



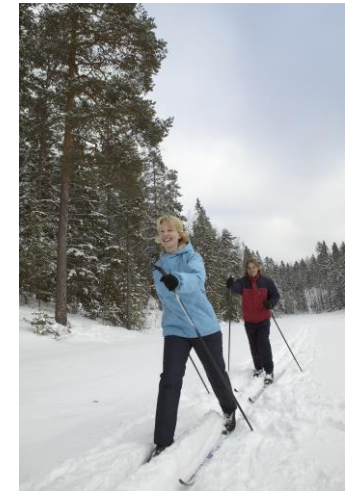
FINNISH NATIONAL  
BOARD OF EDUCATION

# Education in Finland



## Finland in brief

- ◆ population 5.4 million (18 inhabitants / sq. km)
- ◆ two official languages: Finnish and Swedish
- ◆ foreigners: 4.8 % of the population
- ◆ education level of the working age population:
  - 13 % basic education
  - 45 % upper secondary education
  - 42 % tertiary education







# Underlying educational understanding is based on equity

Everyone has the right to basic education free of charge. The public authorities shall guarantee for everyone equal opportunity to receive other educational services in accordance with their ability and special needs, as well as the opportunity to develop themselves without being prevented by economic hardship.

(Constitution of Finland)





# Education developed in partnership

National  
authorities

Local  
authorities

Teachers'  
union

Social  
partners

Parents

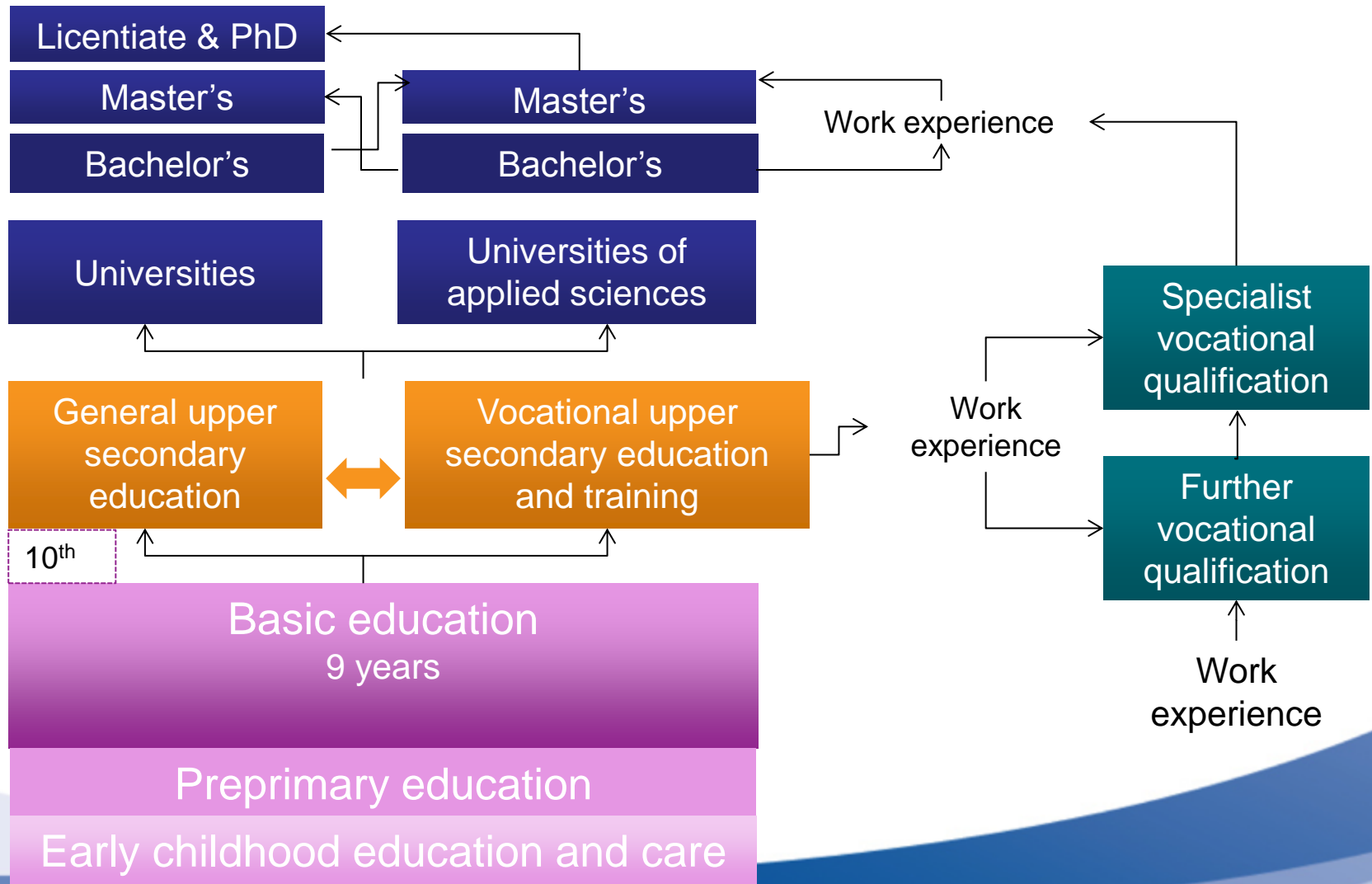
Pupils and  
students

Research  
institutions

Relevant  
stakeholders

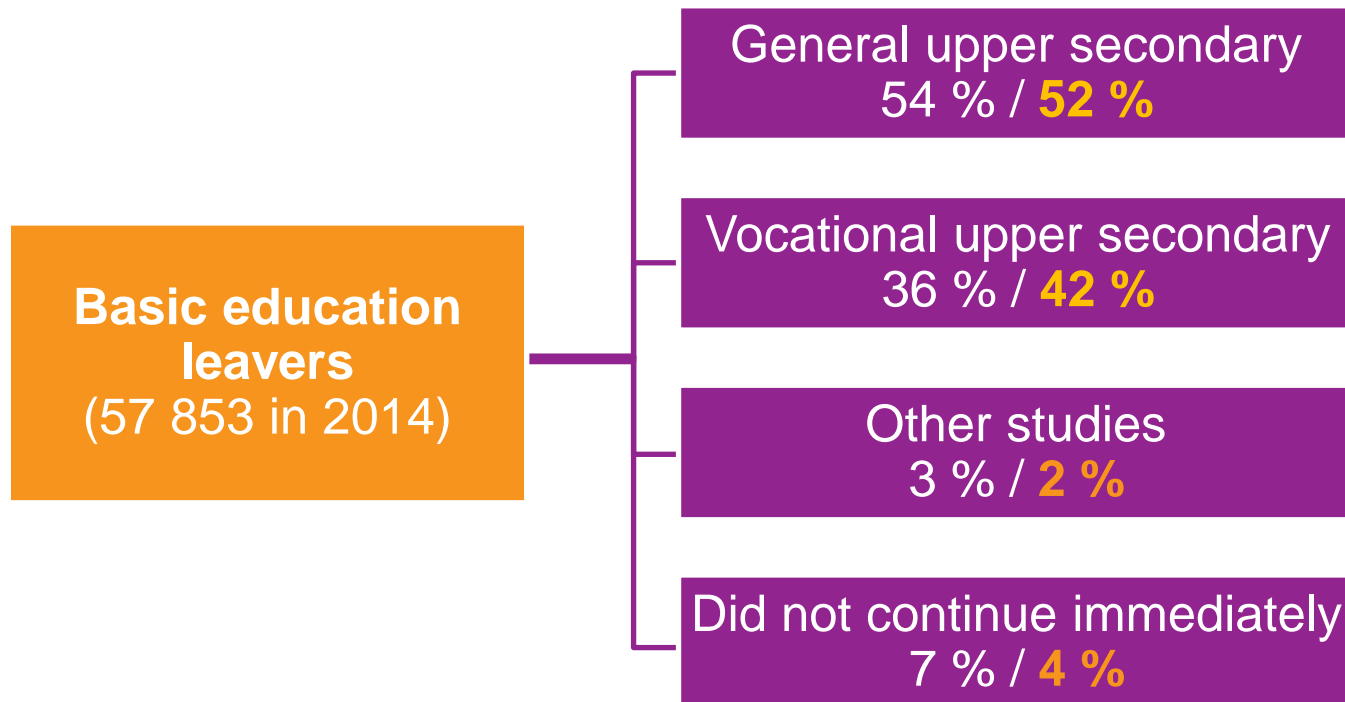


# No dead-ends in the education system





# What happens immediately after compulsory education? 2001 / 2014





# Specificities of the Finnish education system

Teachers highly trained

Teaching attractive profession

Annual instruction time low

Focus on learning rather than testing

Focus on support

Non-selective

Flexible grouping

Basic education starts at age 7

Evolution

Public funding

Free education

Central steering

Local decisions

Co-operation

Education a priority

Decentralised

Trust



# Two-tier national administration

## Ministry of Education and Culture

- ◆ Education policy
- ◆ Preparation of legislation
- ◆ State funding

## Finnish National Board of Education

- ◆ National development agency
- ◆ National core curricula & qualification requirements
- ◆ Support for evidence-based policy-making
- ◆ Services for learners





## Central steering



### Central

- ◆ Educational priorities
- ◆ Minimum time allocation
- ◆ National core curricula
- ◆ Size of state subsidies

## Local decisions



### Local

- ◆ Educational priorities
- ◆ Local curricula
- ◆ Allocation of subsidies
- ◆ Class size
- ◆ Recruitment
- ◆ Teacher "evaluation"
- ◆ Quality assurance



# Current issues

- ◆ Early childhood education and care reform
- ◆ Curriculum reform in upper general education
- ◆ Digitalisation of matriculation examination
- ◆ Vocational education and training reform
- ◆ Admission to higher education
- ◆ Future of liberal adult education
- ◆ Funding
- ◆ ICT in focus, learning environments

