



An Introduction to Schools and Schooling in Finland

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DEAR FRIENDS WELCOME

to the land of Santa Claus and midnight sun

to the oldest town in Finland (1229)

to the European Capital of Culture in the year
2011

to the birth place of the second oldest
ongoing rock festival in Europe

to the city of Turku from where the civilization
has been spread out to other parts of Finland

to the land of the best education system in the whole world



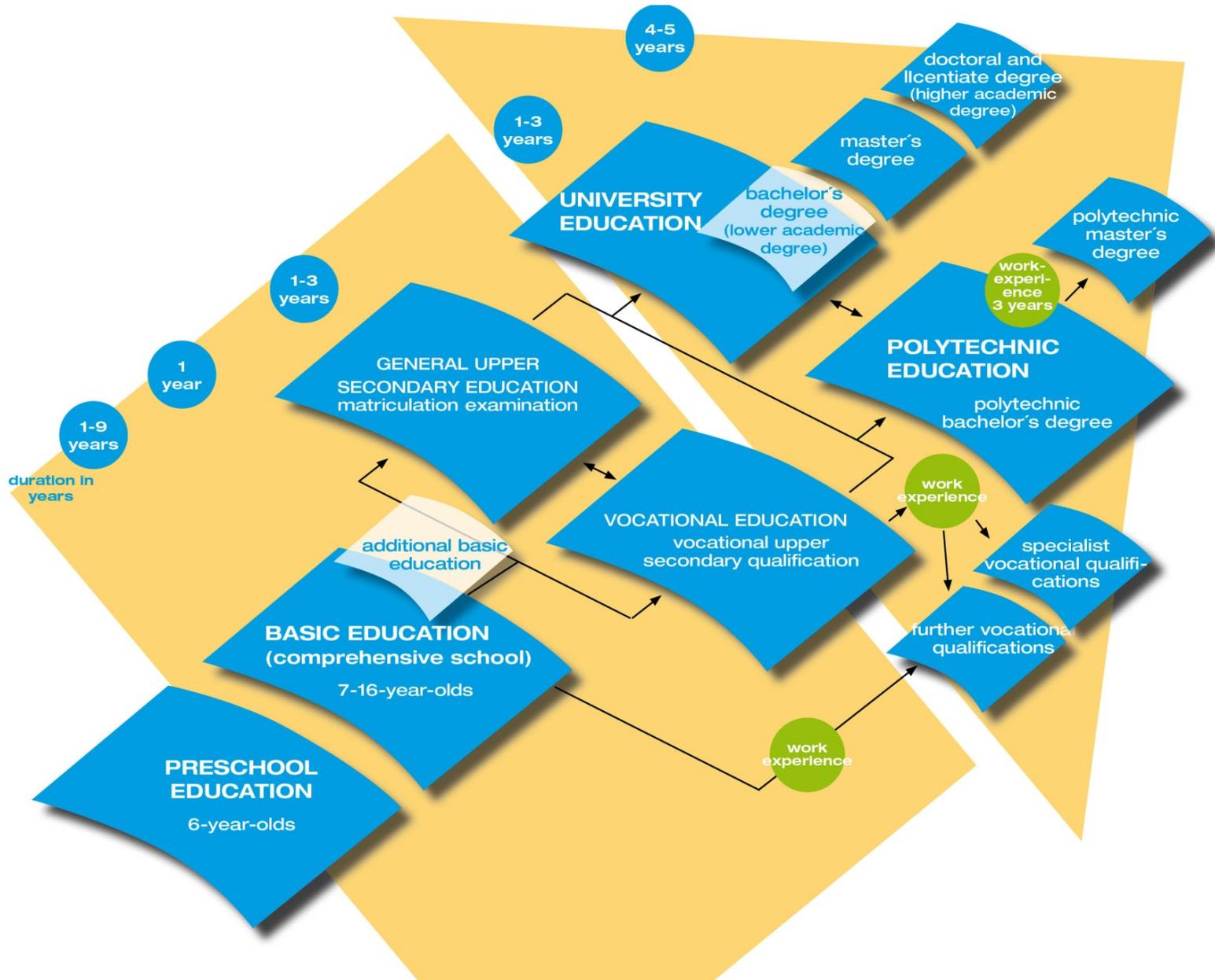
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TURKU

Aura river

The Finnish education system



Links

<http://www.okm.fi/OPM/?lang=en>

<http://www.oph.fi/english>

Finnish ECEC system in a nutshell

Children's day care options are:

1. Municipal day care

- Day care centres (incl. special day care)
- Family day care providers
- Open day care activities (centres or parks)
- Morning and afternoon activities for pupils

2. Private day care allowance

3. Child home care allowance

- Pre-school education (for 1 year, children are usually 6 years old)

