

INFORMAL COUNTRY REPORT (Finland)

1. National reporting on the progress achieved in the implementation of the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe (ECE) Strategy for Education for Sustainable Development offers a valuable opportunity for countries to learn from each other and to share newly produced resources and materials within and beyond the ECE region.
2. In preparation for the ninth meeting of the ECE Steering Committee on Education for Sustainable Development, countries are requested to fill in the questionnaire below, reporting on: (a) progress made and challenges encountered in implementing the three priority action areas since the eighth Steering Committee meeting (Geneva, 21–22 March 2013); and (b) plans concerning the implementation of education for sustainable development (ESD) on the national level after the United Nations Decade of Education for Sustainable Development (2005–2014).
3. Countries are kindly requested to submit this information in writing to the secretariat via e-mail (esd@unece.org) **by 15 March 2014**.
4. The secretariat will review all the information submitted, and deliver a synthesis presentation at the Steering Committee's ninth meeting. The presentation will be followed by an interactive discussion.
5. Recognizing the importance of celebrating champions of ESD, Steering Committee members are in particular invited to **indicate if there are any outstanding initiatives on the implementation of the priority action areas in their countries that they wish to share and/or present**.

Questionnaire for 2014 informal country reporting on the implementation of the priority action areas

I. Priority action area (a) to promote the introduction of ESD into teacher education: Advances made and challenges encountered since the eighth Steering Committee meeting in March 2013

1. Has there been any significant advancement made with regard introducing/ extending ESD as a part of educators' initial training?

Yes **No**

- Please specify

There has not been any significant changes in the system of educator's training in Finland since 2013. The Higher Education Institutions provide the teacher education in Finland and they decide on their own curricula.

Please indicate if you wish to make a presentation on this topic/if there is an outstanding initiative in your country on this topic

2. Have there been any significant advances made with regard to introducing/ extending ESD as a part of educators' in-service training?

Yes **No**

The National Board of Education finances, follows up and develops in-service training targeted for principals, teachers, study advisors and personnel responsible for support services in schools and institutions (except for personnel of higher education institutions). One of the focus areas for the training

has for several years been sustainable development. This applies also to the in-service training of vocational educators. Also other actors provide for in-service training.

In 2013 the National Board of Education financed ESD related in-service training for basic education teachers with 238 000 € and for vocational educators with 258 000 €. The number of participants were 665 and 1440 (respectively).

Please indicate if you wish to make a presentation on this topic/if there is an outstanding initiative in your country on this topic

3. Are there any recently produced materials/resources that are accessible to a wider audience (e.g., online)?

Yes **No**

Please specify and, if applicable, indicate the language and website address

ECE/CEP/AC.13/2014/3

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II. Priority action area (b) to ensure that there is an ESD school plan in every school by 2015: Advances made and challenges encountered since the eighth Steering Committee meeting in March 2013

1. Has the number of schools adopting a “whole-institution approach” to sustainable development (SD)/ESD increased?

Yes No

Please specify

In Finland reliable information on ESD school plans is available only regarding those schools and education institutions that have applied for certificates like Green Flag or Sustainable Development Certificate for Schools. The number of certificates has slightly increased in 2013.

Education for sustainable development is presented in the current national core curriculum for basic education as a cross-curricular theme, meaning the objective and content are incorporated into numerous subjects; it integrates the education and instruction.

Please indicate if you wish to make a presentation on this topic/if there is an outstanding initiative in your country on this topic

2. Have any (additional) incentives and assistance measures (guidelines, award scheme, funding, training, technical support) been made available that support ESD school plans?

Yes No

Please specify: Sustainable Development Certificate for Schools:

- The sustainable development certificate scheme for schools was extended to cover also non-formal education in 2013. Already 4 institutions have achieved the certificate.

- The Sustainable Development Certificate for vocational education institutions was extended to cover also institutions of adult education.
- Ministry of Education and Culture financed a project on web-based evaluation system for sustainable development in 2013. The aim was to produce tools that help in including sustainable development into on-the-job learning and the quality systems of the institutions.

Green Flag:

- The themes of Green Flag were extended to include Healthy Life –theme. Now there are seven themes for the Green Flags schools to focus on.

As part of **the Society's Commitment to Sustainability** (http://www.ym.fi/en-US/The_environment/Sustainable_development) process the Trade Union for Education in Finland together with six other associations and trade unions has challenged all day care centers, schools and educational institutions in Finland to make their own operational commitments the target of which could be to draft a ESD School Plan or to achieve a ESD related certification.

