

# What's cooking? Recent developments in the Finnish education system and policy



### Finland in brief

- population 5.5 million (18 inhabitants / sq. km)
- two official languages: Finnish and Swedish
- persons with foreign background :6.2 % of the population
- education level of the working age population:
  - 11 % basic education
  - 44 % upper secondary education
  - 45 % tertiary education











Statistics Finland 2018, Education at a Glance 2016, City of Helsinki media bank

### The Best Basic Education in the World

WEF, The Global Competitiveness Report 2016-17

#### World's Best in Press Freedom

Press Freedom Index 2016

#### Top-Ranking Country in PISA OECD PISA

#### The Safest State

WEF, Travel and Tourism Competitiveness Report 2015

#### World's Least Failed State

Fund for Peace Failed States Index, 2016

## Second best performing Higher Education graduates

OECD Education at Glance 2016



#### Third Best in Innovation

WEF, The Global Competitiveness Report 2016-17

#### World's Second Least Corrupt Country

Corruption Perceptions Index, 2014

### The Best Public Administration

Lagatum Institute, The Lagatum Prosperity Index 2016

## Greatest amount of Human Capital

WEF, The Human Capital Report 2016

## World's Third Best in Gender Equality

WEF, Global Gender Gap Report 2015

#### World's Second Best Place to Be a Mother

Save the Children's annual State of the World's Mothers report 2015

Photo: Tuomas Uusheimo / Helsingin yliopisto

Openness, internationality and global responsibility

Employment, productivity and competitiveness

Foundation for a good life and well-functioning society

Creative economy
Key research projects
RDI investments Management of
IPR rights

Higher education, general upper secondary school,
vocational education and training, lifewide learning, capabilities for
using and developing technology, access to private and public funding

Good governance, rule of law, effective institutions, predictability, macroeconomic stability,
information policy and data management, early childhood education and care,
comprehensive school, libraries, security and safety, health, social cohe-sion,
social inclusion and trust

**TRUST** 

Source: The Ministry of Eduction and Culture, Finland

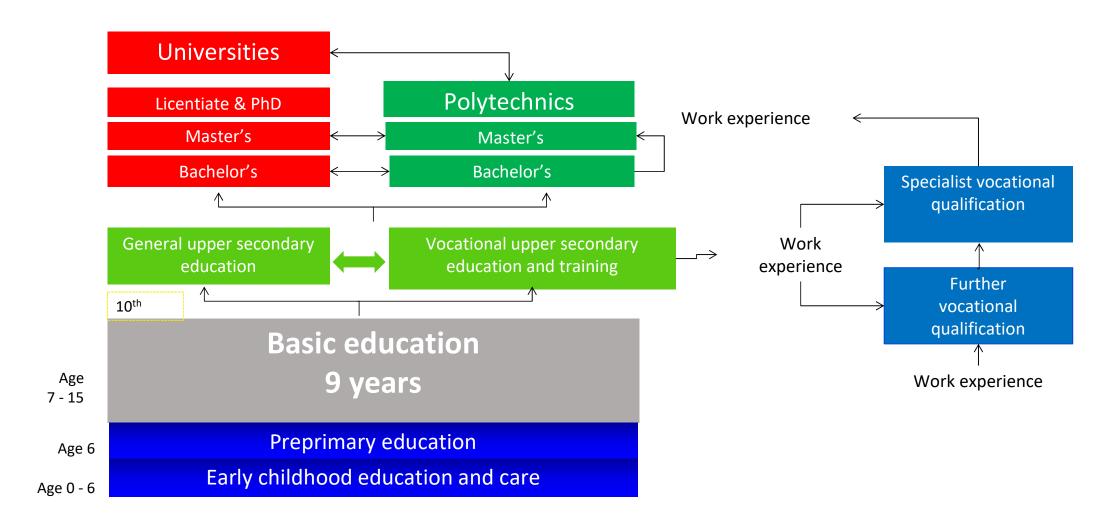
## Underlying educational understanding is based on equity

Everyone has the right to basic education free of charge. The public authorities shall guarantee for everyone equal opportunity to receive other educational services in accordance with their ability and special needs, as well as the opportunity to develop themselves without being prevented by economic hardship.

