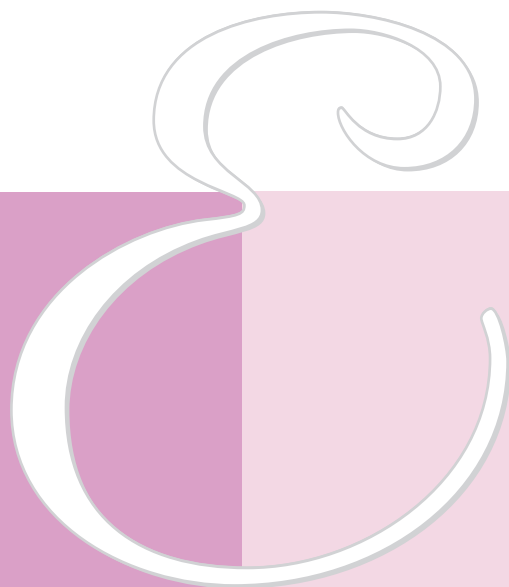




EDUCATION IN FINLAND
ADULT EDUCATION
AND TRAINING



OPETUSMINISTERIÖ

Undervisningsministeriet

MINISTRY OF EDUCATION

Ministère de l'Éducation



Finland in Brief

Population: 5.2 million

Capital: Helsinki, population 540,000

Surface area: 338,000 km², population density 17 inhabitants/km²

Official languages: Finnish (94%) and Swedish (6%); the Sami (Lappish) language in the Sami domicile area in Lapland

Religion: Evangelical Lutheran 86%, Orthodox 1%, unaffiliated 12%

Major sectors of the economy (% of GDP): services 60%, manufacturing industry and construction 35%, agriculture and forestry 5%

Main trading partners: Germany, Sweden, United Kingdom, Russia

GDP per capita: approx. €20,500

Proportion of people with post-basic education in the total population: 57%

Students in certificate-oriented education: 1.1 million

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Adult education and training in the administrative field of the Ministry of Education

Premises of education policy

The premise of Finnish educational philosophy has been to cater for the competence and education of the entire population. This has steered both the choices of education policy and the development measures of adult education policy. The Government determines the priorities and definitions of the development policy in the Development Plan for Education and University Research. The new plan covers the period 1999–2004.

One of the tasks of education and training is to provide tools to manage changes in society and to consolidate cohesion. Central factors of change include the progress of globalisation, the trend in the population's age structure, changes in working life and structural unemployment, as well as the effects of information and communication technologies. A high standard of education, reinforcing the status of adult education and training, diversifying contacts with working life and a policy of competencies based on the principle of lifelong learning are ways of preparing for the challenges that the new millennium will bring.

Each age group is provided with general 9-year basic education in its entirety. About half of the people in each age group participate in the preceding pre-school education or similar activities. The opportunity to move up to general or vocational education after basic education in comprehensive school can be provided for the whole age group. Tertiary-level studies are available for 60–65% of the age group in polytechnics or universities. A significant proportion of educational provision is directed to the competence-related, educational and cultural needs of the adult population.

Adult education and training system

General and vocational education for adults		Additional and supplementary training to complement upper secondary education	General self-developmnet
University	Polytechnic (AMK institution)	• Other supplementary training programmes and courses • Specialisation studies at universities • Specialisation studies at polytechnics	• Studies preparing for civic and working life skills • Social studies • Interest-oriented studies
Upper secondary school	Initial vocational education	• Specialist vocational qualifications • Further vocational qualifications • Language proficiency tests • Other additional training	
	Comprehensive school		

Certificate-oriented education and training

Non-formal education

Administration and funding

The overall responsibility for education policy and self-motivated adult education and training rests with the Ministry of Education and the National Board of Education, an expert and development office subordinate to the Ministry. Important co-operation partners at the central administration level include the Ministry of Labour, the Ministry of Social Affairs and Health and the Ministry of Trade and Industry. The Education and Culture Departments of the Provincial State Offices are the regional expert authorities in the administrative field of the Ministry of Education. The municipalities and the federations of municipalities play a significant role in providing and financing education and training. Non-governmental organisations (NGOs) have a strong position especially in the sectors of liberal adult education and counselling. Important co-operation partners also include teacher, student and labour market organisations.

The Department for Education and Science Policy within the Ministry of Education is divided into six divisions: the General Education Division, the Vocational Education Division, the Polytechnic Division, the University Division, the Science Division and the Division for Adult Education and Training. The responsibilities of the Division for Adult Education and Training primarily cover the tasks concerning adult education and training (general, vocational, polytechnics, universities, liberal adult education and the counselling sector) and the promotion of lifelong learning within the domain of the Ministry of Education. Within the National Board of Education, tasks concerning adult education and training are discharged by its Adult Education Division. The Adult Education Council in turn is an expert body within the Ministry of Education, set up by the Government for a three-year period.

The main tasks of the Division for Adult Education and Training concern:

- overall national adult education and training policies and their formulation
- legislation and finance
- operating conditions for the network of educational institutions and their division of work
- the level, economical use and accessibility of educational provision
- co-ordination and cementing of the lifelong learning policy

In terms of its budget, the Ministry of Education is the third largest ministry behind the Ministry of Social Affairs and Health and the Ministry of Finance. The administrative field of the Ministry of Education accounts for about 14% of the State budget (3.8% of Finland's GDP), equivalent to FIM 26.6 billion (€4,400 million). In addition, the local (municipal) authorities, the private sector and citizens provide considerable funding for education, science and culture. The new legislation concerning education and training, effective as from the beginning of 1999, further increased the decision-making powers of education providers and emphasised the status of the evaluation of the quality and performance in the sector as part of the steering policy in the domain of the Ministry of Education. Of the Ministry of Education's budgetary estimates of expenditure, about 14% is channelled into adult education and training, totalling almost FIM 3.5 billion (about €580 million).

