

# Education policy making in Finland

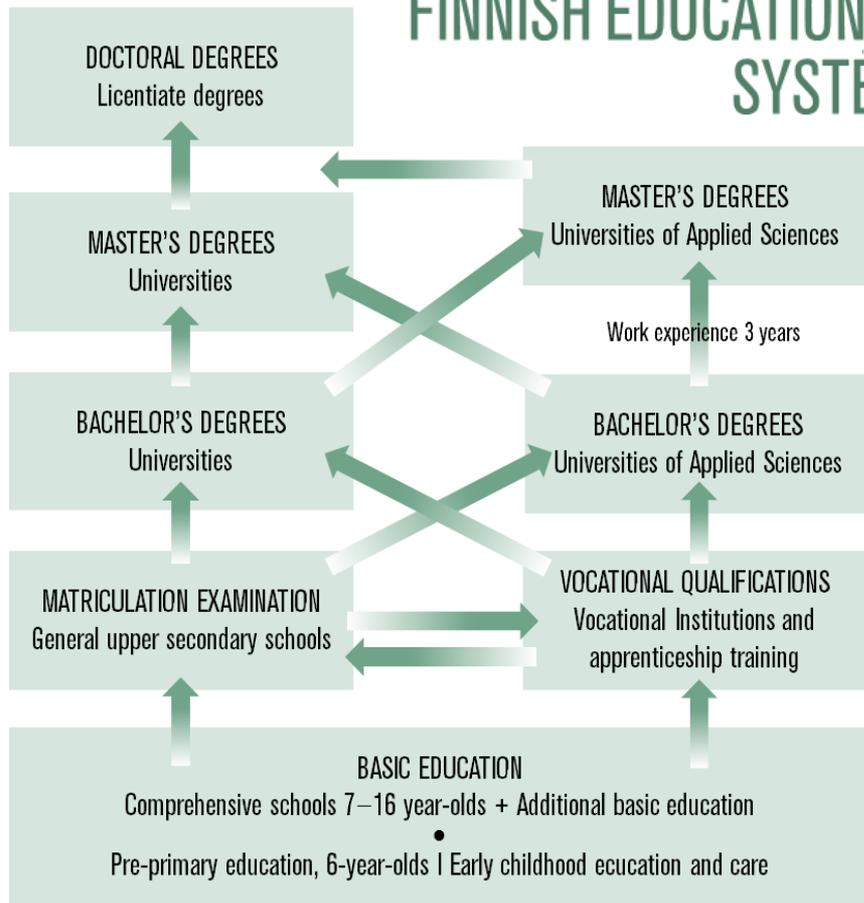
Riga 24.1.2020

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- Context: Finnish education system and its challenges
- Feeding into strategies: the futures reviews
- Strategic education policy documents and their preparation
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# FINNISH EDUCATIONAL SYSTEM



**LIBERAL ADULT EDUCATION**

- Adult education centres
- Folk high schools
- Summer universities
- Study centres
- Sports institutes

- Great flexibility
- No dead ends
- Equal opportunities
- Planned for life-long learning

