CURRICULUM IN FINLAND

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Finnish National Board of Education
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Independent since 1917, member of the European Union since 1995

- Total area 338,000 km², Population **5.5 million** (17 inhabitants / km²)

- Two official languages: **Finnish 92 %, Swedish 6 %**, (Saami 0.03%)

- Religion: **Lutheran (84 %), orthodox (1 %)**

-74.6 % of population (aged 25 to 64) have completed **upper secondary or tertiary education**. 33.2 % have **university** or other tertiary qualifications

- Immigrants: 2 % of population

- Main exports: **electronics, metal and engineering, forest industry**

- Working life: 86 % of **women** (aged 25 to 64) are employed outside the home. Average monthly **income** (men) 2832 and (women) 2273 euros.
For learning and competence

ADMINISTRATION AND FUNDING OF EDUCATION

• Education is the responsibility of the Ministry of Education and Culture
• The Finnish National Board of Education (FNBE) works with the Ministry of Education to develop educational aims, content and methods for primary, secondary and adult education
• Local administration is the responsibility of the local authorities (municipalities) which play a prominent role as education providers
• Most institutions providing basic and upper secondary level education are maintained by local authorities or joint municipal boards
Education providers have a central role in the governance structure

- Parliament
- Government
- Ministry of Education and Culture
- National Board of Education (FNBE)
- Education providers:
  - Municipalities (336), Federations of municipalities, private organizations
- State regional organizations (5)
- Schools and other educational institutes (2900 in basic education)
The Finnish National Board of Education is the agency responsible for the development of education and training in Finland, working under the auspices of the Ministry of Education. It is responsible for developing early childhood education and care, pre-primary and basic education, morning and afternoon activities for schoolchildren, general upper secondary education, vocational upper secondary education and training, adult education and training, liberal adult education and basic education in the arts.

FNBE was established in 1991 – background since 1869.
FNBE: DEVELOPING EDUCATION

• draws up National Core Curricula for early childhood education and care, pre-primary education, basic education, general upper secondary education and upper secondary vocational qualifications and the Requirements of Competence-based Qualifications

• these documents determine the core objectives, contents and guidelines for teaching. Education providers prepare their own local curricula based on these national documents

• steers implementation of curricula and explores reform needs. It undertakes various projects to develop education.
Short History of the Present Education System

  1. Old parallel school system was replaced by nine-year compulsory comprehensive education > same basic education for all
  2. Flexible, non-graded general upper secondary education and high quality vocational education were also developed later in 70’s and 80’s
• Preschool education for 6-year olds became a subjective right for all children 2001
• National Core Curriculum for Basic Education has been renewed in 1985, 1994, 2004 and 2014
• Through these years: growing municipal autonomy and empowerment of schools and teachers
The Ethos of the Finnish Education system

**Learning culture**

**High standards for all**
Enabling, encouraging,

**Professionalism of teachers**
Empowerment of teaching profession
High quality of teacher education

**Supportive ethos**
Early intervention
Individual approach
Active role of students
Good student-teacher relationships
Encouraging feedback

**Ethos of trust**

**Education system:**
comprehensive, non-selective, central guidelines and goals, local implementation and innovation

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General education reform: Curriculum development 2012–2017

2012 2013 2014 2015 2016 2017

- NCC for pre-primary, basic and voluntary additional basic education
- NCC Preparatory education for general upper secondary school
- NCC for basic education for adults and NCC for general upper secondary education for adults
- NCC for general upper secondary education
- NCC for basic education in the arts
- Local curricula

NCC = National Core Curriculum
POSSIBLE SCHOOL-SPECIFIC CURRICULUM

LOCAL CURRICULUM – MUNICIPAL LEVEL

National Core Curriculum 2014

Government Decree 422/2012 governing the general national objectives and distribution of lesson hours in basic education

Basic Education Act and Decree
Teaching and learning are on the top in Finland

- All parts of the system aim at supporting teaching and learning – national norms form a strong basis for local provision of education.
- Quality is based on national standards given in Education Acts and Decrees, National Core Curricula, and in national teacher qualification criteria, on financial guidance, and on internal (self) evaluation and external evaluation.
- Vertical and horizontal interaction and cooperation are the means for creating common understanding, and also for getting information for the new development processes.
- Curriculum has a central role in the system, both as the means of interaction and as the basis for evaluation and pupil assessment.
Curriculum as an interactive and strategically important process

• Three layers of curriculum: national core curriculum, municipal curriculum, school curriculum and year plan

• All these are created in an open, extensive and interactive process – curriculum is more a process than a product

• Curriculum is a strategic document and it reflects our best understanding of humanity, society and learning; it also connects the work of every school to municipal and national strategies

• National quality criteria for basic education support the conceptualization of the core curriculum at the local level
Qualities of Curriculum

- Curriculum is the expression of our insight and will and it gives common direction to the processes and development of teaching and learning
- Curriculum is holistic and compact – it covers all areas of learning and school life, not only different subjects
- Goals for learning and prerequisites for successful learning process are more important than subject contents
- Curriculum is inclusive – it covers education for all students
- Curriculum looks for the balance between academic achievement and student welfare
- Curriculum is based on future orientation and competence-based thinking
Why is reform needed?

The world surrounding school has changed essentially since the beginning of the 21st century – the effects of globalisation and the challenges of a sustainable future.

Competencies required in society and working life have changed – skills to build a sustainable future.

It is necessary to examine educational contents, pedagogy and schools’ working practices and reform these in relation to changes in the operating environment and competencies.
Focus of the curriculum reform

◆ Rethinking the learning conception
  • Importance of students own experiences and activities, feelings and joy
  • Importance of working together, learning to learn in dialogue with others
  • Renewing the idea of learning environment

◆ Rethinking the school culture and the relationship between the school and the community
  • School as a learning community
  • Diverse and open cooperation

◆ Rethinking the roles, goals and content of school subjects
  • Transversal competences to support the identity development and the ability to live in a sustainable way
The school will be developed both as a growth community and as a learning environment.
The ground of the curriculum reform in basic education

- Pedagogical reform
  - Transforming from WHAT to learn to HOW to learn

- Building integrity of basic education
  - Broad competences, school culture, connections and collaboration between subjects

- Changing school culture
  - Renewal of pedagogical thinking, learning environments, working approaches and assessment

- Curriculum as a digital tool
  - Producing web-based eCurriculum with more functions
Preparing National Core Curriculum

**For learning and competence**

**National Board of Education**

**Curriculum Advisory Group**

**Coordinating team**

**Curriculum teams**

**Cooperation network of municipalities and schools (regional networks)**

- Association of Finnish Principals, Teacher Union, Association of Municipalities, Publishing house association
- Universities, municipalities and schools
National goals for basic education and transversal competences
- knowledge
- skills
- values
- attitudes
- will
Rethinking the school culture

- Safety in daily life, wellbeing
- Dialogue and varied working approaches
- Celebrating diverse cultures, Awareness of languages
- Participation and democracy
- Responsibility for the environment, Future orientation
- Equity and equality

For learning and competence
Multidisciplinary learning modules in basic education

• Pupils are entitled to at least one integrative, multidisciplinary learning module every school year
• Learning modules integrate skills and knowledge of various school subjects, teachers work together
• Pupils participate in the planning of these modules
• Goals, content and ways of working are planned and decided at the local level
  • *They should be interesting and meaningful from the pupils’ point of view*
  • *They realize the principles of the school culture*
  • *They promote the development of transversal competences*
MUITO OBRIGADO!

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