Adult education and training in brief

Adult education and training under the Ministry of Education may be summarised as follows:

- it is provided by about 1,000 educational institutions, including universities
- the annual number of students exceeds one million
- direct budgetary funding accounts for 14% of the Ministry of Education's estimates of expenditure (FIM 3.5 billion; €580 million)
- certificate-oriented education at all levels
- open provision of studies constituting part of certificate-oriented programmes
- preparatory training for competence-based qualifications (further and specialist vocational qualifications, language proficiency tests, computer user's 'driving licences')
- apprenticeship training provided
- additional and supplementary training to update, extend and consolidate vocational competence
- studies preparing for civic and working life skills, social studies
- interest-oriented studies

Adult education and training system

Development of the system

The Finnish system of adult education and training is the result of prolonged historical development. During a period of more than a hundred years, various forms of educational institution have emerged to fulfil the educational needs of that time. Every institution form had its own goals, operating methods and target groups. However, the systematic development of adult education and training only started in the 1970's in accordance with the definitions outlined by the Adult Education Committee. In 1978, the Government issued a Decision-in-Principle concerning the planning and development of adult education and training. This was based on the principle of continuing education, which entailed the creation of a flexible education and training system to provide all citizens with the opportunity to develop themselves through study at all stages of life. This was followed by extensive development work in different sectors, which in turn led to legislative and other reforms and a considerable expansion of adult education and training.

Up until the 1980's, adult education and training were mainly associated with liberal adult education institutions. Since then, measures have been specifically directed at expanding the provision of certificate-oriented education and supplementary training for adults. Consequently, the relative proportion of liberal adult education has diminished, although, in terms of quantity, it still reaches multitudes of citizens. However, in terms of educational provision, certificate-oriented adult education is more extensive, since it lasts longer. In the 1990's, universities' adult education has in turn increased considerably with the expansion of open university instruction in particular. Moreover, the most recent form of education, the polytechnic system, also includes adult education and training, and provision of these has increased with the permanent establishment of the polytechnic system. As the unemployment rate reached a high level in the early 1990's, adult employment training (labour market training) was also expanded.

All education and training intended for young people are also provided for adults, ranging from comprehensive school studies to university, but due to its nature, some of the educational provision is intended for adults only. Some educational institutions concentrate exclusively on adult education and training, whereas for others adult education and training form part of their other activities. In some cases, adults may also participate in education intended for young people. Adult education and training are also provided in the form of in-service training in companies. The proportion of commercial training organisations is small.

Educational content and description of the institutions

Basic education and general upper secondary education for adults

Adults may complete the syllabus of basic education (comprehensive school) or upper secondary school and participate in the upper secondary school matriculation examination primarily *at upper secondary schools for adults and in adult study programmes at ordinary upper secondary schools*. Instruction is primarily arranged in the form of evening courses. Many people only study individual subjects, mainly languages. There are separate core curricula for adult education, which allow for the fact that the students are adults in the number of compulsory courses, length of courses and duration of lessons. Upper secondary schools for adults also provide instruction for foreign students. There are upper secondary schools for adults in about 40 localities, mainly cities. With the exception of two, these are municipal institutions. There are comprehensive school programmes in some 30 *folk high schools*, and six folk high schools have an upper secondary school programme. These also observe the core curriculum for the upper secondary school for adults, but, due to the fact that these schools are boarding schools by nature, studies take place during the day. Most of the students attending folk high schools are young.

Initial vocational education and training for adults

Adults may study for the same initial (upper secondary) vocational qualifications as young people. Vocational upper secondary education has been divided into seven sectors and just over 30 fields of study, which are further divided into study programmes leading to different qualifications. The duration of education ranges from 2 to 3 years, but this is being gradually expanded to three years, as a half-year period of on-the-job training is included in the education. Post-secondary education is being gradually terminated and has primarily been transferred into the polytechnics.

Adults may study together with young people at different types of *vocational institutions*, the majority of which are municipal, multi-field institutions. However, instruction is often arranged in the form of adult study programmes or multiform study. *Vocational adult education centres and national specialised institutions* are institutions specialised in adult education and training. Furthermore, some *folk high schools, physical education centres and conservatoires* also provide vocational education and training. In the licence to organise education, the Ministry of Education has determined the fields of education and student quantities, and it may also have set other conditions. Within these limits, the education provider decides how to direct the education to young people and adults. Vocational education can be provided at an educational institution or in the form of *apprenticeship training*. All adult education and training emphasise the fact that an individual learning programme must be drawn up for each student, taking into account his or her previously acquired competencies.

A method of completing an initial vocational qualification expressly suited to adults is the use of *competence-based examinations (competence-based qualifications)* independent of educational background. Competence-based qualifications are governed by guidelines, and their definition of vocational competence is the same as that in education and training based on core curricula. Competence-based qualifications can be completed in those institutions, which have been granted the right to organise

the examinations in their contracts of organisation. The examination committees are bodies appointed by the National Board of Education. They operate in accordance with the tripartite principle, which means that, in addition to the educational administration, they also involve experts representing employers and employees in the field concerned. Their task is to manage and steer the organisation of competence-based examinations, confirm completion of the qualifications and issue certificates. The examinations are subject to a fee. Although participation in competence-based examinations is independent of how vocational skills have been acquired, most people participate in training to prepare for the examination.

Additional vocational training

Additional vocational training is self-motivated training independent of the employer, with the aim of enhancing vocational competence. Hence, it is post-secondary further and supplementary training intended for adults. This training can be provided in the form of longer periods, short courses or apprenticeship training. Moreover, the training can also be arranged in co-operation with companies when it focuses on raising the personnel's level of competence, not on pure in-service training. The training can be provided by all *educational institutions under public supervision* (including universities and polytechnics). The training is provided by institutions, but funding is based on purchase contracts made by the Provincial State Offices with the institutions, using state appropriations. Educational purchases take into account both the national guidelines and regional and local emphases.

