

YOUTH WORK EDUCATION IN FINLAND

TOMI KIILAKOSKI



FINNISH YOUTH RESEARCH NETWORK

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I INTRODUCTION: 'WE DON'T NEED NO EDUCATION' IS ONE OF THE STUPIDEST THINGS TO SAY IN FINLAND

Perhaps the most well-known anti-education song is Pink Floyd's 'Another Brick in the Wall, Part 2'. With a chorus declaring that we do not need education or 'dark sarcasm' in the classroom, the song is a catchy call to abolish formal education and, in doing so, liberate human potential. Released in 1979, it coincided with the so-called deschooling movement of the 1970s, which emphasised learning outside formal education and called for the deschooling of societies and the development of different ways of accessing knowledge and skills training (Illich 1981). The lyrics are based on the band members' harsh personal experiences in the British school system. The writer of the song, Roger Waters, performed the song in August 2018 in Helsinki, Finland, where a local girls' choir sang with him.

I was there in the audience, amazed by the irony: they were singing an anti-education song in a country where education is valued highly and that ranks at the top of the PISA studies. I was also appalled, as were the friends with whom I attended the concert. What on earth were they thinking? Protesting against education in my country is a bit like protesting against oxygen or the use of winter clothes in the cold weather. If there is one thing in Finland that is needed, it is surely education. This is what we believe in. This is the foundation on which we have built our society.

Education has been seen as a spearhead of Finnish well-being throughout the nation's history (Rinne & Salmi 2000). To the Finnish, it is a way to not only ensure that every citizen has equal possibilities but also to build and strengthen the nation state of the relatively newly independent Finland (Ahonen 2003). When poems are written to honour education and Finnish reggae singers write hit songs emphasising the need to get an education and earn formal qualifications, they are echoing a larger societal imperative (Haapakorva & Ristikari & Kiilakoski 2018). This

attitude is alive and well today. Education is still viewed as a way to enable individuals to fulfil their potential, as a cornerstone of economic competitiveness, as a solution to various societal woes and as an end in itself. Education is one of the building blocks of the Finnish welfare state and one of the major mechanisms for creating an egalitarian society.

An illuminating example of the importance of education in Finnish society and its national narrative is a study by Finnish historian Pilvi Torsti, who asked survey participants what they believed to be the most significant events and developments in the history of Finland. Surprisingly, the most important event was not the Second World War, not the Winter War of 1939–1940, not creation of the welfare society, or the 1906 voting reform that gave women and the working and middle classes the rights to vote and to stand for election (cf. Sulkunen 2006). The great achievement of Finnish history, according to the respondents, was the creation of the current basic education system. They selected ‘Compulsory education, comprehensive school and free education’ as the most important development in the history of Finland, over any military or industrial developments. (Torsti 2012, 99–101.) The importance of education is manifested at many different levels in Finland, not only in the political system but also in the way people in Finland view history.

Given the importance of education in Finnish society, it is perhaps not surprising that youth work education in Finland is well developed and spans multiple levels of the education system. The tradition of youth work education in Finland has deep roots, especially compared to other European countries, which are only beginning to set up their educational system for youth work (O’Donovan et al. 2019). Youth work education in Finland developed rapidly after the Second World War, when Finnish society in general entered a new phase emphasising building a society based on social security networks and services. Finnish sociologist Pertti Alasuutari (1996) has called this period a ‘second republic’ which placed great trust in societal planning and governmental control. Various important services were developed and supported by the state.

The first official course in youth work began in 1945. It was seen as one of the answers to youth question, an important societal issue for a country recovering from the horrors of the Second World War. The first course was one year long but was immediately declared too short given the

broad and complex goals of youth work education. Youth work was seen as an expert field whose workers needed training in the social sciences, youth studies, psychology and education (Nieminen 1995, 304–305). Scholars of educational policy have emphasised that this was a period when the ultimate aim of education centred on developing the notion of Finnish citizenship, with an emphasis on building a unified society (Värri 2018, 43).

Even from its early days, youth work has been seen as both an independent discipline and as an activity that requires high-quality education spanning many topics. This is an important observation: a crucial task of any professionals wanting their field to be recognised by society is to demonstrate how the service they offer is *complex* and *of genuine importance* to its clients (Forsyth & Danisiewicz 1985). Even at the beginning of the long-term formal education in Finland, youth workers were able to convince society that youth work is a field in its own right that is beneficial to both the young and to society as a whole and requires an in-depth and complex understanding of young people, education, psychology and society. To this day, there is a general consensus that youth work is valuable and beneficial to society's youth (Siurala 2018, 55).

The Finnish appreciation for both education and youth work has meant that youth work education has been systematically developed over a long period of time. Since the 1940s, Finland has developed an educational system for youth work that spans all levels of education, including vocational education and both levels of the dual-sector model in higher education. In addition, a wide variety of non-formal education is available for youth work. This abundance of options enables youth workers to access learning opportunities in their field at different phases of their professional or voluntary career. Learning more about youth work in both the formal and non-formal spheres of education is always possible in Finland.

1.1. YOUTH WORKER PERSPECTIVES ON THEIR EDUCATION

Societal structures such as educational systems shape the way people negotiate their lives and paths within these structures. Since youth work

education is an integral part of the education system, it is an obvious factor in the reflections of people interested in youth work as a future career. This is exemplified in the different narratives youth workers give about their youth work identities and professional paths. To shed light on the impact of Finnish youth work education on the careers and life plans of youth workers, three different perspectives are described. These reflections are taken from interviews conducted for a project which aimed to construct a worker-based curriculum for Finnish municipal youth worker from 2011 to 2016 (Kiilakoski & Kinnunen & Djupsund 2018). For the purposes of this text, three ideas should be explained. Firstly, education is seen as an essential and obvious path to a career in the youth work. Secondly, youth work is typically seen as a career choice for those interested in working with the young or with people in general. Thirdly, the decisions that people make inside the Finnish service system are partly shaped by available opportunities and the consequent 'music of chance', to borrow a phrase from the novelist Paul Auster.

In the traditional career model, the 'entry ticket' to the labour market is a formal qualification which validates the learning one has attained. A certificate given by the formal education institution is a symbol that one is a competent worker. The linear career model supposes that early motivation toward or socialisation into a particular field will develop into studies in this field and, later, with work in the field. Using this model, a career path can be divided into three parts: socialisation into the field (for example, by taking part in the youth work activities as a participant and as a leader), formal education leading to qualifications, and working career (see Kiilakoski in print). Some Finnish youth workers have followed this pattern. It is a linear process that begins at a young age, when they have their first experiences with youth work. A well-developed education system enables youth workers to follow these rather traditional career paths.

In one interview, an experienced youth worker described her work life as a process which had its origins in experiences in the youth field at an early age. The first stage was an initial motivation to become a participant in youth work activities. The next step was earning formal qualifications to work as a youth worker. After this, her long career as a youth worker continued. This type of story about youth work education spans a great deal of a person's life and is situated in practice architectures (Kemmis

2014) of youth work that are strong on many levels. In order for such a narrative to unfold, there need to be relevant activities available throughout the youth worker's development, an existing educational system and a public financing system which allocates resources for youth work and thus secures sustainable career paths for those who are willing to devote their professional lives to the field.

My relationship with youth work began when I was a child. I was involved in every possible club and camp and whatever else was offered. These were usually organised by the parish. I can recall only a few that were organised by the city, yeah. It might have been when I was twelve or thirteen that I started organising clubs myself and worked as a youth leader in camps or as an assistant youth worker during confirmation work and such. Youth work has always been there for me. And when I started thinking about what I wanted to do when I grew up, I narrowed it down to two options: early childhood education or youth work education. I applied to both courses at once, naturally. I did not get into the early childhood education school and did get into [an institution offering youth work education at the time]. So the decision was made for me. But later on, when I worked as a substitute kindergarten teacher, I was like, 'Phew! I am glad I was not accepted into that school'.

The above quote from a youth worker in Northern Finland reveals not only the role of contingencies in career choice, but also such workers' commitment to the youth work and youth field in general. It provides a snapshot of the viewpoint of a person who has followed a career path in youth work for quite some time. It can also be seen as an example of professional development, in which capacities and skills are developed in connection to professional identity and professional self-confidence (Geeraerts et al. 2014): once one's professional identity is formed, one may find that other fields of work (in this example, kindergarten teaching) no longer seem desirable. One function of the youth work education system is to provide building blocks for constructing a professional identity and confidence as a member of the youth work community (Kiilakoski 2019a; Kiilakoski 2019b).

While the education system and the resourcing of youth work make a linear, lifelong career path in the field possible, not all of those who gradu-

ate from youth work education follow that path. To illustrate, observe the example of those who graduate from universities of applied sciences. Finnish higher education is based on a dual-sector model – in which some universities focus on vocational (practical) courses and others academic courses – and most youth workers with a higher education background come from universities of applied sciences, the more practically-oriented variant of higher education (see Chapter II).

