



## Finland

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### Education for All 2015 National Review

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## MINISTRY OF EDUCATION AND CULTURE

### International Relations

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### National EFA 2015 Review – Finland

The Finnish National EFA Action Plan was published in 2004. It was jointly prepared by the Ministry of Education, the National Board of Education, the Ministry for Foreign Affairs and the Finnish National Commission for UNESCO. The plan took into account that in national development work the actions are largely implemented within existing mechanisms. The most important of these is the Development plan for education and research (KESU) approved every fourth year by the Government of Finland, which covers education and learning from early childhood education and care to higher education and adult education. KESU is based on the aims set in the Government Programme and works as an engagement plan for it, containing the key qualitative, quantitative and structural policies. The present development plan covers the period of 2011-2016.

Apart from national development, the EFA process has a strong international dimension. For Finland, the international dimension mainly means development cooperation. Therefore, the present progress review has been divided into two parts: In the first part the objectives of the action plan are analysed nationally, and in the second part, how Finland has promoted the goals of EFA in its development cooperation.

#### **Part I: National implementation: follow-up of the six Education for All goals**

On an international level education in Finland is of high-quality. This is due to various factors, especially the fact that the whole system is built on the principle of inclusion: no one is left behind. The system is flexible and offers those with special needs (e.g., due to illness or disability), as well as children and young people who are in danger of social exclusion a number of support mechanisms, as well as opportunities to go back into studying during different stages of education. In Finland teachers are highly educated in all levels of education (teachers are required to have a Master's degree), and they have strong autonomy and authority to implement their work.

The teacher profession is valued, and the people applying for teacher education are highly motivated. Educational planning is a national, municipality-specific and even school-specific process that involves both teachers and students.

Education is understood as an important tool for social advancement and personal development. Education is meant for all. The task of national education policies is to continuously raise the level of education and expertise of citizens. Every human being has the right for continuous self-development, learning new and to grow to be a member of an ethically and morally responsible society. The changes in the education system are steered by an education policy, so that they meet the changing needs of the society. The long-term goal is to ensure everyone, regardless of origin, background and wealth equal opportunities and rights for civilisation, high-quality free education and everything that being a fully-fledged citizen requires. The government's (2011-2015) objective is to narrow down the gap in learning outcomes, participation in studies and completing studies between genders and to reduce the inheriting of education.

***Dakar Framework for Action goal 1: Expanding and improving comprehensive early childhood care and education, especially for the most vulnerable and disadvantaged children***

The Finnish National EFA Action Plan emphasised development of children's basic skills such as learning to learn already before the primary education starts. Children's social skills can be supported remarkably with high-quality early childhood education and care. In Finland since 1996 all parents with children under school age have had the right to get their child a place in municipal day care. Therefore children have the opportunity to participate in early childhood education if the parents want.

Child day care administration and steering was transferred from the Ministry of Social Affairs and Health to the Ministry of Education and Culture in early 2013. After the transfer early childhood education of all children under school age became part of the education system and the importance of early childhood education as the first step of lifelong learning became stronger.

The government has decided that to ensure children's equitable learning conditions by making pre-primary education which is organised a year before compulsory education. Presently, children's participation in pre-primary education is based on the guardian's decision and about 98 percent of six year-olds participate. Changing the pre-primary education compulsory will promote educational equality and ensure a basis for equal learning and for its part will prevent social exclusion. A complete educational continuum between the pre-primary education in day care, pre-primary education and basic education supports young children's transition phases.

The Finnish National Board of Education is currently revising the national core curricula for pre-primary education. The new revised grounds will be completed by the end of 2014 and the curricula that will be prepared based on them will be introduced in August 2016.

The Ministry of Education and Culture is preparing a reform of the legislation on early childhood education (2014). A multidisciplinary working group submitted its proposal on early childhood legislation in March 2014. As part of the government's structural policy (2013), required qualification of early childhood staff will be relaxed to improve the productivity of the public economy. The qualification requirements are revised so that studies needed for professional qualification can be carried out more flexibly.

Since 2009 the Ministry of Education and Culture has supported the education of people with an immigrant background working in early childhood education, basic education, upper secondary education and vocational education. The aim is to increase the participant's qualifications and capabilities to meet the needs of learners with a migrant background, as well as to strengthen the Finnish or Swedish language skills (official languages of Finland) required in the work. Approximately 1,000 people in 2009-2014 have participated in education organised by polytechnics and universities that organise teacher education.