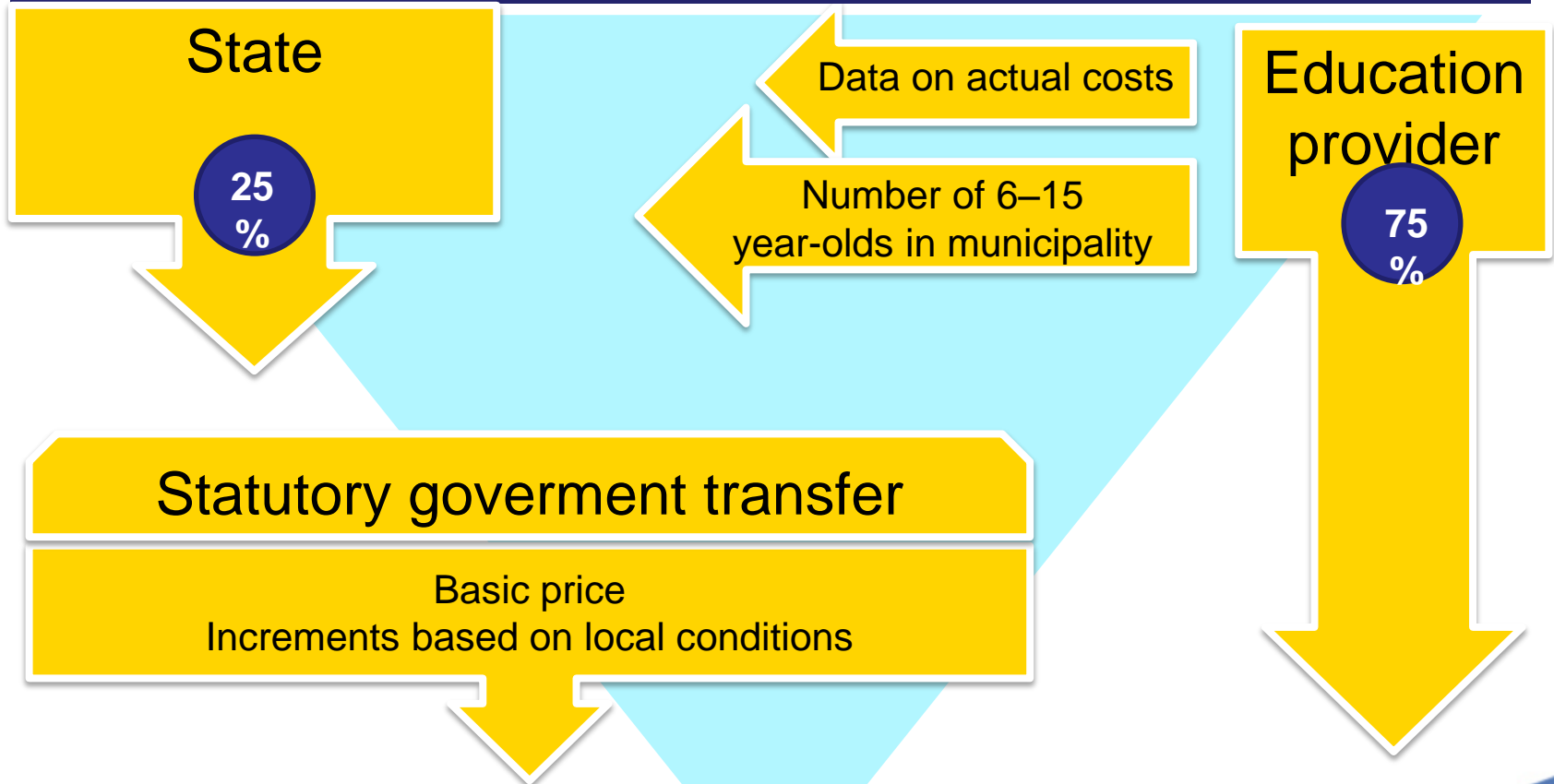


Basic education is

free for pupils and families



## Funding of pre-primary and basic education in a nutshell



Funding for pre-primary and basic education



# Expenditure on education 2014



## Operative costs per pupil/student

basic education	<b>8 826 €</b>
general upper secondary	<b>7 746 €</b>
vocational upper secondary	<b>10 362 €</b>