# Challenges of the Finnish Education System

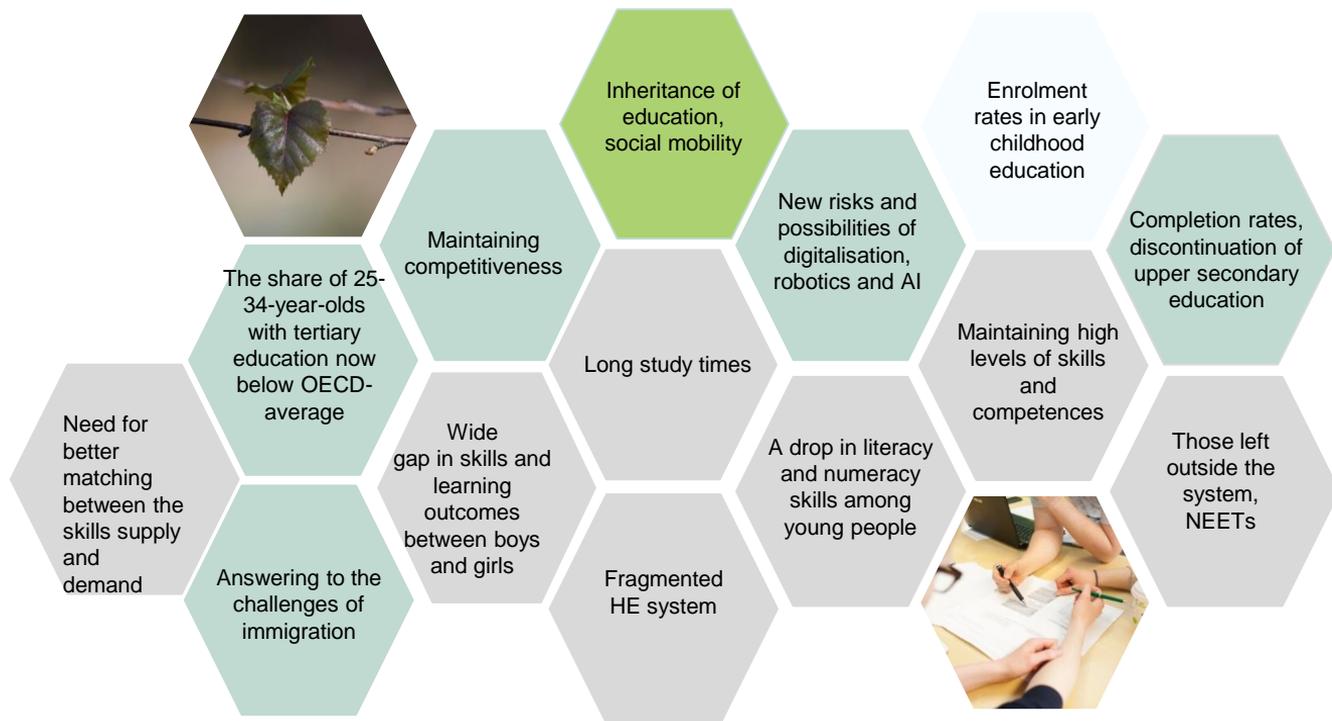
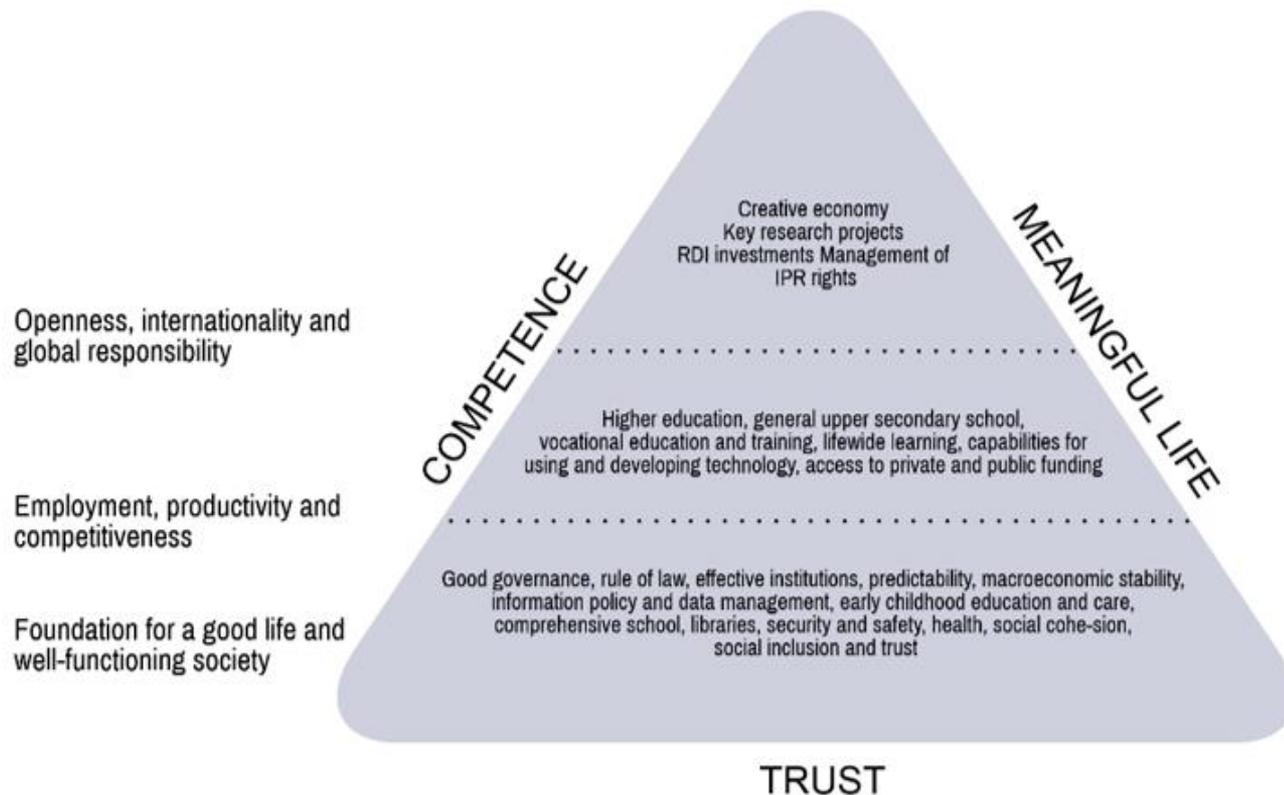