***Dakar Framework for Action goal 2: Ensuring that by 2015 all children, particularly girls, children in difficult circumstances and those belonging to ethnic minorities, have access to and complete, free and compulsory primary education of good quality.***

In the Objective part, the Finnish National EFA Action Plan emphasised equal availability, class size, educational guidance, and cultural diversity in education. The following text introduces the recent trends and practices.

In Finland differences between schools are small, but the trend is growing. The Ministry of Education and Culture has given special grants since 2012 for measures that enhance educational equality, with particular attention on schools that are situated in areas where 1), majority have completed only basic education, and 2) the unemployment rate and 3) the proportion of immigrants is high. Together these three indicators explain most of the differences in learning outcomes between schools.

The national EFA action plan outlined reducing class sizes as a key development area. Smaller class size enables to reduce the impact of children's background on learning outcomes. The Ministry of Education and Culture targeted funding during 2009-2013 for reducing class sizes in pre-primary and

basic education. The aim of these measures was to promote the quality of teaching and learning outcomes. The average size of a class has decreased and the portion of large teaching groups has almost halved since 2008. The aim is also to reform the system of central government transfers to local government by 2015 so that the financing would be based more on indicators defining the operational environment of basic education such as the areas number of immigrants, education level of adults and unemployment rate.

The EFA Action Plan paid attention to the development of study counselling. According to the Ministry of Education and Culture's Development Plan for Education and Research for years 2011-2016 a national good student and study counselling criteria will be developed for basic education, general upper secondary education and vocational education in such form that they can be introduced in the autumn term 2014. The objective is to support the high quality of counselling and to ensure the availability regardless of place of residence. The criteria will help schools and educational institutions, public administration and decision-makers to assess and develop counselling.

Looking after students, participation, interaction and trust between students, teachers and parents are also key factors when building comfortable and peaceful daily life in schools. The Government aims to promote classroom management and to increase students' well-being, sense of community and chances to participate by reforming laws concerning basic and upper secondary education and student welfare. The aim of these reforms is to reduce disruptive behaviour and to respond to the challenge that Finnish children and young people feel that their chance to influence in schools and educational institutions is low. Each school and educational institute must have a student body which has to be consulted before decisions that affect the students are made. The education provider must promote inclusion of students for example by providing them with the opportunity to participate in the preparation of the school-specific curriculum and regulations.

Laws concerning the support of education and learning came into force in January 2011. The objective is to strengthen the students' right to get support in learning at an early stage in pre-primary and basic education. The aim was to increase the systematic way of giving support flexibly among teaching and boost multidisciplinary cooperation. Also transparency in the process of offering support was aimed to be increased.

One form of support is enhanced support (remedial teaching, part-time special education, student welfare support and different pedagogical solutions) to support learning and growth and prevent social exclusion and problems associated with learning, social interaction or developing. If the student cannot be supported adequately with enhanced support, the student is given special support and special education.

**Dakar Framework for Action goal 3: *Ensuring that the learning needs for all young people and adults are met through equitable access to appropriate learning and life-skills programmes.***

In the Objective part, the Finnish National EFA Action Plan emphasised in particular the prevention of social exclusion in transitional stages of education, working life skills, student counselling and special need education. The following will define recent trends and practices.

By international standards the situation regarding young people that are not employed or involved in education or training (NEET) is relatively good in Finland. The situation has not changed significantly since 2008, while the proportion of young NEETs has increased in most countries due to the economic crisis. Preventing dropping-out from education and societal exclusion are policy priorities in Finland. Every individual who drops out from education and the labour market is seen as a tragedy and significant cost to society. The reasons behind dropping-out can be generally explained by a sum of different factors. The reason might be the wrong field of study or unrealistic expectations of the studies.

As part of efforts to prevent social exclusion of young people, the government is implementing as its head project the Youth Guarantee. Labour market organisations, Association of Finnish Local and Regional Authorities and Finnish Youth Cooperation – *Allianssi* are committed with ministries to the implementation of the Youth Guarantee. The Youth Guarantee entered into force in the beginning of 2013. It offers each young person under 25 and recently graduated people under 30 a job, on-the-job training, a study place, or a period in a workshop or rehabilitation within three months of registering as unemployed. Educational guarantee as a component of the Youth Guarantee ensures a study place for everyone finishing basic education.

