefited from an examination performed by a psychiatrist prior to the prescription of medication.*

### **A comparison with previous school shootings**

The Kauhajoki school shootings shared several features with previous school shootings. As in many previous cases, the perpetrator used a semi-automatic handgun and fuel. Another common feature was the fact that the perpetrator eventually committed suicide. As in this case, school shootings often occur in small localities that have a reputation for being communal. The flip side in small localities may be that, when they are compared to larger communities, the opportunities for self-fulfilment and room for being different are more limited.

The fact that the perpetrator targeted his own school was also typical of school shootings in general. The perpetrator was a young male with symptoms of depression, self-destructive thoughts, and a fascination with previous school shootings. The perpetrator had been a target for bullying during his development. His school record was average or good. Outsiders had noticed a change in his behaviour, appearance, and interests. He had hinted at his intentions without ever actually referring to them directly. He had been repeating misanthropic phrases related to school shootings, acquired a gun, and practised shooting. To some extent, he was also seeking publicity for his act.

Unlike many previous school killers, the perpetrator does not appear to have had a narcissistic personality or behaved arrogantly. Neither did he hold any particular worldview. He was also older than most school killers.

In some respects, the perpetrator had certain factors in his background that increased the likelihood of him becoming a juvenile offender. These factors include mental problems, aggressive behaviour and substance abuse, loss of contact with his biological father, frequent moves, and negative life events such as the loss of a brother or being a target of bullying.

On the other hand, the perpetrator was in many ways an atypical juvenile offender. In the years preceding the act, his relationship with his parents was good, and he liked it at his school, where his performance was well above average. He had also been seeing a psychiatric nurse. Therefore, he cannot be said to have been alienated in the traditional sense, even if he may have had feelings of being an outsider.

Some of the perpetrator's problems were common among those committing or attempting suicide. This act was different from suicide not only in that there were numerous other victims but also in that, traditionally, a Finn committing suicide is seldom seeking publicity with his act. Neither does somebody who is contemplating suicide often get him- or herself a new pet or new furniture just before committing the deed.

### **Conclusion 23**

*The manner of execution of the Kauhajoki school shootings and the perpetrator's background shared numerous features with previous school shootings. No particular ideology or worldview behind the deed has come to light. The background factors to the deed display features typical of juvenile delinquency and suicides.*

### **5.3. An analysis of communications and the media**

In an eventuality such as the Kauhajoki school shootings, it is the duty of the various operators involved to get the situation under control by minimising damage, assisting and supporting the victims and their families, and enhancing communality in society at large. When a society reaches the stage called the information society, communications and the media play a key role in these functions. Communication is not something just the media engages in, as the dissemination of information and discussion are vital in recovery from a crisis.

#### **The conduct of the media**

Media coverage of the Kauhajoki school shootings repeated the typical pattern of coverage of a sensational and dramatic event, based on the quick and reliable relaying of information.

The effects of the Jokela school shootings were evident in the news coverage, as journalists attempted – consciously or subconsciously – to avoid the excesses they were criticised for in conjunction with Jokela. The coverage was clearly less emotive in content, and authorities were the main sources of information. Additionally, instead of continuously updated online journalism, primarily the main media were used in the coverage. In comparison to Jokela, media coverage of the events in Kauhajoki was, on the whole, relatively restrained and discreet. Some media could have exercised more restraint in their use of pictures and videos in particular. In one instance, a complaint was filed with the Council for Mass Media in Finland on the use of a particular video clip, but the complaint resulted in an acquittal. The complaint was filed on the grounds that the Nelonen channel included videos deleted from a Web service in its news broadcast to allow the audience to form a picture of the activities of the Kauhajoki police prior to the shooting. According to the Council for Mass Media in Finland, the video clips provided the audience with relevant information, which allowed them to better grasp the situation in its entirety. The Nelonen channel was acquitted.

Even though the news media did not present the incident in an idolising light, the extensive coverage, focusing on the perpetrator, still created an image of him as a hero. This kind of interpretation is possible, especially as, according to many reports, extensive media publicity was exactly what many school killers were dreaming about. Some of the victims' families were offended by the way the gunman was 'turned into a hero', while the media ignored the victims. However, focusing on the victims may involve unforeseen risks, as was seen in conjunction with the Jokela school shootings. Coverage of the perpetrator was no more extensive than in Jokela, but the audience was left with a different impression, as the focus was on the perpetrator and the authorities instead of the victims.

There is an explanation to coverage focusing on the gunman: it is hardly conceivable that modern journalism, which relies heavily on instant reporting and new technology, would not report the activities of the main figure. The journalists did, after all, learn the identity of the perpetrator early on. In a way, official information also justified focusing on the perpetrator, since the perpetrator's name was made public by a minister in a

media conference at 3pm. This happened before even the perpetrator's parents had received confirmation of the fact.

In the publication of names – whether of the perpetrator or the victims – the established practices of the media are in blatant disharmony with the general significance of the matter. What matters to society is that the perpetrator is apprehended and the families of the victims are informed as soon as possible. It is important to ensure that the victims' families are informed before the names are released. Even after this, the names have little informational value. The victims or their families may not want publicity. On the other hand, publicity is exactly what the perpetrator is seeking, so it should not be given to him unnecessarily. There were significant differences in how and when the various media released the name of the perpetrator on the day of the incident.

Publishing the names is a difficult professional dilemma for journalists, as is evidenced by the phraseology used in the Guidelines for Journalists published by the Council for Mass Media in Finland. This problem has become even more complicated with the advent of new technology, as it is easy nowadays for journalists to discover the relevant names through Web services. The ethical judgement of journalists and editorial staff is put to the test by any big, dramatic news event. More and more often, editorial staff face a situation where not publishing the name of, in particular, the perpetrator seems hypocritical. There were differences between various media in how and when they published the names related to the Kauhajoki incident, but on the whole it is safe to say that generally the coverage was reasonably balanced.

The shadow of Jokela was still visible in the fact that, in addition to traditional coverage focusing on the events themselves, a new, less news-like type of reporting soon established itself. On one hand, the incident was repeatedly compared to the Jokela school shootings and the measures taken afterwards. But, on the other, journalists questioned the firearm permit application procedure, the position of the Minister of the Interior, and the planned school reforms alike. However, as in all major news events today, the media soon lost interest. The incident was not followed by public discussion or follow-up reports as it should have been.

There were reports of some foreign media representatives behaving inappropriately in conjunction with the Kauhajoki incident. There are few facts on this, but what there is seems to support the studies that found the behaviour of journalists to be the more outrageous the further the everyday reality of local people is from the medium's operating environment. These studies were also supported by the fact that the media that were geographically closest to Kauhajoki were very discreet in their coverage, even regulating the volume. They did not want to add to the anxiety they had witnessed firsthand.

#### **Conclusion 24**

*The media had learned their lesson and did not repeat the excesses they went to in Jokela, either on the scene or in their news coverage. The coverage focused on the gunman, and mere description of what had happened was soon replaced by discussion of problems in Finnish society in general, though the latter never actually reached the depths it ideally*

*could have. The restraint the media exercised in their coverage of the victims was an example of responsible journalism.*

### **Conclusion 25**

*It goes without saying that, in their reliance on instant reporting, the modern media treat school shootings in the same way as any other major news event. In covering and analysing this kind of event, journalism is itself part of the phenomenon, and its ethical responsibility is far greater than in many other cases.*

### **The Web environment**

Even though the perpetrator's use of the Internet was not as constant or intensive as that of the Jokela school killer, he still modelled his act on the modes of operation employed by previous school killers, which he had learned online. Both the Jokela and the Kauhajoki school killer familiarised themselves particularly with Web material related to school shootings.

One of the effects of the Kauhajoki incident was that videos and other material that had already been deleted, referring especially to the Jokela school shootings but also to previous incidents, started showing up again even in the most popular Web services. Private computer users around the world typically upload material that has already been deleted to the Web when the material becomes topical again as a result of a new event. In a similar fashion, various Web communities – some of them full of admiration for the act, others focusing on shared grief and offering solace – sprang up quite soon after the incident.

