



Photo: Heli Sorjonen, Mavi, Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry

FINLAND IN INTERNATIONAL RANKINGS AND COMPARISONS

Finland has reinvented itself in just one short century. Our national character and Northern heritage have boosted us to the top of all kinds of country rankings. This would never have happened without a core Finnish value: equality. Key elements in the country's success include a strong commitment to equality, high-quality basic education for all, a practical and problem-solving mindset and consensus-based political decision making, even in times of crisis. With limited natural resources, Finland has always depended on its human resources: smart, knowledgeable, innovative people striving to do more with less.

FROM POOR RELATION TO THRIVING NEIGHBOUR

By the early 20th century, Finland was still one of the poorest and most agrarian countries in Europe. Growing into one of the 21st century's wealthiest and most modern nations forms the great story of our country.

So where does Finland's core value of equality stem from? A widely accepted explanation points to a combination of two factors: a harsh climate that has required everybody's cooperation and input in order to help the community survive and the influence of other Nordic countries with a similar development and values. Before its century as an autonomous part of Russia, Finland had been part of Sweden for more than 600 years.

Due to these strong cultural, political and economic Nordic ties, Finland's free, universal education

system, which was separated from the church, began to develop even in the mid 19th century (1866), long before Finnish independence in 1917. Since 1921, every Finnish child has had access and been required to attend top quality, free-for-all basic education, which is now the heart and soul of Finnish society.

Finland was also the first country in the world to grant women full political rights in 1906, making them active forces in society and crucial shapers of the nation.

There has been nothing random about this process and no gimmicks – just careful and thorough social planning, a healthy climate for compromise and consensus, a well-functioning political system and a common belief in the empowerment of education and research.

- Finland has a high-class education system
- Everyone is important, the ethos of “no one is left behind” still thrives
- Equality, low levels of hierarchy, co-operation
- Smart use of resources
- Open society, low levels of corruption
- Freedom of speech and a free press
- Competitiveness
- Gender equality
- Cleanliness, close relationship with nature
- Functionality
- Investments in R&D, a strong innovation culture, a high number of patents per capita
- Very strong rule of law
- Original and highly versatile cultural life

FACTS AND FIGURES

See [here](#) some of the ways in which Finland scores well in international comparisons.



Photo: Sakari Piippo, Finland Promotion Board