
Education in Finland

Finland in brief

- Population: 5,6 million (18 inhabitants / sq. km)
- Two official languages: Finnish and Swedish
- 8,3 % of the population with foreign background
- education level of the working age population:
- 11% basic education
- 46 upper secondary education
- 43% tertiary education



Education as a constitutional right

- Everyone has the right to basic education free of charge.
- Equal opportunities to receive educational services in accordance with their abilities and special needs

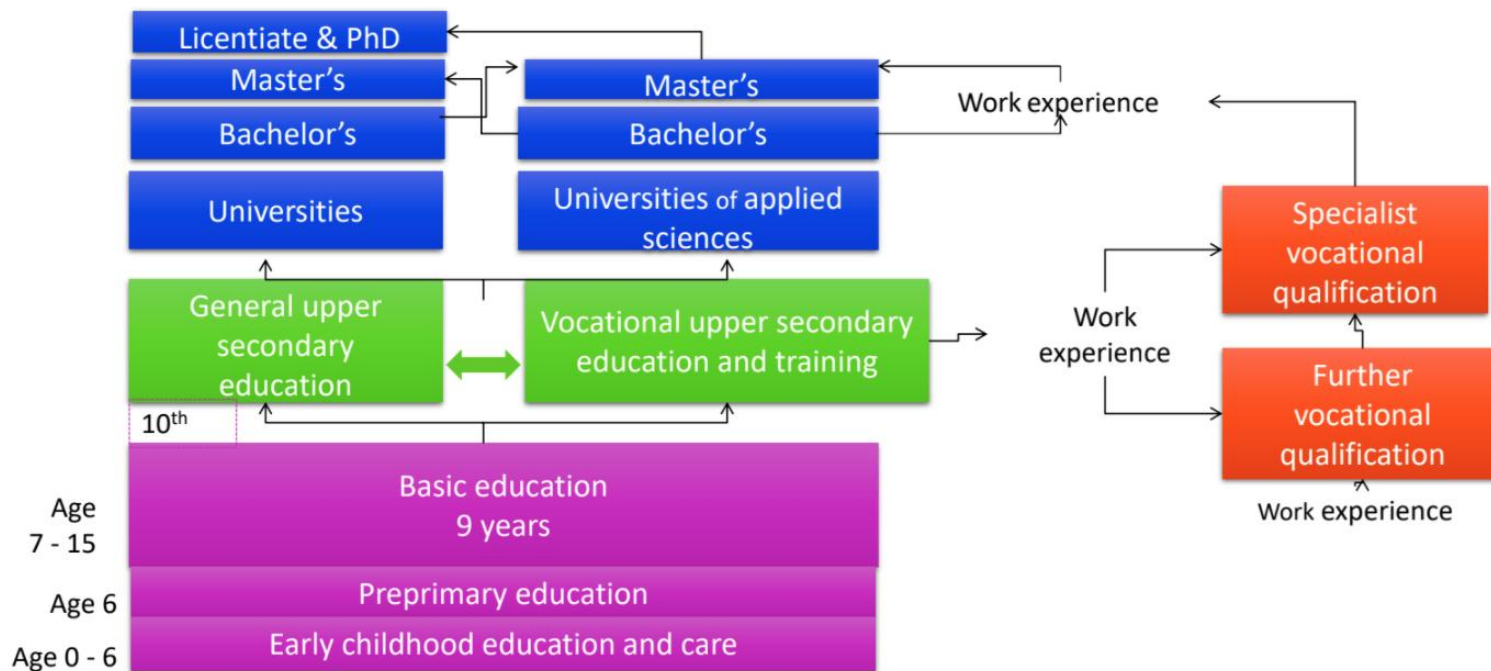


Education is developed in partnership

- national authorities
- local authorities
- teachers' union
- parents
- pupils and students
- research institutes
- social services

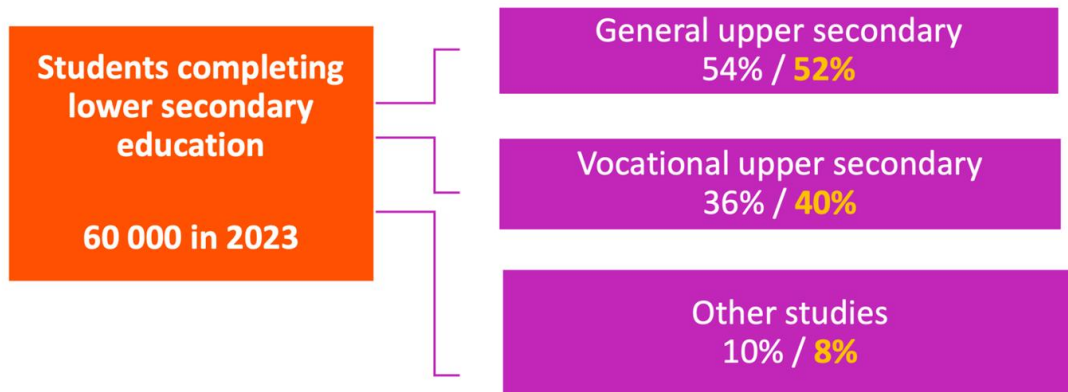


No dead-ends in the education system



What happens after secondary education?