Every year in Finland, hundreds of students graduate from universities of applied sciences as community educators (*yhteisöpedagogi*). In 2018, 189 community educators graduated from Humak University of Applied Sciences, 65 from the South-Eastern Finland University of Applied Sciences, 28 from Centria University of Applied Sciences and 16 from Novia University of Applied Sciences. In total, 297 community educators graduated in 2018¹ (Vipunen – Educational Statistics Finland 2019a).

If they wish to continue in the field of youth work, the career opportunities are there. Research indicates that community education is a wise choice in qualification from an employability perspective. In one study, conducted in 2015, two-thirds of the community educators interviewed who graduated in 2014 had secured their first job in their field of study. Not all community educators, however, choose employment in youth work in the long run. Twenty-three per cent of the community educators interviewed for the study worked as youth workers, and 12 per cent as experts and developers (most connected to the young or youth work). Seventeen per cent of the community educators worked in the child welfare, which in Finland is seen as a separate field from youth work, even though youth care or youth social work would be seen as part of youth work in some other European countries. (Väisänen & Määttä 2015, 18–20.) All in all, about one-third of community educators work in the youth-work related jobs. The majority of graduates from youth work education appear to find jobs outside youth work. This fact demonstrates how, in a mobile society, initial education does not determine career path for the majority of students. Outcomes are similar for youth

1 In total 29,082 students graduated from universities of applied sciences. Roughly one percent of all the degrees made were Bachelor of Humanities in Community Education.

work programmes in vocational education. It is estimated that a majority of also those who graduate from youth work vocational education work in fields outside the youth field (Kouvo & Kaunismaa 2013, 19). Thus, while a clear path from youth work education to youth work profession is an available option, it seems that most people with an educational background in youth work move on to different fields in the transition from formal education to work.

This transition can also take some twists and turns before one arrives at a desired profession: for instance, initial education in a different subject can end up leading to a career in youth work via a more indirect route. It appears that the ideal of a straight, single professional path has been replaced by a more fragmented path, in which one may drift from one profession to another based on contingency factors such as employment possibilities, personal interests and mobility (Rinne & Salmi 2000). An example from this more fragmented model of job changes and multiple working careers is a narrative by a youth worker working in Southern Finland at the time of the interview.

My first qualification was in restaurant and catering services. I studied to be a waiter, and during my waiting work, I was working for [an international NGO] as a face-to-face fundraiser and later as a trainer and team leader. I became interested in NGOs. I was also politically active in [the place I lived]. Somewhere along the way, I started to think that being a bartender was not the alpha and omega of everything. I went to university of applied sciences and started studying civic activities. I did a long training session at an NGO, where we made a national information campaign during which we toured universities of applied sciences all over Finland. I talked with to many young people during that campaign. Listening to their stories, I felt that there was a lot to be done for them, lots of social-work-related stuff. So I chose to study social empowerment and special education instead. I myself come from a rough background and needed help as a young person, so I felt that it would be nice to help others as well.

This story shows how socialisation into the youth field can happen in later stages of one's career. It also shows that personal experiences of receiving help and being accepted into a community may play a role in one's motivation to work in the youth field. Personal experiences and social goals,

including helping other people and improving society, can also coincide (Kiilakoski in print). The narrative also points to a relevant feature of the educational system in Finland: education is free, and one can choose to earn multiple degrees if one so wishes. Because it improves social mobility, the state is willing to finance citizens' studies. An education system available to everyone can increase the citizens' trust in education and willingness to apply for courses without economic calculations of the costs and benefits (cf. Silvennoinen & Kalalahti & Varjo 2018, 10). Adult education has long been an important part of Finnish educational system, and reforms of vocational education in Finland emphasise the recognition of prior learning in order for students to be allowed to study only those areas and subjects in which they have yet to develop skills and knowledge.

Both of the above professional narratives have portrayed youth work education as an 'entry ticket' into professional youth work. Both workers studied youth work in a formal setting. Not all Finnish youth workers, however, have a degree in the field. Although youth work has strong professional structures, such as the Youth Act, a coordinated youth policy, specially allocated resources and accessible research written in both Finnish and English, there are no required qualifications for youth workers. In fact, many important decisions about youth work are made at the local level (Forkby & Kiilakoski 2014), and municipalities are free to hire any worker they see fit to do the work. In practice, some sort of formal education is needed, but this does not have to be in youth work. An example of this type of fragmented career path is the following story of a youth worker in Northern Finland.

Let's say it like this: I became a youth worker by accident. I have a bachelor's degree in social services. After graduation, I was working in children's afternoon activities while receiving the labour market subsidy. This is how I gained my first work experience in youth work. I had also been a trainee in child welfare, so I had worked young people before. When a substitute position opened up in a youth club, I applied and ended up being a youth worker there. After a couple of months, I had a permanent job in that club and worked for about three years. Then I went on maternity leave. I wanted a job I could work earlier in the day, so I applied for another job with younger children. Then I went on maternity leave again. Between the two maternity leaves, I got a permanent job as a youth worker.

In the above story, the contingency factors involved in career choice are clear. Rather than a linear career path or a strong commitment to the youth field, the determining factor for this youth worker was availability of options in the labour market. Since there are no formal qualifications dictating who can work as a youth worker, it is perfectly possible to ‘stumble upon’ a youth work job, as this interviewee has done.

Furthermore, Finnish legislation does not set a clear framework for what youth work is about or how or where it should be done. This can be seen as an example of Nordic welfare societies placing a great deal of trust in professional communities themselves to determine the most effective ways of doing their work. (Forkby & Kiilakoski 2014.) In practice, this has resulted in youth work developing local strategies for responding to the needs of the young. Youth work in Finland has been described as having a mutable, even ‘amoeba-like’, identity (Kivijärvi & Heino 2013). This trait allows youth work to respond quickly and dynamically to changes in society and youth cultures, but it also means that constant reflection on the nature of youth work is needed to ensure that youth workers are doing the right things in the right settings (Moisala & Ronkainen 2018). One challenge of a political climate that emphasises transparency and measurability is to clearly lay out the field’s goals, methods and ways of evaluating its work and its outcomes (Kiilakoski 2011; Kivijärvi 2015; Kiilakoski & Kinnunen & Djupsund 2018; Siurala 2018). Given this mutable identity, it is no wonder that people from different backgrounds are able to access youth work and find a place within its professional community. So far, there have been no significant efforts to restrict youth work positions to those possessing formal youth work qualifications. On the contrary, diversity is valued.

The above three narratives about becoming a youth worker describe different routes into the profession. In the first, there was a great deal of non-formal learning in the field, followed by initial formal education. The second interviewee completed initial education in another field but began studying youth work later, in continuing education. This possibility is available thanks to Finland’s free education, which enables workers to return to education in the later stages of life without having to pay tuition fees. The role of non-formal learning is also considerable in this second narrative. In the third, initial education is in another field,

no youth work qualifications are obtained, and youth work is learnt by participating in the work.

The Finnish youth work education model enables many different routes into the field. For some, it is through initial formal education. For others, the route is less clear and involves studying a different subject before youth work. For others still, youth work might be learned through non-formal education and direct work experience. What is noteworthy is that the Finnish education model makes all of these developments possible by offering youth work education at all levels of the education system; by adhering to an education policy which enables studying as an adult through free education and avoidance of dead ends in the education system; and by the strong structures of Finnish youth work.

The above three examples of different career paths hint at the nature of the youth work community in Finland. Youth work education is part of the youth field and contributes to making the community of practice (Wenger 2008) of youth work stronger. However, not all paid youth workers, let alone volunteers, have completed youth work education. This may be seen as a reasonable solution to the professionalisation dilemma in youth work. Critical perspectives on professionalisation have claimed that professionalisation will lead to increased evaluation and standardisation and will create 'an exclusive group, where entry is determined by the judgement of similarly educated experts' (Nuggehalli 2018, 80). Such exclusivity may result in the loss of creativity and critical perspectives in the field. Formally educated, professional youth workers have some advantages over other actors in the youth field, but they do not have a complete monopoly on it. According to Juha Nieminen, these professional structures have meant that youth work has been able to ask critical questions about accessibility of the field and have not led to 'hard, association-based unionism' (Nieminen 2014, 43). The Finnish example shows that a well-developed formal education system does not necessarily mean standardisation and that youth work can still be seen as a 'wild field' (Soanjärvi 2011) where people from different backgrounds can join together to form a flexible, even amoeba-like, (Kivijärvi & Heino 2013) community of practice.

1.2. ZOOMING OUT

This book offers a brief introduction to Finnish youth work education. The aim is to provide an overview of Finnish youth work education to a wider international audience interested in promoting youth work education. The aim is to describe the basic features of Finnish youth work education and, based on the existing research literature, to locate it within the practice architectures of Finnish youth work and within the wider context of educational policy and tradition in Finland.