The re-emergence of old and harmful material is part of the circulation or cyclical operation so typical of the Web and other social media, and which is almost impossible to prevent. Young people's Web activities cannot and must not be restricted through legislative means – after all, the Web is, on the whole, a useful source of information and entertainment, as well as a channel for social activities. Children and young people are more familiar with the versatility of the Web than adults are.

We can make an impact on how people use the Web through the development of media literacy, a basic skill in society of our time. Systematic communication education as part of school curricula would promote critical and well-informed Web behaviour and educate young people to become more critical in their usage of the Web. Good Web skills also include the ability to use appropriate equipment, as well as the skill to filter and evaluate the information received. Media literacy is included in the 2004 National Core Curriculum for Basic Education as a cross-curricular theme in mother tongue and literature studies as well as art, but its effective implementation is still heavily reliant on the enthusiasm of individual schools or individual teachers.

### **Conclusion 26**

*The Kauhajoki school shootings led to the re-emergence of Web material related to previous school killers that had already been deleted or had remained in the shadow of other, more interesting material. The Web environment and its use might become an even more useful communal force and discussion platform through further development*

*of the media literacy of all generations. The presence of grown-ups on the Web is also absolutely necessary.*

### **The media and authorities**

Authorities' media liaison during the Kauhajoki incident was relatively smooth for the most part, even though the media did find the co-ordination between the various authorities less than perfect at times. Media conferences were held regularly, and the journalists were provided with the necessary work space. The authorities aimed to relay all information as soon as possible and managed to avoid the kind of delays seen in Jokela. It has to be admitted, though, that in Kauhajoki, the authorities did have more time for planning and preparation, because most of the journalists did not arrive on the scene until a few hours after the incident.

Many new instructions pertaining to communications in public administration have been issued in the 2000s. These instructions are new in terms of both their content and implementation, and they emphasise openness and the important role of communications in the work of all civil servants. Such instructions are, however, easily forgotten in a major crisis, as the various operators need to step up their standard activities and their information services simultaneously. Communication easily slips back into its traditional role of hierarchical provision of information, considered the exclusive domain of professional media officers. This was mostly avoided in Kauhajoki, even though not every authority managed to perform its duty in this respect, busy as they were.

### **Conclusion 27**

*The recent, extensive reform of communications ideology in public administration clearly had an effect on the way the authorities provided information during and after the incident. Further training is necessary, however, to enhance co-operation between various authorities and individual operators' willingness to provide sufficient information.*

### **Authorities and the general public**

In terms of communications, it was the direct relations between authorities and the general public that caused the most problems in Kauhajoki. Caring for the victims' families and keeping them informed were not fully co-ordinated either during the incident or after it.

The use of the Web in public administration has greatly improved and become more versatile since the 2004 tsunami, which is, without doubt, largely the result of improved communications instructions. These instructions repeatedly emphasise that public administration entities must be able to communicate with the general public directly, not just via the media.

Messages sent to the police by people who had known the perpetrator personally and were concerned about his gun received a lot of publicity in conjunction with the events in Kauhajoki. It appears that some of these messages were never actually sent, and one message, which did not identify the perpetrator, had been sent anonymously via the

police Web site. It was perfectly understandable for the police to ignore an anonymous message. After the school shootings, the National Police Commissioner received an e-mail message reminding him of a warning sent to the police earlier. This message was also ignored, and its origin was initially not confirmed. Information on the perpetrator's problems, such as his substance abuse, acquisition of a firearm, mental health problems, and occasional aggressive behaviour when intoxicated was available from various sources. However, nobody had a comprehensive picture of the situation, and the individual pieces of information were not particularly worrying in isolation. The above does raise some questions on the flow and processing of information, however.

Online communication has lowered the threshold for directly approaching not only various institutions and individual civil servants but also Health Care Services, Youth Services, or school personnel. Each day, authorities receive numerous messages, with many types of content. Most of them are undoubtedly inappropriate or meaningless. However, it is an established principle of good governance that messages from the general public generate some sort of response. What public administration needs to do today is to develop mechanisms to process and, if necessary, to forward initiatives and questions from the general public for further steps to be taken. The existence, made possible by technological advances, of a democratic channel from the general public to the authorities is not enough if the voice of the people and the channel available for them do not receive the respect they deserve. Neither is the Web alone sufficient to satisfy victims' families' need for information.

### **Conclusion 28**

*In terms of communications, the most urgent target for development in public administration is the enhancement of a direct channel for the general public, for use both in crisis situations and in normal conditions. The creation of a viable system for the analysis of messages sent by the general public would improve the flow of information, increase citizens' opportunities for making their voices heard, and enhance the allocation work in the activities of various organisations.*

### **5.4. A summary of the key factors that led the perpetrator to commit the act**

That the perpetrator ended up committing a school shooting was the result of a long process involving many factors. No background factor or event ever justifies the kind of act the perpetrator committed. However, to facilitate preventive work in the future, it is useful to list certain things that may have increased the risk.

The perpetrator had been suffering from various mental health problems for approximately 10 years, and his condition had taken a turn for the worse. He had a positive attitude to medical treatment but was not referred to a doctor. With the benefit of hindsight, it would seem that he would have benefited from a psychiatric examination and might have received some help with his worst problem. The factors that probably contributed to the perpetrator's depression included being repeatedly the target of bullying, the break-up of his family, the difficulty – caused by frequent moves – he experienced in becoming integrated into a community, and the death of a brother he was particularly close to. His parents and friends' concern did not reach those

individuals or authorities who might have been able to help him, or the messages did not trigger a sufficient response.

In the light of the information currently available, it is impossible to establish beyond any doubt why the young man's mental health problems were channelled into an admiration for school shootings and, eventually, led to him committing the deed. The act was modelled on previous school shootings the perpetrator had mainly read about on the Web.

The perpetrator carried out the deed with a self-loading or semi-automatic firearm, which was small-calibre but still capable of inflicting serious damage. As is usual in Finland, he had no difficulty in acquiring the necessary permits for his gun. Without exception, a firearm has been used in all school shootings, and the use of one has become a model for those who admire and idolise school shootings.

## 6. MEASURES TAKEN

The most extensive measures taken after the Kauhajoki school shootings were introduced within the framework of the Internal Security Programme. Various ministries drew up proposals for the enhancement of the implementation of the measures outlined in the Internal Security Programme. The ministerial management group for internal security discussed the proposals, then accepted them on 5 November 2008. The measures were categorised as follows:

1. The development and extension of authorities' Web services aimed at young people
2. The enhancement of communications between various authorities and the removal of possible obstacles
3. More effective monitoring of the Web
4. The development of local security planning
5. Increased security education in schools
6. Other proposals

Other proposals included the appointment of a named police officer in schools, closer monitoring of violent Web games, the prevention of hate crimes, and co-operation with the media.

In November 2009, the steering group for internal security and the ministerial management group for internal security discussed the follow-up reports submitted to them on the implementation of the measures. Measures already taken are listed in Appendix 2. Other measures, not directly related to the Internal Security Programme, include the following:

- The Finnish Association of Fire Chiefs published its new Security Guide for Educational Institutions.
- In November 2009, the Council for Mass Media in Finland appointed a working group to determine whether it is necessary to revise the Guidelines for Journalists document. The working group will submit its report by the end of April 2010.
- The Current Care Guidelines for the treatment of depression were revised. The most essential new recommendations concern the prevention of depression through psychological interventions and improved living habits, the significance of exercise in acute care, and a wider spectrum of psychotherapeutic treatments that have proved effective.
- The Government Decree on Family Centres, School and Student Health Care, and Preventive Dental Care for Children and Adolescents (380/2009) entered into effect in July 2009. The decree addresses identification of the need for special support and the provision of this support, the promotion of and support for mental health, and the prevention of school bullying.
- In January 2010, the working group on the security of educational institutions published its report as No. 40/2009 of the publications of the Ministry of the Interior. The working group's task was to issue instructions for the preparation of security plans; to provide schools, the police, and rescue authorities with

instructions on how to act in a threatening situation; and to plan how these instructions shall be implemented.