What happens immediately after lower secondary education? 2001 / 2023



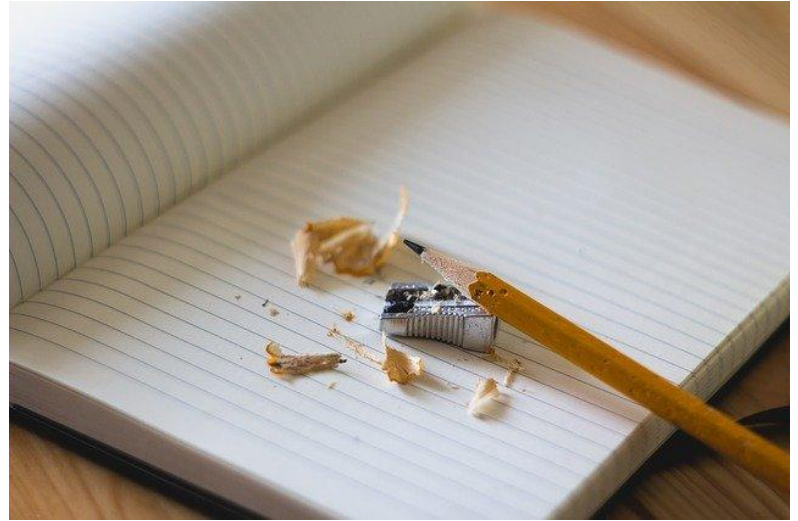
Other studies:

- Preparatory education for programmes leading to an upper secondary qualification (TUVA)
- Preparatory education for work and independent living (TELMA)
- Completion of compulsory education at folk high schools

Source: Vipunen - Education Statistics Finland

Specialities of Finnish education system

- highly trained, motivated teachers
- annual instruction time low
- no ranking
- focus on support
- basic education starts at age 7
- focus on learning rather than testing
- education a priority
- public funding
- local decisions
- free of charge
- co-operation
- trust





Two-tier national administration

Ministry of Education and culture:

- education policy
- preparation of legislation
- state funding

Finnish National Agency for Education:

- National development agency
- national core curricula and qualification requirements
- support for evidence-based policy-making
- support for reform and development
- services for learners
- supporting internationalisation

Central steering

- educational priorities
- minimum time allocation
- national core curricula
- size of state subsidies