The second chapter presents the Finnish youth work education system, concentrating mostly on formal education at all levels. It includes a description of the basic features of the Finnish pedagogical tradition and also touches on non-formal education. It briefly analyses how this system compares to youth work education elsewhere in Europe. This chapter is mostly descriptive and aims to provide foreign readers with an understanding of the education system in Finland.

The third chapter uses the theory of practice architectures, as developed by Stephen Kemmis, and analyses the cultural-discursive, material-economic and social-political arrangements of Finnish youth work. The argument of the chapter is that in order to understand the way Finnish youth work education has developed, one must understand the wider context of how the field's community of practice has developed. The larger aim of the chapter is to zoom out (Nicolini 2013) on the social structures of Finnish youth work and, through this perspective, gain insight into why youth work education has developed so strongly in Finland.

The full picture of youth work education is incomplete without some reflection on educational and pedagogical thinking in Finland. In the fourth chapter, some features of the Finnish pedagogical tradition are described. Finnish beliefs about education in general, education as a national project, and credential inflation are also briefly analysed.

In the concluding chapter, the theory of practice architectures is used to provide an analytical summary of all the preceding chapters.

In this text, I am primarily interested in 'zooming out' and looking at various national practices that shape youth work education. The terms 'zooming in' and 'zooming out' were formulated by Davide Nicolini, though I do not follow his methodological ideas precisely. His methods

of studying work practices require examining them in a larger framework and looking at the relationships between different practices and how they affect one another. They involve asking questions such as ‘How did we get here?’ and ‘How does the practice under consideration contribute to the bigger picture?’ (Nicolini 2013, 229–233). Using this idea, this text locates existing youth work education programmes and practices within the wider context of youth work and educational policy in Finland. Following this idea of ‘zooming out’, my emphasis is on the wider structures of youth work and educational policy instead of, for example, on the experiences of current students in youth work education.

II YOUTH WORK EDUCATION IN FINLAND

Youth work education is, unsurprisingly, as diverse as youth work practice. (Fusco et al. 2018, 628)

Based on our understanding of youth work, we argue that effectively supporting the professional readiness of youth workers requires a set of pedagogical and curricular practices that are unique to the field and can be effectively met through a graduate program. (Pozzoboni & Kirshner 2016, 72.)

In this chapter, the Finnish youth work education system is described. The chapter begins by describing the core values and principles of education in Finland. After this, an overview of the Finnish education system is provided, followed by a more detailed description of youth work education.

II.1. CORE PRINCIPLES AND VALUES IN EDUCATION IN FINLAND

To understand the main features of the education system in Finland and how it has developed, one must first examine its core principles. Research has analysed the values impacting the education system throughout the years. These values manifest themselves in the way educational policy is organised in Finland and may explain, at least in part, the reason for Finnish success in the PISA assessments (Sahlberg 2011; Ustun & Eryilmaz 2018). There is a general consensus on several aspects of Finnish educational thinking and the practical implications of its values and principles.

Educational equity. As the Finnish education structures were formed in the nineteenth century, when Finland was an autonomous part of the Russian Empire, the seeds of equity in education were being sown. The educational philosophers of the time emphasised the need to civilise the Finnish people, with the goal of forming a national culture. It was thought that every citizen should be provided similar learning opportunities

because they, as human beings, have equal value. This basic attitude has been elemental in Finnish policy debates throughout the nation's history, although the concept of educational equity has been interpreted differently by different people (Lampinen 2000). In the 1960s and 1970s, the idea of educational equity culminated in a basic education system based on a radical interpretation of equality that emphasised that every pupil is capable of achieving the learning goals set by the national core curriculum, although some may need support on a personal, social or physical level (Kalalahti & Varjo 2012). The reform of basic education was a huge societal enterprise involving many committees, projects and their evaluation and dialogue among scholars, policy makers and practitioners (Hoikkala & Kiilakoski 2018). The ideal of educational equity was interpreted to mean that everyone, regardless of social class, religion or region of origin, was entitled to the same quality of education and, given the right pedagogical and welfare support, could master the same educational content (cf. Ahonen 2003, 155–157). In practice, this has meant providing resources to the pupils who need them the most (Ustun & Eryilmaz 2017).

Egalitarian values have influenced both educational policy and the whole idea of the welfare state (Tervasmäki & Okkolin & Kauppinen 2019). The aim is to ensure that everyone is able to access education. In this view, education has intrinsic value because every citizen of each new generation has a right to know the intellectual and artistic heritage of the generations before them. Besides being a value choice, promoting education has an economic dimension as well: by ensuring that as many citizens as possible receive an education, a nation with a small population can maximise its learning potential and social capital (Hoikkala 2017, 19). There is national consensus on the willingness to organise education based on the values of equity and equality. This is also connected to Finland's deep trust in education and view of education as a way to improve both societal living conditions and individual welfare (Kortekangas & Paksuniemi & Ervast 2019). The principle of equity in education has important practical implications: education must be available to all, regardless of their social or economic capital.

Free education. There are no tuition fees in Finland, which means that education is free for both young people and adult learners from preschool to doctoral studies. In basic education, school meals, textbooks and trans-

portation for pupils living over five kilometers away from the school is totally free. In upper-secondary and higher education, textbooks must be purchased by the pupils², but at the upper-secondary level, meals are provided for free. There is a state-funded system of student grants and loans for both upper-secondary and higher education (EDUFI 2017). Education in Finland is free for the citizens of European Union and European Economic Area. (For the non-EU and non-EEA students, there are tuition fees.)

Lifelong and continuous learning. The importance of education in Finland is connected to the idea of lifelong learning. The Finnish educational system is influenced by the ideas of social equity (the state provides safety nets for citizens to shelter them from hardship) and individual equity (learners are different and must be provided with educational opportunities based on their abilities, skills and motivation) (Simola 2015, 389). Up until 2019, upper-secondary education was non-compulsory. Finnish educational policies have relied on developing equal opportunities for all youth to participate in upper-secondary education by individual choice. Various incentives have been introduced to encourage young people stay in the education system. (Sahlberg 2011, 29.) In recent times, rapid social developments, the restructuring of the labour markets and technological breakthroughs have all brought about renewed interest in promoting lifelong learning as a way to ensure that all individuals can maintain their employability (Hoikkala & Kiilakoski 2018).

No dead ends. The Finnish educational system has no dead-ends. Finnish youth and adults may continue their studies in upper-secondary education regardless of what choices they have made in past. Institutions organise education and training for adults at all levels of the educational system. (EDUFI 2017, 9.) Those who before chose the vocational education path can later choose to apply to universities for academic study, and the academically educated may apply for vocational education. In particular, the reform of vocational education emphasises the recognition of prior learning, so that learners do not have to redo material they have already learned.

2 The current governmental programme intends to raise the compulsory schooling age. When this initiative is implemented, textbooks and other materials will be free for all students.

Local autonomy and a culture of trust. Trust in educational institutions is often mentioned as one of the defining features of the Finnish education system. This trust is manifested in the independent decision-making of educational institutions and in the way the general public values teachers and others involved in educational institutions. (Sahlberg 2011; Simola 2015; Kortekangas & Paksuniemi & Ervast 2019.) Although vocational education has been more closely monitored by the state (Lampinen 2000) than academic education, autonomy of education has been viewed as a key feature of a high-performing education system. According to Pasi Sahlberg, trust in educational institutions means believing that teachers, principals, citizens and local communities know best how to provide education. Trust can only flourish in an environment that relies on honesty, confidence, professionalism and well-functioning government. Finnish society excels in transparency measurements, and public institutions are generally trusted in Finland. (Sahlberg 2011, 130–131.)

Commitment to economic growth and national projects. Aside from a way to help individuals fulfil their potential, education has also been seen as a reasonable economic investment. Quality education is viewed as a strategy for producing a competent workforce, for staying competitive internationally and for building a world-class innovation environment. Economic issues and discourses have affected the way education has been seen for over a century and have thus influenced the Finnish pedagogical tradition considerably (Skinnari & Syväoja 2007). Educational policies have been seen as a sensible investment, even in harsh economic times when other sectors of society face budget cuts (Yliaska 2014). This has changed somewhat in recent years. In 2010, Finland spent 12,605 million euros on education (including student subsidies); in 2017, that number decreased to 11,837 million (Official Statistics of Finland 2019b). In the new governmental programme, education, research and innovation are seen as drivers of the Finnish economy, and the role of education in employability is emphasised (Prime Minister's Office 2019). In general, however, Finnish society prizes schooling as a way to improve both communal and personal life (cf. Kortekangas & Paksuniemi & Ervast 2019).