Well-being promotes learning



# Support to well-being & learning

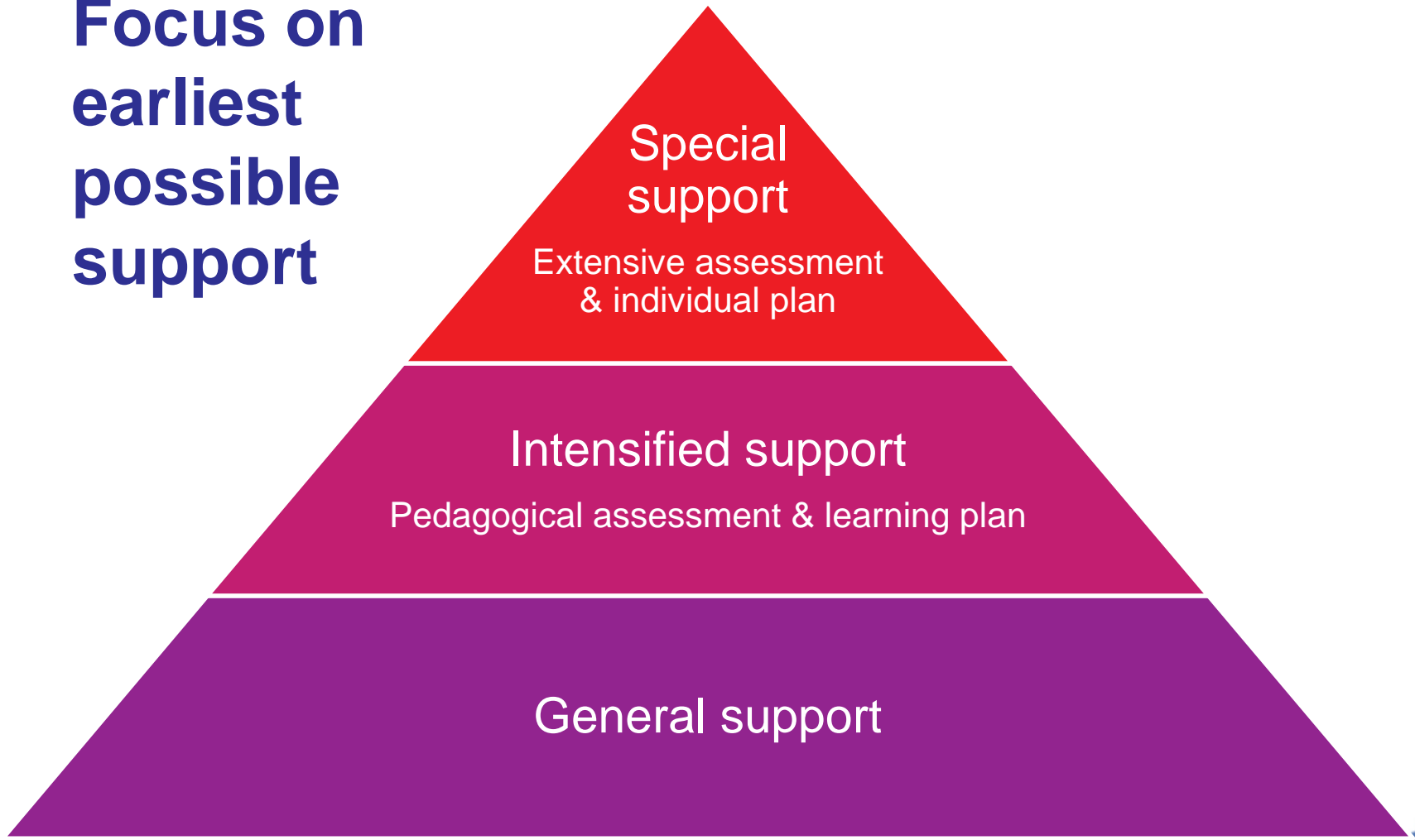
Maternity &  
child health  
clinics

Early childhood  
education  
and care

School



# Focus on earliest possible support





## Pupil and student welfare

Collective  
and  
individual  
approach

Health  
care

School  
meals

Safety



# School meals

School meal generally consist of typical Finnish foods.  
A good school meal consists of



warm main course



vegetables



bread and table spread



drink

water







# Guidance and counselling



- ◆ Subjective right
- ◆ Part of the curriculum
- ◆ Collective and individual approach
- ◆ Develops learning skills
- ◆ Supports self-confidence, participation and personal growth
- ◆ Focus on transition points

Quality assurance is a  
tool for development

# Education providers have main responsibility for quality

## Self-evaluation



Skills demonstrations  
Competence-based  
qualifications

System & thematic  
evaluations

National evaluations of  
learning outcomes

International  
assessments



# Evaluation of learning outcomes function as traffic lights

National  
evaluation plan

Sample-based

Stratified

Mother tongue  
and mathematics  
every other year

Other subjects  
according to  
policy priorities

Child's overall development

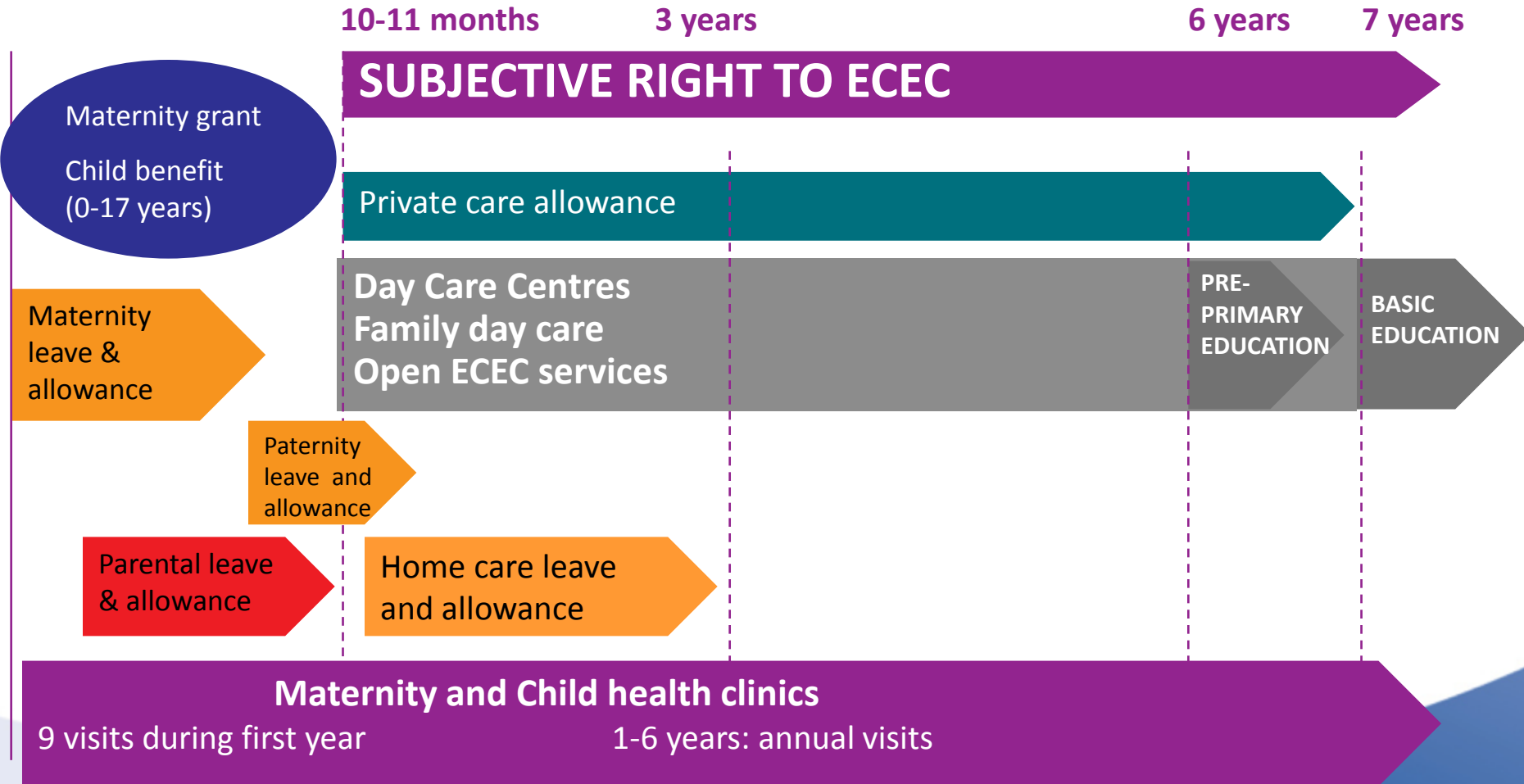
and joy of learning

emphasised in Early Childhood

Education and Care



# Early childhood education and care (ECEC)





# Early childhood education and care (ECEC)



Photo: Liikuntapäiväkoti

- ◆ Universal entitlement (0-7 years)
- ◆ Main forms: Day care centres and family day care
- ◆ Integrated approach to education, care & teaching => EduCare model
- ◆ Moderate fees