- The government bill of 4 February 2010 concerning the Youth Act contains new provisions for a multidisciplinary co-operation network for local authorities, as well as youth outreach work and related disclosure of data. Additionally, a special grant for the extension of youth outreach services to cover some 60% of Finnish municipalities has been allocated in the 2010 State Budget.
- The Church has increased the number of parsons and other Church workers in educational institutions, initiated a project for the development of psychological support, stepped up its Web activities, and provided more resources for its help line.
- A two-year prospective follow-up study of the coping, support, and treatment of the students who were exposed to the incident is currently under way in the National Institute for Health and Welfare. An intermediate report was published in 2009.
- The Finnish Defence Forces have reviewed and revised their instructions on the handling, storage, and possession of firearms and have also been developing an aptitude test for conscripts.
- The Rescue Services have introduced a new situation picture system ('Jotke').
- Several seminars have been organised on the topic of school shootings.

## 7. RECOMMENDATIONS

### 7.1. The availability of firearms

The perpetrator used a self-loading or semi-automatic small-bore pistol, for which he had the appropriate permits. As is usual in Finland, he had no difficulty in acquiring the necessary permits. The Jokela school killer was granted his gun without having been interviewed personally. By the time of the Kauhajoki incident, the procedure had been revised, and the perpetrator was interviewed by a policeman before he was given an acquisition permit. Additionally, the perpetrator was interviewed by the police a second time, because of the videos he had uploaded to the Web. In both instances, the perpetrator was found to meet the requirements of the rules and regulations in force at the time to qualify as a person who may be entrusted with a firearm.

Attempts to identify potentially criminal intentions in an interview conducted by the police or a doctor have proved unreliable, as evidenced by the fact that both the Jokela and Kauhajoki school killers were able to behave matter-of-factly when the need arose. Neither does it seem possible to deem an applicant suitable or unsuitable for possessing a firearm on the basis of mental health diagnoses.

Without exception, a firearm was used in all previous school shootings. Furthermore, studies examining school shootings in the USA have shown that school killers typically had easy access to a gun. A firearm firing multiple shots within a short time makes it possible for the gunman to kill multiple victims. In Kauhajoki, none of the 13 people in the classroom managed to escape during the shooting incident.

There are many guns in Finland, and, owing to historical traditions, Finnish people have a positive attitude to guns. Guns are used for many purposes, mostly for hunting and recreational shooting. These activities have no direct relation to school shootings – or any other type of violent crime, for that matter – as guns, on the whole, are actually quite seldom used in acts of violence. The large number of guns in Finland and their easy availability do, however, increase the pro-gun mentality among the population, create opportunities for firearms' use for destructive purposes, and thereby reduce public security. Some of the legally owned guns end up in illegal markets through theft, for example. Only the kinds of guns that do not enable their users to carry out such large-scale carnage should be allowed in recreational shooting.

#### ***Recommendation 1***

*The Ministry of the Interior should take steps to ensure that all handguns allowing their user to fire a large number of shots within a short period of time are collected – against payment, for example – and that no new acquisition permits are granted for such firearms. Handing in illegally owned guns should be made more attractive for the owners.*

### ***Recommendation 2***

*The Ministry of the Interior should take steps to raise the age limit for the possession of firearms to 20 years, to make all permits fixed-term, and to set two years of recreational shooting on a regular basis as a necessary condition for the granting of a permit.*

One member of the Investigation Commission filed a dissenting opinion with regard to the availability of firearms. The dissenting opinion is presented in Appendix 1.

### **7.2. The development of mental health services for young people**

The perpetrator had been suffering from various mental-health-related symptoms for some 10 years and, on the basis of the information available for the investigation, was falling seriously ill. He received medical treatment for depression and anxiety. The perpetrator would in all likelihood have benefited from a medical examination performed by a psychiatry specialist. By contrast, the Jokela school killer was found not to have received sufficiently comprehensive and systematic treatment or sufficient follow-up monitoring for his mental health disorder.

It is crucial to pay special attention to the mental health of young people referred to as young persons in the Youth Act, or people aged 28 or younger, in order to intervene in the process of marginalisation as early as possible. Medication alone, prescribed on flimsy grounds, cannot be considered the correct form of treatment for a young person. Therapeutic support is an essential element in the treatment of young people.

The need to develop mental health services for children and young people is echoed by the latest recommendations, issued in 2005, of the committee monitoring the implementation of the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child in Finland. The committee recommended that Finland take more effective measures for the prevention of juvenile suicide and enhance its mental health services.

According to a consensus report on the well-being and ill-being of Finnish youth, submitted in 2010 by the Finnish medical society Duodecim, the prescription of psychotropic medication for young people between 13 and 22 years of age should always be preceded by special consideration and careful assessment of the situation. This is why a medical examination performed by a psychiatry specialist or another doctor specialising in psychotropic medication for young people is a necessary precondition for the prescription of such medication.

### ***Recommendation 3***

*The Ministry of Social Affairs and Health should take steps to ensure that the prescription of psychotropic medication for young people aged 22 or younger is always preceded by a medical examination performed by a psychiatry or psychotropic medication specialist.*

### **7.3. Enhancing cross-generational interaction in educational institutions**

The perpetrator had talked with other people about school shootings and his experiences of being the target of bullying. Some people were aware of his mental health problems, and even more people knew about his at times excessive use of alcohol and his aggressive behaviour when intoxicated. The people who were aware of his problems included his friends, other students, his parents, and (to some extent) health care personnel and teachers. These people saw that the perpetrator had some problems, but none of them actually had a comprehensive picture of the situation. A similar situation was behind the Jokela school shootings.

Members of young people's social communities are in an excellent position to look after each other's well-being. We also need other networks capable of providing support, such as school communities, health care services, and youth services. Good cross-generational interaction is a necessary condition for successful co-operation, which in its turn will allow us to identify the invisible problems behind the social ill-being of young people, and to access the silent information concerning their everyday lives. There is need for both private and public discussion.

To create meaningful dialogue, we need changes in school culture, changes that would allow us to build confidential relationships – that also young people would identify as such – between adults and young people as well as structures that support the social inclusion of young people. This change can be achieved on the level of individual schools but also by enhancing in particular teachers' understanding of the dynamics of social groups among young people. This is where youth work and NGOs can make an impact. It is therefore vital to utilise their expertise and modes of operation in the enhancement of cross-generation interaction also in a school environment. The prevention and identification of the violence faced or committed by young people, as well as dealing with it, is the educational duty of all those working with young people.

Enhancement of student health care, student associations, and the health care system in polytechnics would also promote the identification of students' problems and dealing with these problems in a comprehensive manner. Universities and the occupational health care system could provide a model for this, as they offer their students and workers an initial medical examination and provide assistance for addressing various problems without delay. On the whole, there seem to be grave deficiencies in Finnish schools of all levels in the availability of school doctor or psychologist's services, for example. The recommendations on personnel resources and health examinations have largely been ignored. There has also been considerable variation in how well students are able to participate in the planning of their own activities.

#### ***Recommendation 4***

*Working with the Ministry of Education, the Ministry of Social Affairs and Health should take steps to provide additional resources for student health care, particularly for the mental health sector. This would imply the introduction of regular, compulsory health examinations, for example.*

### ***Recommendation 5***

*The Ministry of Education should take steps to provide students with school-specific opportunities to express their concerns and opinions also on the Web and to discuss them with student welfare personnel. The system should include procedures for the identification and processing of problem situations.*

### **7.4. Comprehensive security planning in educational institutions**

Together with the announcements made over the PA system, self-rescue was an important factor in restricting the shooting to only one classroom in the Kauhajoki school shootings. Evacuation was expedited through the order to leave the building, made over the PA system. The school had prepared itself for various eventualities, even though a situation such as a school shooting had not been identified as a potential risk in the plans.