Bildung. A German word 'Bildung' is notoriously difficult to translate in English. Attempts such as 'cultivation', 'self-development' and 'cultural process' all suggest that Bildung is a process in which an individual de-

velops herself and her environment. *Bildung* also refers to the efforts of a person to improve and to seek a more advanced form of life. (Siljander & Sutinen 2012, 3–4.) *Bildung* – ‘sivistys’ in Finnish – has been a constant principle among Finnish educational thinkers, and thus they attempt to address both the holistic growth of the individual and her efforts to come to terms with the times and live well in them (cf. Skinnari & Syväoja 2007). The idea of *Bildung* has been one of the most influential concepts in Finnish educational policy and has in practice meant that one does not, at the end of the day, offer economic justifications for education (Väljjarvi 2014, 2). Even the governmental programme from 2019 emphasises that ‘*Bildung* is one of our most important values and a guarantee of human freedom’ (Prime Minister’s Office 2019, 160). Talking about *Bildung* enables the nation to maintain a broad perspective on education beyond meeting the requirements of the current economic status quo. The emphasis on *Bildung* turns the attention to values and the broader purposes of an education system (Saevort 2013). Recently, there have been calls to reinterpret the concept of *Bildung* in a way that integrates ecological and eco-social themes into existing ways of thinking about human growth and the ultimate goals of education (Sivenius & Värri & Pulkki 2018; Värri 2018).

II.2. THE EDUCATION SYSTEM IN FINLAND

It has been claimed that education in Finland is somewhat unique, and noteworthy for the strong performance of its students and the minimal variation among those students in different regions of the country (Sahlberg 2011, 5). Finnish educational policy has also been called ‘stubborn’: Finland has opted for educational policy solutions that differ from those of other OECD countries, and those typically adopted within the framework of the converging educational policies of the West. Examples of this stubbornness include a reluctance to allow economic discourses in education, a refusal to develop external quality assurance mechanisms or publish statistical lists on the performance of its educational institutions and an exceptionally strong emphasis on educational equity in domestic and international educational debate. (Simola 2015, 390–391.)

EDUCATION SYSTEM IN FINLAND

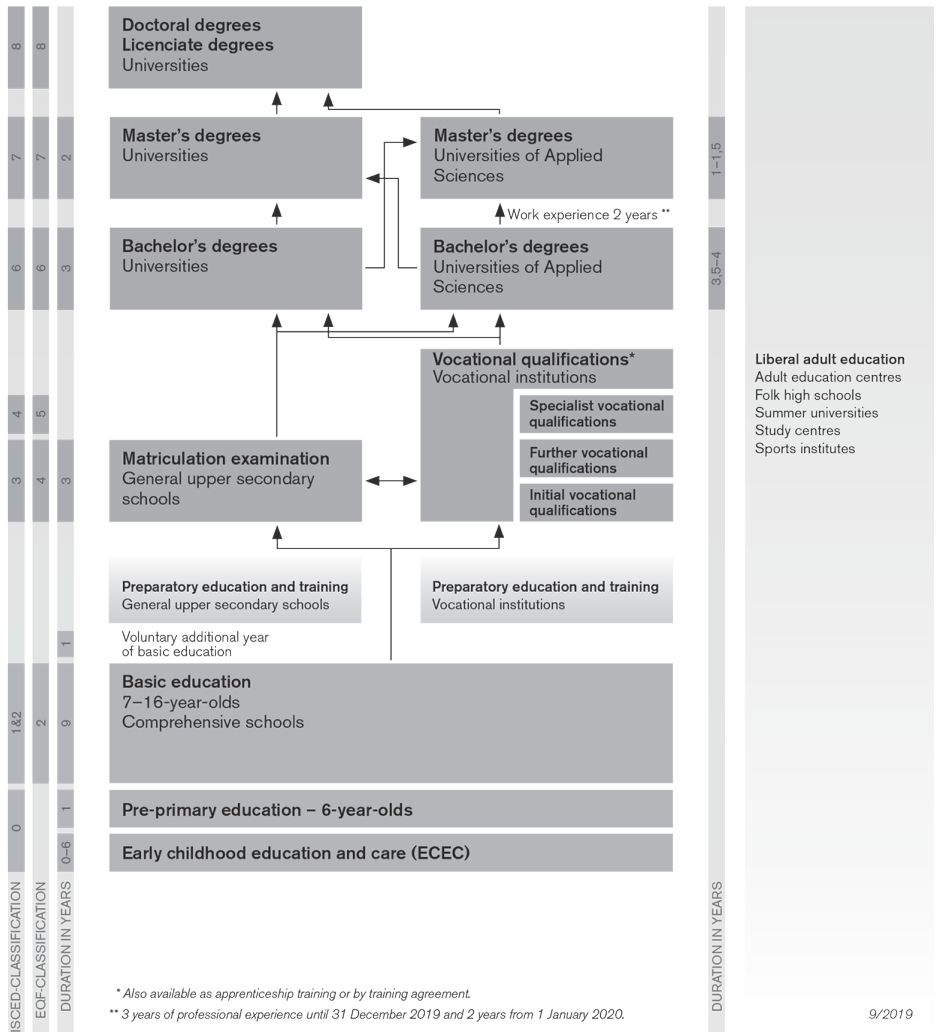


Figure 1. Education system in Finland (Ministry of Education and Culture 2019a).

Finnish education begins with early childhood education for children under six, then one compulsory year of pre-primary education for all children aged six. Basic education starts at the age of seven and consists of nine grades. Most Finnish pupils end their basic education at the age of sixteen. The school year lasts for 190 days (Basic Education Act, §23). The revolutionary idea of the basic education reform conducted in 1972 was that all pupils enrol in the same nine-year basic school, organised by local authorities, regardless of their socioeconomic background (Sahlberg 2011, 21). According to the Basic Education Act from the year 1998 (§2), the purpose of education is ‘to support pupils’ growth into humanity and into ethically responsible membership of society and to provide them with knowledge and skills needed in life.’ Education should also promote civilisation and equality in society, as well as the prerequisites for participating in education and otherwise developing themselves during their lives. Also, the system should guarantee adequate equity in education throughout the country. (Basic Education Act, § 2.) Differently from most European school systems, the school year in Finland (along with Denmark) begins in early August rather than in September (European Commission/EACEA/Eurydice 2018).

Basic education is free of charge, and free school meals are provided. The Finnish National Core Curriculum offers a framework for school curricula, but smaller decisions are made at the local level. In recent times, the National Core Curriculum for basic education has been renewed every ten years (Vitikka 2009), and the latest was published in 2014, replacing the 2004 one. Finnish basic education has drawn considerable international attention because of Finnish students’ strong performance on the PISA comparative education research assessments, from the first study in 2000 to the most recent in 2015. From these results, it has been concluded that ‘Finland (along with South Korea) had optimal systems with high achievement and strong input of material and human resources’ (Corner 2015, 96). However, the 2015 PISA study revealed a widening gap in learning outcomes between the capital region and rural regions of Finland as well as a gender gap, with female pupils outperforming males (Vettenranta et al. 2016).

After basic education, students may choose to continue in either vocational education and training or general upper-secondary school.

Their studies are designed to be completed in three years. In 2017, 57,753 young people completed basic education. Of these, 53 per cent chose to progress to upper-secondary school and 41 per cent to vocational education. One percent chose to study for an additional tenth year. Two percent began preparatory education for upper-secondary vocational education and training, which lasts between six and twelve months. Three per cent (1,764 young people) chose not to continue their studies. (Official Statistics of Finland 2019a.) The transition from basic education to secondary education has long been a youth policy concern in Finland. In the 2010s, the number of young people continuing their studies has increased considerably. In 2010, as many as 8.9 per cent of young people who completed basic education did not continue their studies, increasing to 9.1 per cent in 2011.

Only basic education is compulsory in Finland, meaning that secondary education is optional. General upper-secondary schools prepare students for higher education but do not train them for employment. Upper-secondary school concludes with a matriculation exam, currently the only national and comparable assessment in the whole educational system (Rautiainen & Kostiainen 2015). Vocational education and training, on the other hand, is designed to train students for employment. Both vocational education and training and upper-secondary education are available to all young people and adults (Lakkala & Lakkala 2019) and lead to eligibility for higher education studies, ensuring that the education system contains no dead ends and facilitates lifelong learning.

Vocational education and training (VET) students choose from ten different fields of work: agriculture and forestry; business, administration and law; education; health and welfare; humanities and arts; information and communication technologies; natural sciences; service industries; social sciences; and technology (Studyinfo.fi 2019b). Within these, youth work education is part of the 'education' field. Permission to provide vocational education and training is granted by the Ministry of Education and Culture. At the beginning 2019, there were around 160 VET providers nationwide (Ministry of Education and Culture). There are three routes leading to full or partial vocational qualifications. Aside from basic vocational qualifications, there are programmes for specialist

vocational qualifications and further vocational qualifications. These programs are competency-based.

Vocational education was reformed in 2017 and 2018 with the aim of creating a competency-based and customisable programme that would decrease bureaucracy and promote individual learning paths. Institutions are required to plan learning paths individually which each student, maintain co-operative relationships with business and industries and provide more opportunities for learning through work experience. (Lakkala & Lakkala 2019.) Providers of vocational education and training make local-level decisions on how to achieve these reform goals.

