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THE FINNISH EDUCATION SYSTEM & EDUCATION SERVICES AND SOLUTIONS



Photo: Sakari Piippo



Education is the key to evolve and adapt in the changing world. Education helps us meet the requirements of future jobs and improves our standard of living while mitigating climate change.

The system in one country cannot be copied, but **good practices can be adapted** to another when co-creation takes place. People, new knowledge, digital technologies, learning philosophies, flexible structures, and processes can cross borders.

Finland has **great strengths and proven track record** in education, which can be shared with other countries.



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FINLAND HAS ONE OF THE BEST PERFORMING EDUCATION SYSTEMS IN THE WORLD

#1

**EDUCATING FOR THE
FUTURE INDEX**

(Economist 2019)

#1

DIGITAL SKILLS

(WEF Global Competitiveness
Report 2020)

#2

**TERTIARY EDUCATION
SYSTEM DELIVERS
NEEDS OF EMPLOYERS**

(WEF Global Competi-
tiveness Report 2020)

#1

**THE HAPPIEST
COUNTRY IN THE WORLD**

(World Happiness Report 2021)



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THE FINNISH EDUCATION SYSTEM IN A NUTSHELL



Education for all

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- The development of the whole education system takes time. During the first years of the 20th century, only a third of rural children went to school.
- The 1921 act on compulsory education started the path towards a modern education system based on the **philosophy of education for all**.
- Today **education from pre-primary to higher education is free of charge** for Finns and citizens from EU/ETA countries. Early childhood education and care is subsidized.



History

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1943

Law on free-of-charge school meals. All pupils have been served free school lunch during each school day since 1948.

1973

Act on Children's Day Care. Local authorities are obliged to organize public day care, which allows both parents to participate in working life.

1921

Compulsory School Attendance Act.

Municipalities are obliged to provide six years of compulsory education to all children aged 7 to 13.

1972

School reform. New comprehensive school system with 9 grades guarantees same opportunities for good quality education in a school nearest to you.



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School meals work as an equalizer between children from different backgrounds, strengthen equal opportunity and most importantly, promote learning.

Photo: Elina Manninen/Keksi



History

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1994, 2004, 2014

The national core curriculum and the education system have been reformed several times

1994

Requirement of master's level education for all basic education teachers

1985

Shift from a unified curriculum to a national core curriculum with local adaptations

1990s

Strong decentralization of education system. Abolishment of School inspectorate system, School books no longer centrally approved.

1996

Introduction of the dual model in higher education: academic universities & universities of applied sciences.



History

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2010

Introduction of the principal of inclusion in Finnish schools

2018

Reform of secondary vocational education to introduce competence-based qualifications and a close co-operation with workplaces

1995

First 'e-Learning strategy': Education, Training and Research in the Information Society (1995-2000)

2015

Pre-primary education compulsory for all 6-year-olds

2021

Extension in compulsory education. The minimum school leaving age raised from 16 to 18 years.



The Finnish education system today

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0-5-year-olds
Early childhood
education and
care

6-year-olds
Compulsory
pre-primary
education

Basic education

7-16-year-olds
Basic education
in comprehensive
schools

Secondary education

16-19-year-olds
Matriculation
examination in
general upper
secondary
schools

16-19-year-olds
Vocational
qualifications in
vocational
institutions

Tertiary education

Appr. 3+2 years
Bachelor's and
Master's degrees
at Universities

Appr. 3+2 years
Bachelor's and
Master's degrees
at Universities of
Applied Sciences

Doctoral
degrees and
licentiate
degrees in
Universities

**An OECD study ranks
Finland as #2 in the
world, for highest
performing graduates
(2019).**



Characteristics of Finnish education

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- **Schools are given a great deal of autonomy.** The national core curriculum is localized and there is a **high level of trust** between the national and local school authorities.
- Teachers are **professionals of learning**. They can for example decide how they teach and what learning materials and resources they use.
- All children are entitled to **special support**. Pupils with minor or medium learning difficulties study in the same schools and classrooms as the others, but the schools are allocated additional resources.
- Finnish children begin pre-primary education at the age of six, spend less time in the classroom and have less homework than kids in many other countries, but still have **excellent learning outcomes**.



Teachers in Finland

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- **Teachers are valued** in Finnish society. Teaching is a popular profession and universities can select the most motivated and talented applicants.
- Both class teachers and subject teachers are highly trained, and their **research-based training** includes pedagogical studies and teaching practice.
- As a results, teachers are **autonomous professionals** with the expertise and ability to develop their own work. They are trusted, enjoy wide autonomy and have flexibility in their work.
- Teachers also **actively participate in developing education and educational solutions** and learning materials.



