

Finland Attachment Programme 2017

Study Report

August 20-September 9, 2017



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Part 1: Background of Finland Attachment Programme 2017

1.1 Objectives of the Attachment Programme

The programme aims to enable participants

- to acquire knowledge of the Finnish education system and its key features; as well as the modernisation of basic education, initial teacher education and professional development of teachers in Finland
- to learn about the Education Reform completed in 2015, the new National Core Curriculum implemented in August 2016 and the latest development in Finland
- to acquire practical knowledge and conduct professional exchange with Finnish teaching experts from various education sectors via different events, such as expert sessions, visits and school attachments
- to equip with practical tools and ideas for professional development in Hong Kong based on the experience gained and to disseminate such knowledge in the professional communities in Hong Kong

1.2 Participants

The delegation is comprised of 4 members of Committee on Professional Development of Teachers and Principals (COTAP), 9 EDB officers, 4 principals/ senior teachers from government secondary schools (GSS) and government primary schools (GPS), and 3 awardees of the Chief Executive's Award for Teaching Excellence (CEATE). See Appendix for a detailed list of participants.

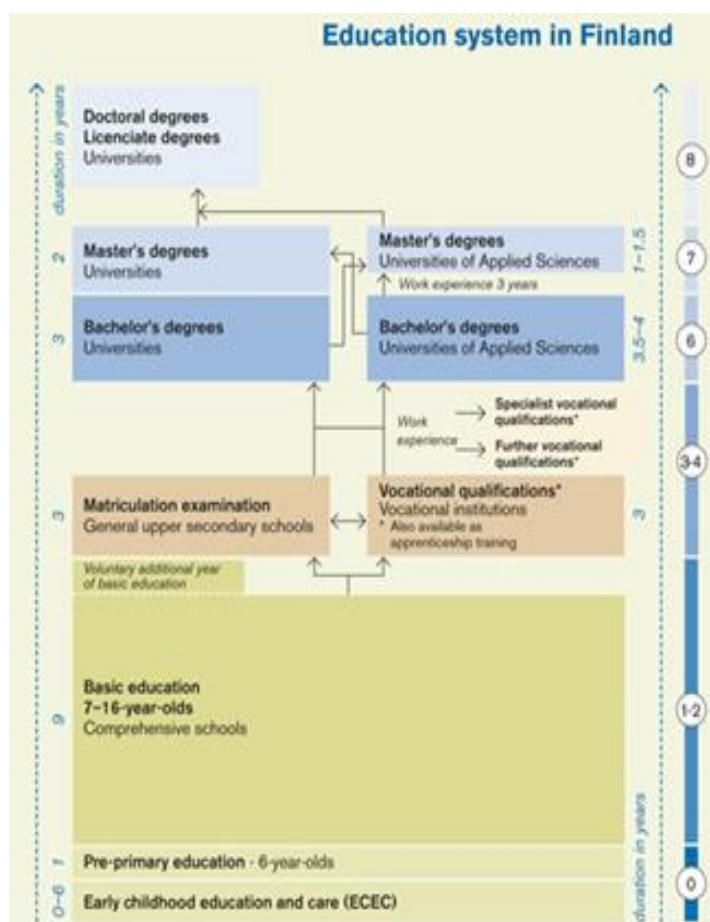
1.3 Duration

Date	Programme	Participants
<p><u>Week One</u></p> <p>20/8/2017- 26/8/2017</p>	<p>Overview of the Finnish education system — expert talks and visits in <i>Helsinki</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ministry of Education and Culture • Finnish National Agency for Education • xEdu Accelerator Programme • Kalasatama Primary School • Olari High School in Espoo • Day Care Centre Puotinharju 	<p>All participants</p>
<p><u>Week Two to Three</u></p> <p>27/8/2017- 9/9/2017</p>	<p>On-site learning and attachment in Finnish schools in <i>Jyväskylä</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Vesanka Primary School • Mankola Lower Secondary School • Lyseo Upper Secondary School • University of Jyväskylä 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Principals/ Senior teachers from GSS and GPS • CEATE Awardees

Part 2: Holistic Studies of Finland Education: An Overview from Education System, Curriculum Development to School Practices

In this section, a holistic review of Finland Education would be conducted in system level, curriculum level and school level. By reviewing the context and system level in Finnish education, an institutional review was conducted to explore the structural strengths and constraints to education practices. A normative review on the basic values and culture in Finland was also conducted as a supplement to the structural analysis. A review on curriculum level and school level was then followed to put the institutional and normative review into practical level. Through a holistic review and triangulation of these three levels of Finland education system, the structure and process of Finland education was analysed to reflect on the current issues and practices in Hong Kong education.