A central part of additional vocational training is the system of *further and specialist vocational qualifications*. These are qualifications expressly designed for adults, requiring advanced vocational competence. In the same way as for initial vocational qualifications, the National Board of Education confirms the guidelines for further and specialist qualifications. The system of these qualifications, organised in the form of competence-based examinations, is the same as described above in connection with

initial vocational qualifications. The qualifications and the preparatory training are financed through purchases. The preparatory training may also be provided in the form of apprenticeship training. The majority of additional training is provided by *vocational adult education centres*, which are mostly municipal adult education institutions. Since they also sell much of their training to the employment administration in the form of adult employment training and other types of commercial services, they are clearly the largest adult education institutions in terms of provision. *National specialised institutions and other specialised vocational institutions* mainly provide additional vocational training, operating chiefly in various branches of trade, industry and services and mainly owned by companies.

Polytechnic education

In the 1990's, about 30 polytechnics have been established in Finland through an extensive experiment and development programme. Polytechnics have been developed on the basis of post-secondary vocational education to replace the latter. Their tasks emphasise the need for skilled labour in working life within their areas of operation, particularly in small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs). Polytechnics provide a wide variety of study opportunities for the working-age adult population. More than a fifth of educational provision leading to polytechnic degrees is directed to adults. The majority of students are people with the above-mentioned post-secondary qualifications or other vocational qualifications, who are upgrading their studies into polytechnic degrees. In addition to degree-oriented studies, polytechnics provide professional specialisation studies of 20–40 credits (one credit being equivalent to 40 hours of study). Decisions concerning more extensive postgraduate polytechnic degrees relevant to working life are being made during 1999. All polytechnics also provide open polytechnic instruction. Polytechnics are mainly municipal, multi-field institutions, many of which operate in several locations.

Universities

All 20 universities in the country also provide study opportunities for adults. Adults participate in education leading to university degrees through the normal student selection procedure. Several fields offer Master's programmes customised to the needs of working life. Naturally, scientific postgraduate studies are also available. All universities have a *continuing education centre*, which also organises continuing education of varying forms and lengths, ranging from short courses to specialisation studies of 20–40 credits. This education is generally subject to a fee.

The field that has expanded most rapidly is *open university instruction*. This provides all citizens with an opportunity, independent of educational background, to complete academic study modules. There is no specific Open University in Finland, but universities provide the education in a dispersed manner in co-operation with different adult education institutions. For the purposes of instruction, various methods of multiform teaching have been developed. In recent years, study via information networks has particularly increased. A growing operating method of open university is known as the university of the Third Age, intended for senior citizens. The educational provision previously concentrated on behavioural sciences and humanities, but it now covers all fields of study. It is not possible to complete a degree at open university, but these studies may be included in a degree, provided that one subsequently acquires the right to complete a degree. Different levels of fees are charged for the instruction, depending on the form of study and the institution in question.

Liberal adult education

Liberal adult education means the network of educational institutions that has emerged as the result of prolonged historical development, as well as their instruction. A common feature of these activities is that their objectives and contents are not set from outside or from up high, but they are decided by the organisations behind the institutions. These sponsor organisations usually

include various associations and foundations, but another possible form of ownership is as a limited company. The sponsor organisations may represent different ideological or religious views or base their operations on local and regional educational and cultural needs. Consequently, adult education centres, mainly owned by municipalities, are also considered to come under liberal adult education. Liberal adult education thus includes both activities based on different value systems and those that are neutral in this respect.

An essential feature is the voluntary nature of participation. In relation to the state authorities, a central factor is the licence to maintain an institution, which entails establishing whether the underlying educational and cultural needs are sufficient and whether the applicant has sufficient professional and economic resources for maintaining the institution. Once granted, the licence allows extensive autonomy and the freedom to operate, but also requires that the institution is independently responsible for identifying and developing its tasks. The maintaining licence involves the right to a state subsidy in accordance with the relevant legislation. Traditionally, folk high schools, adult education centres and study centres have been considered as liberal adult education institutions, but according to the new legislation, physical education centres (sports institutes) and summer universities have also been brought under the same act.

These institutions provide a diverse range of education in many different forms. In particular, they offer general, social and interest-oriented studies.

Folk high schools are nationwide boarding schools. The majority of them are maintained by various associations and foundations (84 in all), six are municipal and one is owned by the Åland Region. Each school may emphasise its own value system, ideology or educational objectives. Of the schools, 34 are called Grundtvigian (independent), 43 have a Christian background, 11 are maintained by political movements, trade unions and NGOs and three concentrate on education for disabled people.

Folk high schools provide one-year study programmes and summer and weekend courses of different lengths. The most

popular programmes are those concentrating on languages, the arts, social subjects and humanities. The range of course subjects is extensive. About three-quarters of the schools' overall activities are non-formal studies (i.e. non-certificate-oriented). The rest consists of certificate-oriented education provided in accordance with the relevant legislation. Some schools provide exclusively non-formal liberal education, whereas certificate-oriented education accounts for a considerable proportion in others. Folk high schools also provide plenty of open university instruction.

Adult education centres (or workers' institutes) are mainly municipal adult education institutions. Adult education centres operate in all municipalities, and their activities have been dispersed into suburbs and villages. The emphases of instruction are determined according to the locality. The most popular subjects are languages (17%), music (17%), other arts subjects (16%) and crafts (25%). Adult education centres also provide a lot of open university instruction. In addition, they cater for a large part of basic art education intended for children and young people. Instruction is mainly arranged in the evenings. The most common operating method is a study group convening once or twice a week, although short-term intensive courses are becoming more common.