The implementation of Youth Guarantee was started in 2012 by increasing the number of vocational study places in the Helsinki metropolitan area and in a number of other growth centres. It is essential that the transition from basic education to upper secondary level proceeds quickly and flexibly. The principles for granting study places for upper secondary and vocational studies were changed to grant priority to applicants who have completed their basic education and do not hold a study place in upper secondary education.

As part of the Youth Guarantee the Skills Programme for Young Adults gives young adults under the age of 30 with no qualification or degree the opportunity to complete a vocational qualification. In all, for 2013-2016 the program has allocated resources a total of EUR 183 million. The aim is that the program provides an education for a significant portion of the target group and that the good practices

that have been created remain operative also after the program. According to the information received from the organisers of education in January 2014, from the students that started their studies, about 80 percent were unemployed (NEETs). Therefore the program has been successful in reaching young adults that are most in need.

The Programme for Boosting the Completion Rate of Studies in Vocational Education (2011-2014) aims to entrench tools that prevent dropping out from studies. The amount of students that dropped out from studies decreased slightly in the school year 2012-2013 compared to the previous school year. There is still a lot of variation among different education providers. Similarly the amounts of drop-outs vary a lot in different study fields. In 2013 8.7% Vocational Secondary Education students dropped out, but some of them continued their studies in other study programmes. 7.8% of students in vocational education dropped out and quit studying. The amount of drop outs decreased with one percentage compared to the previous year.

As one of the Youth Guarantee measures a large Young people's workplace learning and apprenticeship reform launched in the beginning of 2014. The measures focus on students under 25 whose education is limited to basic education. The idea of the reform is to develop models to improve young people's opportunities to participate in apprenticeship and to add flexibility to moving from one form of education to another. The quality and implementation of workplace learning will be developed with the co-operation of education providers and work places. The willingness of employers to take young people into apprenticeship training is aimed to be increased by a separate compensation (increased training compensations). Operating models that have proven to be good will be established after 2016.

Also preparatory studies have been reformed. The new training courses are implemented in autumn 2015 according to government proposal. The idea of the "Preparatory studies for a basic vocational education"-study programme is to improve the students preparedness for applying into basic vocational education and to gain a qualification. In the preparatory training the students' personal aims are mapped and a personal study plan is drawn up. The aim of this is to prevent social exclusion and dropping out from studies.

The preparatory and rehabilitative education and supervising of the most severely disabled students forms the study programme "Preparatory Education for Work and Independent Life". It is aimed for people who, because of an illness or disability, do not have the opportunity to move into education that leads to a qualification. The objective of the education is to provide students with need for special support education and supervising in accordance with their personal aims and capabilities.

The structural policy program (2013) approved by the Government agrees that education will be made compulsory until the age of 17 instead of the present age of 16. The reform aims to keep young people at risk to drop-out in the education system and ease their chance to find their own field of study. In future all young people continue their education after basic education for at least a year: in general upper secondary education, vocational education, additional year of basic education or by participating in preparatory training.

A new student and student welfare act enters into force in autumn 2014, which will expand the student welfare services to the upper secondary level. The amendment seeks to promote students' learning, health and well-being, accessibility and communality of the learning environment and the cooperation between home and school. The aim is also to ensure early support for those in need, and in that way prevent problems from arising. In addition, multidisciplinary cooperation in student welfare will be enhanced. Student welfare means promoting and supporting learning, physical and mental health, social well-being and practices that increase the prerequisite for them to operate in the co-operation of educational institutions.

In all, the whole education system supports continuity of education and training. The Finnish education system is flexible and permeable with no dead-ends. The modular structure of VET that facilitates re-entry into studies and emphasises individualisation has contributed to the relatively good situation. The support and counselling practices as well as development initiatives embedded into the system also diminish the need for separate structures and systems. In all, 5.5 per cent of students attending education leading to a qualification or degree discontinued their studies and did not resume them in any education leading to a qualification or degree during the academic year of 2011/2012. In general upper secondary education, the discontinuation percentage was 3.5, in vocational education aimed at young people it was 8.7. Discontinuation decreased compared to the previous year in all sectors of education, mostly in general upper secondary and vocational education.