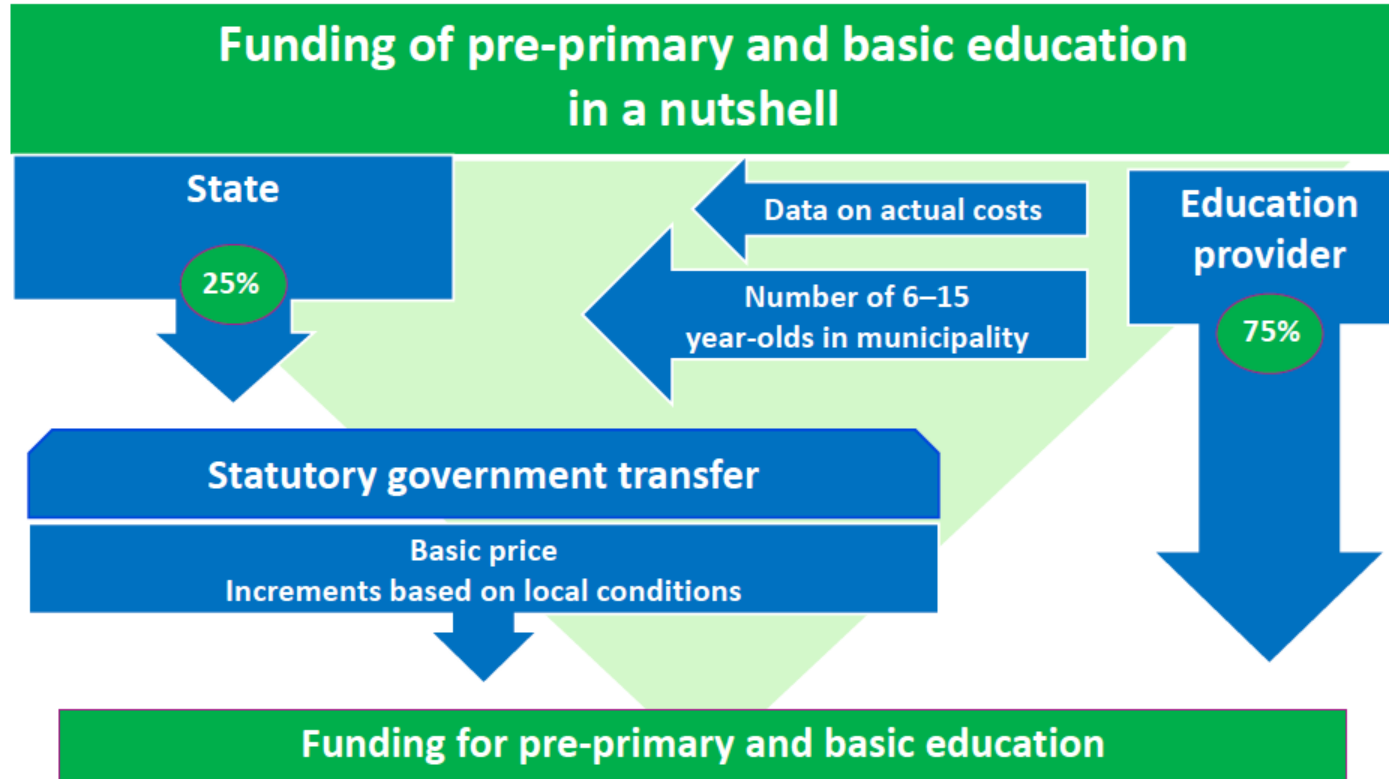
Local steering

- educational priorities
- local curricula
- allocation of subsidies
- class size
- recruitment
- teacher 'evaluation'
- quality assurance

Current issues

- differences between girls and boys in learning outcomes
- mobile phone use at school
- decreasing learning outcomes
- paying more attention to learners with immigrant background
- admission to higher education
- preparatory education for programmes leading to an upper secondary qualification (called TUVA)

Funding of pre-primary and basic education



Expenditure of education 2021

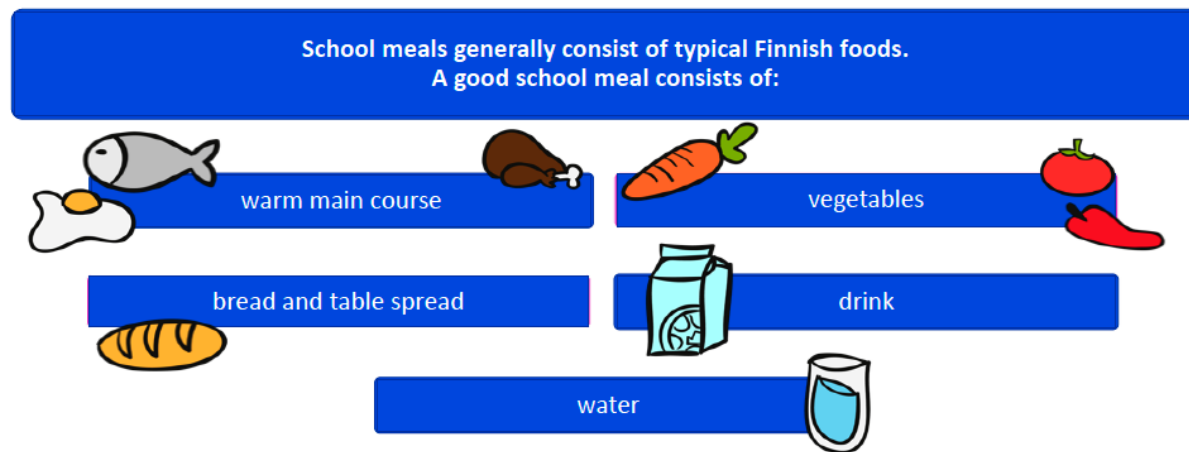


- **Operative costs per pupil/student**
 - pre-primary education **6 713 €**
 - basic education **9 975 €**
 - general upper secondary **8 535 €**
 - vocational upper secondary **10 665 €**