Finnish higher education is comprised of universities and universities of applied sciences³. Higher education institutions are autonomous⁴. According to the Universities Act, the mission of universities is threefold (Universities Act, §2). Firstly, they must conduct independent academic research. Secondly, they are to provide research-based education. Thirdly, they must promote lifelong learning and interact with the wider community. The first university in Finland was founded in 1640 in Turku, when Finland was an eastern part of Sweden. This university is now the University of Helsinki. Current university networks began to evolve in the twentieth century. The Technological University of Finland was founded 1908, and from that point, new universities were founded in every decade until 1980s. The expansion of the university network throughout the country began after the Second World War, when educational policy was seen a way to systematically develop Finnish society (Lampinen 2000). It has been noted that until the 1960s, university education was rather elitist. In that decade, university education expanded geographically, took in more students, and began teaching more subjects. (Ojala 2017.) Five new universities were founded in different parts of Finland (Lampinen 2000, 125). There are currently fourteen universities in Finland, the

3 In this text I am using the term 'university' for academic universities, and when talking about universities of applied sciences, I am using the 'university of applied sciences'.

4 Although universities have autonomy, there are some ways to influence higher education. Finnish Education Evaluation Centre audits higher education institutions. Currently a third round of audits is being conducted. New audit model (2018–2024) is developed for analysing the impact and the quality of higher education. (Finnish Education Evaluation Centre 2019.)

newest being Tampere University, formed in 2019 through the fusion of three higher education institutions operating in Tampere. University education is free for citizens of Finland and countries belonging to the European Union or European Economic Area (Universities Act, §10).

The dual-sector model of higher education was developed in the late 1980s and early 1990s. The first universities of applied sciences were established in 1991–1992 on a trial basis. These trials were in line with the decentralised approach to education policy that Finland was adopting at the time. In 1996, nine universities of applied sciences were granted permanent government permission. (Lampinen 2000.) The adoption of the dual-sector model was one of the biggest reforms in Finnish higher education. The idea behind it was to create *equal but different* higher education institution to respond to the need for highly developed expert cultures in different industries. (Lampinen 2000; Ojala 2017, 20–21.) By the year 2000, all universities of applied sciences were granted permanent government permission. Currently, there are twenty-five universities of applied sciences in Finland⁵, three of which currently offer youth work education. Universities of applied sciences offer both bachelor's and master's degrees. The law establishing the latter as a permanent degree programme was created in 2005. Master's degrees in universities of applied sciences are consired to be a Finnish pedagogical innovation that enables more practically-oriented students to continue their studies after the bachelor's degree (Ojala 2017, 35–39).

In 2017, 37,505 new students enrolled in universities of applied sciences, and 22,815 new students in the universities. The number of women entering higher education is higher than the number of men: 20,687 women and 16,888 men enrolled in universities of applied sciences, and 12,983 women and 9,902 men started in universities (Official Statistics of Finland 2019a). The total number of students beginning university studies is roughly 60,000. In 1997, roughly 57,000 children were born in Finland, indicating that many students entering higher education are

5 23 universities of applied sciences operate as public limited companies in the Ministry of Education and Culture's administrative branch. There are two other universities of applied sciences, Åland University of Applied Sciences and the Police University College, which operates under the mandate of the ministry of the Interior. (Ministry of Education and Culture 2019.)

older individuals who already have some form of education. The OECD has criticised Finland for the slow transition from secondary to tertiary education and the older age at which the students enter and leave higher education (OECD 2019).

II.3. YOUTH WORK EDUCATION SYSTEM IN FINLAND

The history of youth work education in Finland as part of the formal education system began in 1945, when the first course in an institution that is now part of Tampere University was established. Youth work education has been systematically developed ever since and is now available at all education levels, from vocational education to doctoral studies.

The history of youth work education is connected to the development of youth work, which is supported by the state and municipalities, and of the educational system in general. The expansion of the university network, the development of vocational education from the 1970s onwards, the creation of the dual-sector model in higher education and credential inflation (Simola 2015) that creates the need to gain formal qualifications in every professional field have all contributed to the development of the youth work field.

| | |
|---------|--|
| 1945 | Youth leader program in School of Social Sciences, Helsinki (which became University of Tampere in 1966). |
| 1949 | Beginning of church youth work education. |
| 1974 | Two-year course for youth workers begins. |
| 1976 | Education of church youth workers is lengthened to three years. |
| 1987 | The degree programme for youth activities instructors is established (three years for those with upper-secondary education, four years for those with only basic education). |
| 1993–94 | Reform of vocational education. Two degree programmes for youth work are established. |
| 1998 | The beginning of youth work and civic activities education in universities of applied sciences. |
| 2004 | The title ‘community educator’ is officially established. |
| 2005 | Master’s programme at the University of Kuopio is created. |
| 2007 | Master of Humanities programme begins at Humak University of Applied Sciences. |
| 2016 | The option to specialise in youth research as part of doctoral studies in the School of Social Sciences and Humanities at the University of Tampere is created. |
| 2018 | Reform of vocational education. The beginning of the youth and community instructor programme. |

Figure 2. DEVELOPMENT OF YOUTH WORK EDUCATION IN FINLAND (adapted version of Päivänsalo 2000, 9–19).

II.3.1. Vocational education and training

FORMAL EDUCATION SYSTEM OF YOUTH WORK IN FINLAND

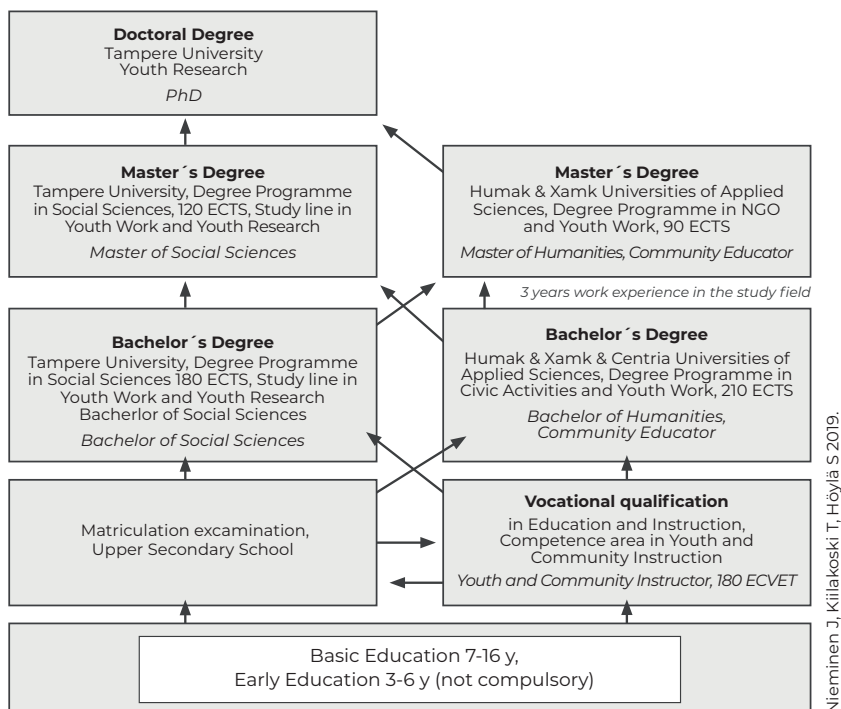


Figure 3. Youth work education system in Finland (Kiilakoski & Nieminen 2019; Höylä & Kiilakoski 2019).

The first Youth Work Act was passed in Finland in 1972. At the same time, the vocational education and training system was going through changes. The existing system was based on training workers for particular jobs; the reform aimed to offer future workers a more holistic perspective that would help them prepare for future changes in the labour market (Lampinen 2000, 98–99). The reform culminated in 1982–1988, when separate education programmes were created for different professions and vocational education and training was stabilised as an alternative to the more academic upper-secondary school (Laukia 2013, 11–12). In

the youth field, vocational education for youth activities instructors was created. The programme lasted three years for those with upper-secondary education background and four years for students with secondary education only. In 1993–1994, the programme for youth and leisure instruction was created, which, depending on the level of previous education, could be completed in two or three years (Päivänsalo 2000, 8–10). The creation of the dual-sector model of higher education changed vocational education and training as well. In 2001, all of its programmes were set to a duration of three years.

With the reform of vocational education and training in 2018, the youth and leisure instruction programme was abolished. Youth work now belongs to subject area of education and instruction, and youth workers earn vocational qualifications in the competence area of youth and community instruction.⁶ The curriculum for youth and community instruction was established by the National Agency of Education in 2017 and implemented in August 2018. The curriculum outlines basic competency requirements for each unit and gives a detailed instruction for the evaluation of student performance.

A vocational qualification requires 180 competency points, consisting of 145 competency points in vocational units and 35 competency points in common units. 110 points are allotted to compulsory vocational units (National Agency of Education 2017). Vocational education training corresponds to level 4 of the European Qualifications Framework. Institutions providing vocational education are required to create individualised study plans and opportunities for work experience with various employers (Lakkala & Lakkala 2019, 41–42). After the reform of vocational education, students are not necessarily required to study in the classroom. Prior learning is recognised through competency demonstrations completed in authentic working-life situations (Laki ammatillisesta koulutuksesta, §52).