The study centres maintained by culture organisations are all private adult education institutions. Half of the sponsor organisations represent political parties and the trade union movement, while independent NGOs make up the other half. Study centres organise their activities independently or co-operate with their member organisations (about 350 in all). The oldest form of operation is a study circle, which can be set up by a minimum of five adults interested in the same theme. The circle selects its topics, working methods and instructor. This type of small-group study is gaining in popularity and has developed new forms (investigative study circle, Internet circle). The most common operating form in study centre activities is a short course. Study centres do not have permanent facilities, but they operate in a dispersed manner throughout the country, often assisted by their

regional centres. Due to the nature of their sponsor organisations, the most popular studies are related to society and unionisation. There is also plenty of interest-based provision. Culture organisations organise a wide variety of cultural activities.

Physical education centres (sports institutes) are national and regional boarding schools providing physical exercise, physical education and coaching. Their operations also involve children and young people, and they function as coaching centres for athletes as well. A few institutes also provide vocational education in the field of physical education.

Summer universities are maintained by regional associations and certain Regional Councils. Their activities focus on summer courses in more than 50 localities. Summer universities provide open university instruction, language courses and supplementary vocational training in particular. Some organise what is known as university activities for the Third Age, offering academic education for the retired population in lectures or courses without degree orientation. Summer universities also function without fixed facilities, but operate in a dispersed manner using the facilities of other institutions.

Language proficiency tests

Since language instruction in Finland is extensive, there was a need to create a system where students may prove the level of their language skills in standardised tests. It was also believed that this would intensify their study. General language proficiency tests were introduced in 1994. Based on three levels and a nine-tiered scale, language proficiency tests are now arranged twice a year in nine languages. Participation is not tied to any previous education or educational institution. The National Board of Education has granted the right to organise language proficiency tests to just over 100 institutions. There is a central body to check the tests and issue certificates indicating the level of proficiency. A relatively small fee is charged for the test. The annual number of language proficiency tests taken exceeds 2,000.

Counselling activities

Crafts and home economics counselling organisations are national counselling organisations operating in the administrative field of the Ministry of Education, also including adult education and training among their tasks. In addition to a central organisation, they have regional and local offices. Their activities rely on the work of employees and the voluntary work of their members. The activities comprise guidance, consultancy and training directed to adults, young people and enterprises. The Finnish Crafts Organisation concentrates on promoting and developing Finnish handicrafts as part of national culture and also as a means of livelihood. The home economics counselling organisations promote the economic, mental and material welfare of homes and families as well as environmental protection. These activities are not governed by separate legislation, but the organisations do receive state aid.

Adult employment training

Employment (labour market) training forms part of national labour policy. Its objective is to improve the supply of skilled labour, on the one hand, and the opportunities of unemployed people to re-enter the labour market, on the other. The emphases of employment training follow fluctuations in the employment situation. As a result of the mass unemployment that has prevailed in Finland during the 1990's, employment training has expanded considerably, with a specific focus on training for unemployed people. A specific target group is the long-term unemployed. The administrative responsibility for employment training rests with the Ministry of Labour. The employment administration purchases the training from educational institutions and other education providers. Local purchases are entrusted to the regional Employment and Economic Development Centres, and the training is geared to local labour needs. The annual number of courses is about 8,000–9,000. In 1997, about 135,000 people started employment training. The training

is mostly short-term further and supplementary training, but it may also lead to a qualification. Students do not have to pay for the training, and their subsistence during the training is guaranteed by means of a training grant or labour market support, with amounts equivalent to the unemployment allowance.

In-service training and commercial provision of education and training

In-service training provided by companies is primarily carried out in accordance with the requirements of the work assignments concerned. Traditionally, in-service training is short-term supplementary training in the workplace or educational institutions, but certificate-oriented education has also emerged in recent years. For example, employees have had the opportunity to complete further and specialist vocational qualifications.

Only a small proportion of all education and training is provided by commercial training organisations.

Administration and funding of adult education and training

Legislation

The legislation governing education and training has traditionally been very detailed. Almost all educational legislation has been reformed as from the beginning of 1999. The legislation based on various forms of educational institution has mostly been replaced with legislation founded on the education and training provided. For example, the acts governing vocational institutions and the institution-specific decrees have thus been replaced by the Vocational Education Act and Decree concerning all initial vocational education and training. At the same time, the decision-making powers of education providers, both municipal and private, have been increased. The education provider now has the right to decide, for example, in which institutions it will provide each type of education or training. Moreover, detailed provisions governing administration and staff have been abolished. Consequently, the administration of municipal institutions, for example, is determined in accordance with the Local Government Act and other municipal provisions. Correspondingly, the position of institutional staff will in turn be determined in accordance with acts governing the collective agreements for state and municipal civil servants and for the private sector.

These changes also concern adult education and training. Since adult education and training are provided in all sectors of education, a wide range of provisions is applicable to them. In many specific instances, the new legislation is neutral about the students' age and provides the opportunity to organise education and training both for young people and adults in accordance with the same act. However, in many specific instances, the provisions do offer the opportunity to organise education and training for adults so as to allow for the special features of adult education and training.

Basic structure of legislation

Basic Education Act
(628/1998)
and Decree (852/1998)

- Govern all basic education regardless of provider
- A separate curriculum may be drawn up for adult education
- Provisions on education intended for those no longer subject to compulsory education are more flexible, e.g. in terms of working hours

Upper Secondary Schools Act
(629/1998)
and Decree (810/1998)

- Govern all general upper secondary education
- A separate core curriculum for adults

Vocational Education Act
(630/1998)
and Decree (811/1998)

- Govern all initial vocational education and training provided on the basis of core curricula
- Provided in the form of institutional education or apprenticeship training

Vocational Adult Education
Act (631/1998)
and Decree (812/1998)

- Govern additional vocational training based on competence-based examinations and leading to further and specialist vocational qualifications, i.e. qualifications independent of educational background and their preparatory training, as well as other forms of additional vocational training

Polytechnics Act (255/1995)
and Decree (256/1995)

- Govern the provision of polytechnic studies

Universities Act (645/1997)
and Decree (115/1998)