According to rescue legislation, all educational institutions must have a valid rescue plan in place, with the emphasis usually on fire safety but also on other types of accidents. According to the National Core Curriculum for comprehensive and upper secondary schools, all schools must have a crisis plan and a plan for the protection of students from acts of violence. A corresponding obligation to draw up emergency plans currently also applies to polytechnics and universities. Occupational safety and health legislation provides for addressing safety issues pertaining to school personnel. Local security planning, also referred to in the Internal Security Programme, is carried out on the municipal level. In Kauhajoki, the police are responsible for this planning.

From educational institutions' viewpoint, these obligations appear not only complicated and organised along sector lines; they also seem to emphasise the special features of each sector at the expense of the overall picture. There is a risk that resources may prove insufficient for maintaining several separate plans or for providing the necessary training. Furthermore, there may be some overlap in the plans, and they may not cover all areas. The best model for security planning in educational institutions is probably one supervised by the local rescue authority in conjunction with regular fire inspections.

An approach that emphasises a comprehensive and extensive assessment of security risks would yield better results in security planning. Information on accidents, dangerous situations, and similar events both within the school community and elsewhere could be utilised to identify potential risks. What we need to bear in mind is that the school shootings phenomenon will develop and undergo changes. The identification of potential risks forms a solid base for the prevention of accidents and other, similar events, which has previously often been overlooked in security planning, for example.

### ***Recommendation 6***

*The Ministry of the Interior, the Ministry of Education, and the Ministry of Social Affairs and Health should take steps to compile all security-related planning and instructions in educational institutions into a single document that is updated regularly. The essential elements here are the identification of potential risks; the systematic prevention thereof; and instructions for various security-related eventualities, distributed to students in pocket-sized booklets, for example.*

### **7.5. Command relationships in situations involving multiple authorities**

Co-operation among the various authorities involved in the Kauhajoki incident was mainly carried out on field command level. Their modes of operation gradually took on similar features, which is something that often also happens in conjunction with smaller joint operations. Indeed, a useful model in emergency situations is to repeat what has previously been done in similar situations or drills. In a major operation, however, the crucial difference is the large number of operators involved and the urgent need for clear command relations. Owing to the nature of this particular incident, the police were deemed to be in charge of the situation. The various authorities involved in the operation did not have a sufficient joint situation picture. The co-ordination of the activities was random to some extent.

According to the Rescue Act, the chief of rescue is in overall command in a rescue operation involving authorities from several administrative sectors. This provision has not been applied in conjunction with school shootings, but the authorities have not made joint preparations to act otherwise. It is probably most natural for the police to be in command in situations of this nature, but in some cases it may be difficult to draw the line. This could occur in the case of an explosion or a fire whose cause is initially not known, or in a situation such as the Nokia water crisis in 2007, for example. The nature of rescue activities in a school shooting incident may also be significantly different if there is a large-scale fire in the building or the number of evacuees or victims to be rescued is large. Command relationships should be clear and determined in advance to meet the demands of various situations in varying circumstances.

Instructions, plans, training, and drills do not sufficiently address accidents and special situations wherein the participation and co-operation of multiple authorities is required. These shortcomings become particularly pronounced in situations where decisions on the co-ordination of operations, maintenance of the situation picture, and general command have to be made swiftly.

#### ***Recommendation 7***

*The Ministry of the Interior and the Ministry of Social Affairs and Health should take steps to provide the police, Rescue Services, and Emergency Medical Services with jointly approved co-operation plans that are adaptable to a variety of situations and sudden changes in operation circumstances. Sufficient training and drilling must be provided to ensure that the plans work in practice.*

### **7.6. Co-operation between authorities in prevention work**

The underlying factors behind school shootings are general ill-being and problems that the various operators in society have failed to identify adequately, with that failure having made early intervention impossible. To create a more comprehensive understanding of this phenomenon as well as an atmosphere of caring, the Investigation Commission hereby repeats recommendation 11 issued by the Investigation Commission for the Jokela school shootings.

The emphasis in the implementation of the recommendation should be on prevention in particular. This also involves the need to compile all studies related to preventive work in police training into a single study module, which would facilitate the development of preventive police work into part of daily police routines.

### ***Recommendation 8***

*In co-operation with the Ministry of Social Affairs and Health and the Ministry of Education, the Ministry of the Interior should take steps to develop co-operation involving multiple authorities such that it takes a more systematic and regular direction. This co-operation is necessary in preparation for various eventualities, as well as to train for and co-ordinate preventive security work also.*

### **7.7. Co-ordination of psychosocial support**

The incident resulted in a large-scale need for psychosocial support in several localities. All the victims, their families, and many of the polytechnic students did not live in Kauhajoki. Psychosocial support is part of the social welfare and health care system, whose services are primarily provided by the municipality of residence of the person in need of support and, more specifically, its health centre-based crisis team. In practice, this support can be provided through joint municipal authorities, specialist health care services in hospital districts, and various NGOs or the Church. The municipalities surrounding Kauhajoki had for years been engaging in municipal co-operation in the provision of crisis relief, which facilitated the rapid commencement of crisis work there.

It soon became apparent, however, that the resources available for crisis work in these municipalities were woefully inadequate for a crisis of this magnitude. Small Finnish municipalities, in particular, simply do not have the resources for such a large-scale eventuality involving several municipalities and other organisations. In this instance, the long-term crisis work was organised through the setting up of a special project, application for funding for this project, and the hiring of additional personnel. This arrangement had to be undertaken in the immediate aftermath of the incident, which naturally reduced the amount of time and the resources available for actual crisis relief. As the project was established, matters of responsibility and leadership were unclear, and there was no guarantee that the project would receive the necessary funding.

There are a large number of qualified personnel available for the provision of psychosocial support, in various organisations throughout Finland. There are, however, no plans in existence as to how these resources may be utilised most efficiently. Accordingly, the provision of psychosocial support may involve delays, uncertainty about the duties of various organisations, overlaps, concern for the continued availability of resources, a lack of overall command, and inexpedient allocation of support. The need for support experienced by a person living far away from the scene of the accident, for example, may go unnoticed. The same can happen in the case of, for example, a bus accident where the victims or survivors come from somewhere else than the municipality where the accident occurred.

**Recommendation 9**

*The Ministry of Social Affairs and Health should take steps to ensure that the plans, resources, responsibilities, and competent leadership for the provision of psychosocial support in major crises are available regardless of where the accident takes place or where the people involved come from. The aim is to provide the necessary individual, communal, and practical support to those involved, when they need it.*

Helsinki, 17 February 2010

  
Pekka Sauri  
Chairman

  
Pekka Aho

  
Mirjam Kalland

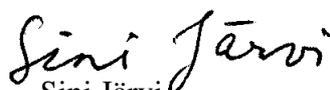
  
Esko Kaukonen

  
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Pauli Niemelä

  
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Kai Valonen

  
Sini Järvi  
Secretary

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## **APPENDIX 1: Dissenting opinion on item 7.1 of the investigation report**

In its investigative report on the Kauhajoki school shootings, the Investigation Commission decided to propose in recommendation 1 concerning firearms that all handguns allowing the user to fire multiple shots within a short period of time be collected. The recommendation is in the following form:

*The Ministry of the Interior should take steps to ensure that all handguns allowing their users to fire a large number of shots within a short period of time are collected – against payment, for example – and that no new acquisition permits are granted for such firearms. Handing in illegally owned guns should be made more attractive for the owners.*

In practice, this would mean a violation of the Constitutional right of Finnish citizens to protection of property. Furthermore, the recommendation would mean putting an end to all shooting sports, even Olympic sports, where semi-automatic pistols are used. This recommendation would not, however, lead to the recovery of illegal semi-automatic pistols; instead, these would still remain in the possession of persons who hold them illegally. In practice, the collection would only pertain to legal firearms.