**Dakar Framework for Action goal 4: *Achieving a 50 per cent improvement in levels of adult literacy by 2015, especially for women, and equitable access to basic and continuing education for all adults.***

The National EFA Action Plan drew attention especially to the supply of adult education, fairness of participation opportunities and securing the education opportunities of the unemployed and the people under the threat of unemployment. A sufficient level of education gives an opportunity in the labour market and reduces the risk of becoming unemployed. It improves the employee's ability to



develop in their own work, participate in continuing education if needed and increase the ability to move from labour market, occupation, workplace and region to another.

Over the years 2013 and 2014 the preparation of a number of adult education reforms was started. Of these, the largest and the ones with most significant effects are the financial reform of the vocational education, development of the upper secondary education provider network and the structure and financial reform of liberal adult education. In addition, the preparations have started on improving the opportunities of immigrants who have passed the compulsory school attendance age to complete basic education, development of the competence-based qualification system and the development of new specialisation programmes for higher education institutions.

According to the government programme, adult education should be equally available for all adults. Education and research development plan for 2011-2016 set a target to reduce the impact of social status and educational background on participation in adult education. The participation is aimed to be raised to 60 percent by 2016. During the year the 18 to 64-year-olds taking part in adult education has remained at the same level for several years, about half (52%) of all adults (the previous adult study was conducted in 2012), and the number of study days per participant has reduced.

Also differences in participation between groups appear to be increased rather than narrowed. According to the PIAAC survey organised by the OECD that assesses the basic skills of 16 to 65-year-olds, in Finland the connection between socio-economic background and skill level is higher than OECD-countries average. Finland performed in the 2013 PIAAC survey very well by international standards. The results of Finns were second highest in all three areas that were assessed. In Finland, there are still a significant number of adults whose basic skills are not at a level that comprehensive acting and participation in modern society requires. In Finland 11% have low literacy skills, 13% low numeracy skills and almost 20% have low information technical problem solving skills. Differences between age groups in Finland are high. With the exception of the youngest age group (16-24 years), the results have improved in all age groups.

The government has allocated additional appropriation of 10 million EUR for years 2014-2015 for strengthening the skill base of adults. An online service called Opintopolku.fi was launched in Finland in 2013. The service aims to produce citizens comprehensively education and services that support applying to education, learning and career planning on the basis of life-long learning. In future through the same online service system it will also be possible to apply to adult education. The aim is that the adult student can find suitable education easier and the service will also facilitate the work of the education provider.

A Skills programme for young adults is organised as part of the Youth Guarantee in 2013-2016, which aims to involve people aged 20–29 who lack a post-basic education in vocational education. In 2011 there were approximately 121 000 people in this situation. The programme's education can be provided at an educational institute or in the form of apprenticeship training. The aim is that the program provides training for a significant portion of the target group and that the improved practices operate also after the programme.

EFA Action Plan also emphasised the need to provide adults with an immigrant background language studies and other training, in a way that improves their opportunities to continue to further education and employment. In liberal adult education as part of the Youth Guarantee a separate funding of 2 million euros per year in 2013-2014 has been allocated to folk high schools and adult education centres for improving young immigrants' learning and language skills. The supported education is non-degree education organised by an educational institute. Young people who have completed basic education or additional year of basic education, who are completing basic education or people who are over compulsory school attendance age, and do not have an upper secondary education qualification have a priority in student selection. Secondly a study place can be granted for young immigrants aged 20–29 who lack a post-basic education (the target group for Skills programme for young adults). Funding covers all organising costs, so the student will not be charged student fees.

***Dakar Framework for Action goal 5: Eliminating gender disparities in primary and secondary education by 2005, and achieving gender equality in education by 2015, with a focus on ensuring girls' full and equal access to and achievement in basic education of good quality.***

**and**

***Dakar Framework for Action goal 6: Improving all aspects of the quality of education and ensuring excellence of all so that recognized and measurable learning outcomes are achieved by all, especially in literacy, numeracy and essential life skills.***

Equality, equity and inclusion are the cornerstones of quality education in Finland. The status and importance of high-quality basic education is recognised both nationally and internationally. Only high-quality education enables the civilisation based functionality of social structure, growth of the national economy and improving competitiveness. Finnish education is of high international standard and recognised as such.