Pupils and student welfare

- collective + individual
- health care
- school meals
- safety

School meals

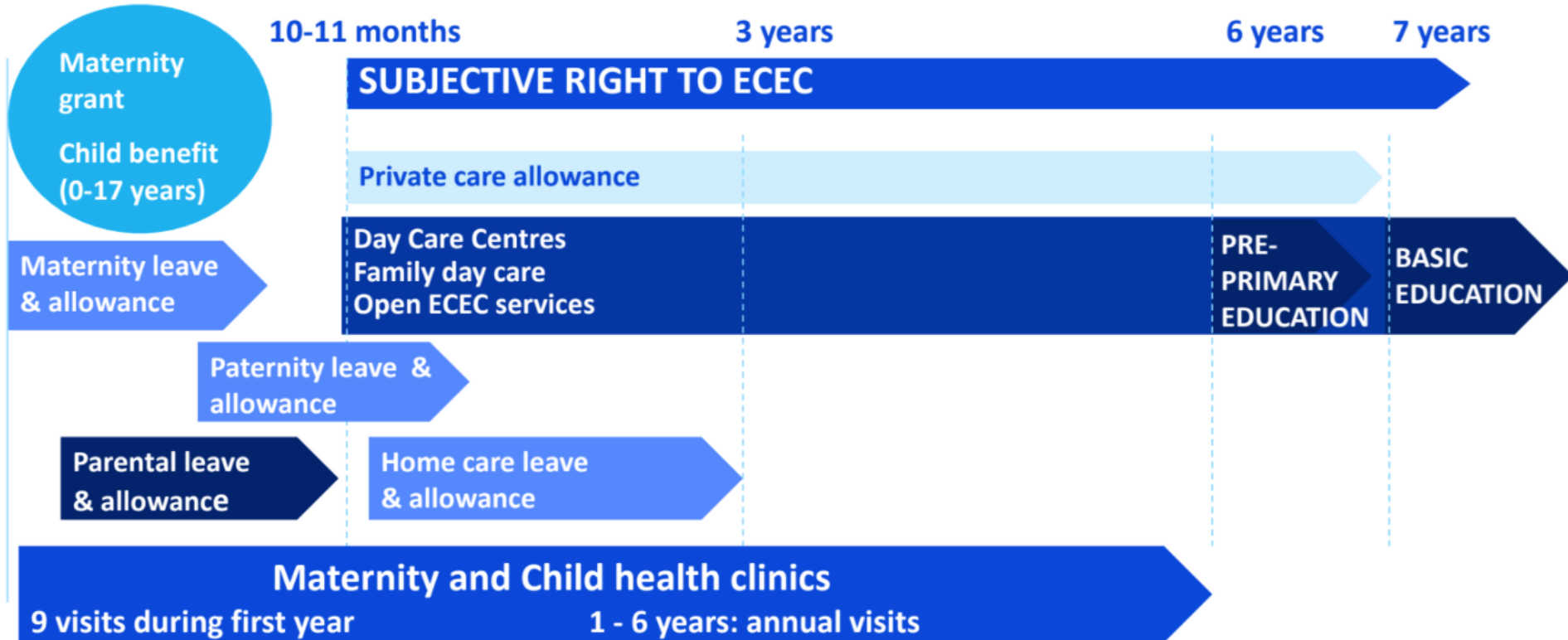


Guidance and counselling

- Subjective rights
- part of curriculum
- collective and individual approach
- develops learning skills
- supports self-confidence, participation and personal growth
- focus on transition points



Early childhood education and care (ECEC)



ECEC plans and curriculum

- child's overall well-being in focus
- integrative educations
- individual ECEC plan
- no learning standards
- learning through play essential
- language, physical activity, exploration
- artistic experiences and self-expression



Pre-primary education at the age of six

- free and compulsory
- provided in ECEC centres or schools
- minimum 700 hours per year
- promoting child's prerequisites for growth, development and learning
- a continuous learning path from ECEC to school
- integrative education
- learning through play, joy of learning