2.1 Key features of the Finnish Education System



2.1.1 Structure of Finland's Education System

The Finnish education system, which the Finnish is proud of, is an education system without dead-end. Starting from the early childhood education, students have different pathways to achieve higher education, and then receive adult education after graduation.

Early childhood education and care, pre-primary and basic education form an integrated progressive approach following the

child's development in Finland. All children under school-age have a subjective right to Early Childhood Education and Care (ECEC), which is primarily organised in day-care centers and in family day-care, should their parents so decide. Starting from 2015,

pre-primary education is compulsory for the children at the age of six, and children will receive the pre-primary education with a minimum of 700 hours per school year (4 hours per day). However, children have a right to receive other ECEC services before and after pre-primary education hours.

Basic education encompasses nine years and caters for all those between 7 and 16 years. Students have 38-week schooling per year and learn 18 subjects throughout the basic education. Local authorities assign a school place to each pupil close to their homes but parents are free to choose the comprehensive school of their preference with some restrictions. All schools should follow a national core curriculum, which includes the objectives and core content of each subject. The government will then draw up their own curricular, which is specified for the local or regional needs, within the framework of the national core curriculum. Also, in the first six years of basic education, subjects across the same level were mainly taught by the class teacher while in the last three years, different subjects were assigned to the relevant subject specialists. Although there is no national examination in the basic education, national guidelines and principles for pupil assessment are provided in the core curriculum. Diagnostic, formative and summative assessment with instructive feedback are adopted as part of learning and teaching to support students' learning. Upon completion of basic education at grade 9, students have their final assessment. Teachers will assess their learning outcome and issue the basic education certificate to students.

Students who completed the basic education successfully are eligible for general and vocational upper secondary education and training. Admission to upper secondary school is mainly based on the students' grades in the final assessment at grade 9. Recently, 52% of students receive general upper secondary education and 42% of students receive vocational upper secondary education. The syllabus of general upper secondary education is quite flexible: instruction is organised in modular form and students can decide on their individual study schedules. Students can combine studies from both general education and vocational education. At the end of the general upper secondary education, students will take a national matriculation examination, which comprises four compulsory tests and a certificate will be issued to the students.

For students who take vocational education and training, they will have at least half a year on-the-job learning in workplaces during their three years of study. The studies are also based on individual study plans and their assessments are based on criteria defined in the national qualification requirements. As the vocational qualifications are developed in co-operation with the world of work and other key stakeholders, it ensures that the qualifications support flexible and efficient transition of knowledge into labour

market as well as facilitating occupational development and career change.

Higher education is offered by universities and universities of Applied Sciences. Both the students who have taken the matriculation examination and vocational qualification have general eligibility for university education. Most university students aim for a Master degree.

2.1.2 Features of Finnish Education – Equity and Quality

One of the basic principles of Finnish education is that all people must have equal access to high-quality education and training. According to Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) (2015), *Education Policy Outlook 2015 Making Reforms Happen*, Finland is one of the OECD countries that combines high performance and high levels of equity.

In Finland, education is free at all levels from pre-primary to higher education. In pre-primary and basic education, the textbooks, daily meal and transportation for students living further away from the school are free for the parents. At upper secondary level and in higher education, the students have the right to a free meal and in higher education meals are subsidised by the state. Adult education is the only form of education that may require payment.

All students have the right to educational support, and it is believed that the potential of each student should be maximized. Guidance and counselling is provided by all education personnel to support, help and guide students to proceed according to their own capabilities in their studies and to make correct and appropriate decisions concerning their education (including their path to general or vocational or both at upper secondary level) and careers.