Photo below: Aalto University; Text sources, paraphrasing: Research and innovation policy outline for 2015-2020, January 2016, European Commission, February 2016

# Futures reviews

- Once during the electoral period, **each ministry makes it's own futures review**, exploiting **national and international research and indicators (OECD, UN, EU ..)**
- Reviews are part of the **ministries' joint foresight activities**, underpinned by common foresight – common drivers for change
- Public officials prepare them and the work is led by the permanent secretaries of the ministries.
- The reviews assess global trends and projections and situations in Finnish society, and examine issues involving political decision making.
- The **aim is to generate public debate and provide information for the next government formation.**
- In addition, the **joint outlook of the Permanent Secretaries of the ministries** on the key questions for the upcoming 2019–2023 government term:  
Opportunities for Finland <http://julkaisut.valtioneuvosto.fi/handle/10024/161388>

# Futures review of the Ministry of Education and Culture: our model for success



# Strategic education policy documents

- Before 2015: five year Development Plans for Education and Research
  - based on government programmes, prepared at the ministry, but in dialogue with the stakeholders: in 2011 comments about the draft from almost 200 organisations
  - documents with varying (is size, in particularity) targets and measures
- 2015-2019 Strategic Government Programme and its implementation plan
  - five government term education objectives and six "key projects"
  - during the period (e.g.) "Vision for higher education and research in 2030"
- 2019 – Government Programme
  - more detailed than the previous; four main objectives, but many measures defined
  - Government Education Policy Report for the Parliament

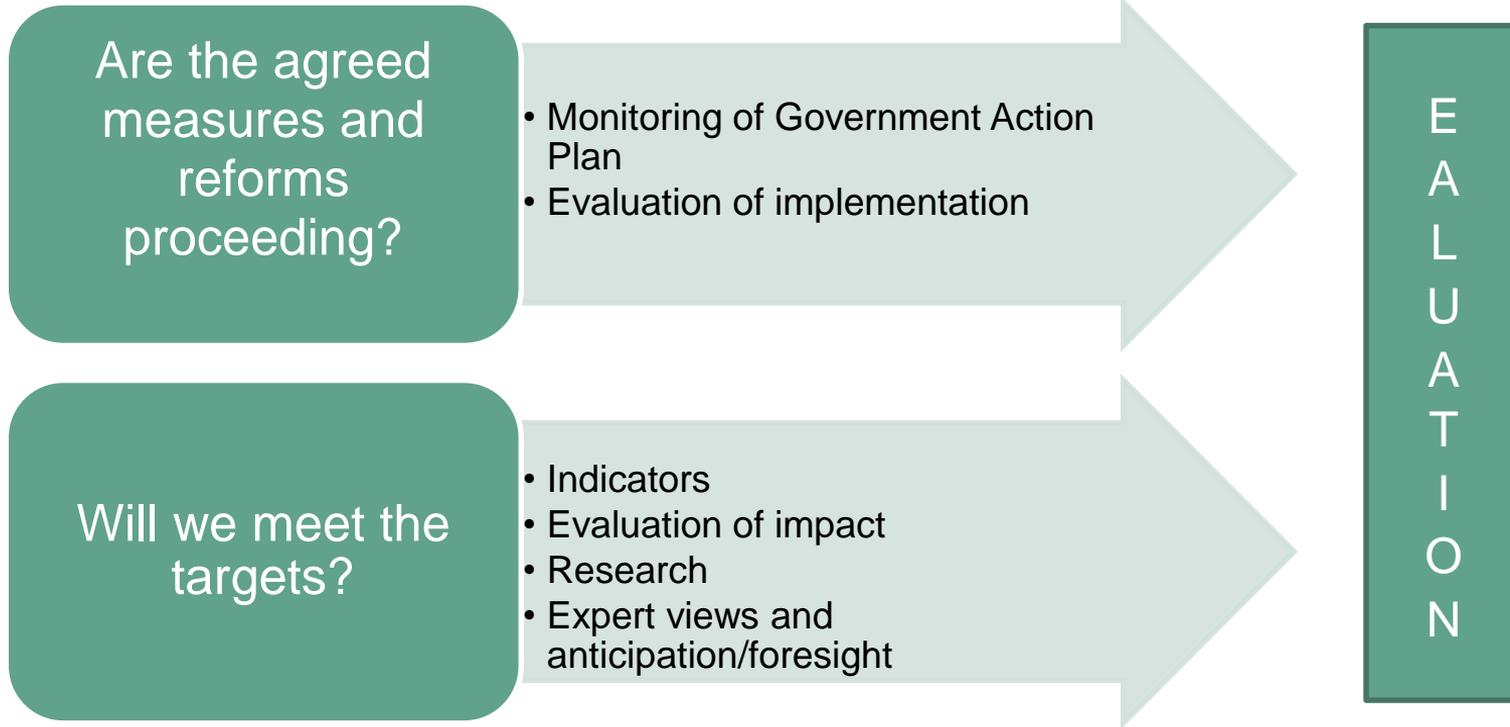
# Government programme 2019- Finland that promotes competence, education, culture and innovation, objectives

