



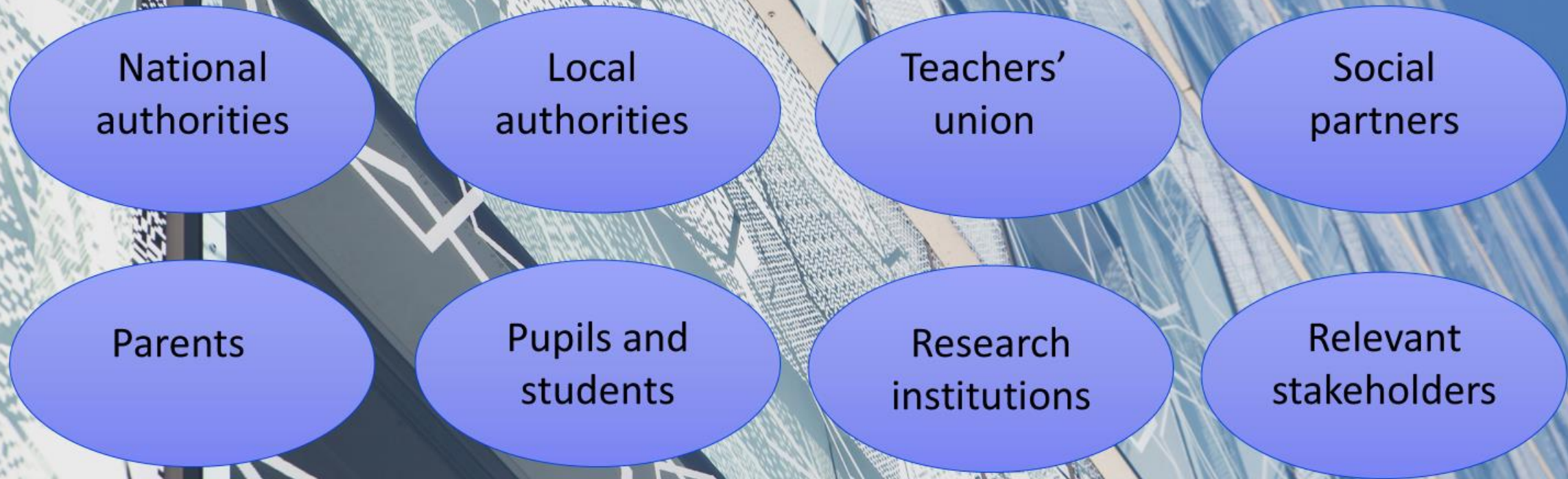
FINNISH NATIONAL
AGENCY FOR EDUCATION

Democracy and Human Rights in Core Curriculums

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Education developed in partnership



The curriculum system in Finland



Curriculum process

Finnish education evaluation
centre/ EDUFI/Finnish Institute
for Educational Research



School attaches youth to active citizenship

- The role of teachers as educators of democracy is crucial, as primary schools are the only public institution that can help to even out differences in political participation and political commitment across the whole age group.
- **Finnish youth have a good knowledge of society and a general interest in politics is on the rise.**
- Despite this, **youth don't believe in their own abilities as social actors and are not particularly interested in political participation.**
- Several studies have shown that participation in **school is linked to the willingness to remain socially active in the future.**
- Pupil councils are actively developed in schools, but often with a low number of youth involved. The support of principals is also needed.

Democracy and human rights are core values of basic education



- Basic education is built on respect for life and human rights. It guides us to their defense and to the inviolability of human dignity.
- It promotes well-being, **democracy and active citizenship.**
- Education contributes to economic, social, regional and gender equality.
- **Basic education provides the basis for a global citizenship that respects human rights and encourages action for positive change.**

Mission of basic education

- Education promotes inclusion and sustainable lifestyles, and **growth towards membership of a democratic society**.
- Basic education teaches pupils to **understand, respect and defend human rights**.
- Alongside respect for life, other people and nature, the inviolability of human dignity, **respect for human rights and the democratic values of Finnish society**, such as equality and equity, are emphasised.



Transversal competences support human development

- **Participation, empowerment and building a sustainable future (L7)**
- At the same time, basic education creates the knowledge base for pupils to grow into active citizens who exercise their democratic rights and freedoms responsibly.
- Pupils are encouraged to reflect on their proposals from the perspectives of equality and equity, fair treatment and sustainable living.