## ECEC plans and curriculum

National  
curriculum  
guidelines on  
ECEC

National core  
curriculum  
for  
preprimary  
education

Local  
curricula &  
plans



Child's overall well-being in focus

Integrative education

Individual ECEC plan, no learning standards

Learning through play essential

Language, physical activity, exploration, artistic experiences  
and self-expression

ECEC partnership



# Pre-primary education at the age of six

- ◆ free and compulsory
- ◆ provided in day care centres or schools
- ◆ minimum 700 hours per year
  
- ◆ promoting child's prerequisites for growth, development and learning
- ◆ a continuous learning path from ECEC to school
- ◆ integrative education
- ◆ learning through play, joy of learning



Basic education:

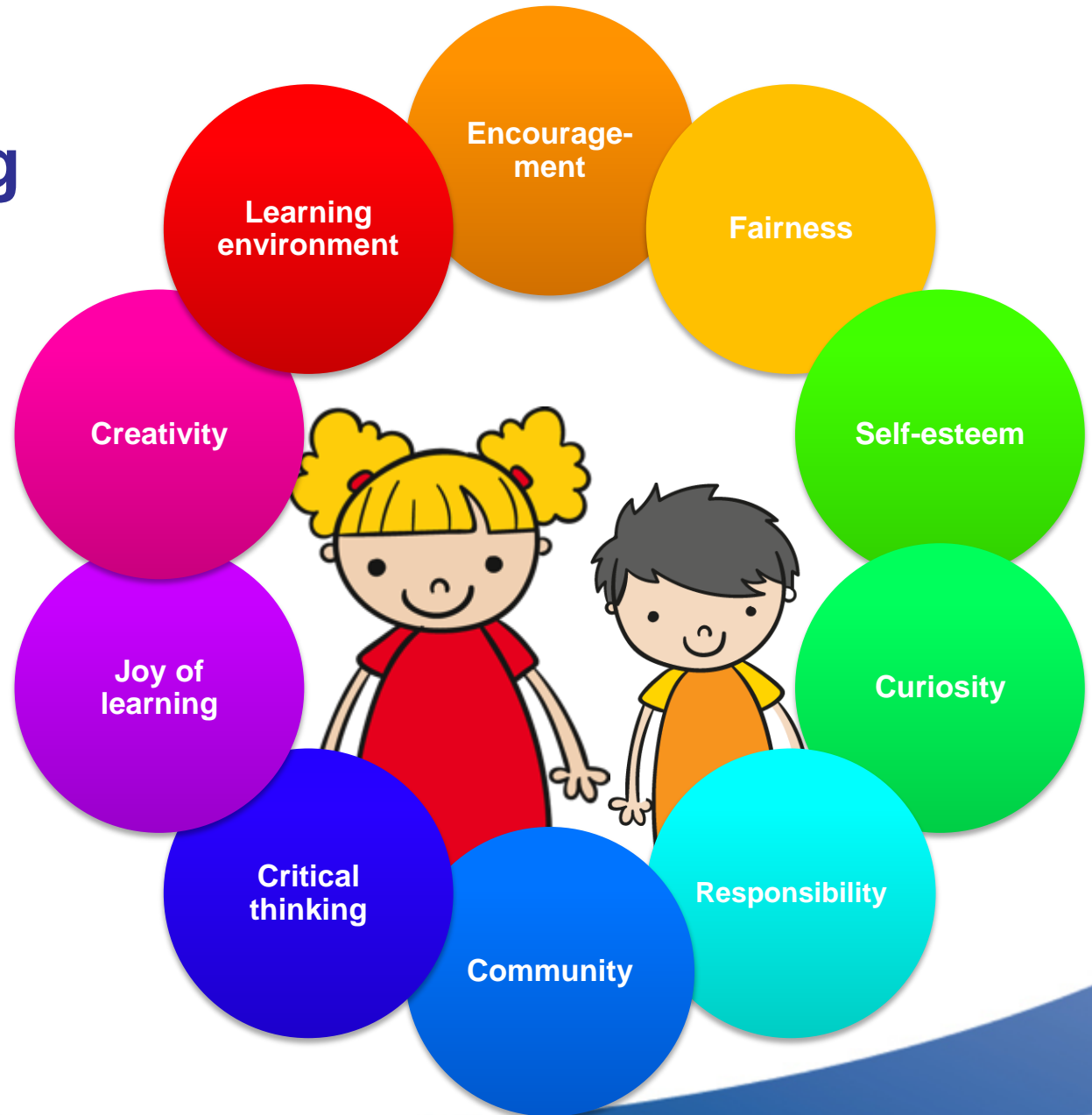
Every pupil is unique and

has the right to

high-quality education



# Maximising potential: every child is unique





# Rethinking competences

National Goals for  
Basic Education  
and Transversal  
Competences

- ◆ knowledge
- ◆ skills
- ◆ values
- ◆ attitudes
- ◆ will







# National minimum time allocation 2016 -> sample of subjects (annual weekly lessons<sup>1</sup>)

<b>Forms</b>	<b>1–2</b>	<b>3–6</b>	<b>7–9</b>	<b>Total</b>
Mother tongue & literature	14	18	10	42
Mathematics	6	15	11	32
A language (1st foreign language)	–	9	7	16
B language (2nd national language)	–	2	4	6