Maximising potential

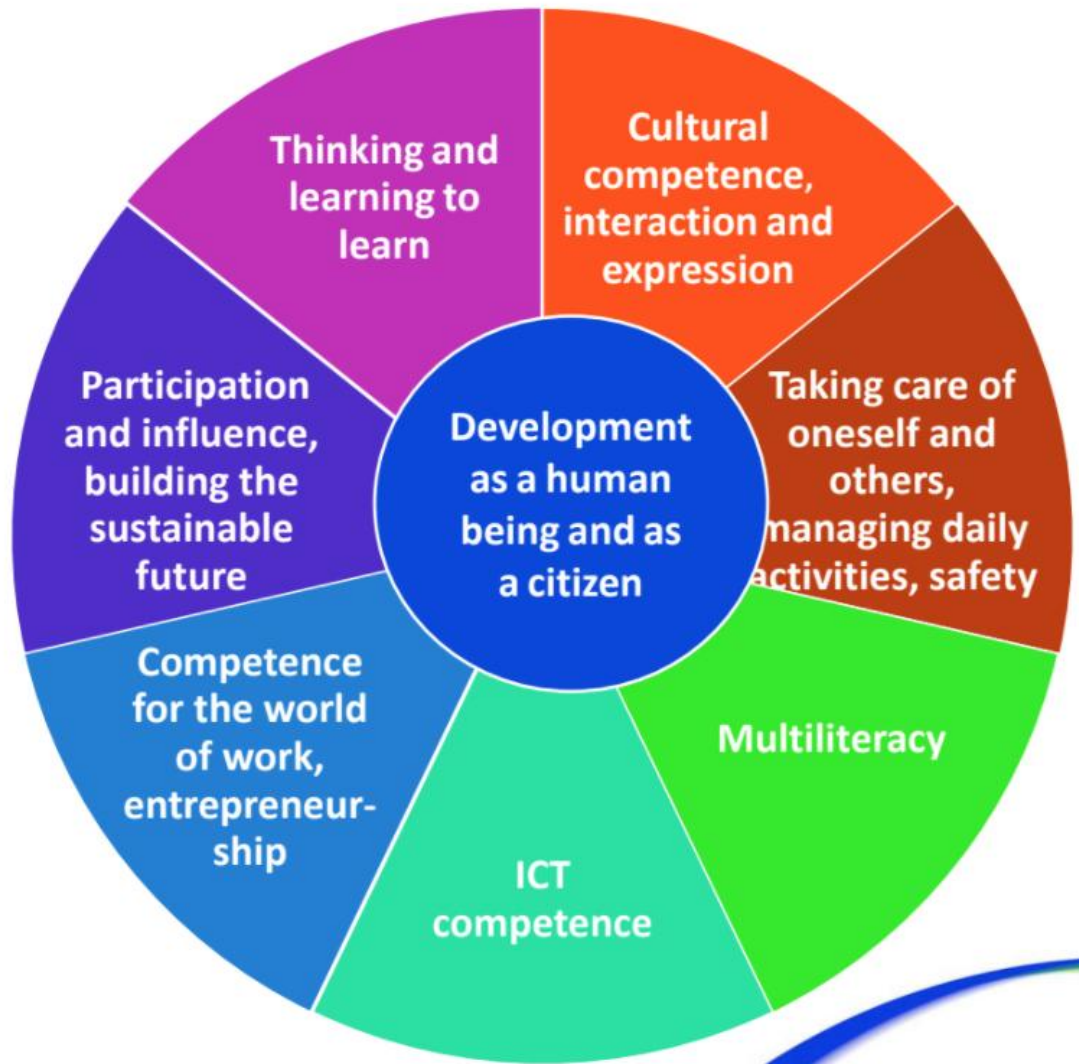
Every child is unique



Rethinking competences

National Goals for Basic Education and Transversal Competences

- knowledge
- skills
- values
- attitudes
- will



National minimum time allocation [LINK](#)

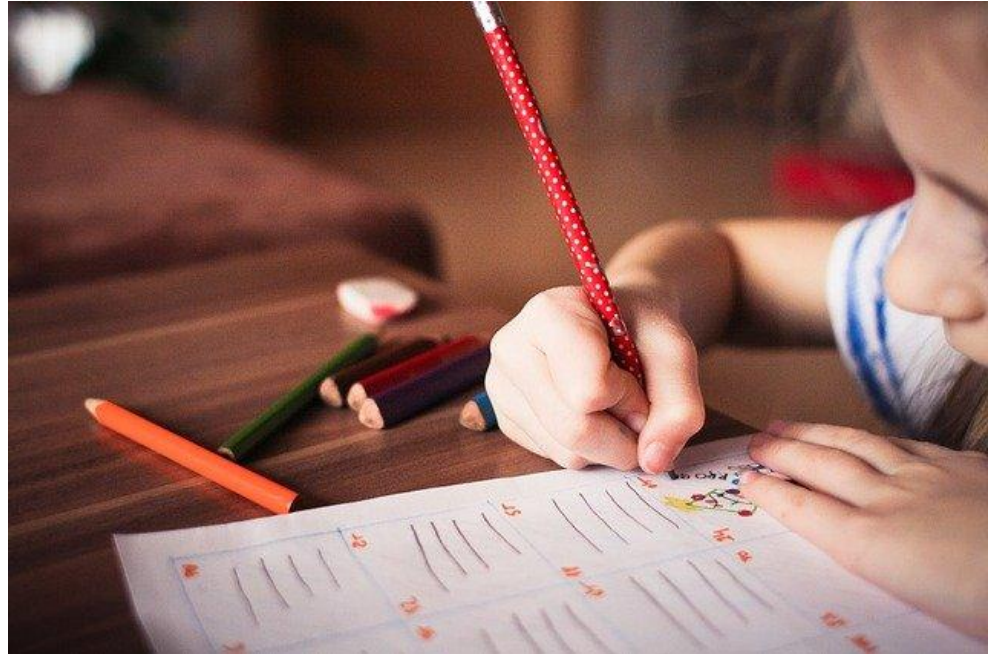
sample of subjects (annual weekly lessons¹)

| Forms | 1–2 | 3–6 | 7–9 | Total |
|------------------------------------|-----|-----|-----|-------|
| Mother tongue & literature | 14 | 18 | 10 | 42 |
| Mathematics | 6 | 15 | 11 | 32 |
| A language (1st foreign language) | 2 | 9 | 7 | 18 |
| B language (2nd national language) | – | 2 | 4 | 6 |

| Forms | 1–6 | 7–9 | Total |
|--|-----------|-----|-------|
| Environment and science | 14 | 17 | 31 |
| History & civics | 5 | 7 | 12 |
| Arts, crafts & sports | | | 62 |
| ¹ Total annual no of lessons x 38 | Total min | | 224 |

Basic education curriculum reform - core ideas

- active learner
- sustainable way of living
- integrative teaching
- schools as learning communities
- comprehensive school



Conception of learning

Learner's active role

- Sets targets
- Reflects & analyses
- Solves problems

Interaction

- Learns with others and in different environments
- Understands consequences

Learning to learn

- Recognises own way of learning
- Applies this to promote learning

Self-conception and confidence

- Helps setting targets
- Receives feedback

Upper secondary education

- flexible
- personalised
- individualisation
- modular / course structure
- combining general / vocational studies
- eligibility for higher education