It is my opinion that, instead of imposing the above-mentioned total ban on semi-automatic pistols, the recommendation should still enable citizens to engage in responsible shooting sports. Additionally, the recommendation should aim at enabling permitting authorities to investigate applicants' background in more detail than heretofore, and at more attention being paid in the permit process to the applicant's active participation in shooting sports.

The fact is that there are many firearms in Finland. The large number of guns has led to misuse of firearms, as well as to firearms ending up illegally, in one way or another, in the hands of persons to whom a permitting authority would not grant a firearm acquisition or possession permit. As is mentioned in the introduction to the recommendation, a firearm was used, without exception, in all previous school shootings. Furthermore, studies of school shootings in the USA have shown that school killers typically had easy access to a gun. However, according to a study conducted by the FBI, the availability of guns as such is not a risk factor.

The National Police Board should ensure that the police have up-to-date electronic databases on firearms and their possessors at their disposal. Furthermore, the Ministry of the Interior and the National Police Board should see to it that, in conjunction with the firearm acquisition process and, if necessary, for the full term of validity of the firearm possession permit, the police have access to a sufficiently comprehensive report on the background of the applicant, including the applicant's health status, regardless of what is provided by law on the openness or secrecy of documents, and that, when necessary, certain types of firearm permits are granted for a fixed term only. Raising the age limit for an acquisition permit for semi-automatic pistols to 20 years should also be considered. The possibility of using parallel permits should also be looked into.

It is my personal opinion that recommendation 1 should read as follows and that it should apply to handgun permits granted for recreational and hunting purposes. Additionally, recommendation 2 should be deleted.

*The Ministry of the Interior should take steps to raise the age limit for the possession of firearms to 20 years, to make all permits fixed-term, and to set two years of recreational shooting on a regular basis as a necessary condition for the granting of a permit.*

Pekka Aho  
Member, Investigation Commission

## **APPENDIX 2: The implementation of measures initiated as a result of the school shootings**

On 26 November 2009, the ministerial management group for internal security discussed the follow-up reports on the implementation of the measures initiated as a result of the school shootings. The following measures were recorded as completed:

### **1. Measures for the prevention of school shootings**

#### **Determining the course of events and the underlying background factors**

- Investigation commissions were appointed for the Jokela and Kauhajoki school shootings.

#### **The development of services preventing school shootings**

- The working group on the development of pupil and student welfare submitted its memorandum in September 2009. Legislative processes have been initiated on the basis of the memorandum.
- A basic report was submitted on the survey 'The promotion of welfare and health in polytechnics'.
- A seminar was held on preventive work related to substance misuse. A report will be drawn up on best practices.
- The Timeout model will be extended. This model provides support for young men who do not participate in military or civilian service.

#### **Support material, instructions, and research**

- The National Institute for Health and Welfare has prepared the following support material: 1) 'Children and youth and the events at the Jokela school' and 2) 'The identification of children and young people's need for help'.
- Material on the prevention of crime and on security co-operation related to community policing has been prepared and distributed to the populace.
- The curriculum of the Police College of Finland's school police programme has been modified to take into account the events in Jokela and Kauhajoki.

#### **Controlling the harmful effects of electronic media and monitoring the Internet**

- The National Bureau of Investigation (NBI) currently maintains Web monitoring to intervene in further school shooting threats.
- The funding provided for this monitoring has allowed the NBI to recruit 10 workers to perform it.
- A working group has prepared reforms in the organisation of IT investigations, Web monitoring, and the utilisation of technology in search engines.
- The NBI maintains both a hotline number for phone tip-offs and an e-mailbox for online tip-offs.

### **Practices, instructions, and training related to firearm permits**

- Police department personnel handling firearms matters have received standardisation training and training related to applicant interviews.
- Police departments have been issued with standardisation instructions on firearm permit procedures.
- A letter has been issued for administrative use on the granting and revocation of firearm possession permits.
- The importance of the permit procedure is emphasised in preventive security work in police departments and the curriculum of the Police College of Finland.

### **Military call-ups and monitoring conscripts' fitness for service**

- Preliminary health examinations and call-up examinations are enhanced through improvement of the availability and up-to-dateness of register data pertaining to conscripts' health status. Instructions have been issued for health care operators. The Ministry of Social Affairs and Health has provided mental health work operators with instructions on the disclosure of health data concerning conscripts liable for call-up to the Finnish Defence Forces.

### **Assessment of the need for legislative reforms**

- An assessment of the need for legislative reforms pertaining to the media environment has been initiated. It seems there is no need for reforms.
- A decree on amendment of the decree on family centres and school and student health care is being prepared.

### **Responding to threats**

- The working group preparing measures to ensure the implementation of the state crisis management model has published its final report.
- The National Council for Crime Prevention is currently compiling a list of measures that will facilitate the reduction of violence at the local level. The checklist is to be included in a guide to be sent to all municipalities.

### **Internal preventive measures in the police administration**

- According to the 2008 Community Policing Strategy and the 2009 performance steering, schools are a special target of preventive informational work.
- The 2009 performance steering of the police takes into account the events in Jokela and Kauhajoki in its key measures for crime prevention, as well as updating of municipal security plans to correspond to the current situation for 24 police departments.

## **2. Operational activities**

### **Further development of youth work**

- A crisis centre has been opened in Kauhajoki, and youth work in Ilmajoki has received additional support.

- A thesis has been written on the lessons of the Jokela school shootings for municipal youth work.
- A youth researchers' publication on the Jokela and Kauhajoki incidents has been published.

### **External communications**

- Information services were provided for international media in conjunction with the Jokela incident. The Ministry for Foreign Affairs has introduced a weekly on-call system.
- Information services were provided for international media as well as foreign reporters and diplomatic missions in Finland in conjunction with the Kauhajoki incident.

### **Police investigation of school shootings**

- The Jokela investigation was completed.
- The investigation of the Kauhajoki events was completed.

### **Instructions for application in shooting incidents**

- A recommendation is under preparation concerning how to deal with shooting incidents at schools.
- A broad-based working group is being appointed to prepare measures that will provide support for school communities and enhance security.

### **Command relationships and instructions**

- The command structure of local police field operations will be reviewed as part of the on-going reform of police administrative structures.
- Review of police instructions on the use of firearms in case similar incidents occur is under consideration.

### **Training**

- Training sessions are to be arranged for representatives of education and cultural services, social welfare and health services, the rescue services, the police, education providers, head teachers and rectors of educational institutions, members of pupil and student welfare teams, and other members of educational institutions' emergency teams.
- Police officers who took part in operations in conjunction with school shootings have given lectures at numerous training events, sharing their experiences with the audience. Their observations will be taken into account in a reform aimed at enhancing the leadership and operations of the police.
- The activities of the police in relation to school shooting incidents will be taken into account in police training at least from the angles of police tactics, internal communications, media liaison work, and interest group co-operation.
- A training session on the tactical challenges involved in school shooting incidents was held in all new police departments.

- School shootings were discussed in a seminar at the Police Academy of Finland, in an international seminar on police co-operation, in an internal training session for police administration, and in crisis work training.

### **3. 'After-care' for the Jokela and Kauhajoki incidents**

#### **After-care resources**

- State budget funds from various sub-items were earmarked for the provision of after-care related to the school shootings.
- The Municipality of Tuusula employs crisis workers in Tuusula schools.
- The Finnish Red Cross granted crisis relief funds to the Municipality of Tuusula from its disaster fund.
- The Social Insurance Institution of Finland (Kela) provided funds for discretionary rehabilitation.

#### **Availability of services**

- Assistance was provided for the Municipality of Tuusula in the recruitment of an after-care co-ordination team. The team's task is to provide assistance in the organisation of further measures, the assessment of individual needs, and the acquisition of paid services.
- A working group was appointed to provide an overview of the situation and its development in Tuusula, to contact municipal operators when necessary, to assess the need for help in the municipality, to produce practical instructions, to act as a media liaison, to ensure the functionality of the area's psychiatric services system, and to take steps to increase the well-being of children and youth.
- A working group was appointed after the Kauhajoki incident to provide support for the Municipality of Kauhajoki in the organisation of support and crisis relief for the victims, their families, and the students and staff of the polytechnic in the initial stages of the crisis.