The new Universities Act (558/2009) and Polytechnics Act (564/2009) contain similar binding obligations concerning the participation of Higher Education Institutes (HEIs) in external evaluations of their operations and quality systems, as well as in the publication of evaluation results. **Since 2012, sustainable development is included as optional audit target of the HEI audits** by the Finnish Higher Education Evaluation Council (FINHEEC) (http://www.finheec.fi/files/1780/KKA_1512.pdf). HEIs also have other means of fulfilling their statutory obligation than by participating in audits conducted by FINHEEC.

Please indicate if you wish to make a presentation on this topic/if there is an outstanding initiative in your country on this topic

3. Are there any recently produced materials/resources that are accessible to a wider audience (e.g., online)?

Yes **No**

Please specify and, if applicable, indicate the language and website address

III. Priority action area (c) to reorient technical and vocational education and training in support of sustainable development and the transition to a green economy: Advances made and challenges encountered since the eighth Steering Committee meeting in March 2013

1. Has there been advancement towards a structural reorientation of technical and vocational education and training (TVET) towards ESD?

Yes No

Please specify

The system of vocational qualifications is being currently revised in order to strengthen their competence base and response to the labor market needs. New skills requirements like those related to green economy or sustainable development arise from the interfaces of competences, educational fields and business sectors. The aim is to increase the flexibility of qualifications system in order to be able to respond to these

needs faster. Changes to the current key competences of life-long learning included in the vocational qualifications, like sustainable development, are not being planned for.

The vocational education institutes are actively pursuing sustainable development. Many institutions have their own SD plans several of which are included in their quality systems. Currently supportive criteria for quality control and continuous quality improvement for vocational education is being prepared for.

Please indicate if you wish to make a presentation on this topic/if there is an outstanding initiative in your country on this topic

2. Have any incentives and assistance measures been made available that support the reorientation of TVET towards SD?

Yes **No**

Please specify

See section II.2. for more information.

Please indicate if you wish to make a presentation on this topic/if there is an outstanding initiative in your country on this topic

3. Are there any recently produced materials/resources that are accessible to a wider audience (e.g., online)?

Yes **No**

Please specify and, if applicable, indicate the language and website address

IV. Implementing education for sustainable development beyond the United Nations Decade of ESD

1. Is there already a political commitment/indication that ESD implementation will continue to be supported after the United Nations Decade of ESD?

Yes **No**

Please specify:

Finland's national strategy for sustainable development has been revised. Along with the revision of the strategy, a national concept 'Society's Commitment to Sustainability' has been launched.

Society's Commitment to Sustainability (available in English at:

file:///C:/Users/vuoreri1/Downloads/Kest%C3%A4v%C3%A4n%20kehityksen%20yhteiskuntasitumus_EN_21%201%202014_final.pdf) has been prepared by a wide-ranging strategy group. Through the

commitment, the government and the administration, in collaboration with various societal actors, pledge to promote sustainable development in all their work and operations. The commitment states that "sustainable development will be integrated into primary education, education of all fields and lifelong learning."

Society's Commitment to Sustainability was officially accepted in December 2013 by the Finnish National Commission for Sustainable Development. The Ministry of Education and Culture is preparing its own

operational commitment in order to support the implementation of the Society's Commitment to Sustainability. In addition the Ministry of Education and Culture has asked the Higher Education Institutions to report on their plans on implementing the Society's Commitment to Sustainability. The reports are due in late April 2014.

Currently there are several revisions taking place at various levels of education in Finland. In addition to those described earlier in this report, the national core curriculum for pre-primary and basic education is being renewed. The renewed core curriculum will be completed by the end of 2014. The distribution of lesson hours for basic education and the minimum number of lessons for core subjects during basic education was confirmed by the Government in 2012 and they will be implemented together with the new core curriculum in 2016. Sustainable development has a central role in the revision of the core curricula. The revision of distribution of lesson hours for general upper secondary education has also been commenced with the aim of being implemented with the core curricula that will also be revised in 2016.

2. Is there an indication of what will (continue to) be the priorities of your country for future ESD implementation?

Yes No

Please specify

The Finnish national strategies for education for sustainable development are still valid. An evaluation on their implementation was carried out in 2012. Currently there are no plans to revise or to draft a new national strategy on ESD.