(Constitution of Finland)



## No dead-ends in the education system



## **Characteristics of the Finnish Education System**

- Finnish culture: trust for education
- Education policy
  - Educational equality and equity
  - Delegating decision power and responsibility from central administration to the local levels
- Comprehensive school (= basic education)
  - Core curriculum
  - Headteachers as pedagogical directors
  - School practices: several subjects, small groups, high quality equipment
- Teacher education
  - Teaching seen as an academic profession
  - Highly-qualified teachers
  - Excellent students



**School meals** 



**15 minute break** - after every 45 minutes



Emphasis on collaboration,



Equal opportunities and equality



All children go to publicly funded schools



No standardized tests in basic education

## Finnish education in international comparison

Instruction time low

Differences between schools small

Girls outperform boys

Moderate costs

Socio-economic effect moderate

Teachers feel highly valued



## **Education developed in partnership**

National authoritiesLocal authoritiesTeachers' unionSocial partnersParentsPupils and studentsResearch institutionsRelevant stakeholders

## WHAT MAKES TEACHING PROFESSION SUCH A POPULAR?

#### Autonomy

- Freedom to choose learning materials and pedagogy
- Freedom to decide on assessement
- Participating in defining local curriculum

#### Respect

- Teachers are well respected
- Changing of profession is very rare
- Teacher education programmes are popular Source: Finnish teachers and principals in figures, National Agency for Education, 2018



- No national examinations in compulsory education
- No school inspections at any level
- Focus on improving teacher professionalism

#### **Working Conditions**

- Minimum teaching time one of the lowest in OECD countries
- Continuing professional development supported
- Little administration and extracurricular work

## **Tutor Teacher Model**

- The New Comprehensive action plan aimed to introduce tutor teachers to all ca. 2,200 comprehensive schools in Finland to embrace new pedagogical approaches, support implementation of new core curriculum, promote the digitalization of teaching and increase peer learning and collaboration
- Also training for tutor teachers themselves was made available in 2016, and regional networks of tutor teachers in 2017 (5 ECTS)
- Tutor teacher model has been supported with EUR 23,8 million in 2016–2018

How to educate and train in an uncertain and complex world for a future we can't predict?