Highlights of democracy education in competences

Grades 1-2

- Through their own experiences, students learn about the rules of democratic participation and how to put them into practice.

Grades 3-6

- Issues and situations related to sustainable development, peace, equality and democracy, and human rights, especially children's rights, are explored with students.

Grades 7-9:

- It strengthens and deepens pupils' interest in common and social issues and practises how to act as members of a democratic society.

Promoting democracy education in the school culture

- An inclusive, human rights-based and democratic culture lays the foundations for students to become active citizens.
- The Community encourages and provides the means and structures for democratic dialogue and participation.
- School work is organised in such a way that it is based on the participation and consultation of pupils. Ensuring that pupils gain experience of cooperation and democratic action within their own teaching group, within the school and its surrounding environment and in different networks
- **Student councils are compulsory** in primary, lower and upper secondary schools and vocational institutes
- **Municipal Youth Councils** in each municipality

6th Grade Criteria / Social Studies

Teaching Objective	Learning objectives derived from the learning objectives	Areas for assessment	Description of competences for grade 5	Description of competences for grade 7	Description of <u>competences for grade 8</u>	Description of competences for grade 9
T3 To guide the learner perceive themselves as individuals and as a member of different communities, to understand the importance of human rights and equality and to perceive society as a legal principles of society	The pupil learns to perceive him/herself as an individual and as a member of different communities, understand human rights and equality the importance of equality and understand the legal principles of society.	Common rules, human rights and equality principles of human rights and equality	The pupil gives examples of common rules. The pupil identifies human rights and equality issues in everyday life. The pupil identifies key legal principles when guided. .	The pupil can tell why common rules are needed. The pupil describes the importance of equality and human rights. The pupil will give an example of how the legal system works.	The pupil explains the meaning of common rules also in practice. The pupil justifies, why human rights are important and why a legal system is needed. The pupil will give examples of how the legal system works.	The pupil distinguishes the role of common rules, the legal system and human rights in society and to its members

9th Grade Criteria / Social Studies

Teaching Objective	Learning objectives derived from the learning objectives	Areas for assessment	Description of competences for grade 5	Description of competences for grade 7	Description of <u>competences for grade 8</u>	Description of competences for grade 9
T9 To encourage pupils to broaden their views, participate in societal activities and debates , and use their media skills and knowledge of society to form their own opinions and acting as a citizen	The pupil learns assimilate and use essential knowledge and skills for social action.	Societal thinking, Participation, media literacy and influencing skills	The pupil gives examples of ways to get involved and influence in society when guided. The pupil can take a stand on a social issue.	The pupil gives examples of ways to get involved and contribute to society. The pupil arguments opinions on social issues.	The pupil participates in the discussion of socio-political issues and compares different ways of having an impact. The pupil arguments on social issues.	The pupil participates constructively discussing socio-political issues and evaluates the public debate on issues concerning them.

Upper secondary education promotes growth to democratic citizen

- The value base of the upper secondary school curriculum is based on **democracy and the Finnish ideal of civilisation**, according to which studying and learning renew society and culture.
- Upper secondary education is based on respect for life and human rights and the inviolability of human dignity.
- **It promotes equality and gender equality, democracy and well-being.**
- **Culture:**
 - Inclusion and community: participation and democratic action lay the foundations for students' growth as active citizens
 - Equality and equity: The school promotes equality and gender equality in all its activities.
- **Student councils and student participation plans (membership of working groups, management team, etc.).**

Citizenship and democracy education are part of the transversal competences

Well-being competence

Students will understand the importance of constructive interaction and intercultural understanding for a sustainable future, democracy and peace.

Building an identity
Identifying and using your strengths
Responsible use of technology
Strengthening ethical lifestyles
Empathy skills
Multi-perspective
Supporting your own and others' well-being
Perseverance and resilience to change

Societal competence

Studies deepens the student's understanding of his/her own role, responsibilities and opportunities to support the multifaceted realisation of democracy in the surrounding society and in cooperation with others.