Educational support also includes remedial instruction or support for students with special educational needs. Schools and teachers are responsible for identifying those who may be falling behind. These students receive additional support, such as remedial instruction. If required, teacher assistants and special education teachers are available to provide further support. All municipalities and larger schools have student welfare teams which include teachers, a school nurse, a school psychologist, a student counsellor and the principal. Student welfare teams have regular meetings to share information, discuss issues related to students and deal with these issues as soon as possible.

As for support for students with special educational needs, the rationale is to provide

special needs education primarily in mainstream education. All students of compulsory school age have the right to general support, that is, high-quality education as well as guidance and support. Intensified support will be given to those students who need regular support measures or several forms of support at the same time. The aim is to prevent existing problems from becoming more serious. If students cannot adequately cope with mainstream education with general or intensified support, they will be given special support. Students with special educational needs are provided with individual education plans.

Since the immigrant population in Finland has increased significantly in recent years, more supporting measures are provided for immigrants and people of immigrant origin. For instance, preparatory education for immigrants are organised by education providers to enable the migrants to enter basic or upper secondary education.

2.1.3 Features of Finnish Education – Preparing Students for the Future

Comprehensive schools provide nine years of compulsory education to all students. There is no tracking or streaming, and a voluntary tenth year is available for students who are unable to enter upper secondary level education upon completion of ninth grade. Approximately 2% of students leaving comprehensive schools take part in the tenth year which provides an opportunity for students to improve, prepare for and continue with upper secondary education or vocational training.

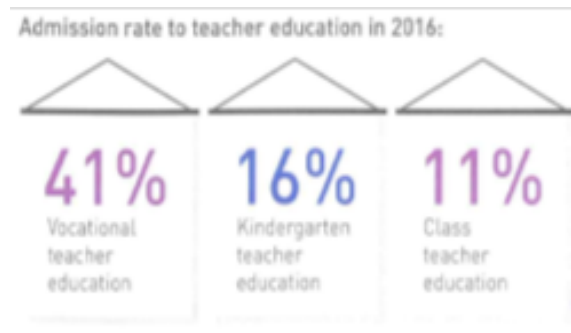
To prepare students for the future, Finland has well-developed general and vocational education and other training programmes. Finland has high upper secondary education attainment rates and both general and vocational education and training (VET) options are available. At the end of the three-year general education curriculum, students can take the national matriculation examination which provides access to tertiary education. A modular structure allows students to combine general education and VET studies. This contributes to prevent dropout and ensures flexibility within the system.

VET facilitates students entering into the labour market. Students can pursue VET in upper secondary and in universities of applied sciences at the tertiary level of education. VET qualification provides formal eligibility for tertiary education. The rates of graduation in pre-vocational / vocational programmes are high.

A VET reform is underway in Finland which takes effect from 2018. The main goal of the reform is to improve the status of VET in Finnish society. The funding system and structure will be renewed while keeping various educational paths open. Preserving the eligibility for further studies and ensuring regionally comprehensive education network

is an important aspect when planning VET reform. The objective of the reform is to adopt the competence-based approach.

2.1.4 Features of Finnish Education – Trust, Proficiency and Responsibility of School Leaders and Teachers



Finland has competent teachers. Teaching is an attractive career in Finland and the teacher education institutions can select the most suitable applicants for the teaching profession. Recently, less than a quarter of applicants admitted to teacher education. For basic and general upper secondary education,

teachers are required to hold a Master degree (for teachers in vocational education and training, they have to hold a higher education degree). To be a school leader, principals are required to have a teacher qualification, a certification in educational administration and teaching experience. Teachers and principals also participate actively in in-service-training. Because of the high qualification of teaching professions and the culture of trust in Finland, teachers and principals are highly respected in society.

Being trusted, teachers have high autonomy in work. They have considerable pedagogical autonomy to interpret the curricula and to choose teaching methods and materials, as well as resources and methods to continuously assess students' progress. There is no formal inspection for teachers but the principal will discuss with the teachers regularly on their teaching progress and students' learning. Local authorities even invite teachers of each school in the region to plan the local curricular together. With the involvement in developing the local curricular together, teachers own the curriculum and have commitment to implement the curriculum well.