The National Education for All - Action Plan drew attention especially on preventing social exclusion, developing the learning environments and taking care of the competences and good working conditions of teachers. The Action Plan emphasised for example the reduction of labour market

segregation when considering gender equality. The most recent trends and measures to achieve gender equality and high-quality education are described in the following.

The Government's (2011-2015) programmes education policy's aim is that every citizen has equal opportunity and rights for civilisation, formal basic education free of charge and what is required to be a full member of the society, irrespective of ethnicity, background or financial standing. The Government aims to reduce the gender differences in learning outcomes, participation in education and completing education as well as the impact of socioeconomic background on education.

Government gives funding to municipalities for organising basic education. The currently ongoing reform of the system of central government transfers to municipalities aims that in 2015, the financing given to municipalities for organising basic education would in the future be based more on the indicators describing the operating environment such as number of immigrants, level of education of adults, and unemployment rate. The reform of the financial system aims to ensure equal conditions of access to education in different areas and to reduce the effects of segregation.

Two special allowances have been granted by the Ministry to promote educational equality. The Ministry of Education and Culture has allocated in 2009-2013 60 million euros of funding for reducing the class sizes in pre-primary and basic education. The measures aim to promote the quality of teaching and learning outcomes by ensuring sufficiently small teaching groups. The actions taken by the Ministry to reduce the sizes of teaching groups have reduced the average size of classes and the share of large teaching groups has almost halved since 2008. Ministry of Education and Culture has also allocated a second time approximately 23 million euros of special government grant for measures promoting educational equality for years 2014-2015. A similar funding was first allocated in 2012. Government grants are granted to support the operation and quality of weaker schools. When making the funding decisions, special attention is given to schools that are located in areas where the level of education is low and unemployment rate and proportion of immigrants is high in the population in order to reduce the differences between schools. Together these three indicators explain the majority of learning outcome differences between schools.

Despite the Finnish high level of education the learning outcomes in national and international assessments have in recent years shown that the learning outcomes of students finishing their basic education have fallen. The declining of results is considered to be significant. In particular, the increase in the number of young people who are poor in mathematics and the decrease in the number of students who are very competent in mathematics show a worrying direction.

In Finland the impact of socio-economic background to the students' performance in mathematics is still lower than in most OECD countries. However the impact of students' home background to the

results has increased clearly from 2003. First time in Finland, a group of schools stands out because they fall well below the international average. The difference between the weakest and the most successful schools has increased. Competence varies geographically, for example, in Northern and Eastern Finland, boys' skills are weaker. Inequality occurs in different ways in different municipalities. The challenge is the fact that the indicators of inequality and measures aiming to prevent inequality differ clearly between municipalities.

Explanations for the declining results have been searched outside of the school, from change in the society, on the other hand from the practices of schools. The change in society is associated to the decreasing importance of school in young people's lives. It is argued that school is not seen any more as a forum for self-actualisation, an enabler for social advancement or as a guarantor for a good future like before. In Finland, students' school satisfaction is relatively low. Also the sensibility and relevance of learning has been questioned. Learning should be motivating and meaningful for the student, but at the same time learning requires excelling oneself and operating outside ones comfort zone. Students' self-concept and motivation are emphasised. According to PISA 2012 assessment in Finland motivation and attitude explain the variation in students' performance in mathematics clearly more than in OECD countries in average. Learning should be relevant concerning the future; but also tempting, and still demanding enough so that the motivation to learn grows and remains. It has also been questioned how the resourcing of schools measures up with the increased number of students needing support and therefore the operational preconditions.

In consequence of this alarming trend the Ministry of Education and Culture started in 2014 a development project concerning the future of Finland's basic education (*Tulevaisuuden peruskoulu*) in order to reform the basic education. Its aim is to

- assess the current situation of basic education and examine the reasons for the drop in learning outcomes
- narrow down the gap in learning outcomes between boys and girls
- find ways to make students feel more motivated and enjoy school.

Proposals of the working groups will be formulated so that they can be applied in the work on the core curriculum in 2014 and in drawing up the next government programme. There are two working groups in the project, of which the other focuses on significance of competence and learning in terms of societal development and the other on learning motivation, school satisfaction and teaching arrangements and methods. The work of these two groups is coordinated by a broad-based steering group.