- Govern the operations of all universities

Liberal Adult Education Act
(632/1998)
and Decree (805/1998)

- Govern non-formal, non-certificate-oriented education and training provided by liberal adult education institutions
- Within the scope of this act, educational institutions also provide open university studies and basic art education for all age groups
- The act provides for both steering and funding of the activities

Adult Employment Training
Act (763/1990)
and Decree (912/1990)

- Govern training purchased by employment authorities and mainly intended for unemployed people
- Administration and funding falls under the Ministry of Labour

Act (668/1994) and Decree
(669/1994) on the General
Language Proficiency Tests

There is no separate legislation
concerning counselling
activities and in-service training

Administration

The Finnish Parliament passes acts governing adult education and training and decides on the appropriations allocated to adult education and training from the State budget. The Government issues decrees complementing the acts and decides on the Development Plan for Education and University Research. It may also issue Decisions-in-Principle and Resolutions concerning education and training.

The overall responsibility for development of adult education and training rests with the Ministry of Education. Issues concerning education and research have been concentrated at the Department for Education and Science Policy, which has a Division for Adult Education and Training. Since adult education and training form a part of all educational activities, the Division co-operates with the other divisions of the Department. The Ministry participates in the preparation of legislation and the budget and functions as a central executive authority. It decides on issues such as the qualifications structure in vocational education and training and grants most of the licences to organise education and training. The Ministry also makes decisions concerning state subsidies and aids. An expert body operating under the Ministry is the Adult Education Council with representatives from different organisations and operating forms.

The National Board of Education operating under the Ministry of Education draws up the national core curricula for certificate-oriented education and training, attends to various expert and development tasks and is responsible for the main part of the evaluation of education and training.

For the purposes of the State's general regional administration, Finland is divided into six provinces administered by the Provincial State Offices. In issues concerning education and training, they operate under the Ministry of Education. In recent years, the tasks of the Provincial State Offices have been reduced, since decision-making powers have been transferred directly to the local authorities and to other maintaining bodies of educational institutions, as well as to the institutions themselves. A central task of the Provincial State Offices in the field of adult

education and training is to purchase additional vocational training. The Ministry decides on the general guidelines for additional training and allocates the appropriations for additional training to the Provincial State Offices in connection with their target outcome agreements. These in turn decide on the regional priorities of training purchases and make decisions on purchasing the training from various educational institutions on the basis of tenders. The institutions are then responsible for providing the training.

The Regional Development Act gave rise to the establishment of the Regional Councils, which operate as the co-operation bodies for the local authorities with responsibility for regional development. The Regional Councils play an important role in the field of education and training in issues related to the EU's Structural Funds programmes in particular. The regional administration authorities for the Ministry of Labour, the Ministry of Trade and Industry and the Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry are the Employment and Economic Development Centres. The sphere of authority of their Labour Market Departments also embraces adult employment training.

Educational institutions are primarily maintained by the municipalities and the federations of municipalities. These attend expressly to education and training provided by upper secondary schools, polytechnics, vocational institutions and adult education centres. However, in liberal adult education in particular, maintaining bodies also include private associations, foundations and limited companies. All providers are treated on equal terms in relation to the central administration and educational funding. In accordance with municipal self-government, the municipal power of decision is exercised by the elected municipal council. The executive powers are vested with the municipal executive board and educational issues are dealt with by one or more specialised boards. Issues concerning the practical arrangements of education and training are solved at municipal level. These include organisation of the education and training and, in certificate-oriented education, the drawing up of curricula on the basis of the national core curricula. Since state subsidies are not earmarked, but are allocated to the local authorities as a lump sum, local-level decisions concerning educational funding are important.

Private educational institutions have their own administrative bodies and decision-making practices. Educational legislation provides that they shall have a board, a rector responsible for the operations and regulations determining their operating methods. The operations of the universities are regulated by the Universities Act and Decree. All universities are owned by the State and enjoy extensive autonomy.

Funding

The main part of Finnish adult education and training is financed from public funds, i.e. from the State and the local authorities. A central foundation for funding is that the education provider or the maintaining body of an institution has a licence granted by the state authorities. This means that these are educational institutions under public supervision.

For the most part, the State regulates the provision of adult education and training by funding. This is most clearly visible in liberal adult education, where appropriations from the State budget alone constitute the total amount of state funding, which are then allocated to the educational institutions. In initial vocational education and training, the total student volumes have been determined in advance, but the education provider decides independently on the allocation of student places to adults and young people. In the model based on performance agreements, such as with the polytechnics, the agreements also cover the volumes for adult education and training. State funding may also be granted for the costs of constructing educational institutions. In addition, appropriations have been budgeted for experiment and development grants.

The state subsidy model means a system where funding is granted on the basis of calculation, by multiplying the unit price confirmed for a calculatory unit price by the number of students, lessons or other units agreed upon. The price may be the same for all education or on a scale according to cost differences in education. The resulting sum total is the basis for granting state funding in the form of state subsidy. The local authorities partici-

Funding for adult education and training

Education/training	State	Local authorities	Student fees/student social benefits
Basic education	based on unit price	contribution FIM/inhabitant	Instruction free of charge, fees for individual subject studies
General upper secondary education	based on unit price	Contribution FIM/inhabitant	Instruction free of charge, fees for individual subject studies
Initial vocational education and training	based on unit price	Contribution FIM/inhabitant	Instruction and one daily meal free of charge, in some cases also accommodation; wages and other benefits in apprenticeship training
Additional vocational training	based on purchase contract	–	Reasonable student fees, fees for competence-based examinations
Liberal adult education	57% and 65%	–	Student fees vary; boarding charge in folk high schools and physical education centres; part of expenses in municipal adult education centres to be covered by the local authority
Polytechnics	based on unit price	Contribution FIM/inhabitant	Instruction free of charge; fees for open instruction and specialisation studies
Universities	100%	–	Fees for open university and continuing education
Adult employment training	100%	–	Training grant or labour market support
In-service training	–	–	Paid by companies

pate in the funding of certificate-oriented education with a contribution determined on the basis of their population and educational costs (about 43% on average). This is how basic education, general and vocational upper secondary education and polytechnic education are financed. State subsidies are also granted to liberal adult education, but no statutory contributions are determined for the local authorities.