2.1.5 Features of Finnish Education – Governance at Local Level

The education system is flexible and the administration is based on the principle of “centralized steering – local implementation”. At the national level, there are two tiers of national administration: the Ministry of Education and Culture and the Finnish National Agency for Education. The Ministry of Education and Culture is responsible for formulating education policy, preparation of legislation and provision of state funding. The Finnish National Agency for Education is a national development agency responsible for national core curricular and qualification requirements, support for

evidence-based policy-making and services for learners.

While supportive administration is provided at national level, the local authorities make the decisions and play a key role in education. Municipalities / local authorities are responsible for the provision of education and the implementation, like organising basic education, making decision on allocation of funding, designing and implementing local curriculum, as well as recruiting and training personnel. The extent of autonomy schools have is also determined by local authorities. The schools have the right to provide educational services according to their own administrative arrangements and visions, as long as the basic functions, determined by law, are carried out.

There is no monitoring of the schools' performance at national level though there are national evaluations of learning outcomes. Such national evaluations are for the national level to understand how well the objectives have been reached as set in the core curricula and qualification requirements. The principals, meanwhile, have to report to the school boards the administration of the schools, for example, the use of funding and the appointment matter of the schools.

2.2 The Finnish Curriculum Development

2.2.1 The National Core Curriculum 2014

In the Finnish National Core Curriculum, there are four core beliefs:

- First, students are active participants.
- Second, learning takes place in different learning environments and is a product of interaction among students, teachers and other adults.
- Third, development of learning-to-learn skills is the basis of goal-oriented and life-long learning.
- Fourth, students' interests, values, ways of working and emotions guide the processes of learning and motivation.

2.2.1.1 An Overview on the process of the Curriculum Reform

Hierarchy of the National Core Curriculum

In Finland, all schools are governed by teaching legislation, the national curriculum and the local curriculum.¹

¹ http://www.oph.fi/koulutus_ja_tutkinnot/perusopetus/opetussuunnitelma_ja_tuntijako

A. Teaching Legislations

The Teaching Legislations are nationwide acts such as the Basic Education Act (628/1998), the Basic Education Act (852/1998), the Government Decree on National Objectives and Lectures in Basic Education (422/2012), which include provisions on general objectives, subjects, language of instruction, the principles of organization and the rights and obligations of the pupils. During our visits and attachments, it was not difficult to hear school management and teachers saying that they must follow the National Core Curriculum in running the school or in teaching otherwise it would be “Against the LAW”.

B. The National Core Curriculum

The National Core Curriculum 2014 defines the key aspects of education and teaching, such as the value and function of basic education, the principles, the main contents of the subject matter, student's guidance and support, assessment, student's education, the home and school education, the learning environment and school policies.

C. Local Curriculum and school annual plans

The local curriculum is based on the basics of the core curriculum. Its formation is the responsibility of the organizer of the education, which is usually the municipality or the Education Consortium. The curriculum is the foundation of school education and teaching. Each school providing basic education must have a curriculum. Students have the right to receive guidance and counseling in the school curriculum.

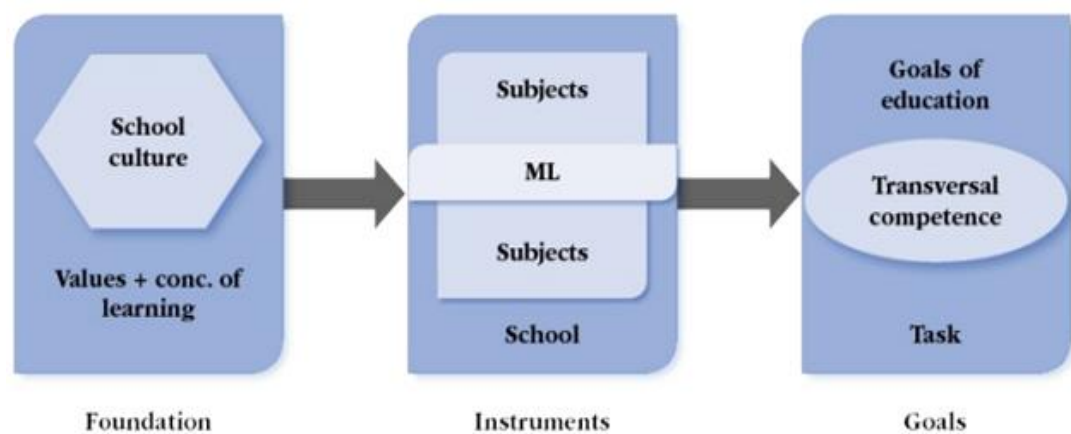
The curriculum usually includes a *municipality-specific part*, which is followed by all the municipalities in the municipality, as well as the *school-specific sections* that the schools themselves draw up. Those who are in custody have the opportunity to participate in the school's curriculum and in defining educational goals. Students' and parents' views can also be included in the curriculum.