<b>Forms</b>	<b>1–6</b>	<b>7–9</b>	<b>Total</b>
Environment and science	14	17	31
History & civics	5	7	12
Arts, crafts & sports			62
<sup>1</sup> Total annual no of lessons x 38		Total min	222



# Basic education curriculum reform

## Core ideas

Active learner

Sustainable way  
of living

Integrative  
teaching

School as a learning  
community

Comprehensive  
education



# Conception of learning

## Learner's active role

- Sets targets
- Reflects & analyses
- Solves problems

## Interaction

- Learns with others and in different environments
- Understands consequences

## Learning to learn

- Recognises own way of learning
- Applies this to promote learning

## Self-conception and confidence

- Helps setting targets
- Receives feedback

General upper secondary education

aims at

broad-based knowledge



# Upper secondary education

Flexibility

Personalisation

Individualisation

Modular/course structure

Combining general & vocational studies

Eligibility for Higher Education





## Distribution of lesson hours in general upper secondary education


Compulsory courses	47–51
Minimum total of specialisation courses	10
Minimum total number of courses	75



## Distribution of courses 2016 -> sample of subjects

Subject	Compulsory courses	Specialisation courses
Mother tongue & literature	6	3
A-language	6	2
B-language	5	2
Other languages		8+8
Mathematics	6-10	2-3
Environment & science	5	16
Humanities & social sciences	11	14
Arts, crafts & sports	4-6	7

# Matriculation examination


- 
- ◆ Minimum 4 tests
  - ◆ Mother tongue + 3 of the following:
    - 2<sup>nd</sup> national language
    - foreign language
    - mathematics
    - general studies (one subject in sciences and humanities)
  - ◆ One or more optional tests possible
  - ◆ Biannual



vocational education

and training:

focus on competences

An illustration of two hands holding a tablet. The hands are brown with white cuffs. The tablet screen is dark grey and contains text. The background is light blue.

# Vocational education and training (VET)

School-based vocational education & training

Competence-based qualifications

Apprenticeship education and training



# Developing VET

Improving  
effectiveness

Flexibility &  
individualisation,  
Recognition of prior  
learning, learning  
environments

Drop-out &  
exclusion

Youth guarantee, funding  
reform, work-based  
learning

Quality  
improvement

Local development plans,  
quality strategies,  
competence-based



# National requirements for upper secondary vocational qualifications

## Vocational units

**135 cp**

- On-the-job learning
- Basic and field-specific study units
- Specialising study units
- Other optional units
- Skills tests

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## Core units

**35 cp**

e.g. communication, social, mathematical & world of work competences and skills

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## Free-choice units

**10 cp**

(cp = competence point, *numerical representation of the overall weight of learning outcomes in a qualification.*)



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# Key competences for lifelong learning the core

**Learning and problem solving**

**Interaction and cooperation**

**Vocational ethics**

**Health, safety and ability to function**

**Initiative and entrepreneurship**

**Sustainable development**

**Aesthetics**

**Communication and media skills**

**Mathematics and sciences**

**Technology and ICT**

**Active citizenship and different cultures**

Adult education is popular

# Adult Education and Training

General upper secondary education for adults  
Vocational adult education and training  
Adult education in Higher education institutions  
Liberal adult education  
Labour market training





## 2.2 million participants in educational institutions, adult education not leading to a qualification (2013)

### % of the population aged 25 to 64 participating in education and training (2014)

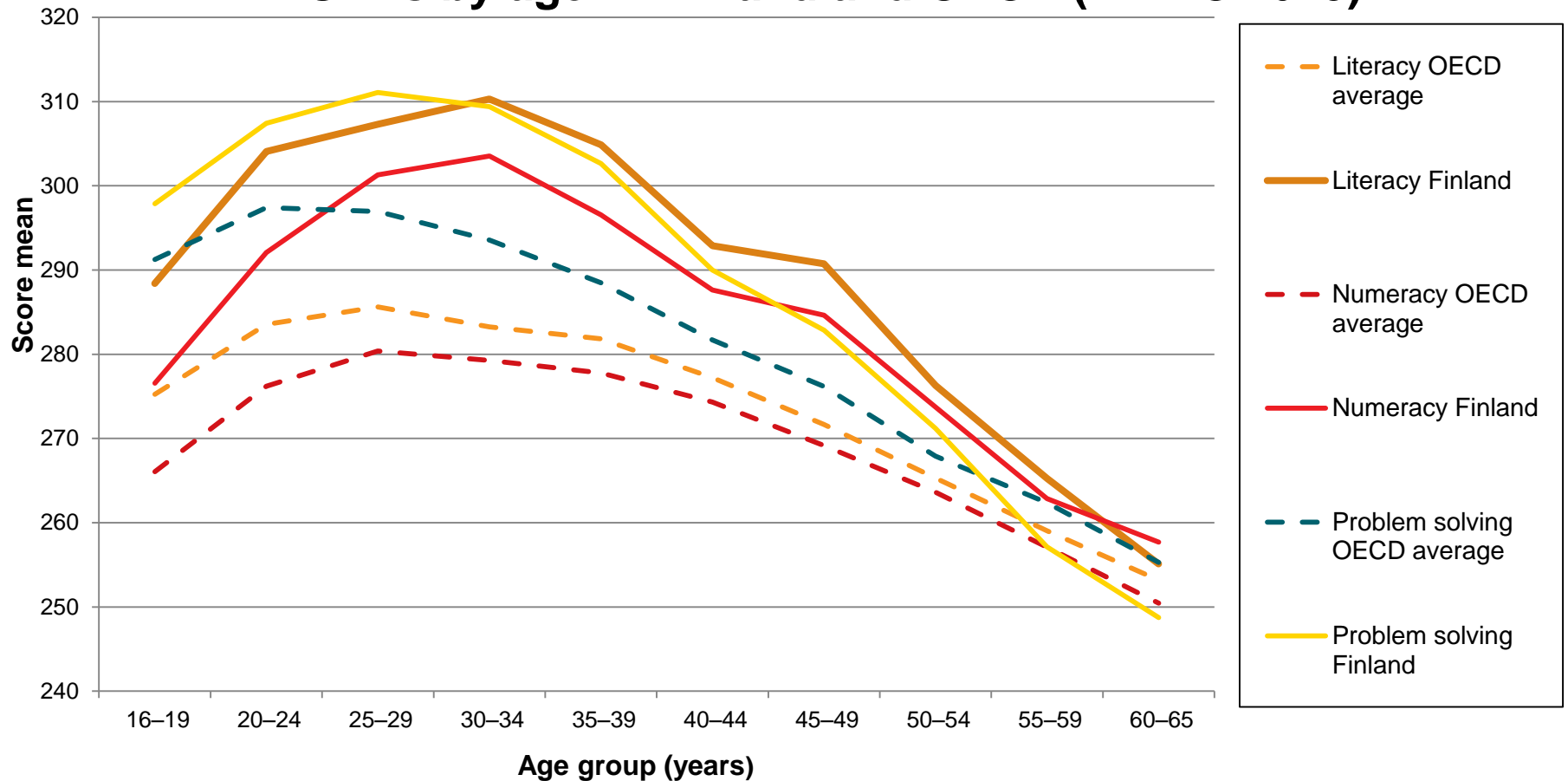
	Total	Male	Female
Finland	25.1	21.6	28.8
EU-28	10.7	9.8	11.5