The Ministry implements a Reading and Writing Enthusiasm programme (*Lukuinto-ohjelma*) in 2012-2015. The aim is to create operating models to improve children's and young people's reading and writing skills, strengthen teachers, educators and library professionals' awareness, knowledge, and ways of supporting children's and young people's diverse reading and writing skills, enthusiasm to read and media education. The program aims also to improve children's and young people's interest and ability in diverse reading and writing, strengthen their use of different texts and media contents and promote access to information and content (information management and media literacy). The target groups of the programme are 6 to 16 year old children and adolescents (special attention on boys), teachers, library professionals and parents.

Ministry of Education and Culture starts a national development programme on developing science and mathematics education, which will be implemented in 2014-2019. The aim of the development programme is to find new innovative approaches to learn, teach and get students interested in the basic skills of natural sciences and mathematics, which are related to teaching methods, practises used in teaching and learning environments. The aim is to develop an action plan that is based on scientific research, internationally high standard and suitable for basic education. The programme will be established for the use of all comprehensive schools.

The KaMu (*Kaikki Mukaan* – “All on Board”) – project develops a national action plan to promote psychosocial well-being and life management skills as well as to reduce bullying and the effects caused by it in upper secondary schools. The programme covers the whole upper secondary education, and includes general measures targeted at all students and measures targeted at risk groups which aim to reduce the risk of social exclusion of students and straining of student welfare.

<http://kamu.metropolia.fi/en/kamu/>

As part of the development of quality teaching the Ministry of Education and Culture launched in 2014, a Cloud Service project (*Pilviväylä-hanke*) which aims to provide a system that gives schools and teachers easy access to the best and latest teaching materials. The project will also develop ways to support teachers to produce and share their own teaching materials and facilitate businesses access to the market of educational material. Learning and teaching materials are understood in a broad sense, including study related text and video materials, games, applications, group work tools and services. The Cloud Service project is being built in cooperation with the Estonian Ministry of Education

## **Part II: Development cooperation and EFA**

In addition to national development the Education for All process has a strong international dimension. For Finland, this refers primarily to the Finnish Development Cooperation. Finland has

pledged its support to the objectives of the Education for All programme as part of the United Nations Millennium Development Agenda. The progress is monitored on a global level under the coordination of UNESCO.

The National operational programme for Development Policy (2012), drawn up each term of Government, connects education and learning to all objectives of Finland's development policy as part of the development of human resources. Education is seen as a human right and a producer of knowledge and skills that are needed in the society. Together with openness of information, research, innovations and sustainable technology it is a key factor in strengthening capacities.

The agenda of Education for All is promoted in various forums by supporting children's and young peoples', especially girls', right for education from early childhood education and care to higher education. In addition, employment of young people is promoted, institutions providing education are strengthened and children's right for education is supported by fighting against child labour.

Finland supports the strengthening of education in developing countries by utilising the success factors of the Finnish education system, such as teacher training and the quality of the education system. Finland implements Development Cooperation in the education sector (including development policy planning) in close cooperation with government authorities (Ministry for Foreign Affairs, Ministry of Education and Culture, Finnish National Board of Education, CIMO) the Trade Union of Education (OAJ), higher education institutes and non-governmental organisations.

For the past 10 years the emphasis has been on supporting basic education and on issues considering educational equality (inclusive education, education in own mother tongue). The share of universities and higher education institutes is relatively stable thanks to cooperation programs (North-South-South and the Higher Education Institutions Institutional Cooperation Instrument (HEI-ICI)). Emphasis on vocational education is growing.

The Development Co-operation appropriations of the education sector have increased significantly in recent years:

<b>Disbursements, thousand euros</b>	<b>2008</b>	<b>2009</b>	<b>2010</b>	<b>2011</b>	<b>2012</b>
<b>Total</b>	28705	31253	38084	38778	41843

<b>Whole bilateral ODA</b>	480600	568100	633500	614100	620770
<b>Share of education</b>	6,0%	5,5%	6,0%	6,3%	6,7%

Finnish education sector's development cooperation is mainly bilateral. In 2011, about 65% of disbursements were made through bilateral aid, 28% through non-governmental organisation cooperation and 2% local cooperation funds. 5% education aid was channelled through The United Nations system, the vast majority targeted according to country. To increase effectiveness the number of target countries has been reduced. Long-term and important partners in the educational field are especially Ethiopia, Mozambique, Nepal, Afghanistan and the Palestinian territories. In these countries and territories the field of education is Finland's priority sector.