Distribution of hours in general upper secondary education

Compulsory studies in credits (1 credit is about 9 classes of 75 minutos)

mother tongue 12 credits

1. foreign language 12

Swedish 12

mathematics 12-20

environment + science 10

humanities + social sciences 22

arts, crafts and sports 8-12



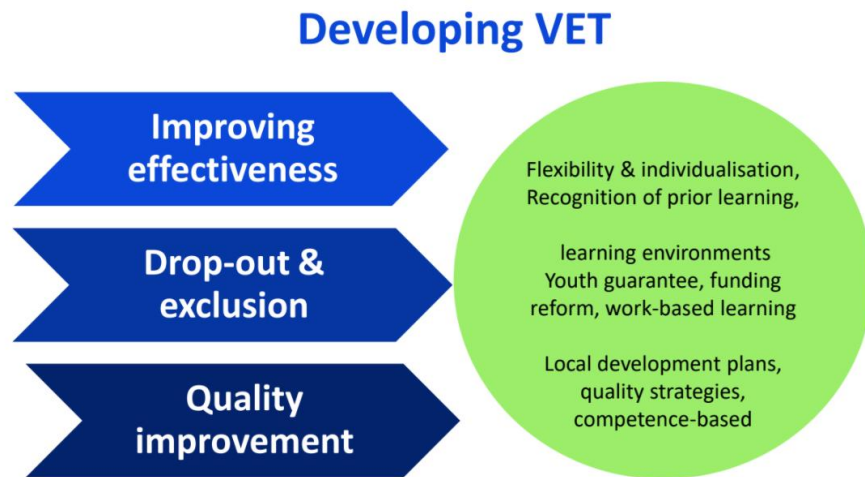
Matriculation examination, a minimum 5 tests:

- mother tongue + 4 of the following:
- 2nd national language
- foreign language
- mathematics
- general studies (one subject in sciences and humanities)



Vocational education and training

- close co-operation with labour market
- work-based learning
- flexible learning pathways
- open pathways from VET to higher and further education



Key competences for lifelong learning

- learning and problem solving
- interaction and cooperation
- vocational ethics
- health, safety and ability to function
- initiative and entrepreneurship
- sustainable development
- aesthetics
- communication and media skills
- mathematics and sciences
- technology and ICT
- active citizenship and different cultures

Adult education and training

- general upper secondary education for adults
- vocational adult education and training
- adult education in higher education institutions
- liberal adult education
- labour market training



2.2 million participants in adult education not leading to a qualification

**29 % of the population aged 25 to 64
participating in non-formal adult education in 2019**

| | Total | Male | Female |
|----------------|--------------|-------------|---------------|
| Finland | 29 | 24.8 | 33.3 |
| EU-28 | 10.8 | 9.8 | 11.9 |

Higher education



14 universities

- Conduct research and provide education based on research
- Universities interact with society and promote the effectiveness of research results

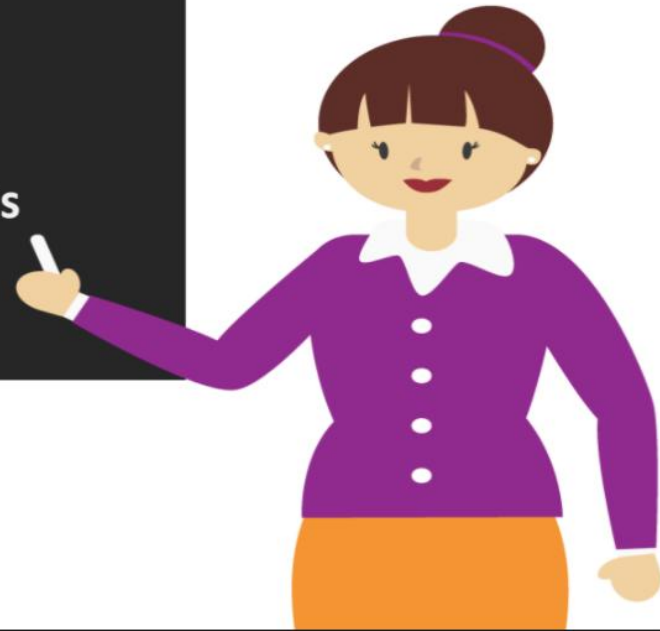
25 universities of applied sciences

- labour market needs and research and development to support instruction and promote regional development

Finnish teachers are supportive

Finnish teachers believe in:

- equity and encouragement
- individual support
- strengthening the pupils' thinking skills
- developing the pupils' self-confidence and tolerance



Source: From goals to interaction.
Evaluation of pedagogy in Finnish basic education 2008
(National Council for Evaluation in Education in Finland)

Most teachers are required a master's degree

Kindergarten teachers
180 ECTS (3 years)

Class teachers
300 ECTS (5 years)

Subject teachers
300 ECTS (5–6 years)