The textbooks and other teaching materials are used in the teaching, but the local curriculum and the annual plan drawn up on the basis of it are the documents on which the education and teaching of the school are based. The student has the right to know the curriculum of their school.

2.2.2 School-based Multidisciplinary Curriculum

2.2.2.1 Introduction: Multidisciplinary learning modules in the new curriculum

Each school year, every school must have at least one clearly defined theme, project or course that combines the content of different subjects and deals with the selected theme from the perspective of several subjects. Students are entitled to at least one integrative, multidisciplinary learning module every school year. Learning modules integrate skills and knowledge of various school subjects, teachers work together. Students participate in the planning of these modules. Goals, content and ways of working are planned and decided at the local level. They should be interesting and meaningful from the students' point of view. They realize the principles of the school culture and promote the development of transversal competences. Through multidisciplinary learning modules, the school can bring the core values in school culture to their students and develop students' transversal competence.



Finnish National Board of Education (2016) National Core Curriculum for Basic Education 2014. Helsinki, Finland: Next Print Oy.

2.2.2.2 Integrative instruction and multidisciplinary learning modules in basic education

The school should provide at least one multidisciplinary learning module every school year. The duration of the modules must be adequate for students to focus on the contents of the module and to work in a goal oriented and versatile manner. Multidisciplinary learning modules (MLs) are study periods of integrative instruction based on cooperation between subjects. Their implementation should showcase the school's values and conception of learning. The learning modules express in concrete terms the principles that guide the development of the operating culture of basic education and

support the development of transversal competence.

Foundation

Integrative instruction is a vital part of a school culture that supports comprehensive basic education. It enables the students to structure the meaningful relationships between the phenomena via linking knowledge and skills in various fields and, in interaction with others. This allows the students to perceive the significance of topics they learn at school for their own life and community, and for society and humankind. In the learning process, pupils are supported to expand and structure their worldview. A precondition for integrative instruction is a pedagogical approach to both the content of instruction and working methods where phenomena of the real world are examined as wholes in multidisciplinary studies. Local resources are exploited in the implementation of the multidisciplinary learning modules. The modules offer opportunities for cooperation between the school and the society.

Instruments

To implement multidisciplinary learning modules, cooperation is required among subjects with different pedagogical approaches and the school's other activities. All subjects are in turn involved in implementing the learning modules as required by the current topic. Themes that are upholding the principles of the school culture, interesting to the students, and suitable for cooperation between subjects and teachers are sought to be used as contents of the learning modules.

Goal

Multidisciplinary learning modules promote the achievement of the goals set for basic education and the development of transversal competences. The topics of the modules are planned locally to reflect the principles of school culture. The students are given feedback on their work during learning modules, and the competence demonstrated by the students is taken into account in assessment for the subject.

2.2.2.3 Cross-curricular themes in General Upper Secondary Schools

Foundation

Cross-curricular themes are educational challenges with social significance. They have been taken into consideration in individual subjects and themes that guide the development of the school culture. In practice, cross-curricular themes are transversal

competence areas crossing the boundaries of individual subjects. The learning objectives of cross-curricular themes are as follows:

- analysis of contemporary phenomena and its operating environments
- crossing knowledge boundaries of different disciplines
- collaborative learning
- courage to change the future
- Instruments

Instruments

The cross-curricular themes are taken into account in all subjects of the upper secondary school culture. Voluntary work, work placements or some other activity outside the school can be used as part of the implementation of the cross-curricular theme. Contents for thematic studies can be selected from cross-curricular themes. The cross-curricular themes are school-based and the followings are some common themes in upper secondary schools:

Common cross-curricular themes				
well-being & safety	sustainable way of life & global responsibility	knowledge of cultures & internationality	multiliteracy & media	technology & society