# Skills and age: Finland and OECD average

## Skills by age in Finland and OECD (PIAAC 2013)



Dual model in higher education



# Higher education

## 14 universities

Conduct research and provide education based on research.

Universities interact with society and promote the effectiveness of research results

## 24 universities of applied sciences

Education based on labour market needs and research and development to support instruction and promote regional development



## Steering in Higher education

- ◆ 4-year agreements between HE institution and Ministry of Education and Culture
- ◆ target results, monitoring and resources
- ◆ Government funding ca 64% of university budgets

## HE institutions decide on

- ◆ Administration
- ◆ Admission
- ◆ Content of study programmes
- ◆ State funding

Finnish teachers are  
trusted professionals



## **Finnish teachers are supportive**

**Finnish teachers believe in:**

- equity and encouragement**
- individual support**
- strengthening the pupils' thinking skills**
- developing the pupils' self-confidence and tolerance**

Source: From goals to interaction.  
Evaluation of pedagogy in Finnish basic education 2008  
(National Council for Evaluation in Education in Finland)





# Most teachers are required a master's degree

**Kindergarten teachers**  
180 ECTS  
(3 years)

**Class teachers**  
300 ECTS  
(5 years)

**Subject teachers**  
300 ECTS  
(5–6 years)

**Teachers  
of vocational  
studies:**

Master's , Bachelor's  
+ work experience+  
pedagogical studies  
of 60 ECTS)

**Principals:**  
teacher education  
+ e.g. certificate  
in educational  
administration



# Teacher training institutions can select heavily

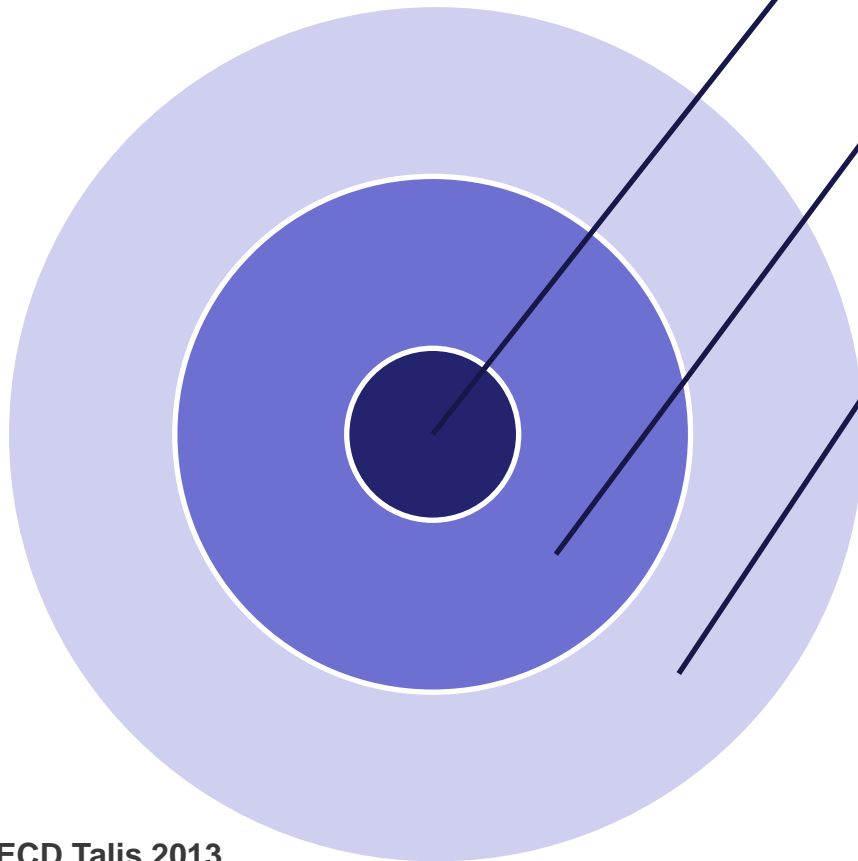
Intake into teacher education 2015 (% of those who applied)