Additional vocational training and employment training are funded through a purchasing system, where the Provincial State Offices and, correspondingly, the employment authorities purchase the training from educational institutions on the basis of their tenders. Institutions may also sell training in the form of commercial services to companies and associations.

The central act concerning funding is the Act on the Financing of Educational and Cultural Provision (635/1998), according to which the funding for basic education, general and vocational upper secondary education and polytechnic education is determined. Provisions on the funding of liberal adult education are included in the same act that contains provisions on the activities. Additional vocational training is funded in accordance with a separate act issued on its financing (1138/1996).

Evaluation, research, counselling and guidance services

As a result of the decentralisation of decision-making powers, local responsibility for the implementation and outcomes of education and training has increased. At the same time, there is a growing need for more information on education and training and their outcomes at different levels. The new legislation obligates the education providers and educational institutions to evaluate the education and training they provide and their effectiveness and to participate in external evaluation. The Higher Education Evaluation Council and the Evaluation Unit of the National Board of Education are the national expert and support service organisations for evaluation activities.

The aim of the national evaluation of adult education and

training is to establish how well the institutions have performed their task and how public funding has been used. Attention is also paid to the efficiency of their operations and to the extent to which equal opportunities have been achieved in their educational and cultural provision. The forms of evaluation are thematic (e.g. adults' language proficiency) and institutional (e.g. study centres). The Adult Education Council has drawn up a plan for the evaluation strategy of adult education and training.

The Academy of Finland, universities' Faculties of Social Sciences and Education and educational research institutes are the most important bodies in financing and conducting research into adult education and training. The responsibility for statistical provision primarily rests with Statistics Finland. It also prepares an extensive interview-based Adult Education Survey in co-operation with the Ministry of Education, to be conducted at regular intervals. The most recent survey is from 1995 and its major results are explained below. The next Adult Education Survey will be carried out in the year 2000.

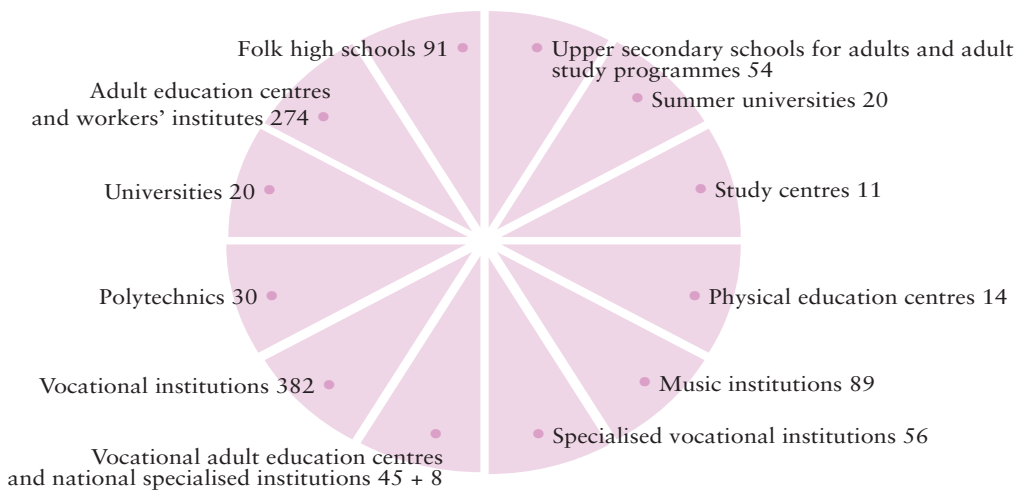
The purpose of counselling and guidance services for adults is to create operating models, which would support individuals in building up new occupational identities and meanings and in career planning. With the aid of counselling and guidance, adults have the opportunity to continuously develop both general employment skills – such as co-operation and interaction skills, understanding of working cultures, career planning skills and self-knowledge – and specific skills related to certain work assignments.

In international comparison, there is quite a high-quality and extensive provision of counselling and guidance services in Finland. Established forms of operation include student counselling at educational institutions, careers counselling at employment offices and career guidance training provided in the form of employment training. In addition, counselling and guidance for adults have been developed in workshops, in in-service training and institutional education, as well as in rehabilitation and social work. In principle, anyone can benefit from counselling and guidance at some stage when uncertain about the future or when feeling insecure.

Provision, participation and staff

Provision and resources of adult education and training

Provision of adult education and training is extensive and diverse. More than a million adults start self-motivated education or training annually, provided by some 1,000 educational institutions within the administrative field of the Ministry of Education, including certificate-oriented education, open provision of studies forming part of a degree, preparatory training for competence-based examinations, additional and supplementary training to update, extend or consolidate vocational competence, studies preparing for civic and working life skills, social studies and interest-oriented studies. The following chart illustrates the provision of adult education and training.



About 14% of the educational expenditure of the Ministry of Education is directed to adult education and training, amounting to almost FIM 3.5 billion (about €580 million). Of the appropriations, about a third is used for general education and liberal adult education, another third for initial and additional vocational education and training and the remaining third for tertiary-level adult education. The largest appropriations in the

field of adult education and training are allocated to additional vocational training (exceeding FIM 650 million), polytechnic adult education (about FIM 500 million) and adult education centres (more than FIM 350 million). The total volume of provision in adult education and training exceeds 10 million lessons. Comparing the number of lessons, the largest institution groups are vocational adult education centres and adult education centres.

Funds channelled into employment training from the State budget amount to about FIM 1.7 billion (€280 million). Employers estimate that they use almost FIM 5 billion (€830 million) for their personnel's training and competence each year.