## The Metatasks of Education

Transfer the human achievements for the next generation

2. Give capabilities to confront the future



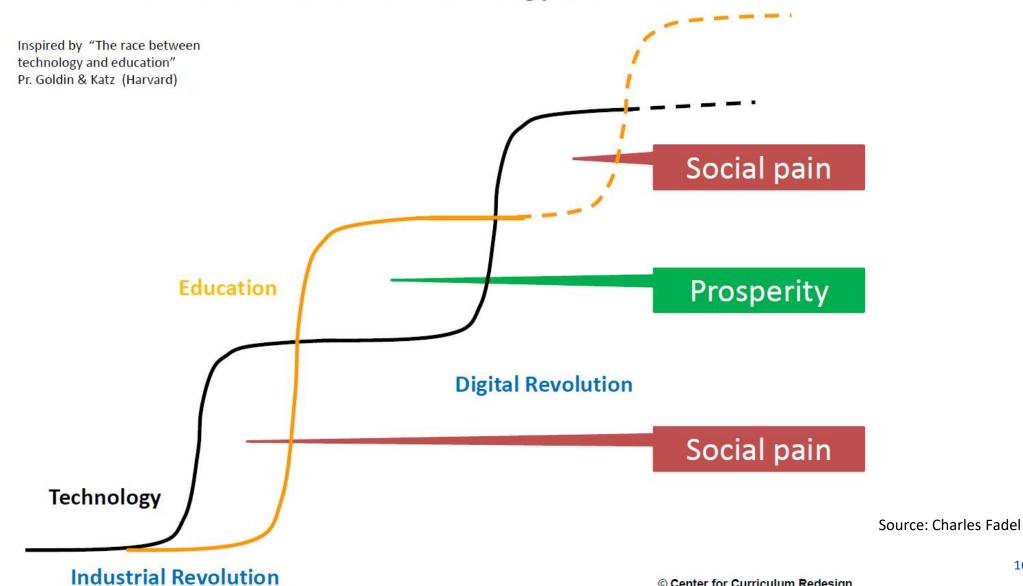
**HISTORY** 

**FUTURE** 



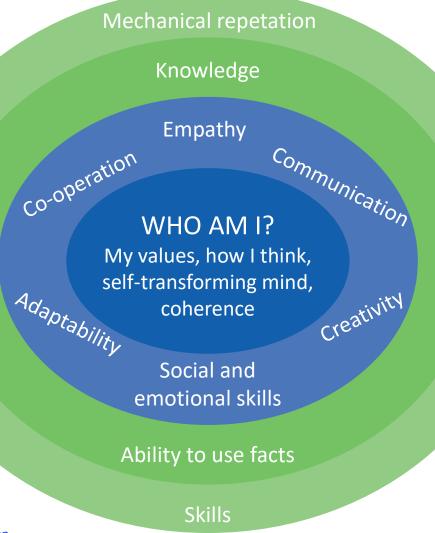
Complex world

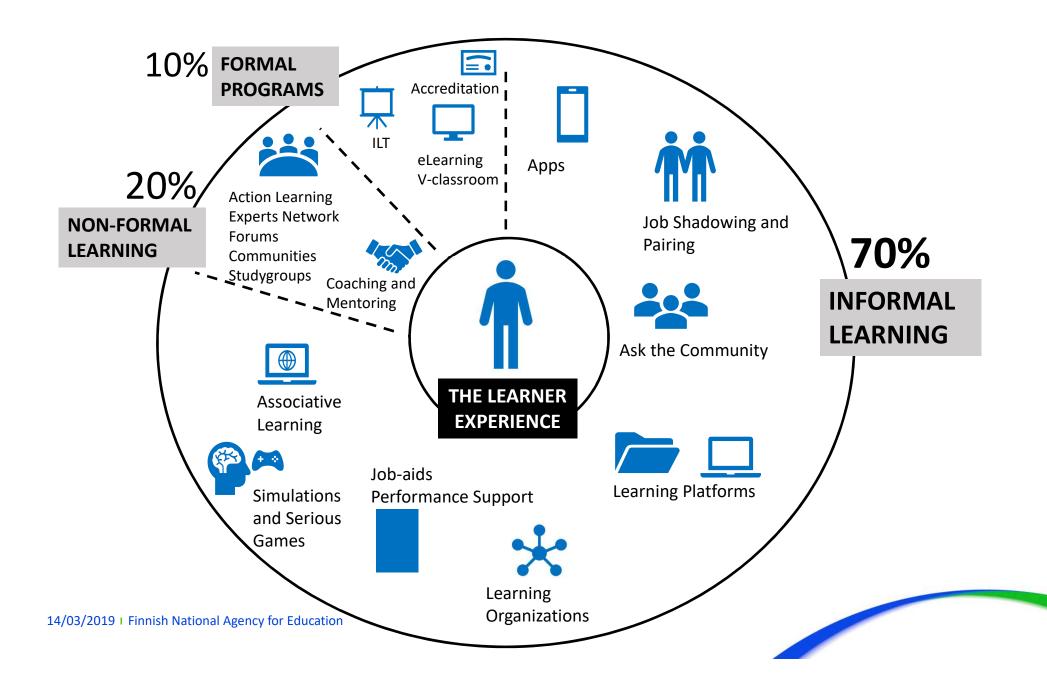
#### The Race between Technology and Education