Class teacher education	11 %
Subject teacher education	10 % – 53 %
Vocational teacher education	28 %





## Teachers feel valued



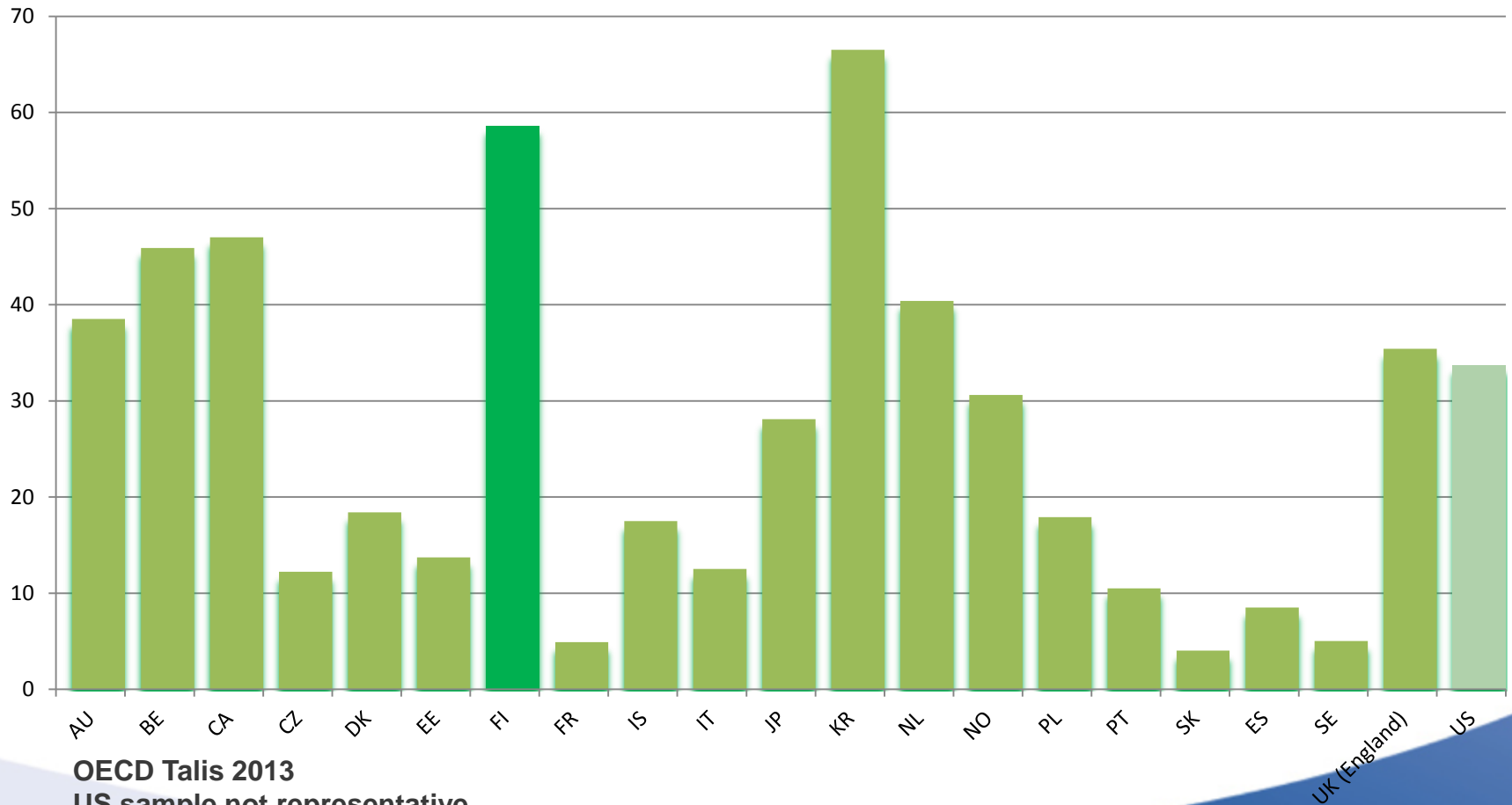
90 % satisfied with their job

70 % would choose teaching again

60 % think that their work is valued in society



# TALIS 2013: I think that the teaching profession is valued in society



OECD Talis 2013

US sample not representative



# Teacher and principal salaries in Finland

(permanent contract, average gross salaries per month 2014)

kindergarten teacher	2,600 €
class teacher, primary education	3,500 €
subject teacher, lower secondary	3,900 €
subject teacher, general upper secondary	4,500 €
principal, lower secondary education	5,500 €
principal, general upper secondary	5,800 €

**Average salary in the municipal sector in Finland 2014:**  
3,094 € (men 3,652 €, women 2,952 €)



# Salary is not the reason to become a teacher

## Salaries in the municipal sector in 2014



<sup>1</sup> Lower secondary teachers Statistics Finland, Taloussanomat

Comparing Finnish education



# Finnish education in international comparison

Instruction  
time low

Differences  
between  
school small

Girls  
outperform  
boys

Moderate  
costs

Socio-  
economic effect  
moderate

Teachers feel  
highly valued

**PISA:  
differences  
between  
schools  
smallest**



- **OECD average 37 %**
- **Finland 6 %**

Variance of performance between schools as a proportion of total performance across OECD countries



# What do the high-performing school systems have in common?

- 1 They get the right people to become teachers.
- 2 They develop these people into effective instructors.
- 3 They put in place systems and targeted support to ensure that every child is able to benefit from excellent instruction.

McKinsey&Company 2007:

How the world's best-performing school systems come out on top, p.13