In multilateral cooperation Finland has supported among others UNESCO's programs and institutes. The funding of these programmes has been for a long time about 1.2 million on an annual level. Finland has supported the Education for All process, particularly through CapEFA instrument technical support (Capacity Building for Education for All, EUR 500 000 per year). Finland has also supported the International Institute for Educational Planning (IIEP, EUR 200 000 per year), and the UNESCO Institute of Statistics (UIS), which does remarkable work to enhance the monitoring of educational objectives globally (EUR 200 000 per year). In 2012-2013 Finland also supported a team, operating independently in connection with UNESCO's Secretariat, which prepares the annual Education for All - process Global Monitoring Report. The financial allocation has been centralised in 2014, and will be channelled in the future entirely through the CapEFA instrument.

Finland has joined the partnership of Global Partnership for Education with EUR 4 million funding (2013-2014). GPE's fund allocates its funding to the least developed countries, therefore it supports the Education for All agenda and helps to reach the Millennium Development goals. Finland also supports UNICEF. Finland emphasises the educational issues in its support to the Asian (ADB) and the African Development Banks (AfDB).

### **Education in the UN post-2015 development agenda**

Finland has actively participated in the planning of the Post-2015 Education development agenda. Finland is a member of the top coordinating mechanism of the Education for All process (Global Education for All Meeting, GEM) and participated in high-level meetings of GEM, most recently in Muscat, Oman in May 2014.

Finland has emphasised the comprehensive significance of education in promoting development. Education has to be acknowledged as its own set of targets in the universal Post-2015 development agenda, but its multiplied impacts on other development objectives must be recognised. Therefore education should also be taken into account in other development goals, such as ones considering

girls' and women's rights, health promotion and growth of employment and sustainable development at large.

Finland supports the overarching education goal of the Post-2015 Agenda to be the proposal: "Ensure equitable and inclusive quality education and lifelong learning for all by 2030" which has also been approved by the GEM meeting. The Joint Proposal of the EFA Steering Committee on Education Post-2015EFA, which is approved by the GEM meeting, includes many important elements that Finland supports. Education is a fundamental human right and must be seen as a foundation for self-actualisation, peace, sustainable development, economic growth, decent work, gender equality and responsible local and global citizenship.

The agenda takes into account the different levels of education from early childhood education and care to higher education including non-formal education. Compulsory basic education must be extended to nine years according to the proposal of the agenda. Upper secondary education, work experience and vocational training have received increasingly attention. Education has to be relevant in order to reflect the changing needs of society and working life. Education must provide learners with value basis and skills that promote peace, mutual understanding, critical thinking as well as respect towards cultural diversity and the environment. Therefore, Finland welcomes the proposed approaches of global citizenship education and education for sustainable development.

Gender equality and vulnerable groups have to be taken into account on the agenda equally. In Finland, inclusion means that everyone has equal high-quality educational opportunities. The quality of education and learning are central in the agenda. Finland is pleased that qualified and motivated teachers are taken into account as a separate objective. In addition to the availability of teachers, also their competences and working conditions must be taken care of when increasing the quality of education. The future education agenda must pay attention to information and communication technologies (ICTs) as integrated elements of the information society development. People and youth must be empowered through information and media literacy.

As to the wider contents of the future education agenda, we must promote, amongst others, learning for all that contributes to peace, conflict resolution and mutual understanding, tolerance, critical thinking and respect for cultural diversity and for the environment.

It is important to merge the targets proposed through the UNESCO-coordinated process and those proposed by the Open Working Group on Sustainable Development Goals, in order to avoid creating two separate Post-2015 agendas on education.



### **Part III: Conclusion**

The Education for All movement has been an important tool in promoting access to and quality of education worldwide. At the national level the six EFA goals have enabled countries to set even more precise and country specifically tailored goals, according to their own need and situation. This have further enhanced the impact of the movement. At the international level the movement has been able to offer a unique forum to cooperation and mutual support for the development process of education sector.

The work started within the EFA movement need to be continued and inserted as an essential part of the future Post-2015 Education Agenda. At the same time the contents and targets of the Agenda need to be evolved to respond the realities and requirements of the 21st century, including youth and media literacy, as well as learning for all that contributes to peace, conflict resolution and mutual understanding, tolerance, critical thinking and respect for cultural diversity and for the environment.