Active citizenship
Social inclusion
Taking into account the student's extra-curricular competences
Embracing change
Democratic skills
Working for a just and sustainable future
Working life skills and entrepreneurial attitude
Tolerance of uncertainty, frustration and failure

Democracy education is strongly reflected in the content and objectives of social studies

- The value base of social studies teaching emphasizes **the fundamental principles of democracy**
- The subject deepens students' social skills and their ability to cooperate, actively participate in society and exert democratic influence.
- The aim is that the students:
 - are able to build a responsible, democratic, egalitarian and diversity-sensitive conception of society
 - understand their potential to influence **as a member of a changing democratic society** at local, national and international level and be motivated to act as an active and responsible citizen in accordance with sustainable development.
- **Finnish society (YH1)**
 - Key aspects are democracy, human rights, development of the basic structures of society, power and influence with emphasis on active and participatory citizenship.
 - The aim is that the student will be able to examine the opportunities and challenges of democracy analytically from different perspectives
 - Examples of content:
 - human rights, fundamental rights and duties of citizens
 - Citizens' rights and duties, citizens' rights, citizens' rights and duties, forms of social power, democratic decision-making and the Finnish contractual society.

How social studies promote active citizenship?

Democracy and Participation

Understanding democratic structures and civic engagement.

Human Rights and Equality

Fundamental rights, the rule of law, and social justice.

Power and Decision-Making Structures

Political institutions, the legal system, and the consensus-based society.

Economy and Well-being

Economic principles, ethical perspectives, the impact of policy decisions.

Critical Thinking and Media Literacy

Information-gathering, evaluating arguments, and interpreting statistics.

Security and International Cooperation

National and global security, Finland and the EU role.

Social Change and the Future

Megatrends, technological impact, and sustainable development goals

Highlights of democracy education in other subjects

- **Philosophy:**

- Philosophy is taught with a commitment to rational ethical thinking based on respect for democracy, human rights and a sustainable future.
- **Philosophy of society (FI3)**
- Human rights, civil rights and the rule of law; democracy and community as social values

- **History:**

- Teaching emphasises the importance of human rights, equality and equity, and **the potential of democracy and international cooperation to address the challenges of our time and the future.**
- The multiple possibilities of democracy, active citizenship and international cooperation are explored in the context of the principles of a sustainable future.
- **International Relations (HI2)**
- Confronting democracy and totalitarianism
- human rights issues, the Holocaust and other genocides

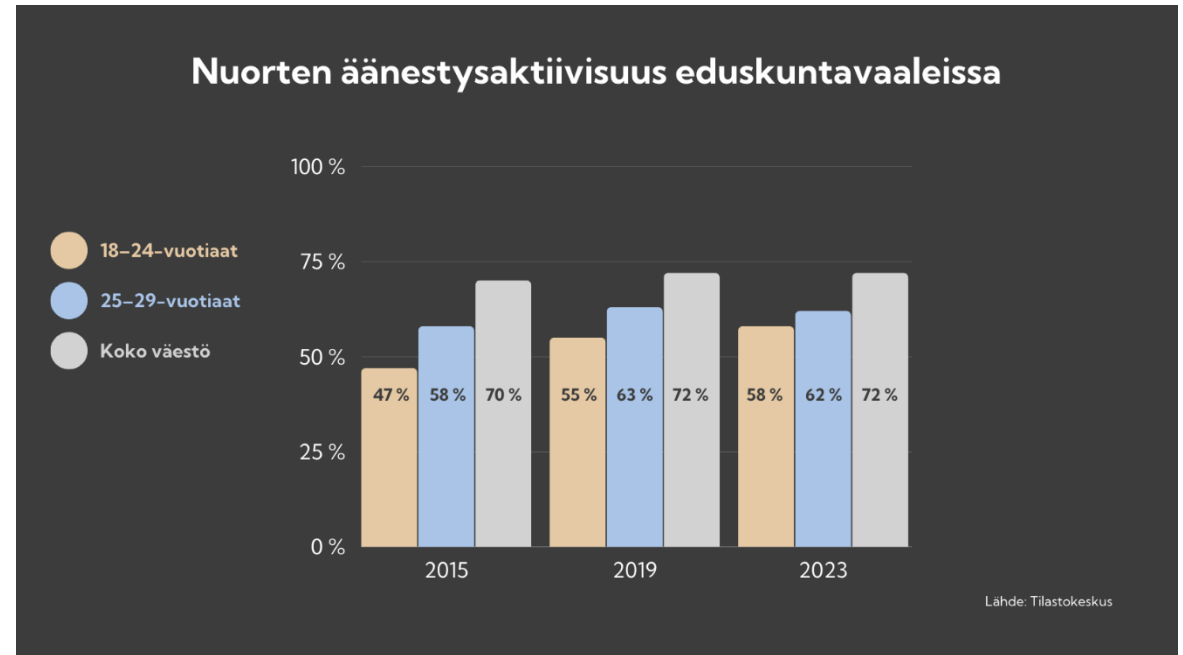
Subject	Connection to Democracy Education and Active Citizenship
Social Studies	Teaches about government structures, civic responsibilities, and the importance of participation in democratic processes.
History	Provides context on the development of democratic institutions and movements for civil rights and social justice. Gives tools to evaluate information.
Finnish Language and Literature	Develops language skills, cultural awareness, and the ability to analyze and discuss societal issues through literature.
Geography	Highlights the importance of understanding global issues, cultural diversity, and the interconnectedness of communities.
Religion	Explores different belief systems, ethical values, and the role of religion in shaping societies and promoting social cohesion.
Art	Fosters creativity and expression, allowing students to explore social and political themes through various media.
Physical Education	Encourages teamwork, fair play, and the development of social skills necessary for active participation in community life.