Participation

According to the Adult Education Survey by Statistics Finland, about half of people aged 18–64 participated in various forms of adult education and training in 1995. Compared with 1990, the growth was 4%. Participation among women stood at 53% compared to 43% among men. The difference has remained unchanged for the last 15 years. The participation rate was highest among people aged 30–54. However, the highest increase in participation in the 1990's occurred among those over 54. People with extensive educational background were the most active participants in adult education: 3/4 of those with higher education, as opposed to 1/3 for those with basic level education. These differences have levelled out to some extent during the 1990's. On average, studies in adult education and training took 8 days per year. The main fields were information technology, languages and studies in social and behavioural sciences.

More than 43% of the labour force, or about a million people, participated in vocational, i.e. work-related, adult education and training. Some 13% of unemployed people participated in adult employment training. The participation rate was highest among those aged 45–54. A good educational background and work position also featured in this comparison. Women participated more actively than men.

The majority of vocational adult education and training was in-service training provided or supported by the employer. More than half the gainfully employed participated in in-service training. Women also participated more actively in in-service training than men. Similarly, employees aged 45–54 were also the most active age group in in-service training; 57% of them had had some training. The rate of in-service training was highest among salaried white-collar workers.

Six per cent of the labour force participated in work-related training at their own expense or in their own time. The majority of them were women. Studies related to leisure activities, interests or elected positions of trust or general studies were carried out by almost a fifth of the adult population aged 18–64, amounting to about 550,000 people. A few per cent had studied abroad during the year.

The most common form of adult education and training was study in the workplace or in a company providing supplementary training (including participation in conferences and seminars), with about a million adult participants. More than 400,000 adults studied at adult education centres. The number of adult participants in education and training provided by various organisations was 300,000; the figure for adult education in vocational institutions exceeded 300,000 and more than 100,000 took part in university and summer university education.

More than half the adult population also planned to participate in education or training the following year. A busy work schedule, slim chances of in-service training, poor accessibility of educational provision or economic reasons were perceived to form the major obstacles to participation.

Position of students

The position of students is influenced by many factors. Instruction in certificate-oriented education is free of charge. Meals and other benefits vary to some extent, and fees, albeit small, may also be incurred in adult education and training. Conversely, different levels of student fees are charged in liberal adult education

and various forms of supplementary training, and these therefore also form part of their funding. Adult students have the opportunity to receive a study grant and various other grants to finance their studies.

Teaching staff

The teaching staff in adult education and training consists of a wide variety of groups. Educational institutions providing adult education and training have their own teachers, the majority of whom have expressly qualified as teachers of adults. The largest such groups are teachers at vocational adult education centres and vocational specialised institutions, as well as those at folk high schools and adult education centres. In many institutions, the same teachers teach both young people and adults. Most of the full-time and permanent teachers have an academic degree and the statutory qualifications. In addition, a large number of part-time teachers, lecturers and education planners in different fields operate in adult education and training. The estimated number of full-time permanent adult education teachers is 4,000–5,000.

The new legislation provides that each educational institution organising adult education and training has a rector responsible for the operations, although he or she may also be the rector of other institutions. Rectors and teachers are selected for their posts by the education provider, usually a municipal or private body. The legal status of staff is determined on the basis of various acts governing employment, mainly on the same criteria. The rate of membership of professional organisations among the staff is high.

Supporting the competencies and mental and physical resources of teachers is a central development area included among the responsibilities of the Ministry of Education. The skills of the teaching staff must also be promoted because of education policy reforms, changes in their job description and the advance of new information and communication technologies.

The maintaining body of an institution or the education

provider bears the main responsibility for the in-service training of its teaching staff. This obligation has been taken into account in the institutions' basic funding. In addition, about FIM 45 million is directed annually to additional training for the entire staff working within the educational sector. The Ministry of Education sets the priorities for this training, which is mainly planned and organised by the National Board of Education. Moreover, funding from the European Social Fund has also been channelled into additional training for certain groups of instructors.

The possibilities for and attitudes towards fulfilling the above-mentioned obligation for in-service training vary among the maintaining bodies. The capacities of the vocational teacher education colleges responsible for the training are insufficient in relation to demand. Moreover, a large number of adult instructors, who have no formal qualifications, want to qualify as teachers while teaching. Therefore, the Ministry of Education has launched special programmes to improve the qualifications and competencies of the teaching staff operating in the field of adult education and training.

The five-year TUKEVA project aims to raise the standard of qualifications and competencies among the teaching and other staff in vocational adult education and training. This involves pedagogical training for teachers without formal qualifications (OTKO). In addition, there is a programme to enhance the competencies and qualifications of the teaching staff and instructors in the sectors of liberal adult education and counselling (VSOP).

Development priorities

Central development targets

The specific development targets in the transition into a new millennium are as follows:

- the Action Programme For Lifelong Learning
- effectiveness of adult education policy and the quality of adult education and training
- enforcing the new educational legislation and monitoring its effects
- educational needs stemming from changes in working life
- anticipatory and working life skills in educational institutions and companies
- the status, tasks and provision forms of self-motivated education and training
- further measures of the Information Strategy Programme
- the population's age structure and the National Programme for Ageing Workers
- social cohesion and prevention of social exclusion
- competencies of the teaching staff and supporting the change in the job description

Programme for Ageing Workers and education and training for senior citizens

Similar to other European countries, Finland is greying in terms of its population. The baby boomers born after the Second World War will be retiring within 10–15 years. Now in their fifties, the majority of them are still in working life. The younger age groups are distinctly smaller. In 1997, the Government made a Decision-in-Principle on what is known as the National Programme for Ageing Workers for 1998–2002. Its purpose is to support the competencies and mental and physical resources of the population aged over 45 in particular, so that they do not retire until

they are closer to the official retirement age. The implementation of this programme including several sections is the responsibility of the Ministries of Labour, Education and Social Affairs and Health as well as labour market organisations.