#### **Prevention of harmful after-effects and special consideration**

- A letter was written to Jokela Upper Secondary School, requesting special consideration due to the shooting incident in conjunction with the spring 2008 matriculation examination.
- Special consideration was given to the shooting incident in the selection of topics for the matriculation examination.
- A discussion forum on school security was arranged in co-operation with various NGOs.
- A discussion of school security for members of youth parliaments and student associations was held.

#### **Co-operation with the media**

- Co-operation between authorities and the media was discussed in a joint seminar on 3 November 2009.

The number of measures still in progress as recorded in the follow-up report was 67.

After the publication of the follow-up report, the Ministry of Social Affairs and Health issued new instructions on psychosocial support. Also, related training was organised.

Local security planning has been developed such that the municipality's management, the rescue services, and the police now jointly ensure that the rescue plans of all educational institutions in the area are up to date and the necessary drills are organised. Local security planning should also address other sites potentially at risk, the rescue plans of which are to be reviewed without undue delay.



## **APPENDIX 3: Official opinions**

### **1. OPINION OF THE MINISTRY OF JUSTICE**

The Ministry of Justice has no comments on the draft report on the Kauhajoki school shootings of 23 September 2008.

Permanent Secretary Tiina Astola

Head of Department Jarmo Littunen

### **2. OPINION OF THE MINISTRY OF THE INTERIOR'S DEPARTMENT FOR RESCUE SERVICES**

#### **Recommendations**

The Ministry of the Interior Department for Rescue Services considers the recommendations given in the investigation report to be valid from the point of view of the Rescue Services and has no further comments.

#### **The measures taken**

The department proposes that the following addenda be made under this heading:

*1) Security in educational institutions: Report by the working group (Ministry of the Interior Publications 40/2009)*

The Ministry of the Interior on 19 January 2009 appointed a working group whose task was to issue instructions for the preparation of security plans; to provide schools, the police, and rescue authorities with instructions on how to act in a threatening situation; and to plan how these instructions shall be implemented. The working group submitted its report to the Ministry of Education and the Ministry of the Interior on 19 January 2010.

The measures proposed by the working group include instructions on revision of the rescue plans of educational institutions to take into account also incidents such as the Jokela and Kauhajoki school shootings. Additionally, the working group submitted a number of other proposals, concerning, for example, the structural safety of school buildings. The recommendations in the investigation report and the measures proposed by the working group are very similar.

*2) Co-operative leadership in situations involving multiple authorities*

The purpose of the reform of the Rescue Act is to provide more detailed specification of the duties and responsibilities of the situation commander in a situation involving multiple authorities. Preparedness (planning, training, drills,

and co-operation) for the above-mentioned situations has received a great deal of attention in performance steering and other instructions.

*3) The development of the field command system of safety authorities*

Various safety authorities are committed to development of the field command system through modification of the system to enable efficient availability of the situation picture and other shared items. The joint section is under preparation and is linked to the development of the Emergency Response Centre data system.

Director of Rescue Services

Janne Koivukoski

Senior Rescue Officer

Tarmo Kopare

### **3. OPINION OF THE MINISTRY OF THE INTERIOR'S POLICE DEPARTMENT**

#### **The recommendations on the availability of firearms:**

##### **Background**

On 26 June 2009, the Finnish government introduced bill HE106/2009 vp to Parliament. The bill comprises an amendment to the provisions of the Firearms Act on handguns – i.e., pistols, revolvers, small-bore pistols, and small-bore revolvers. According to the bill, in future, permits for these types of firearms would be granted only to persons 20 years of age or older. Furthermore, an acquisition permit for these types of firearms would be granted for shooting sports and recreational purposes only to persons belonging to an association referred to in Section 4 of the Associations Act. For hunting purposes, a permit would be granted to a person able to present a certificate issued by a local hunters' association, declaring that the bearer is actively engaged in recreational hunting. All handgun permits would initially be issued for a fixed term of five years. After this, the permit-holder would be required to present a certificate every five years, declaring that the bearer is actively engaged in recreational shooting or hunting.

Should the bill become law, in future, an acquisition permit for a hunting firearm could be granted only to persons 18 years of age or older. With the consent of a parent or guardian, a 15-year-old person could be granted a parallel permit for a shotgun, combination weapon, rifle, or small-bore rifle for hunting or recreational shooting purposes. A parent or guardian could be granted a permit for the acquisition or possession of a firearm if his or her minor child is engaged in hunting or recreational shooting activities.

The government bill does not include a proposal for making all permits fixed-term. The bill does, however, include a proposal according to which a possession permit could be revoked if the permit-holder has otherwise than

temporarily stopped using the firearm for another, acceptable purpose referred to in the Firearms Act.

The bill is currently before Parliament. This government bill is part of stage 1 of a process aimed at a reform of firearms legislation.

The second stage will be initiated with another government bill, due at the start of the autumn 2010 term.

Having approved the above-mentioned bill, the government issued a statement on 25 June 2009, according to which stage 2 of the Firearms Act reform will aim to look into the following targets for reform: the possibility of making illegal individual models of semi-automatic handguns or high-calibre revolvers that are not suited to shooting sports, a review of old firearm permits, and the need to reform the legislation pertaining to the storage of firearms.

Single-shot firearms (no clips) are the only type of firearm that does not enable the user to fire multiple shots within a short period of time. According to November 2008 statistics, there are approximately 1,000 single-shot pistols and some 3,500 small-bore, single-shot pistols in Finland. The total number of handguns – i.e., pistols, small-bore pistols, revolvers, and small-bore pistols – is in excess of 250,000. There is only one pistol event in the Olympic Games that does not require a handgun with a clip. There are very few such events outside the Olympic Games either. The implementation of the ban specified in recommendation 1 would mean, with minor exceptions, the end of handgun shooting sports as we know them.

In early 2004, a one-year ‘grace period’ was introduced, in which all citizens had the opportunity to hand over to the police with impunity all illegally possessed firearms, firearm components, cartridges, and especially dangerous projectiles as well as explosives. The requirement for achieving impunity is that the possessor of the object report it to the police of his or her own volition and hand it over to the police. With regard to firearms, the legal possessor of the firearm can apply for a permit for it, disable it permanently, or hand it over within three months, either to a party holding a valid permit or, without remuneration, to the state. If the legal possessor does not apply for a permit for the firearm, if one is not granted, or if the firearm is not permanently disabled or handed over to a party holding a valid permit or to the state, the police will sell the firearm on behalf of the possessor in a public auction. Firearms that remain unsold after the auction become state property. Firearms whose owner is not known, as well as all illegal firearm components, gas sprays, cartridges, and especially dangerous projectiles become state property without an auction. The introduction of the grace-period system resulted in more than 20,000 illegal firearms being handed over to the police. All told, more than 40,000 illegal firearms have been handed over to the police since 1998, so many illegal firearms have already been collected.

Directive 2008/51/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council amending Council Directive 91/477/EEC on control of the acquisition and possession of weapons became effective on 28 July 2008. Its implementation period ends on 28 July 2010. This directive contains new provisions on the minimum age of a permit-holder: According to the directive, a permit-holder must be at least 18 years of age. However, a possession permit may be granted to a person less than 18 years of age for hunting and target shooting purposes, provided that certain conditions are met. An acquisition permit may not be granted to a person less than 18 years of age even for these purposes, unless the acquisition is made through purchase. Finland's view in conjunction with the preparation of the directive was that the right of persons less than 18 years of age to pursue hunting is to be guaranteed.