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**90% of teachers in Finland
are satisfied with their
work, and 92% say positive
aspects of their job
outweigh the negative ones.**

Source: Ministry of Education and Culture

Photo: Riitta Supperi/Keksi/Finland Promotion Board



Lifelong learning

- Annually 1,1 million citizens take part in courses offered by adult education centres, folk high schools, learning centres, sports training centres and summer universities. Courses are nearly free of charge.
- The aim of **liberal adult education** is to promote social cohesion, equality and active citizenship.



Photo: Riitta Supperi/Keksi/Team Finland



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**68.7% of adult Finns
participated in informal learning
during the past year, compared
to the EU average of 59.9%.**

Source: Eurostat

Photo: Sakari Piippo



Creativity and problem-solving

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- At the end of the 20th Century Finland's economy started focusing on **technology industries, R&D, information and knowledge**.
- New partnerships developed between tertiary education and industry, while primary and secondary education also evolved to **promote creativity, problem-solving, teamwork and other working life skills**.
- The national core curricula of 2014 for basic education and 2021 for general upper secondary education emphasized **transversal competences** and **phenomenon-based learning**, while still holding on to traditional school subjects.



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Photo: Velhot Photography Oy/ Riku Isohella



Education Technology

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- In recent years a thriving **Education Technology (EdTech)** sector has developed, merging Finnish software and education strengths.
- Finland has a **strong digital sector** and a **booming gaming industry**. This all has helped to create favorable conditions for developing cutting-edge digital learning solutions, that make learning fun, engaging and personal.
- Many of the educational technology solutions have been developed together with Finnish teachers, and tested in Finnish schools.



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Photo: Velhot Photography Oy/ Riku Isohella



Worldwide recognition

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- In the 2000s Finland's education system began to receive worldwide attention thanks to **high international rankings in education**. Additionally, Finland achieved this result while spending only slightly more money per student than the OECD average.
- In the latest PISA rankings, Finland has stood out for success in combining excellent academic results with a high level of student satisfaction. Well-being is a key consideration in Finnish education.



Teaching during the pandemic

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- COVID-19 demonstrated the **resilience** and **versatility** of the Finnish education system. In the spring of 2020 Finland closed almost all schools for two months and begun distance learning with minimal interruption.
 - During the school closures teaching and learning took place online. Students were also given tasks to learn independently or together with peers and often hand in homework electronically to teachers.
- All Finnish schools have **tutor teachers** and **mentors** as well as other peer support mechanisms for using digital tools and services.



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THE BEST PRACTICES FROM FINLAND'S EDUCATION SYSTEM CAN BE ADAPTED

✚ Continuous development

- The reforming of the education system in Finland continues even today.
- Finnish education institutions and companies are eager to work with **international partners** in education, share what they know and collaborate for new innovations in learning.



Photo: Jeswin Thomas/Unsplash



Education Finland

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- Education Finland is a governmental cluster programme supporting education institutions and companies in their growth on the international market.
- Its member companies (130) have a wide variety of services in education, representing some of the most innovative solutions:
 - **Degree programmes:** higher education and VET
 - **Educational services:** teacher training, pedagogical and vocational programs, consultancy services
 - **Educational and learning products:** programs, applications, learning platforms, educational content and materials
 - **Learning environments.**

+ Educational travel

- **Educational travel** to Finland is growing in popularity.
- Students often combine educational content with leisure travel, while education professionals learn about the Finnish education system, including the curriculum, management, pupil-centred learning and more.



Photo: Elina Manninen/Kuvatoimisto Keksi

**There are more than 400
English-taught degree
programs in 13 universities
and 22 universities of
applied sciences.** Source: [Studyinfo.fi](https://studyinfo.fi)



Higher Education

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- Universities and universities of applied sciences have **extensive autonomy** and **freedom** of education and research.
 - They promote competitiveness, well-being, education and learning as well as sustainable development.
- Finnish Higher Education system has been ranked by Universitas21 among the Top 10 in the world.
- International students particularly appreciate Finland's **study facilities** like well-equipped libraries and campuses, IT services and support services.
 - Affordable student housing is offered to international students.



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INTERNATIONAL
STUDENTS LOVE TO
studyinFINLAND.**fi**



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Thank you!

Photo: Sakari Piippo