- The level of education and competence among the population will rise at all levels of education, differences in educational achievement will decrease, and educational equality will increase
- Children and young people will feel well
- Education and training will enhance equality and non-discrimination in society
- Finland will be an internationally attractive place to study, conduct research and invest

Extension of compulsory education, reform of continuous learning, RDI-roadmap, governmental education policy report for the parliament ...

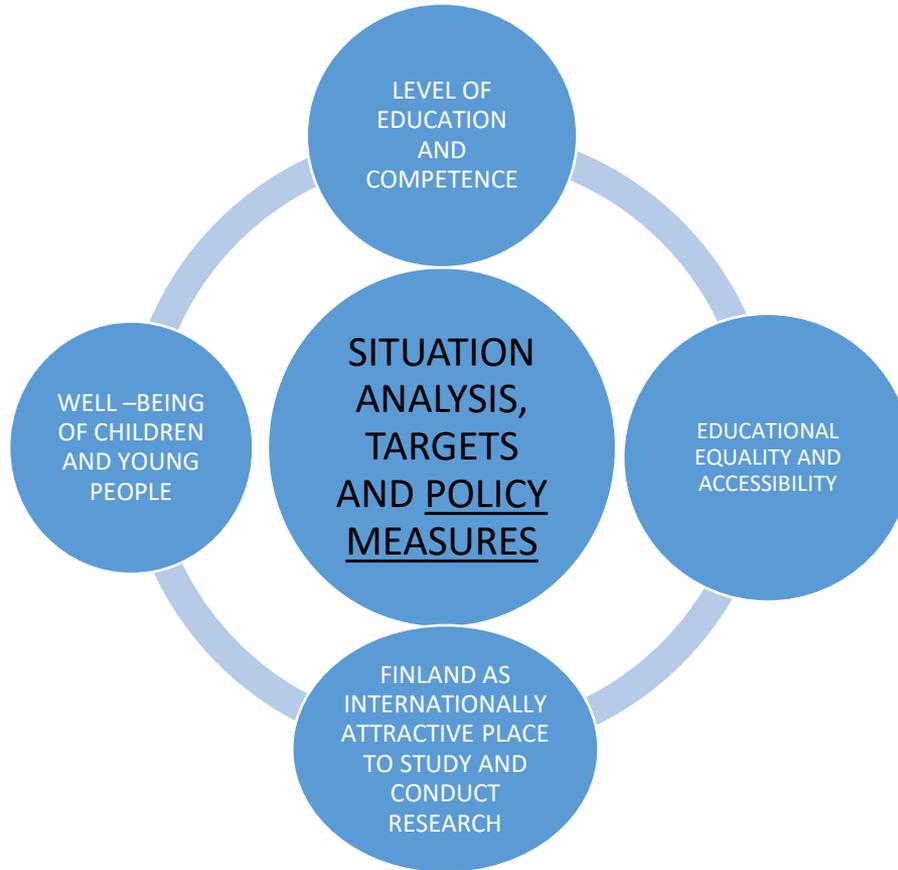


# Monitoring the government programme



Prime Minister's Office has the main responsibility for monitoring the implementation of the Government Programme.

# Government Education Policy Report for the Parliament



- The whole education and research system
- Emphasis on policy measures
- Looking at 2030 and beyond
- For the Parliament at the end of 2020
- During the process wide involvement of stakeholders and experts: virtual brainstorm, school visits, seminars, workshops with researchers, comments for the draft ...

# FINLAND THAT PROMOTES COMPETENCE, EDUCATION, CULTURE AND INNOVATION, AT THE TOP ALSO IN THE FUTURE



Environment,  
climate change

Democracy,  
participation

The international  
system,  
global responsi-  
bility



## SITUATION ANALYSIS

Research evidence, intern. comparisons and experiences, stakeholders ..