### **Recommendation 1**

With its decision to introduce government bill HE 106/2009 vp to Parliament, the Finnish government took the line that recreational shooting using handguns is to be allowed, but with the tighter controls mentioned above in place. As stated earlier, the government obliged the Ministry of the Interior, in the second stage of the firearms legislation reform, to look into the possibility of making illegal individual models of semi-automatic handguns or high-calibre revolvers that are not suitable for shooting sports. When discussing the government bill, the Finnish Parliament in effect states its opinion on firearm regulations.

Making the handing over of illegal firearms more attractive to citizens is a commendable recommendation. It is with this purpose in mind that the Ministry of the Interior will look into the possibility of enhancing the amnesty-period system's efficacy in conjunction with the second stage of the firearms legislation reform.

### **Recommendation 2**

Government bill HE 106/2009 includes a number of proposals for changing the minimum age of an applicant for a permit. The bill proposes that, in future, a handgun permit be granted only to persons 20 years of age or older. For other types of firearms, a permit could be granted for persons 18 years of age or older. With the consent of a parent or guardian, a parallel permit could be granted for a person 15 but not yet 18 years of age for recreational shooting or hunting purposes.

The government bill includes a proposal concerning handgun permits according to which a handgun permit would initially be issued for a fixed term of five years. After this, the permit-holder would have to demonstrate, or face the threat of revocation of the permit, that he or she is actively pursuing his or her hobby. The bill also includes a proposal concerning all firearm permits, whereby a possession permit for a firearm may be revoked if the permit-holder otherwise than temporarily has stopped using the firearm for another, acceptable purpose referred to in the Firearms Act. The possibility of reviewing

old firearm permits will be looked into in conjunction with the second stage of the Firearms Act reform.

### **Other recommendations**

The Police Department has no other comments on the recommendations in the report.

Director General,  
Head of Department      Kauko Aaltomaa

Project Manager          Mika Lehtonen

## **4. OPINION OF THE MINISTRY OF SOCIAL AFFAIRS AND HEALTH**

### **General comments on the Investigation Commission's report**

The Investigation Commission's report on the Kauhajoki school shootings offers informed and in-depth insight into the act, its background, and the activities of various authorities and other operators. The report provides the reader with an overall picture of the incident as well as the activities, responsibilities, and duties of the various operators with regard to this act of violence in a school community.

On the recommendations

#### 1. The availability of firearms

The recommendations are in line with the new Firearms Act, on which the Ministry of Social Affairs and Health has given its opinion elsewhere. We refer to the official opinion of the Ministry of Social Affairs on the government bill on the Firearms Act introduced to the Ministry of the Interior (STM/1252/2009), and hereby state that the ministry's opinion on the disclosure of an applicant's health data to permitting authorities remains the same. In other respects, the Ministry of Social Affairs and Health concurs with the recommendation.

#### 2. The development of mental health services for young people

The Ministry of Social Affairs and Health does not concur with the Investigation Commission's recommendation according to which psychiatrists are to be involved in the commencement of medical treatment for persons 29 years of age or younger. It is more vital to ensure preventive mental health work and the availability of early treatment, which are both supported by expertise in primary health care and multidisciplinary

methods. Furthermore, the treatment provided must be appropriate at all levels of treatment.

The perpetrator had been suffering from mental health symptoms for some 10 years. He was subjected to bullying both at school and in the army. All of his symptoms, as described in the school health questionnaire, patient records, and the army materials, were related to anxiety and depression disorders. On the basis of these descriptions, it seems the symptoms were of varying degree and moderate at most, apart from a period of unknown length for which his mother reported that her son refused to get out of bed, refused to eat, and was generally apathetic. The perpetrator made a quick recovery after seeing a doctor. He also had a drinking problem. He was diagnosed with depression and, in accordance with the Current Care Guidelines, received medication and psychosocial support from a depression nurse specialist.

His health care anamnesis prior to the shooting incident indicates nothing else than moderate depression, simultaneous anxiety, and a substance abuse problem. Annually, up to 10% of young adults in Finland may suffer from severe depression, and 40–80% of these suffer from multiple mental health disorders, just as the perpetrator did. About 10–15% of Finnish youth harbour serious suicidal thoughts. This means there are tens of thousands of young adults in Finland suffering from similar symptoms. Each year, some 0.1% of Finnish youth are diagnosed with schizophrenia.

There are roughly 150 adolescent psychiatrists of working age and, in total, some 1,000 working-age psychiatrists in Finland. They are responsible for diagnosis and treatment of severe mental health disorders. Psychiatric treatment consists mainly of pharmacotherapy. Psychotherapeutic treatment services are concentrated near urban areas, and their use is restricted by the availability of psychotherapists and the high price.

It is the opinion of the Ministry of Social Affairs and Health that the majority of mental health disorders, such as moderate depression and the related anxiety and substance misuse problems, should be treated in primary health care. The ‘Mieli 2009’ plan of the Ministry of Social Affairs and Health (STM 2009:3) recommends that all health centres in Finland utilise the depression nurse specialist model and substance abuse nurse model. Additionally, the plan emphasises the significance of psychiatric consultation provided by specialised health care services to mental health work carried out in primary health care. A brochure entitled ‘Depressiohoitaja perusterveydenhuollossa’ (‘Depression Nurse Specialists in Primary Health Care’) (STM 2010:1), published by the Ministry of Social Affairs and Health, highlights the responsibility of health care doctors in the assessment of patients, as well as the regular clinical guidance provided for depression nurse specialists by psychiatrists, in ensuring optimal treatment for patients with multiple problems, and that they are referred to the right type of treatment. The Mieli 2009 plan and the Government Decree on

Family Centres, School and Student Health Care, and Preventive Dental Care for Children and Adolescents (380/2009) both emphasise elimination of factors endangering mental health through actions such as interventions in school bullying and substance abuse, as well as preventive mental health work carried out in schools.

The perpetrator's mental health support had been neglected already in upper-level comprehensive school, and he started receiving treatment only after suffering from various symptoms for almost 10 years. It appears that there was not a psychiatrist available to provide support for the depression nurse specialist treating the perpetrator, and, despite being responsible for his treatment, the health-care centre doctor did not meet with the patient personally. The prescription of Alprox medication for the perpetrator was an ill-advised choice for a substance abuse patient. The significance of these defects in treatment where the school shootings are concerned remains unclear.

### 3. Enhancing cross-generation interaction in educational institutions

The title of the recommendation and the text below it are in contradiction. The text does not mention generations; it focuses on networks and student welfare instead. Another title, such as 'Student welfare services' or 'The availability of student welfare services' might be more in keeping with the text and its recommendations.

Recommendation 4 lies within the area of responsibility of the Ministry of Social Affairs and Health. A government decree (380/2009) was issued last year on student health care, which entered into effect on 1 July 2009 where health care services and nursing services in student health care are concerned. All students in higher education undergo a health examination on the basis of a health questionnaire aimed at all students. The implementation of the decree is dependent on whether the personnel resources specified in the *Handbook on Health Care during Studies* are made available.

In collaboration with the National Board of Education, the National Institute for Health and Welfare is currently preparing a guide for pupil and student welfare, which will also cover co-operation and networking. A working group has been appointed in the Ministry of Education to prepare comprehensive pupil and student welfare legislation covering the various administrative sectors. The Ministry of Social Affairs and Health is involved in this preparation work.

### 4. Comprehensive security planning in educational institutions

The Ministry of Social Affairs and Health agrees with this recommendation. The Ministry of Social Affairs and Health finds that there is also room for improvement in the flow of information between the various operators in

student welfare (between education welfare officers and school nurses, for example), which had already created a lot of discussion in conjunction with the Jokela school shootings.

It is the opinion of the Ministry of Social Affairs and Health that the above-mentioned comprehensive pupil and student welfare act, currently under preparation in the Ministry of Education, will facilitate co-operation between various administrative bodies.

5. Co-operative leadership in situations involving multiple authorities

The Ministry of Social Affairs and Health concurs with the recommendation.

6. Co-operation between authorities in preventive work

The Ministry of Social Affairs and Health concurs with the recommendation.