Goal

Cross-curricular themes emphasize transversal general knowledge and ability, understanding entities, ethic responsibility and global awareness. It promotes learning across the boundaries of individual subjects by developing one's information acquisition and application capabilities and problem-solving skills. Through the experiences of inquiry-based learning and participation in multi-literacy, allowing one to understand the characteristics of different fields of science and arts. The student becomes accustomed to assess the reliability of information. It contributes to togetherness, participation and well-being by strengthening interaction, cooperation, and expression skills. The students gather experiences of goal-oriented activity and peer learning in teams and projects during their studies. It encourages the students to engage in different art expressions, physical activity and cultural life as the basic preconditions for health and well-being. The students develop the learning-to-learn skills through self-regulation learning strategies. It benefits in developing their competences and choices making in their future.

2.2.3 Multidisciplinary Curriculum Transition from Primary to Secondary Schools

Summarizing the Finnish cases from primary school to upper secondary school, the focus of Finnish education is learning to learn. Finnish primary education focuses on phenomenon-based learning through materials based curriculum, students learn various subjects through the same class teacher by the study of nature and life. Class teachers follow a core curriculum but have autonomy in delivery and choice of learning materials. Teachers devise personalized multidisciplinary curriculum for different learners via differentiated instructions. Teachers play significant role in providing basic instruction and knowledge in the discovery learning process. Lower secondary school applied inquiry-based learning through implementing a game design project by integrating various subjects in 10 school days. In responding to the individual diversity, teachers delegated different working tasks to every individual according to one's talent and interest. Teachers play a significant role in training the trainers by supporting students via making necessary logistic arrangement. Self-directed learning has been implemented through this project by focusing on learners and makes them active, independent, self-confident and goal orientated participants. TeamED Learning Path in the Upper Secondary School provides a natural co-operative platform in the integration of school subjects. Self-directed learning has been further promoted via self-directed team project and problem solving, from classroom setting to overseas study trip.

Gradual transition in curriculum design is found from primary to secondary schools. The role of teachers changes from instructors to facilitators to supporters in learning. The self-directed learning skills of students will be naturally built up through various stages of learning.

Part 3: Thematic Studies of Finland Education: Teacher Education in Finland

3.1 Teacher Education in Finland

3.1.1 Initial Teacher Education

According to the old decrees issued in 1979, 1995 and 2005 decree, all the candidates have to obtain a Master's degree to become a qualified teacher. To get into the initial teacher education programme, one has to complete general upper-secondary school, pass the Finnish national matriculation examination and national entrance examination (VAKAVA) for all eight universities that offer teacher education programmes.

Teachers in basic and general upper secondary education are required to hold a Master's degree that includes research and practice-based studies. Teaching and guidance staff within day-care centres generally have Bachelor's degrees while pre-primary teachers in schools hold a Master's degree.

Teachers in the first six years of basic education are usually generalists, class teachers, whereas those in the last three years and at upper secondary level are subject specialists, subject teachers. Class teachers have a Master's degree in education and they may specialise in teaching one or several subjects in their minor subject studies. Subject teachers have completed a Master's degree in the subject they teach as well as pedagogical studies. They major in specific subjects and do their pedagogical studies over a five-year programme or as a separate module after graduation.

The qualification requirements for guidance counsellors are a Master's degree and guidance counsellor studies. Special needs teachers help learners who have more serious problems both in mainstream education or special education. They are required to hold a Master's with special pedagogy as the main subject of a teacher or a teacher qualification including special needs teacher studies.

Teachers at polytechnics are required to have either a Master's or post-graduate Licentiate's degree while university teachers are generally required to hold a Doctoral or other postgraduate degree.

Finnish initial teacher education is research-based, with emphasis on developing pedagogical knowledge. There is also emphasis on teaching practicum which includes a minor portion of basic teaching skill practice in front of peers in students groups and a more significant portion of required teaching practice at schools. Teacher training

schools and ordinary municipal schools form the network of teaching practicum while teacher training schools constitute the main portion of the network. Teacher training schools have higher professional staff requirements and supervising teachers must prove their competency to work with student teachers. These schools are also expected to pursue research and development roles in teacher education in collaboration with the university.

