

# Preface

This anthology is the result of a collaboration between teacher educators, researchers and representatives of teacher organizations in Denmark, Finland, Estonia, Iceland, Norway and Sweden. This network has organized presentations and symposia at several conferences, carried out projects, written articles and edited books. The background for the collaboration is a desire to share experiences and research-based knowledge of measures aimed at induction and mentoring for newly qualified teachers (NQTs) in the Nordic countries. The collaboration has mainly been funded by *Nordplus*<sup>1</sup>, which is a program created by *The Nordic Council of Ministers*<sup>2</sup>. The purpose of the program is to stimulate research and educational policy cooperation between the Nordic countries and the Baltic states. Therefore, representatives from Tallinn University in Estonia have also actively participated in the group. For practical reasons, in this anthology we refer to our group as *Nordic* in the sense that the representatives of Estonia are also included in this term.

*The Nordic model* is a commonly used concept. The Nordic countries have a lot in common in terms of geography, climate and vegetation, to mention a few. They also have similarities in their history; affected by the same European and global political and ideological currents and they have also influenced each other in many ways. Therefore, there are similarities in religion, culture, social structure, political systems, and, generally speaking, in the way of life.

The Nordic model refers to an economic and social model, which is based on the combination of market economy and a large public sector financed mostly by taxes. It is also often referred to as the *Nordic welfare state model*. This political and social model is usually associated with ideas of individual autonomy, social mobility and an emphasis on basic

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1 <https://www.nordplusonline.org/eng>

2 <https://www.norden.org/en/nordic-council-ministers>

human rights, as well as a significant impact of the state in the economy. Trade unions are strong in the Northern countries whereas the non-governmental organizations and voluntary charitable approaches are less influential than in many other countries.

The educational sector is an important element of the Nordic model: it is almost entirely funded by the public sector, and the citizens have equal access to free education from early childhood to adulthood. So, we may argue that education is one of the fundamental elements of the Nordic model. Education is highly valued and considered to be both economically important and the very basis of human flourishing and wellbeing. This is evident in the high quality of education in the Nordic countries.

On this basis, one would assume that the induction and mentoring practices in these countries would also have much in common. However, the articles of this book quite clearly show that this is not the case. On the contrary, one can see a wide diversity in the ecosystems of mentoring and induction.

A number of people and organizations have facilitated the writing and publication of this book. A special thanks to all those who for many years have contributed to the collaboration that have made our Nordic network a powerful forum for research and quality development when it comes to induction and mentoring for new teachers. This applies not only to those who have contributed in this book (see the author presentations), but also to the representatives of student and teacher organizations who have participated in the work.

Special thanks also go to the Nordic Council, which through the Nordplus Horizontal<sup>3</sup> program has made it possible for us to meet physically, attend conferences and set up the administrative support functions such co-operation requires. We also thank The Teacher Education Development Program of the Ministry of Education and Culture in Finland, VIA University College in Aarhus, Denmark and the University of South-Eastern Norway who have contributed financially to the production of the book.

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3 <https://www.nordplusonline.org/Who-can-apply/Nordplus-horizontal>

Our thanks also go to the publisher Cappelen Damm Akademisk, who in an excellent and professional way has contributed to this book being realized.

We as editors hope this book will contribute to the development of a comprehensive and sustainable ecosystem for professional development, built through partnerships between a wide variety of educational and political stakeholders. This will create a necessary basis for research, a comprehensive professional development program for all teachers and a better school for all who live and learn in it.

Drammen, Notodden and Jyväskylä, 18<sup>th</sup> of August 2020

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