7. Co-ordination of psychosocial support

The Investigation Commission's recommendation is necessary. At the moment, student welfare services are organised along the lines of the *Handbook on Health Care during Studies* (STM 2006), which steers the various operators toward the provision of individual psychosocial support. Intensive co-operation among the various student welfare operators within the school community is a necessary condition for the provision of psychosocial support – including a plan; the necessary resources; responsibility; and competent, expert leadership – in major crises, which the recommendation calls for. Student welfare personnel may not always be physically present at the educational institution.

In 2009, the Ministry of Social Affairs and Health published a working group memorandum entitled 'Psychosocial Support and Services in Traumatic Events' (STM 2009:41), which includes nine proposals for action. Some of the proposals for action put forth in the memorandum overlap with the measures suggested to the Ministry of Social Affairs and Health.

In the same year, the Ministry of Social Affairs and Health published a guide for municipalities and joint municipal authorities on psychosocial support and services in traumatic events (STM 2009:16). The areas covered by the guide include the operators involved in the provision of psychosocial support and services, activities and leadership on various levels, major accidents, after-care, and costs.

Permanent Secretary      Kari Välimäki

Special Adviser            Maire Kolimaa

## 5. OPINION OF THE MINISTRY OF EDUCATION

The opinion of the Ministry of Education on the draft report submitted by the Investigation Commission for the Kauhajoki school shootings is as follows.

### **General**

The investigation report is very thorough. The report displays great expertise, and, on the whole, the recommendations submitted by the commission are explicit and concrete.

In general, the Ministry of Education has no comments on the approach, content, and structure of the report.

### **Detailed comments on the recommendations**

The recommendations of the commission are presented in chapter 7 of the report. The comments of the Ministry of Education are as follows.

#### Recommendation 4: Increased resources for student health care

As such, the recommendation is justified. The recommendation must not, however, lead to extension of the responsibility of the educational administration in terms of student welfare.

Student welfare is solely the domain of the Ministry of Social Affairs and Health, and the Ministry of Education is not competent in this matter. The current division of responsibility between the Ministry of Education and the Ministry of Social Affairs and Health still applies.

With regard to health examinations, the situation has taken a turn for the better. The Government Decree on Family Centres, School and Student Health Care, and Preventive Dental Care for Children and Adolescents (380/2009) enhances school health care as part of pupil welfare and student health care as part of student welfare. The decree entered into force on 1 July 2009, and Finnish municipalities are obliged to begin regular school health examinations as referred to in sections 9 and 10 of the decree as of 1 January 2011.

#### Recommendation 5: School-specific opportunities for pupils and students to engage in online discussions and express their concerns and opinions on the Web

The practical organisation of tuition and education and of the participation systems of educational institutions are among the basic duties of education-providers (municipalities, joint municipal authorities, and

private education providers). The Ministry of Education can, however, pay attention to this matter through informational guidance.

Accordingly, the recommendation should read: 'Education providers should take steps to...'

Education welfare officers, school psychologists, teachers of special-needs students, and guidance counsellors already engage in e-mail discussions with the students. Additionally, there already exist, or are being developed, various electronic tools for the provision of network counselling and support. Where applicable, some of these development projects could be linked with the student services specified in the SADe Programme. It should also be possible to obtain EU funding for this.

In addition to the measures implemented in schools, the opportunities afforded by youth work could be utilised in this context. According to Section 7 of the Youth Act, each municipality is responsible for youth work in its own area. Municipal youth work includes, for example, educational counselling for young people, which can take the form of workshops, youth outreach work, information services, or support for various leisure activities. Youth workers and school personnel could join forces to improve cross-generation interaction in particular.

Leisure activities for young people are an important part of prevention work. We need to support positive leisure activities in areas such as cultural activities (music, theatre, etc.), sports (skateboarding, parcour, snowboarding, dance, etc.), games (LARP, board games, and computer games), and science and nature activities (astronomy, bird-watching, etc.). These offer ample opportunities for cross-generation activities, open discussion, and trustful interaction, and they can be organised through co-operation between schools, youth work, and NGOs.

Young people should also be involved in these activities to provide authorities with a picture of young people's needs and attitudes, as well as their behaviour in an electronic interactive environment (social media).

The proposals concerning youth work, among others, apply also in relation to recommendation 8.

Recommendation 6: Comprehensive security planning in educational institutions

A joint working group, appointed by the Ministry of Education, the Ministry of the Interior, and various interest groups, submitted its report on 19 January 2010. The working group proposes that a security guide for schools be issued. The guide would provide schools with instructions on risk assessment and security planning. The working group also proposed that all security-related plans in educational institutions be placed in a

security folder where they are readily accessible. The security plans should be based on risk assessment carried out jointly by school staff and public authorities. Each school must also have a security organisation in place with clearly defined responsibilities for various aspects of school security.

The Ministry of Education and the National Board of Education's performance agreement for 2011 includes a decision to publish a security guide for educational institutions. Educational institutions will be able to utilise this guide to produce their own plans and guides.

The security recommendation of the Investigation Commission emphasises the role of technological planning and instructions in security planning. Additionally, comprehensive security comprises human interaction and trust, which cannot be replaced by technological apparatus or instructions. Open interaction and an atmosphere of trust contribute to an operation environment where alarm messages too are relayed without delay.

The text following the recommendation (p. 140) states that, according to the National Core Curriculum for comprehensive and upper secondary schools, all schools must have a crisis plan in place and a plan for the protection of students from acts of violence. Similar emergency preparedness requirements were introduced in the legislation pertaining to polytechnics on 1 January 2010. It should also be mentioned in the text that similar provisions are included in the new Universities Act. Furthermore, legislation pertaining to other forms of education will also be amended in this respect under a government decree currently in preparation.

Recommendation 8: The development of co-operation involving multiple authorities

The recommendation concerning the development of co-operation involving multiple authorities is extremely important. Local co-operation between various authorities creates a solid basis for preparedness for different eventualities and preventive work. This work at the local level must be supported and guided by higher levels of administration.

To enhance co-operation involving multiple authorities in the administrative sector within the Ministry of Education, an amendment to the Youth Work Act is currently in preparation, with a government bill scheduled for spring 2010.

Permanent Secretary                      Harri Skog

Special Adviser                              Iris Patosalmi

## 6. OPINION OF THE MINISTRY OF TRANSPORT AND COMMUNICATIONS

According to the draft report of the Investigation Commission on the Kauhajoki school shootings, the conduct of the media repeated the typical pattern of coverage of a sensational and dramatic event but was more discreet than in conjunction with the Jokela school shootings. The conclusions on the conduct of the media state that the media had learnt their lesson and did not repeat the excesses of Jokela either on the scene or in news coverage. It is suggested in the conclusions that, in their reliance on instant reporting, the media treat school shootings in the same way as any other major news event, and that in coverage of an event such as that in Kauhajoki, the ethical responsibility of journalism is far greater than in many other contexts.

In the section focusing on the Web environment, the report highlights the cyclic nature of the Web and social media, an example of which is the re-emergence of old and harmful material, which is almost impossible to prevent. The report states that young people's Web activities cannot and must not be restricted by legislative means. Instead, we should focus more on media literacy to make an impact on how people use the Web. Accordingly, the related recommendation calls for more extensive media literacy and the presence of grown-ups on the Web.

Immediately after the Jokela school shootings, the Ministry of Transport and Communications initiated measures aimed at increasing Web security through the introduction of new rules and regulations for Finnish service providers. The ministry also started to look into the possibility of enhancing the means available for administrators' use to intervene in inappropriate content through effective moderation. The ministry has also co-operated with the police in the development of an online tip-off service.

The draft report of the Investigation Commission on the Kauhajoki school shootings does not include recommendations that would directly involve the administrative section of the Ministry of Transport and Communications. However, the ministry considers the report itself a coherent whole and a step in the right direction. The ministry also concurs with the recommendations mentioned above that have a bearing on the administrative section of the ministry.

Suvi Lindén  
Minister of Communications

Taru Rastas  
Special Adviser





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