The significance of education and training is underlined in the programme by the fact that there are considerable educational differences between older and younger age groups. Almost half of people aged over 45 function in working life without a proper initial vocational education. Consequently, it may be difficult for them to meet the rapid changes and increasing requirements of working life. The accelerating pressure in working life tends to burn people out; moreover, it does not leave enough room for maintaining and improving competencies.

The Ministry of Education has promoted the objectives of the Programme for Ageing Workers as part of the steering by results and information in its domain. Research and pilot projects concerning teaching methods and forms of on-the-job training have been supported. Special attention has been paid to improving IT skills among the adult population. A national guide has been prepared for educational provision suited to the adult population aged over 45 in particular. One such form of training is the system of competence-based qualifications presented above. Similarly, various open learning environments are suited to the ageing population. Introducing training into workplaces will reach vast multitudes.

An important partner, but also a target group, in the Programme for Ageing Workers consists of the teachers and instructors, more than a third of whom are already over 50. Additional and supplementary training for the teaching staff is geared to supporting the objectives of the programme.

As part of the Action Programme for Lifelong Learning, provision of liberal adult education in particular will be directed to studies increasing social welfare among the elderly population. The Academy of Finland has launched a Research Programme on Ageing, ranging over several years and fields.

Information society and adult education and training

A central objective of the Information Society programmes within the domain of the Ministry of Education is to guarantee the provision of basic IT skills to the adult and elderly population as well. In recent years, a considerable part of adult education and training has been oriented to IT studies. Adult education institutions have developed teaching methods specifically suited to the older population. In university studies of the Third Age, for example, information technology is one of the most popular subjects. The computer user's 'driving licence' is a skills test developed for the needs of working life and the adult population. Training leading to the computer user attaining his or her driving licence is provided by adult education and other institutions in different parts of the country. In order to consolidate citizens' information society skills, attention is dedicated to studies increasing social welfare of the growing elderly population and preventing the development of social exclusion, as well as to the special needs of sparsely populated areas.

Educational provision that utilises information technology and open learning environments constitutes an expanding field in adult education and training. Examples of developments include the virtual open university, distance upper secondary school, open polytechnic education, network applications of further and specialist vocational qualifications (OpinNet) and networks of liberal adult education and libraries. Teaching, scientific and cultural provision broadcast through radio and television will expand and reform significantly in the next few years as plans concerning digital channels progress.

Lifelong learning

Translating the principle of lifelong learning into practical implementation methods constitutes the development trend of education policy for the new millennium in Finland as well. The Lifelong Learning Committee completed its report in 1997. It outlined a national strategy for lifelong learning. According to

the Committee, the rising standard of qualification requirements and the rapid updating of their contents, the ageing population and the differences in educational standard between generations, as well as the increasing retired population require focusing education policy towards lifelong learning. In Finnish society, this means creating a solid foundation for continuous learning. This will be achieved by raising a high standard of education and learning skills as the central objective for the entire population and by ensuring the opportunities for continuous learning for adults.

Education policy with emphasis on lifelong learning means paying attention to the following considerations:

- an extensive early childhood education system levelling out the differences in conditions for learning
- the development of learning skills (learning to learn) during comprehensive school
- high level of education in the age group entering the labour market
- young people's seamless transition from education to working life
- the opportunities of adults with weak or obsolete initial education to raise its level or to bring it up to date
- the opportunities of adults to update and enhance their competencies and to improve their learning skills

For support, these call for:

- financial support systems to secure subsistence during studies in different situations in life
- raising learning that occurs outside the public education system on a par with learning within the education system
- extensive and up-to-date information and counselling services for the education and support systems
- a system to guarantee the continuous updating of the teaching staff's professional competence

In accordance with the policy definitions presented above, an Action Programme for Lifelong Learning has been prepared. The purpose is to proceed to concrete measures and experiments on the basis of this programme. The central definitions concerning lifelong learning policy are included in the Development Plan for Education and University Research for 1999–2004 to be adopted by the Government by the end of 1999.

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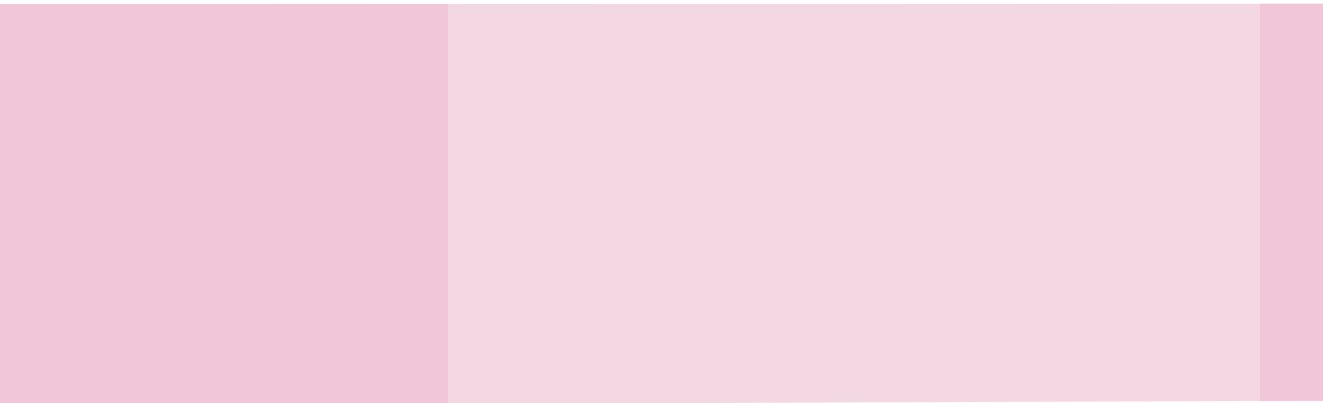
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