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

STANDARDS AND ACCOUNTABILITY

- Uniform national evaluation criteria for each subject at the 9th grade
- Sampling-based national assessment in the core subjects
- No nation-wide tests/examinations in the comprehensive school
- No school inspections after the early 1990s
- Responsibility for self-evaluation and participating
- External evaluations (evaluation programme)
- Quality standards of good teaching

The Ethos of the Finnish Education system

Learning culture

High standards for all
Enabling, encouraging,

Ethos of trust

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

Education system:

comprehensive, non-selective, central guidelines and goals, local implementation and innovation



AUTONOMOUS TEACHERS – CULTURE OF TRUST

- Highly trusted professionals in pedagogy
- All training at university level
- Master's degree for all
- Research-based
- High popularity of the profession
- Highly motivated and multitalented students
- Culture of trust, autonomy
- “Intelligent” accountability
- Professional development in focus
- Flexibility of models increasing
- No external assessment, no formal teacher evaluation

Present job description and qualifications of Finnish principals

1. Legislation obligates each school to have a principal who is responsible for the operations of the school
2. Collective bargaining contracts regulate salary, teaching duties and mandates to have a yearly plan for working hours
3. Otherwise job description is determined locally
1. Teaching qualifications in the relevant school form
2. Experience working as teacher
3. Specific school leadership requirements
4. Certificate in Educational Administration (15 ECTS) or
5. University programme in educational leadership (25 ECTS) or
6. Otherwise proven experience in educational administration

Guidance

Decrees for comprehensive education, upper secondary and vocational education :

- Student counsellors take care of vocational and educational guidance
- cooperation with working life –possibility to have time for work experience
- guidance and counselling in classrooms, possibility to have personal counselling
- Upper secondary general education 38 hours compulsory module + 38 hours optional module in career education -> 2016: 76 hours compulsory

Lifelong guidance is most effective where it:

- Is life long and progressive.
- Connects meaningfully to the wider experience and lives of the individuals who participate in it.
- Recognizes the diversity of individuals and provides services relevant to their needs.
- Combines a range of interventions (e.g. one-to-one and online support).
- Encourages the acquisition of career management skills.
- Is holistic and well-integrated into other support services.
- Involves employers and working people, and provide active experiences of workplaces.
- Is delivered by skilled, well-trained and motivated practitioners.
- Draws on good-quality career information.



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* Is quality-assured and evaluated.

Short History of the Present Education System

- Comprehensive School Reform 1970-1977 and birth of the present Upper Secondary System 1975
- Old parallel school system was replaced by nine-year compulsory comprehensive education > same, basic education for all
- 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



Underlying educational understanding is based on equity

- “All people must have equal access to services of consistent quality.” (Government programme 2011)
- “Finland is a country that encourages people to continuously learn something new.” (Government programme 2015)
- Equal opportunity in education and culture underline Finnish well-being. Measures will be taken to guarantee equal access for different population groups in all regions to a wide range of education and cultural services. The public sector is responsible for promoting the well-being and equality of Finns.

Educational equity

- Values and awareness
- Attitudes and behaviors
- Legal and social factors (€)
- School's organization
- The programs and curriculums
- Teaching methods
- Support Services/team work
- The interactions with the environment
- The guidance and counselling
- The team's preparation/training

Educational equity

1. gender,
2. race,
3. ethnicity,
4. socio-economic status,
5. language,
6. age,
7. rural/urban background,
8. political beliefs,
9. religious beliefs,
10. physical abilities,
11. sexual orientation
12. other dimensions

Gender equality matters

Better gender equality helps in building consensus and thereby adopting education and social policies that invest more heavily on well-being and a holistic development of children at home and in school.

”Highest performing education systems are those that combine excellence with equity.”

OECD 2013

Equity

- Fair school funding
- Early childhood education
- Preventive special education
- School health & well-being
- Whole child approach

SPECIAL NEEDS EDUCATION

- Education is provided according to students age and capabilities.
- Safe school environment, social and psychological support and health care.
- Early identification of learning difficulties and sufficient support. (General, intensified and special).
- Each pupil has the right to receive remedial instruction and special needs education, where necessary.
- If a child cannot cope in mainstream education due to disability, illness, delayed development, emotional disorder or some other similar reason, she/he may be admitted to special education.
- Is provided primarily through inclusion into mainstream education and it may also be provided in a special group, in a special class or in a special school.



THE AIM

The aim of education is that people understand the world around them and the talents within them.

Sir Ken Robinson



The Finnish Way

COLLABORATION

CREATIVITY

TRUST - BASED RESPONSIBILITY

EQUITY



Another way

COMPETITION

STANDARDIZATION

TEST - BASED ACCOUNTABILITY

CHOICE

**“We don’t see things
as they are, we see
things as we are.”**

Anais Nin, 1903-1977



THANK YOU FOR YOUR ATTENTION!

Cited:

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