**Teachers
of vocational
studies:**

**Master's , Bachelor's
+ work experience+
pedagogical studies
of 60 ECTS
(1 year)**

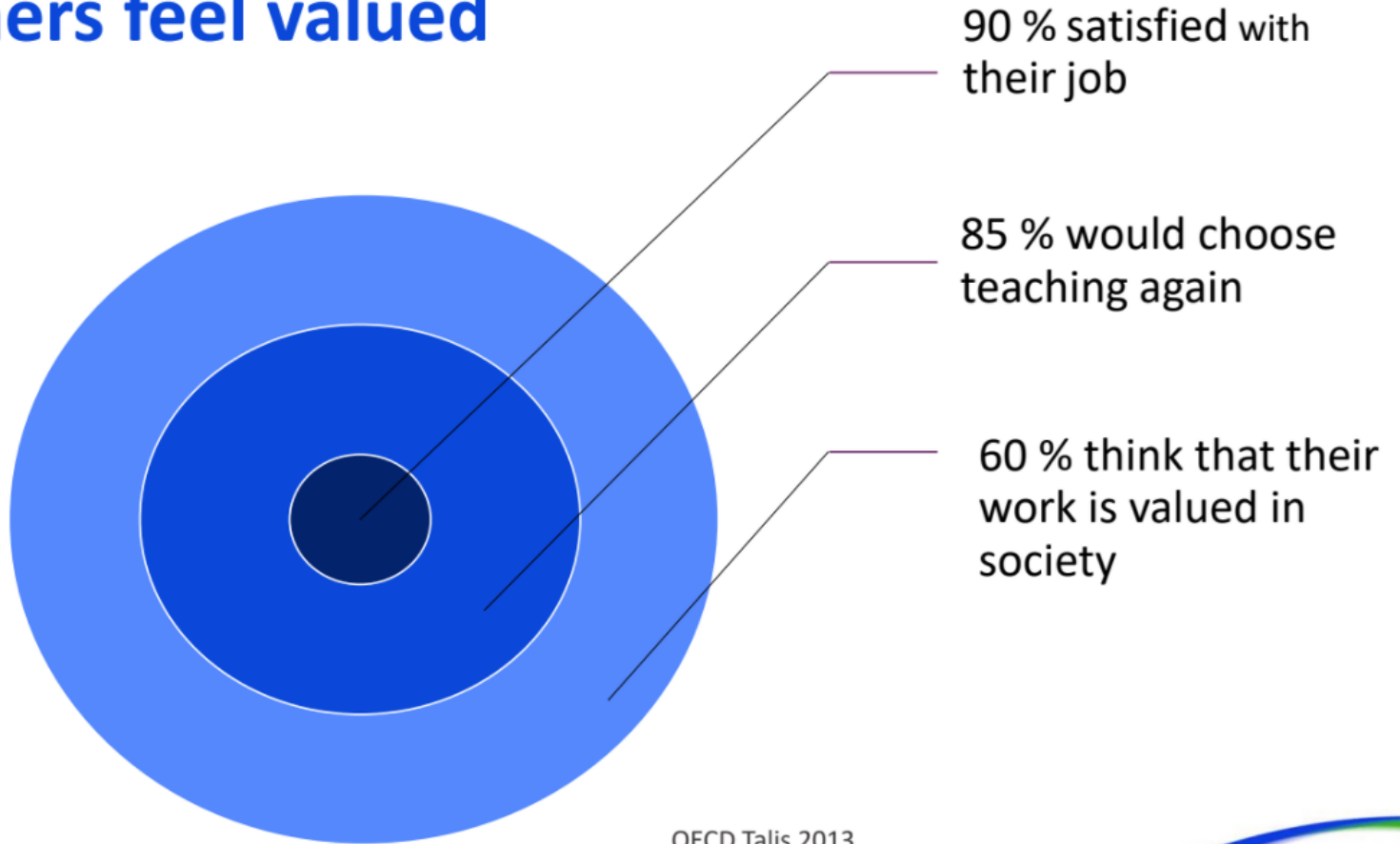
Principals:
teacher education
+ e.g. certificate
in educational
administration

Teacher training institutions can select heavily

Intake into teacher education 2020 (% of those who applied)

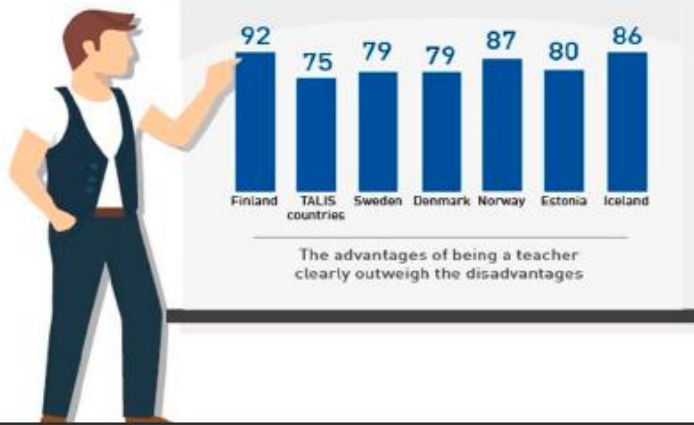
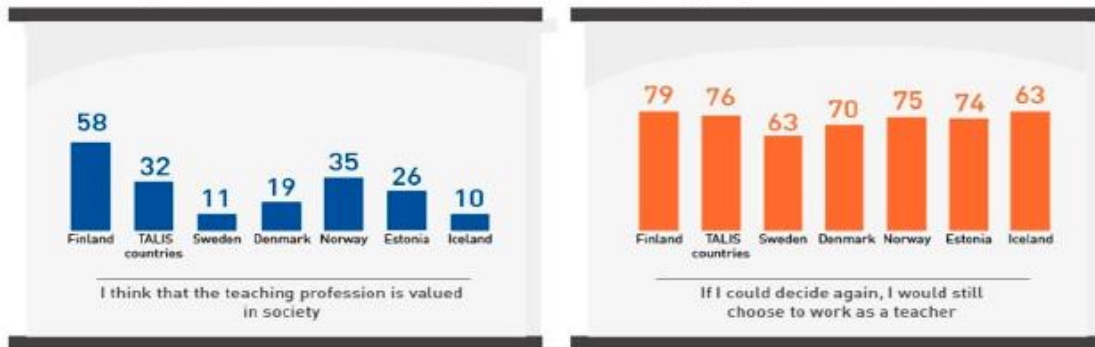
| | |
|-------------------------------------|--------------------|
| Class teacher education | 16 % |
| Subject teacher education | 10 % – 53 % |
| Vocational teacher education | 38 % |