The compulsory vocational units consist of four subjects. As curriculum in general can be seen as an answer to the question of what knowledge

6 Vocational qualification in education and instruction is comprised of four competency areas, one of which is youth work and community instruction. Other competency areas in education and instruction are communications and sign language instructor, early childhood education and care, and family welfare.

is most worth learning and as society's answer to the question of what different people need to know and be able to do (see Pinar 2013), compulsory units can be taken to indicate the basic competencies of youth workers. For this reason, they are examined in detail below.

'Professional encounters, education and instruction' (15 competence points) expects students to follow the laws, regulations and principles of the field; to act professionally in interaction with clients and in the work community; to know how to manage individual and group well-being and safety; to respect diversity when working with various individuals; to support the growth and well-being of the individuals; to execute daily actions of education and instruction; to exercise basic skills of working life; and to develop and evaluate various actions (National Agency of Education 2017, 5–12). Traditionally, the concept of interacting with youth has been an important feature of the professional culture of youth work in Finland. Being able to interact with young people based on their individual personalities is seen as one of the virtues of the field (e.g. Soanjärvi 2011, 113).

The second compulsory area is the 'instruction of the individual, groups and community', which consists of 35 competence points, making it the largest subject area in the curriculum. The curriculum states that students should have the competency to follow the laws, regulations and principles of the field; to plan and deliver actions to an individual, group or community; instruct for group activities, taking into consideration group development phases; to work while utilising various methods of instruction; to instruct in sustainable ways of life and execute a trip, camp or event; to manage the holistic safety of the people being instructed and features of work safety; and to develop and evaluate various actions (National Agency of Education 2017, 276–283). These describe how students should work with individuals and groups in a professional manner, while noting safety and well-being issues.

'Promoting the growth and wellbeing of young people' (30 competence points) is the third compulsory subject. It deals with utilising knowledge to tackle various issues in working with young people and to take into account the different social networks and situations of the young. The curriculum states that students should have the competency to follow the laws, regulations and principles of the field; to work in a way that

utilises knowledge of youth and youth phenomena; to help the young and support their growth and well-being; to take into account families and other social networks of the young; to plan and execute projects; to promote participation and to encourage influencing society; to instruct the young in ethical thinking and reflection on values; to work in digital environments and to execute technology and media education; to work in multiprofessional networks; and to develop and evaluate various actions (National Agency of Education 2017, 126–136). The concept of growth is of particular importance for Finnish youth work (Nieminen 1995; Kiilakoski 2017), and well-being is critical for all professions involving work with children and youth in Finland.

The fourth subject, ‘support and social empowerment for inclusion’ (30 competence points) involves the social policy pillar of youth work (Forkby & Kiilakoski 2014) – not only the prevention of social marginalisation but also about the need to help young people participate in life and develop their own goals. According to the curriculum, students should have the competency to follow the laws, regulations and principles of the field; to work in a preventative manner; to utilise methods of social empowerment and to recognise the need for them; to support participation and community involvement in clients; to work according to the principles of service counselling; to support clients in difficult life situations; to take care of one’s own well-being and safety; to develop and evaluate various actions (National Agency of Education 2017, 136–143.) In Finland, youth work and social work are two distinct fields, and youth workers typically aim to prevent problems, not work with clients who are already recognised as having life problems. Preventative work is seen as an aspect of youth work, but the line between working with the young and working with their problems is an important point of negotiation and renegotiation for a youth worker. (Puuronen 2016, 126–131; Malm 2018, 43–48.)

The curriculum for vocational education is created by the National Agency of Education. Though generally characteristic of Finnish pedagogical thinking (many decisions on how to actually deliver the curriculum and build bridges between education and practice are made at the local level), this curriculum also reflects the fact that vocational education is more tightly controlled than other forms of education (Lampinen 2000).

It is strikingly more detailed than the curricula of universities of applied sciences and universities.

Curricula can be categorised according to what constituents of curriculum they emphasise: they can be aim-centered, content-centered, method-centered or evaluation-centered (cf. Tomperi 2017). The Finnish curriculum for vocational education does not generally focus on content of learning or methodologies. The latter would, of course, be difficult, as there is a great deal of emphasis on on-the-job learning in vocational education. A competency-based approach to curriculum centres on developing potential or recognising already-existing competencies. This is the overall aim of the vocational education curriculum. However, the written document of the curriculum itself is heavy on evaluation. Students are graded on a scale from 1 to 5, and the curriculum describes in detail what students must be able to do in order to get grades 1, 3 and 5. In fact, a majority of the curriculum's 291 pages discuss evaluation (National Board of Education 2017). There are practical reasons for this: since work-life representatives also take part in evaluation, they must be provided with in-depth guidance in conducting evaluation. However, this curriculum can also be viewed as an example of a new approach, which leaves many decisions to those at the local level but is also quite tightly controlled at the national level through evaluation.

Finnish vocational education reform can be seen as an example of an 'assessment-led reform focused on the individual performativity of single individuals' (Autio 2002, 154). The individualised focus of the curriculum has been criticised for complicating teaching and the pedagogical process, as it is difficult to maintain a connection between individual learning experiences and wider pedagogical processes in vocational education (Lakkala & Lakkala 2018). Also, in youth work, the peer interaction dimension is of crucial importance (Nieminen 2014). If the curriculum for youth work education is based on the individual learning paths, it is difficult to provide opportunities for collaborative learning 'in which learners engage in common tasks, where each individual depends on and is accountable to others' (Siurala 2017, 41).

Three conceptual observations can also be drawn from the curriculum of youth and community instruction. Firstly, vocational qualification in the field of education and instruction emphasises the traditional Finnish way of viewing youth work as education. The curriculum includes the ideas

of supporting growth and being able use the methodologies of different branches of education, such as media or cultural education. Secondly, in the European context, the notion of youth work as non-formal education has been important concept for legitimising the field (Kiilakoski 2015). However, in vocational education, the term ‘non-formal learning’, or some other variant of the idea, is absent. The term ‘learning’ itself does not stand out as a goal or core competency. This may be due to the fact that ‘learning’ has not traditionally been part of the professional vocabulary of Finnish youth workers, even if managers of youth work have tried to popularise the term in connection with their field (Kiilakoski 2014). Thirdly, the core competencies of youth work centre on methodologies of instruction, on being able to contextualise one’s practice, on prevention and on promoting the growth and well-being of individuals. These point to the importance of ‘doing’ in youth work. On-the-job learning may fit well with the ‘learning by doing’ aspect of youth work, but vocational education does not currently make much mention of peer learning, despite this being an integral element of youth work. If pedagogical practices of youth work education are to reflect the principles of youth work practice, then criticism of the emphasis on individualisation in the current youth work curriculum is justified (cf. Siurala 2017).

There are currently over twenty institutions providing vocational education in youth work. The network of institutions ranges from the capital of Helsinki to Rovaniemi at the centre of Lapland, in the polar circle. While some of the institutions have a faith-based background, they all follow the same curriculum.

Since the new curriculum was introduced in the autumn of 2018, there are not yet any statistics available for it. However, the former instruction in Youth Work and Leisure Time has been studied. According to statistics, the number of students in the programme has been close to 2,000 in this decade, and roughly 500 youth workers graduate every year.

In 2017, 52 per cent of those who had graduated as youth work and leisure time instructors were working after one year of graduation. Nineteen per cent were unemployed, 13 per cent were full time students and 11 per cent were both working and studying (Vipunen – Educational Statistics Finland 2019b). Based on these statistics, it is not possible to estimate how many of them were working in the youth field.

| | Number of students in the programme | Number of degrees awarded |
|------|--|------------------------------|
| 2010 | 1,795 | 365 |
| 2011 | 1,847 | 440 |
| 2012 | 1,831 | 492 |
| 2013 | 1,902 | 493 |
| 2014 | 1,853 | 492 |
| 2015 | 1,304 | 523 |
| 2016 | (data missing) | 499 |
| 2017 | (data missing) | 485 |

Table 1. Students and degrees made in the Youth Work and Leisure Time instruction programmes (Source: Vipunen – Educational Statistics Finland 2019c).

II.3.2. Universities of applied sciences

The creation of the dual-sector model in tertiary education was a significant reform in vocational education. Older structures were replaced with a new model supporting practices based on knowledge and creating a system for producing knowledge that had a clear connection to different practices. For the youth work field, this meant adapting to a new situation. Programmes in vocational education were cut down. The providers of youth work education were small, college-level institutions, which could not receive government permission to establish a university of applied sciences on their own. The Humak University of Applied Sciences was developed as a network university which integrated twelve vocational institutions all over Finland to respond to the restructuring of vocational education. Aside from pragmatic motives, its establishment involved a more idealistic concept of a university of applied sciences based on the ethos of civil society and the Nordic concept of *Bildung* as a pedagogical project. Most institutions providing youth work education joined the network. Government permission was granted to Humak on a trial basis in 1997, and the first students began their studies in the autumn of 1998. Permanent permission was granted in 2002. This meant that the programme for youth work and civic activities became a legitimate

part of the developing system of universities of applied sciences (Määttä 2018, 22–24). Humak was and continues to be the largest provider of youth work education in Finland. With the creation of the master's degree in applied sciences, Humak was also given permission to start a master's programme in youth work.