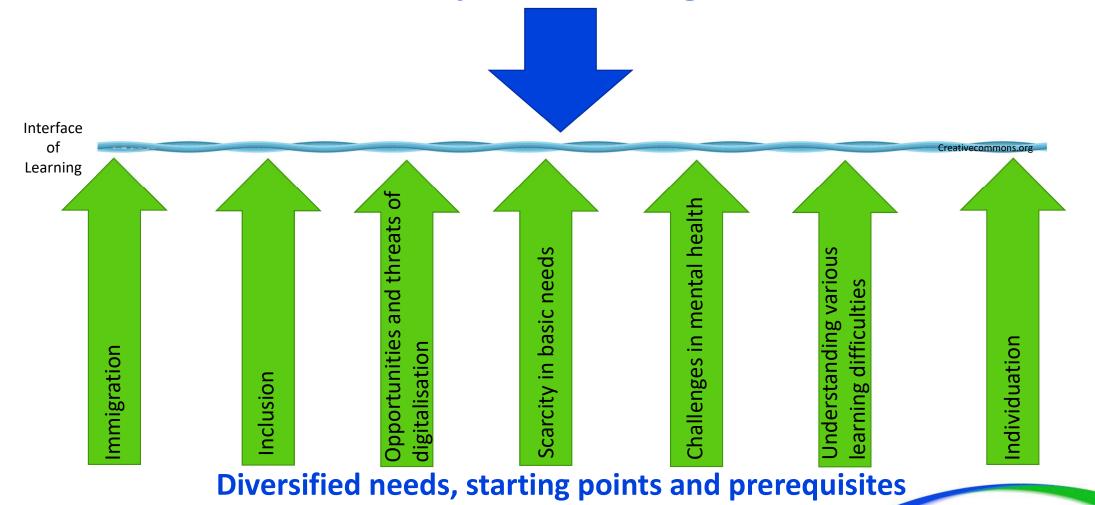
Industrial society Information society Interaction society Heart and humanity Brains Body and hands

**Human Labor** 





## **Equal teaching**



## Diversity of demand requires diversity of

sup Equality



The assumption is that everyone benefits from the same supports.
This is equal treatment.

#### **Equity**



Everyone gets the supports they need (this is the concept of "affirmative action"), thus producing equity.

#### **Justice**



All 3 can see the game without supports of accommodations because the cause(s) of the inequity was addressed. The systemic barrier has been removed

## Four Keys to Finnish curriculum reform 2016

#### **Changing role of students**

- Working together, participation
- Exploratory and creative learning

## School as a learning lenviro

community

#### World of change

- Environment, globalization.
   economy, world of work,
   technology,
   diversity of society
  - Impact on children's environment

## Changing role of teachers and teaching

- Learning conception
- Working together and building learning entities

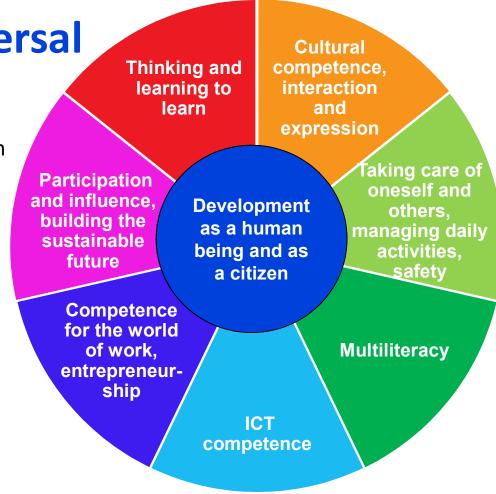
## **Changing concepts of learning and competence**

- Wide and transversal, ethical, sustainable
- Interaction, learning to learn, working with knowledge

Rethinking transversal competences

National goals for basic education and transversal competences

- knowledge
- skills
- values
- attitudes
- will

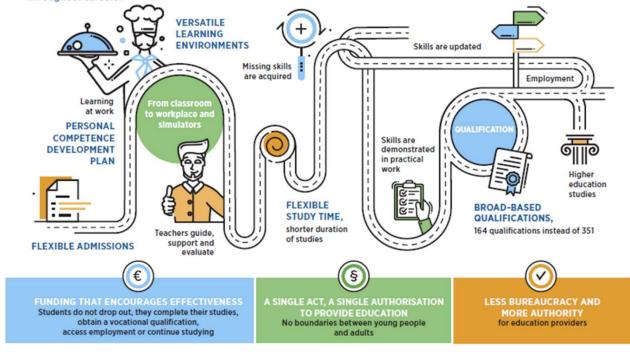


## Implementation is the strategy

Government proposal 2017

#### NEW VOCATIONAL EDUCATION AND TRAINING as of 1 January 2018

Working life is undergoing changes. New occupations keep on emerging and old ones disappear. Technology advances. Revenue models are renewed. Students' needs are becoming more and more individualistic. Skills need to be updated throughout careers.