3.1.2 Teachers' continuing professional development

According to the employment contract, there are 3 mandatory professional development days annually, with professional development programmes offered by the local education authorities, of which all teachers must take part. It is up to individual teachers or school principals to decide how much time beyond these 3 days and what type of professional development is needed.

Continuing education and training have been divided into the following forms on the basis of the responsible decision-making bodies:

- Self-motivated continuing teacher education — teachers have the responsibility and power of decision for participating in the education and they may receive support from society in the form of various study grants. Teachers especially favour continuing education that helps them update their professional knowledge in their own subject or field of vocational education and training. The employer decides on the participation in education during working hours.
- Education that is important in terms of education policy and priorities is funded by the State. The budget for continuing professional training (CPD) for education personnel is allocated through a tendering process administered by the Finnish National Board of Education. Universities, polytechnics, special needs institutions, teacher training schools and other institutions that possess the required special expertise in the field of education and training can apply for these funds.
- The state-funded CPD for 2017 focuses on the following themes:
 - Leadership and school development
 - Pedagogy, subject-specific and vocational competences
 - Well-being and safety
 - Cultural diversity

- Competence-based approaches and learner-centredness
- Digitalisation and ICT

Participation in continuing professional development activities does not provide teachers with formal benefits, such as salary increases or promotions. Part of the CPD is compulsory, but studies show that teachers' participation in CPD is much more than formally required. Thus the main motivation is professional development, updating and renewing one's own knowledge and competences as well as professional well-being.

Professional development and in-service programmes for teachers are independent with initial teacher education and often with different focus on essential areas of teaching and school development. Municipalities as the overseers of primary and lower-and upper-secondary schools, are responsible for providing teachers with opportunities for professional development or in-service training, based on their needs.

There is a difference among municipalities' and schools' ability to finance professional development for teachers. As the central government has only contributed part of the budget and the remaining are contributed by municipalities at local level, some schools receive more resources allocations for professional development than others, in particular during economic downturn, professional development budgets are often shrunk. Some Finnish municipalities organize in-service programmes uniformly for all teachers with some latitude for individual schools to decide what would be more beneficial for them.

- The Osaava Programme (2010-16), a national fixed-term programme for continuing professional development (CPD), aims to ensure systematic CPD of staff in schools. The programme supports education providers to systematically and continually develop the skills and knowledge of their staff according to locally identified needs. Participants in Osaava and other government-funded CPD increased from 30 000 in 2009 to almost 70 000 in 2013.
- Finnish teachers are using Open University studies for enhancing their competences. This participation is voluntary. It is not part of systematic continuing training. It is not funded by employers or National Board of Education. In Finland, they have 14 Open Universities which are integral parts of the universities. Open University studies do not lead to a degree. The task of Open Universities in Finland is to promote educational equality and lifelong learning.

3.1.3 School Leadership

Overview

Few municipalities have systematic training and career paths for principalship whereas searching for principals through open application procedures is a phenomenon in Finland (83.8 %). Selection of new school principals is often based on procedures that are commonly used among business sector, with interviews and aptitude tests to confirm the suitability of the candidate. In many schools, principals have a small number of classes each week. Three out of four lower-secondary school principals in Finland have teaching duties in school, which are relatively higher compared to other TALIS countries. On average, only one-third of principals in other TALIS countries have teaching responsibilities.

Aspiring Principal

To become a principal, one has to fulfill the following requirements:

- Five-year master's degree from a university
- Qualified teachers
- Sufficient teaching experiences
- Obtain certificate in Educational Administration (15 credits), which covers 1) Basics of public law; 2) General and municipal administration; 3) Educational administration; 4) Human resources administration; and 5) Financial administration.

Induction Programme

Principals' induction programmes are mainly organised by universities and Educode Oy. Universities focus on practical applications of theory, whereas Educode focuses on solution of everyday problems. The core content of the induction programme covers 1) School organisation, administration and finances; 2) School curriculum and learning results; 3) Human resources management and leadership; and 4) Strategic planning.

3.1.4 The pathway from novice teacher to school leader

The teaching profession is highly appreciated in Finland and is consistently rated as one of the most admired professions, ranked alongside doctors and lawyers. Finns recognise the value of the teachers and trust their professional insights and judgements. The professional research-based teacher education constituting a master's degree attracts

many outstanding high-school graduates. As becoming a teacher in Finland is highly competitive, without solid knowledge, skills and moral commitment, it is hard to get into initial teacher education programmes as there is careful quality control at the entry.