A notable exception was the Youth Institute of Finland in Mikkeli, Eastern Finland, which has provided youth work education since 1960. This institute chose a different strategy. Instead of joining the national network with Humak, it joined the regional university of applied sciences in Mikkeli. This proved to be a good choice as it combined two programs, one on youth work and the other on cultural work. This programme for youth and cultural work was given permission by the government in 1997 and began in 1998 with forty-three students⁷. The programme is now part of the South-Eastern Finland University of Applied Sciences ('Xamk' later in this chapter). Almost one thousand community educators have graduated from Mikkeli (Niemi 2018). One notable event in Mikkeli was the formation of the research and development centre Juvenia in 2008, which has grown into an important regional and national research institute for youth studies and youth work studies. The aim of Juvenia is to combine academic research with the development of methods and services related to young people (Komonen & Ronkainen 2018, 5). The quality of the work, both academic and practical, has resulted in a steady flow of research funding and published volumes of youth research.

The title of the programme was a matter of debate. In the end, the term 'community educator' was chosen. The name was approved because it combined two features that have traditionally been important in youth work and civil society in Finland: education and community (Niemi

7 Different sources provide different starting years. A book celebrating the twentieth anniversary of youth work education in the South-Eastern Finland University of Applied Sciences was published in 2018, and according to Niemi (2018), the program started in 1998. According to Soanjärvi (2014, 17), the program started in 1997. Jussi Ronkainen (personal communication 10.10.2019), director of research center Juvenia, confirmed that the program started 1998. For an international audience, the relevant information is probably that the education of community educators that began in the late 1990s is more than twenty years old.

2018, 20). The term ‘community educator’⁸ was adopted in both Humak and Mikkeli in 2004 (Soanjärvi 2014), many years after the programme began. The name of the degree is important because it communicates the nature of the profession to the wider community outside of youth work and creates a sense of identity within the youth work community.

The Centria University of Applied Sciences currently offers a degree programme for community educators. The Deacon University of Applied Sciences offers a bachelor’s degree programme in social services called Christian Youth Work. Students in this programme earn a formal qualification to work as Parish Coordinators for Youth Work in the Evangelical Lutheran Church of Finland. Those for faith-based youth work are the only existing formal qualifications for youth work in Finland.

There are two degree programmes in the youth field in Finnish universities of applied sciences: Bachelor of Humanities, Community Educator and Master of Humanities, Community Educator. In 2018, 372 new students began their studies in the Bachelor of Humanities. Two-hundred ninety-seven degrees were completed that year. Detailed numbers for 2016–2018 are shown in Table 2.

| | New students | Completed degrees |
|--------------|--------------|-------------------|
| Humak 2018 | 243 | 189 |
| Xamk 2018 | 102 | 66 |
| Centria 2018 | 27 | 27 |
| Humak 2017 | 256 | 195 |
| Xamk 2017 | 90 | 55 |
| Centria 2017 | 27 | 30 |
| Humak 2016 | 258 | 192 |
| Xamk 2016 | 87 | 66 |
| Centria 2016 | 39 | 21 |

Table 2. Number of new students and graduates in the Bachelor of Humanities, Community Educator (Vipunen – Educational Statistics Finland 2019c).

8 The term ‘community educator’ was invented by the lecturer Eila Luoma, who worked in the Tornio campus of the Humak University of Applied Sciences (Kylmäkoski & Viitanen 2018, 66).

In both Humak and Xamk, the bachelor's degree is competency-based. There are four main areas of competence: community, pedagogical, social and developmental. In Humak University, international competency is emphasised as well. For the purposes of this text, only the curriculum of Humak is analysed more closely, since Humak educates well over half of all the community educators in Finland. Humak describes its education in the following way:

The programme prepares professionals with expertise in appreciative interaction for NGO and youth work roles and increasingly varied professional settings across a range of sectors. Students develop an advanced understanding of social and cultural diversity. Graduates from this programme are active, responsible and community-oriented actors who are capable of developing various forms of networking and advocacy channels. Upon successful completion of the programme, students will be able to identify the determinants of personal growth, development and well-being and the role and applications of preventive work, especially in the context of youth work. (Humak 2018–2014, 8.)

Even this brief description of Humak's youth work education shares common themes with the curriculum of vocational education, such as an emphasis on personal growth, development and well-being and the roles of prevention and diversity. There is a stronger emphasis on development and on conceptual and epistemological questions than in vocational education and training. The programme consists of general studies for developing the ability to study effectively (10 ECTS); professional studies, which provide the basis for professional thinking and identity (125 ECTS); advanced professional studies, which develop advanced competencies (30 ECTS); and expertise and studies in applied research and development, where research and development methods are connected to real-life workplace needs (30 ECTS) (Humak 2018–2024, 6–7). The structure of the curriculum is shown in Figure 4, which also describes its content.

BACHELOR'S DEGREE IN ADVENTURE AND OUTDOOR EDUCATION COMMUNITY EDUCATOR (BH)

STUDIES IN APPLIED RESEARCH AND DEVELOPMENT 30 ECTS

Development methods
5 ECTS

Research-based development
5 ECTS

Development practices
5 ECTS

Bachelor's thesis (final project)
15 ECTS

ADVANCED PROFESSIONAL STUDIES 30 ECTS

Professionalism in adventure education 30 ECTS

Network and partnership development 15 ECTS

Adventure educational programming 15 ECTS

PROFESSIONAL STUDIES 125 ECTS

Professional language
studies 15 ECTS

Finnish language 1, 5 ECTS

Finnish language 2, 5 ECTS

English language and
communication 5 ECTS

Swedish 5 ECTS

Finnish language and
communication 5 ECTS

Introduction to community
education 10 ECTS

Community education as a
profession 5 ECTS

Community educators as
adventure education experts
5 ECTS

Pedagogical skills
in adventure
education 40 ECTS

Participatory pedagogy 5 ECTS

Coaching-based approach
5 ECTS

Experiential learning 10 ECTS

Leadership in adventure
education 10 ECTS

Process management in
adventure education 10 ECTS

Technical skills in
adventure education
30 ECTS

Basic technical skills 10 ECTS

Intermediate technical
skills 10 ECTS

Advanced technical
skills 10 ECTS

Social studies 30 ECTS

Promotion of agency 5 ECTS

Communication competence
5 ECTS

Financial planning and
management 5 ECTS

Entrepreneurship 5 ECTS

Basics of business management
5 ECTS

RDI competence 5 ECTS

GENERAL STUDIES 10 ECTS

Professional development 5 ECTS

Study skills 5 ECTS

OPTIONAL STUDIES 15 ECTS

Figure 4. Outline of Humak University youth work curriculum (2008–2014, 8).

Comparing the curriculum of Humak University of Applied Sciences to that of vocational studies reveals considerable differences. Humak's curriculum was developed by the organisation itself, as an autonomous higher education provider. Although both curricula follow a competency-based approach, Humak's is more centered on aims and, to a lesser extent, content. In contrast to the evaluation-centred curriculum of vocational education and training, Humak's does not describe evaluation in any depth. In this way, Humak's curriculum is closer to the Finnish tradition in which pedagogical decisions, including those related to evaluation, are made at the local level. Even the length of the curriculum reflects this: the curriculum of Humak University describes two programmes in forty pages, while the National Agency of Education's vocational education curriculum describes three programmes in 291 pages.

The four competencies of the curriculum – community, pedagogical, social and developmental – also highlight some of the basic features of

Finnish thinking about youth work. The role of community in human development (this emphasis also differentiates Humak curriculum from that of vocational education) and the conception of youth work as a pedagogical process and as a type of education are emphasised. The curriculum does not mention non-formal learning. These two elements are obvious, given the title ‘community educator’. Social or societal competencies are emphasised, connecting the role of youth work to society at large. Developing work based on research is one of the aims of the whole dual-sector model, so emphasis on this aspect seems natural. There is also emphasis on working in multiprofessional, international and varied settings, part of a greater process in which teachers of applied sciences in general are transforming from individual actors to networked professionals who must take into account different practical requirements and develop connections with a wide variety of practices (Töytäri et al. 2019).

The idea of competency-based education is to develop clusters of knowledge, skills and attitudes that ultimately lead to competent professionals able to serve the public. In higher education, it is a relatively new approach (Simonds & Behrens & Holzbauer 2017). The content of such youth studies curricula has been criticised in Finland, with some arguing that peer learning should play a more prominent role and that investigating the impact of youth-led youth activities would be useful (Hoikkala & Kuivakangas 2017). From a more theoretical perspective, it has been suggested that a stronger emphasis on the link between youth policy and youth work would also be beneficial (Henriksson 2016). It is, of course, possible to integrate these perspectives into a competency-based approach. As it is, however, these criticisms appear to be valid: the term ‘youth policy’ is not once mentioned in the curriculum, and the role of social psychology in it appears to be narrow.