How are we doing then?

- According to the School Health Survey (2023), around 65% of 8th and 9th graders feel they can influence some aspects of their living environment. Almost 75% upper secondary school students feel this way.
- The five most important values that young people and young adults chose to build a society around **were equality and equity, security, environmental sustainability, democracy and justice** (Nuorten hyvä elämä –tutkimus)
- In practice, in an autonomous education system, there can be great differences between schools and institutions in the way in which democracy and human rights education is delivered.
- Finnish democracy is characterized by representativeness, which is reflected in schools and educational institutions in the activities of student councils.

Young people's turnout is increasing slightly

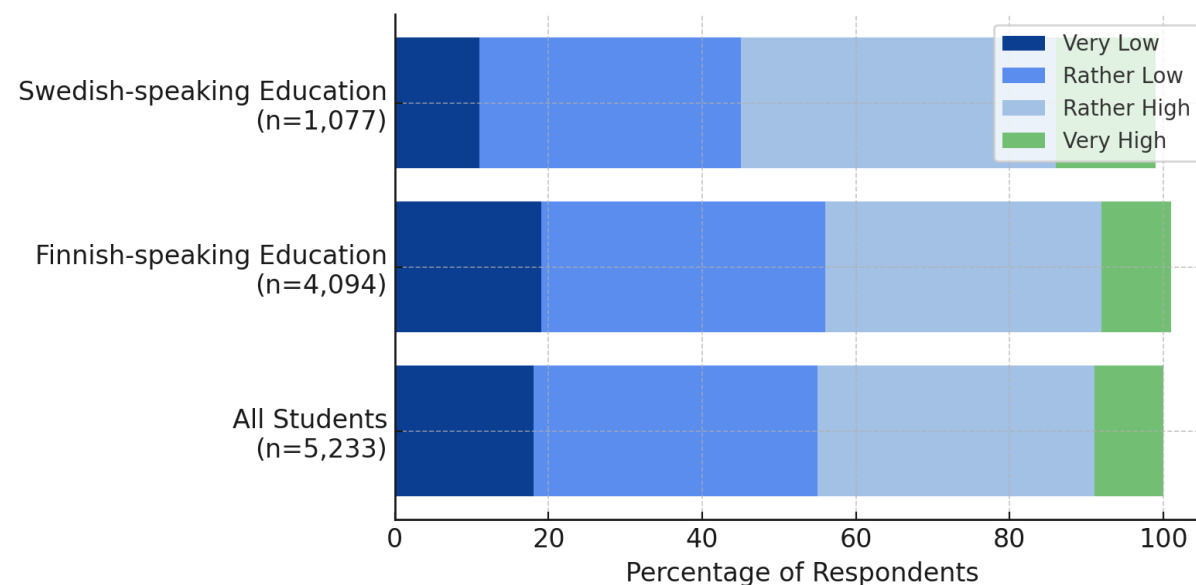
- The decline in voter turnout in youth seems to have been reversed.
- Young people may be more interested in issues of identity and the environment
- On the other hand, young adults are polarized, with young women being more value liberal and young men more value conservative.
- Women (57%) apply to higher education more than men → higher educated people vote more actively



Source: Finnish National Youth Council and Youth Sector, Statistics Finland

Internal civic competence among 9th grade students (2022)

- **Internal civic competence refers to citizens' assessments of their own ability to participate in politics and to understand political processes.**
- It has a strong link with political participation and political interest.
- Gender differences were clearly visible, with well over half of boys having a fairly or very high level of civic competence, while only two in five girls felt the same way.