Teachers feel valued

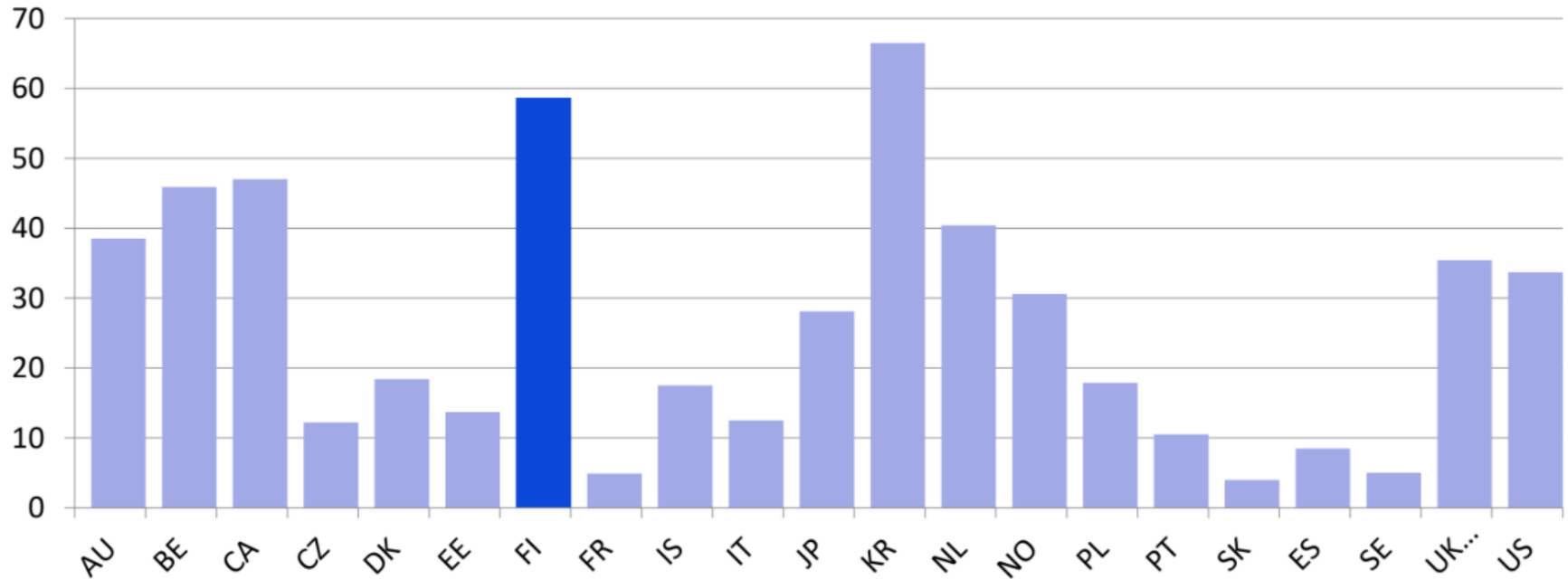


Finnish lower secondary (ISCED2) teachers are satisfied with their career choice

Percentage of teachers (%) who "agree" or "strongly agree" with the statements



TALIS 2013: I think that the teaching profession is valued in society



OECD Talis 2013
US sample not representative

Teacher and principal salaries in Finland, 2022

Annual average salaries (including bonuses and allowances) of 25-64-year-old teachers and school heads in public institutions, in equivalent USD converted using PPPs for private consumption

| | |
|--|-------------------|
| • pre-primary teacher (ISCED 02) | 38 309 USD |
| • class teacher, primary | 50 697 USD |
| • subject teacher, lower secondary | 56 135 USD |
| • subject teacher, general upper secondary | 63 188 USD |
| • VET teachers (teachers of common studies and vocational studies teachers combined) | 59 278 USD |
| • principal, primary | 71 130 USD |
| • principal, lower secondary | 82 812 USD |
| • principal, general upper secondary | 85 871 USD |

Salary is not the reason to become a teacher

Average actual monthly salary in the municipal sector 3 200 €

* lower secondary subject teacher
Source: Statistics Finland

3 900 €
Teacher*



6 200 €
Doctor (health career)



4 500 €
Lawyer



3 600 €
Constable



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**

What do the high-performing school systems have in common?

- 1 They get the right people to become teachers.
- 2 They develop these people into effective instructors.
- 3 They put in place systems and targeted support to ensure that every child is able to benefit from excellent instruction.

Sources:

Adapted of a presentation by
the Finnish National Agency for education

[link to the original presentation](#)



FINNISH NATIONAL
AGENCY FOR EDUCATION