#### NATIONAL PERSPECTIVE

#### WHAT?

ALL COMPREHENSIVE SCHOOLS MEET HIGH STANDARDS AND OFFER EQUAL EDUCATIONAL OPPORTUNITIES

#### WHY?

EVIDENCE OF LEARNING AND WELLBEING

#### HOW?

COHERENT AND FLEXIBLE SUPPORT FOR DEVELOPMENT

#### EDUCATION PROVIDER

#### WHAT?

LEARNING COMMUNITIES DEVELOP PROFESSIONALLY

#### WHY?

EFFECTIVENESS OF EDUCATION

#### HOW?

SENSE OF COMMUNITY AND ADAPTABLE LEARNING ENVIRONMENTS

## SCHOOLS AND STUDENTS

#### WHAT?

STUDENTS FEEL GOOD ABOUT THEMSELVES AND ARE MOTIVATED TO LEARN

#### WHY?

COMPETENCE-AND INQUIRY-BASED LEARNING

#### HOW?

SENSE OF COMMUNITY, EDU-CATIONAL COOPERATION AND PERSONALISED LEARNING PATHS WITH TIMELY SUPPORT

## **COMMUNITY OF GROWTH**

#### WHAT?

WELLBEING OF FAMILIES AND RESPONSIBLE PARENTHOOD

#### WHY?

TIMELY SUPPORT BASED ON FORESIGHT

#### HOW?

CHILD-, YOUTH- AND FAMILY-CENTRED APPROACH

#### SYSTEMATIC DECISION-MAKING, GUIDANCE AND SUPPORT

#### COMPETENT TEACHERS, PRINCIPALS AND OTHER SCHOOL STAFF

COMPETENT AND SELF-CONFIDENT CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE

GOOD EVERYDAY LIFE TO HELP CHILDREN LEARN

## FINNISH BASIC EDUCATION - Exellence through equity for all prioritized goals



#### EDUCATIONAL LEADERSHIP AND PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Developing the school leadership system towards collaborating and constantly learning expert organisation.



## LONG-TERM DEVELOPMENT, FUNDING AND SUPPORT FOR CURRICULUM IMPLEMENTATION

Development of basic education is founded on a long-term collaboration based on trust. There is a continuous dialogue between national and local development.



## SUPPORT FOR LEARNING, PERSONALISED LEARNING PATHS AND FLEXIBLE LEARNING SOLUTIONS

Basic education provides all students with equal opportunities for high-quality and pedagogically relevant teaching.



#### SCHOOLS PROMOTING WELLBEING

Schools are seen as an essential part of the communities.

#### The entire education system will be reformed

## Early childhood education and care

- higher enrolment rate
- competence level among staff will be raised
- focus on pedagogy

### General upper secondary education

- provision of more extensive general knowledge
- cooperation with higher education institutions
- introduction of special-needs education
- obligation to provide guidance to former students

## Universities and universities of applied sciences

- Vision for 2030: 50% of young people complete a higher education degree, 4% of GDP allocated for RDI
- internationalisation and Team Finland Knowledge
- education exports









## Comprehensive education

- new curricula
- support for teachers
- new operating culture
- digital tools and learning environments

## Vocational education and training

- flexibility and individual solutions
- learning in workplaces
- prevention of social exclusion
- reform of qualifications

Source: The Ministry of Eduction and Culture, Finland

## Strenghten the systemic, holistic approach

- School subjects
- Teaching individuals
- School-based learning
- Physical, social, ethical, mental wellbeing separately
- Individualistic professional development of teachers
- Provider-based services
- National identity

- Also competences, skills
- Community capacity building, applied learning
- Lifelong learning path and ubiquitous learning
- Seeing human being as a whole, growth mindset
- School as a learning community
- Child- and youth- centered serviced
- Global consciousness

#### Assess learning



to make it a serious goal

#### Act on evidence



to make schools work for all learners

#### Align actors



to make the whole system work for learning

## Thank you!