Ministry of Justice, Young citizens, Statistical survey of ninth-graders civic competences, 2022.

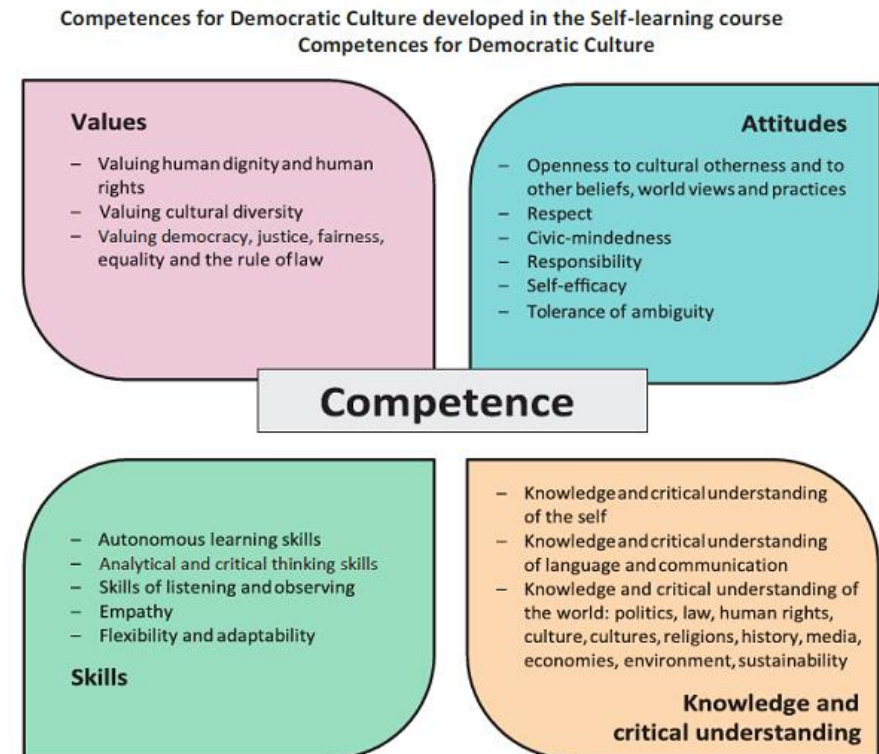
How teachers see democracy education?

- **Nine out of ten secondary school teachers consider democracy education important**
- The more experienced teachers are, the less likely they are to find democracy education difficult
- The vast majority of respondents feel that they do not have enough time for democracy education → **democracy education should be part of everyday life and daily activities?**
- Teachers think that their role is to equip pupils for civic participation and to inform them about different social practices and values.
- In particular, for teachers other than social studies teachers, would be advisable to have more democracy education in teacher education and in-service training.

Source: Secondary teachers and democracy education, 2024)

The Council of Europe **Reference Framework of Competences for Democratic Culture (RFCDC)**

- The RFCDC as a set of materials can be used by education systems to equip young people with all of the competences
- to defend and promote **human rights, democracy** and the rule of law
- to act as active citizens
- to participate effectively in **a culture of democracy**
- to live peacefully together with others in culturally diverse societies.



Publications on the EDC/HRE Pilot Project with good practices 2023



TUUMASTA TOIMEEN!

- Malleja koulujen demokratia- ja ihmisoikeuskasvatukseen
- Jokaisesta hankkeesta kolme mallia, yhteensä 27 mallia



Youth elections give experience of voting

- **Finnish National Youth Council and Youth Sector** organizes youth elections during municipal and national elections
- Election panels are also organized in schools.
- **The school is politically neutral but a good (and safe) place to practice political participation and political literacy.**



Youth election at Kallion lukio 2024, photo Emma Rahikainen, Finnish National Youth Council and Youth Sector.

Digiraati is a platform for discussions

- Digiraati is an online service where you can participate in discussions on a range of topical issues.
- The service aims to give all children and young people under the age of 29 an equal opportunity to make their voice heard on social issues.
- A final report on the subject under discussion is forwarded to those who need to know about the views expressed by children and young people.



Vaikuttaminen verkossa

SPR Nuorten turvatalot

Tule kertomaan, sun ajatuksia verkkovaikuttamisesta! Keskustelu järjestetään kevään aikana.

#nuoret #vaikuttaminen



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Thank you

Nina Penttinen