## MAIN VIEWPOINTS AND OBJECTIVES

Level of education and competence, well-being of children and young people, educational equality and accessibility, Finland as an attractive place to study and conduct research

Development of  
science and  
technology

Transformation  
of work

Growing inequalities

The development of the  
population structure

*Government  
education policy  
report, **draft** of  
the structure*

# Education is developed in partnership

National  
authorities

Local  
authorities

Teachers'  
union

Social  
partners

Parents

Pupils and  
students

Research  
institutions

Other  
relevant  
stakeholders

**... to ensure commitment and seamless  
implementation**

# Government programme 2019-

- “To ensure high-quality decision-making, decisions will be prepared with care and based on research data.”
- “Research and foresight information will be used more effectively to underpin the Government's strategic policy-making.”

# The Strategic Research Council (SRC)

- The Strategic Research Council (SRC) at the Academy of Finland provides funding to long-term and programme-based **research aimed at finding solutions to the major challenges facing Finnish society.**
- The Strategic Research Council (SRC) funds high-quality **research that has great societal impact.** The research should seek to find concrete solutions to grand challenges that require multidisciplinary approaches. An important element of such research is active collaboration between those who produce new knowledge and those who use it.
- Each year, **the SRC prepares a proposal on key strategic research themes and priorities to be approved by the Finnish Government.** The Government determines the research needs and decides the final themes, which the SRC then formulates into research programmes and funding calls. SRC programmes run for 3–6 years. The SRC's annual funding budget is some 55 million euros.
- The projects to be funded are selected by the SRC. The SRC is also responsible for project follow-up and impact assessment. The projects are selected based on a review of their scientific quality, societal relevance and impact.

Participatory  
process:



Open  
consultation  
Foresighting  
Workshops  
Hearings



# Government joint analysis, assessment and research activities (VN TEAS)

- **Generate information that supports decision making procedures, working practices and management by knowledge.**
- The Government adopts a plan for analysis, assessment and research annually that underpins policy decision making and steers analysis, assessment and research activities towards specific priority areas selected by the Government. Under the leadership of the Prime Minister's Office, *the Government working group for the coordination of research, foresight and assessment activities* is in charge of formulating the plan. The working group includes experts from all administrative branches.
- The resources available for implementing the plan amount to approximately EUR 10 million. The appropriations are used **for analyses, assessments, foresight reports, impact comparisons of various policy instruments, and evaluations of situation awareness scenarios. The analysis, research and assessment projects can span from a few months to three years.** The projects are expected to be transparent and the outcomes to be as widely applicable as possible.
- <https://tietokayttoon.fi/en/frontpage>

"Evidence-based or evidence-informed policy: the conscientious and explicit use of current best evidence in making decisions and choosing policy options" (Burns & Schuller 2007, 16).

but

"The scale and scope of the data production system has perhaps become an end to itself, creating certain logics while refusing others, and trapping its creators in quantities of information that do not provide clear or unambiguous guides to action" (Ozga 2010, 80).

# Foresight

- “The ability to judge correctly what is going to happen in the future and plan your actions based on this knowledge” (Cambridge dictionary)
- Foresight activities are performed **in many ministries and branches of government, and also regionally**, for example for the purpose of training and labour market needs.
- **The Government working group for the coordination of research, foresight and assessment activities (TEA Working Group)** serves to strengthen horizontal oversight of research, foresight and assessment activities, improve the information base for decision making and develop new ways of disseminating information on research, foresight and assessment activities to decision-makers and society at large.
- The **National foresight network** brings together Finnish foresight data producers and is a discussion and coordination forum for national foresight actors. It aims to promote the use of information and futures perspectives in decision-making. The purpose is to foster public discussion, research and decisions on the new challenges and opportunities facing Finnish society.

# National Forum for Skills Anticipation

- The National Forum for Skills Anticipation serves as a joint expert body in educational anticipation for the Ministry of Education and Culture and the Finnish National Agency for Education (EDUFI).
- The system consists of a steering group, nine anticipation groups and a network of experts
- The task is to promote the interaction of education and training with working life in co-operation with the Ministry and EDUFI
- Anticipation groups are involved in both qualitative and quantitative anticipation work
- EDUFI draws up an anticipation action plan at the beginning of the term after hearing the anticipation groups and steering group. It also organises the anticipation work
- <https://www.oph.fi/sites/default/files/documents/oef-eng-verkkoon-ja-sahk-jakeluun.pdf>
- <https://www.oph.fi/sites/default/files/documents/oph-oef-esittely-engl-2018.pdf>