



Pioneering policies and practices tackling educational inequalities in Europe

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Evidence-based co-authored and open-access report of most promising pioneering policies and practices

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Finnish academic teacher education [3]

<b>Country</b>	Finland		
<b>Authors of the table</b>	<i>Toom, A., Kleemola, K., Hyytinen, H. &amp; Tuononen, T.</i>		
<b>Name of the policy / practice</b>	Finnish master level teacher education in university [3]		
<b>Short description and the main characteristics of the policy / practice</b>	The aim is to provide high quality academic teacher education for all teachers in Finland, so that they can work in the Finnish schools and in educational system and provide high-quality, equal education and schooling for all children in Finland. Finnish teacher education is organised only in the universities in the faculties of education, and the teacher education curriculum follows the general requirements set for the academic bachelor (180 ECTS) and master (120 ECTS) degrees (major subject, minor subjects, general studies, teaching practicum, bachelor and master theses). All teachers need to complete the 5-year master degree in order to have a formal qualification to work as a teacher and in order to be able to get a permanent job as a teacher.		
<b>Target group of the policy / practice:</b>	All teachers in Finland need to complete a five-year master degree in university in order to receive a formal teacher qualification. Thus, all children and adolescents benefit indirectly by receiving teaching from an educated teacher		
<b>Educational stage or transition phase of the policy / practice</b>	University education		
<b>Type of inequality the policy / practice tackles</b>	The policy targets outcomes: due to highly educated teachers, learning outcomes are considered to be stronger.		
<b>Level of implementation</b>	Macro-level, national policy		
<b>MILC dimensions</b>	Is implemented on national level Targets intersectionalities implicitly: all children regardless of their background have highly educated teachers		
<b>Key dimensions of the identification procedure</b>			
<b>CONDITIONS: Foundational premise level</b>	<i>Comprehensive</i>	Finnish teacher education provided in the universities is meant for everyone, who wants to learn to become a teacher. The universities organize nationally coordinated admission procedures to teacher education, to which all	High

		interested applicants can participate. Teacher education in Finland is a very competitive field, and only about 10% of the applicants to teacher education are chosen to teacher education studies. Teacher education is free of charge for the students.	
	<i>Coherent</i>	Finnish teacher education fits in the broader educational system to comprehensive school, in which teachers have broad responsibilities and autonomy	Medium
	<i>Continuous</i>	Finnish teacher education fosters continuity on systems level in the context of a broader educational system and society.	High
<b>ELEMENTS: Structural level</b>	<i>Contextual</i>	The policy / practice is sensitive to the contextual features (e.g., cultural, linguistic, economical) aspects, and tries to take them into account. It allows a variety of applications and broad autonomy that universities have for organizing the research-based academic teacher education they are responsible of. Experts and stakeholders have identified some contextual needs that should be more at the core in teacher education in various universities, e.g., special education needs, diversity, well-being in teacher's work and school	Medium
	<i>Relational</i>	Finnish teacher education is relatively responsive to the student teachers' needs. Teacher education is enacted in collaboration and dialogue with the teacher educators and teacher training schools. It could also be organized in more intensive collaboration with local and regional stakeholders, and authorities.	medium
<b>TOOLS: Action level</b>	<i>Autonomous</i>	Allows universities and teacher educators to act autonomously, plan and adjust teacher education by taking into account current research, current practical needs, and educational policy emphases. Accountability related to teacher education in Finland is really low: universities decide the curricula of teacher education and organisation of teacher education studies. Universities are responsible of the quality work and quality assurance of teacher education. There are no external accreditation or quality checking of teacher education in Finland. This is exceptional internationally.	High

	<i>Reflexive</i>	Allows and assumes reflexivity of the teacher educators and student teachers and all involved. Reflexivity is related to the development of teacher education, teacher educators and student teachers.	high
<b>Evidence backing the policy / practice:</b>		<p>Finnish teacher education has received extensive international recognition and attention, and research has confirmed its effectivity. Finnish teacher education has been used as an example for the development of teacher education policies, programmes and practices internationally (e.g., in Norway, Estonia).</p> <p>Niemi, H. &amp; Jakku-Sihvonen, R. (2003). Research-based teacher education in Finland. FERA.</p> <p>Toom, A., Kynäslähti, H., Krokfors, L., Jyrhämä, R., Byman, R., Stenberg, K., Maaranen, K. &amp; Kansanen, P. (2010). Experiences of a research-based approach to teacher education: Suggestions for future policies. <i>European Journal of Education</i>, 45(2), 331-344.</p> <p>Sahlberg, P. (2007). Education policies for raising student learning: The Finnish approach. <i>Journal of education policy</i>, 22(2), 147-171.</p> <p>Toom, A. &amp; Husu, J. (2021). Analyzing practice, research, and accountability turns in Finnish academic teacher education. In D. Mayer (Ed.), <i>Teacher education policy and research: Global perspectives</i>. Singapore: Springer. <a href="https://doi.org/10.1007/978-981-16-3775-9_6">https://doi.org/10.1007/978-981-16-3775-9_6</a></p> <p>PISA results of Finnish pupils since 2006</p>	
<b>Brief concluding analysis of policy / practice in the context:</b>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- same teacher education for all teachers throughout Finland</li> <li>- academic research-based teacher education in universities</li> <li>- broad autonomy of universities for organizing teacher education</li> <li>- 5-year teacher education programme</li> </ul>	