In fact, the intake of high quality high-school graduates into the teacher training programmes ensures teaching staff in the education field are of a high caliber. With research-based teacher education, these high-quality student teachers become analytical professionals with in-depth knowledge of the subjects they teach. They are equipped with skills to incorporate educational theories and latest teaching methodologies in the classroom to cope with students of different needs, based on recent research as well as professional observations and experiences.

Initial teacher education, indeed has a heavy impact on shaping student teachers the way of being a teacher in their career path. Through professional teacher training schools, various skills have been passed to student teachers which could be applied to the life of teaching, for example, skills of co-teaching and phenomenon-based learning as well as research-based education, which are found to be the strengths of Finnish education and could be applied to education in Hong Kong.

However, continuous professional development for teachers in Finland is not quite compatible with the initial teacher education as there is disparity among municipalities and schools regarding the resources for and arrangement of professional development for teachers.

As the salary discrepancy between teachers and school leaders is narrow, teachers have little monetary motivation to aspire to be a principal. The salary structures of Finland teachers and school heads are flat when compared with Hong Kong and also other European countries. The continuous professional development of teachers and school heads is not triggered by monetary rewards, career prospect or other external factors. Teachers and school heads are self-motivated to seek continuous improvement based on their professionalism and social expectation. The fact that teachers and school heads earned high social status and trusted by their community is one of the key to their success in professionalism.

The required knowledge and skills for teachers and principals are highly different in Finland context. Unlike other countries, principals may not necessarily be instructional leaders or curriculum leaders in Finnish schools. Instead, they mainly take up administrative role for schools and municipalities. For preparation of school leaders, the training of school leaders focuses on administrative and management. Such significant difference in the role of school principals facilitates teachers to develop

professional autonomy.

In sum, the key to success in teacher education comes from an intensive preparation in pre-service programmes followed by an extensive professional autonomy in in-service development. Before taking up their duties, all teachers and school leaders in Finland are trained with a structured programme to ensure their professional knowledge and skills are up to standard. After the structured training, teachers are granted with full autonomy to design their curriculum and instruction with minimal accountability measures. The structured flexibility in teacher development in Finland would allow all teachers to develop on their own pace with a common solid foundation. Although teachers work to meet students' needs with their own strategies, alignment of good teaching has already done in the teacher and principal preparation programme.

Part 4: Conclusion

In a nutshell, the three-week Finland attachment programme was an eye-opening experience which helped widen our horizon in education. As mentioned earlier in the report, despite the contextual and cultural differences between Hong Kong and Finland, it did refresh our understanding of the latest development of the Education Reform in Finland and offered precious chance for us to reflect on ways for the betterment of Hong Kong education.

Appendix: Participants List



Name	Committee/Division/ School	Remarks
Mr YEUNG Sai-man	COTAP SCITE Convenor	Taking part in week 1 of the programme
Prof HAU Kit-tai	COTAP SCTPD Convenor	
Sr WONG Yeuk-han, Cecilia	COTAP SCSL Convenor	
Ms CHAN Ka-mun, Carmen	COTAP member	
Mr YUNG Po-shu, Benjamin	PDT Division	
Ms LI Hoi-yan, Helen	PDT Division	
Mr MAK Kwan-wing, Kelvin	PDT Division	
Ms KOO Wai-yin, Vienaline	PDT Division	
Ms LAU Mei-kuen	ECP Division	
Ms NG Wing-yan	SD Division	
Ms YOUNG Hoi-yan	SE Division	
Ms HSIEN Lai-hing	QASBS Division	
Ms HON Hin-yan	SA Division	

Ms LEUNG Yvetta, Ruth	Homantin GSS	Taking part in week 1 to week 3 of the programme
Mr WONG Kwok-keung	Tsuen Wan GSS	
Ms WONG Chui-han	Farm Road GPS	
Ms LI Siu-mei	Kowloon Tong GPS	
Ms LEUNG Kin-yi	SMKMCF Ma Ko Pan Memorial College	
Ms TSE Siu-wah	Jockey Club Ti-I College	
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