According to a study by Väisänen and Määttä (2015, 17), 88 percent of community educators who graduated in 2014 were employed half a year after graduation. Only 4 per cent did not get any job at all. In 2008, 90 per cent of graduates found a job within half a year, and only 6 per cent had not found work. Employment prospects for community educators appear to be consistently strong. The fields in which these community educators are employed are varied. Participants in the study worked under roughly 140 different professional titles (*ibid.*, 41). They were employed

by NGOs, municipalities and private companies. They worked not only with the young, but also with other age groups. They worked in youth work, child welfare, rehabilitation, care of elderly people, and in various areas of instruction. Those with the master's degrees worked more often as experts and managers (*ibid.*, 37). Community educator programmes prepare students for a wide variety of professional careers.

Programmes leading to a Master of Humanities, Community Educator degree deepen the knowledge of community educators and prepare them to develop work and to manage processes. Such a programme consists of 90 ECTS points and takes two years to complete. It is possible to earn this degree from Humak University of Applied Sciences and from South-Eastern Finland University of Applied Sciences (Xamk). At Humak, the programme consists of advanced professional studies (40 ECTS), optional studies (20 ECTS) and a master's thesis (30 ECTS). At Xamk, the degree consists of core professional studies (30 ECTS), optional studies (30 ECTS) and a master's thesis (30 ECTS). Professional studies are comprised of two courses: The Changing Context of Youth Education (15 ECTS) and Youth Work as a Field of Development (15 ECTS). In Table 3, the numbers of new students and completed degrees are provided.

| | New Students | Completed Degrees |
|------------|--------------|-------------------|
| Humak 2018 | 42 | 18 |
| Xamk 2018 | 27 | 18 |
| Humak 2017 | 27 | 24 |
| Xamk 2017 | 24 | 12 |
| Humak 2016 | 27 | 18 |
| Xamk 2016 | 21 | 12 |

Table 3. New students and completed degrees for the Master of Humanities, Community Educator degree.

Aside from degree programmes, one can choose to study in open university courses of applied sciences, which enables students to study only the content they wish to study. Such courses are available at Humak and Xamk.

II.3.3. University education

Youth work education in universities has a history of over seventy years, beginning in 1945. Since that time, there have been many developments in Finnish universities. A degree programme in youth education was established at the University of Kuopio under the department of social pedagogy in 2005, but classes were taken at Mikkeli. Two-hundred twenty-five students applied, and 23 were admitted (University of Kuopio 2007). According to distinguished youth studies researcher Helena Helve, who worked as a research professor on the programme from 2004 to 2008, all of the students were youth workers (Laine & Suurpää & Aapola-Kari 2018, 57). In 2008, Helve was nominated for a professorship in the master's degree course for youth studies and youth work at the University of Tampere, which was first financed by the European Social Fund and later by the Ministry of Education and the city of Tampere (*ibid.*, 58). Currently, the University of Tampere offers youth studies and youth work programmes at the bachelor's, master's and doctoral levels. Beginning from year 2013 eight students have been chosen to the master's program, and some students of social sciences have continued their studies in the program after having completed the bachelor's degree (Päivi Honkatukia, personal communication 4.10.2019).

The option of doctoral studies on youth research was created in 2016 (Henriksson 2016, 98). The current professor of youth studies there is Päivi Honkatukia, who has an extensive background in youth research. Though Tampere is the only university offering degree-level education in the field, there are other courses for youth research and youth work in Finland. YUNET, the Finnish University Network for Youth Studies, is a network for advancing youth studies in Finnish universities.

There are six possible study paths in the social sciences at Tampere University, of which 'youth work and youth research' is one. The bachelor's degree requires 180 ECTS and covers five different topics: basic (25 ECTS) and intermediate studies (60 ECTS) in social research, optional studies (55 ECTS), basics of expert knowledge (20 ECTS), study skills (5 ECTS) and language and communication studies (15 ECTS). The bachelor's programme teaches general knowledge about the social sciences and includes two courses at the intermediate level called 'Youth Work and

Youth Research: Key Ideas and Discussions' (5 ECTS), and 'Childhood, Youth and Family' (5 ECTS). Other courses deal with different issues in social science. (Tampere University 2019.)

The master's programme requires 120 ECTS: 90 in advanced studies on the student's study path (including master's thesis and seminar for 40 ECTS) and 30 in optional studies. Advanced studies in youth work and youth studies consist of three thematic topics and a master's thesis. Youth Work and Youth Research: Theory and Research earns 25 ECTS, Research Methodology 10 ECTS, and Working Life Orientation 15 ECTS. The first thematic subject frames the four approaches to the youth question, current debates in youth research, current debates and practices in youth work, local and global youth policy and youth education for the individual and community. Working Life Orientation includes a practical, on-the-job learning component, the internship (10 ECTS) (Tampere University 2019). The doctoral programme enables students to concentrate on their chosen subject.⁹

The curriculum of the University of Tampere is based on existing research traditions in youth work and youth studies. It is clearly an academic programme. Learning outcomes emphasise the need to be able to connect practical questions to the existing research tradition, and the amount of practical studies is considerably lower than in other youth work programmes in Finland. Since the curriculum is new, its practical implications for the field of youth work are unclear. If the students of the programme do not have a professional background in youth work or gain non-formal learning experiences in the youth field during their studies, their knowledge about youth work will be more academic than practical, which in itself is a new scenario in Finland.

Tampere University has surveyed its 2016 graduates. While there is no detailed information from students on the youth work and youth research study path, the social studies students on other paths revealed

9 The doctoral program at the University of Tampere is new, and no dissertations on youth work have been written at the time of writing (spring 2019). There are doctoral students currently on the program, so this situation is likely to change. In the 2010s, dissertations on youth work have been written in educational science (Purjo 2011; Soanjärvi 2011; Kauppinen 2018) and in the social sciences (Honkasalo 2011; Kivijärvi 2015; Juvonen 2015).

that 52 percent of them were working in a permanent position, 38 per cent were working temporary jobs, 2 per cent were unemployed and 7 per cent were not active in the labour markets due to other reasons, such as being on parental leave (Tampere University 2016, 14).

II.3.4. NON-FORMAL EDUCATION IN YOUTH WORK IN FINLAND

The focus of the preceding chapters has been on the formal education system in Finland. Although learning we do within the formal education system is often the only recognised form, this is a fairly obvious mistake, as scholars of youth work have long known. In fact, it could be said that the formal education, or schooling, is merely a standardised process which most people in Western societies must complete, at least in early stages of their lives. Schooling is an institutionalised version of society's hopes and expectations about education. (Kemmis & Edward-Groves 2018, 24, 147.) While formal education in youth work is important because it legitimises the field and gives individuals with formal qualifications an 'entry ticket' into the labour market, it must be acknowledged that people learn about youth work constantly in various situations, social fields and other areas of life. This point is well put by educationalist Peter Jarvis (2005, 112): 'I don't think there can be any human living without learning, and so to me learning is at the heart of living itself.' As individuals, groups and work communities, youth workers engage in learning outside formal education in many contexts.

Looking only at initial education would limit us to a narrow view of educational possibilities and pathways. Education scientist Soonghee Han has created lifelong learning matrix consisting of four elements. Initial education involves formal and non-formal education. In youth work, an example of non-formal initial education can be seen is the youth worker narrative presented in Chapter 1.1, in which the worker described how she had been active in youth work in a variety of settings and roles, both as a participant and as a youth leader. Initial education is usually insufficient for a professional career, due to the changing requirements of knowledge societies. An education system extends beyond the formal education, and various non-formal and informal learning environments

are integrated to learning system. Education extends into later periods of life as well. Continuous education has two elements: the formal and the non-formal. In the lifelong-learning matrix, different elements, both formal and non-formal, form a learning system which not only enables but also forces the individual to continually engage in learning (Han 2011, 60–61). Some developments in Finnish formal education, such as the reform of vocational education and the move towards competency-based programmes, can be seen as adaptations of the educational system in a situation where traditional modes of education must be reformulated.

The importance of non-formal education is acknowledged in Finnish youth work policy. Non-formal learning takes place in activities which are not necessarily designed for the purpose of learning. Nevertheless, these activities are intentional and typically initiated by learners' own motivation, not by institutional requirements. (Cf. Kiilakoski 2015.) Non-formal learning can be organized by employers, by NGOs or other civil society actors such as social movements, by the government or by people themselves when they need to learn about new things.

It is impossible to create a complete picture of the scope of non-formal learning opportunities in Finland. For the purposes of this text, some illustrative examples should be sufficient.

- 1) Centres for youth work development expertise have been created. The Youth Work Act and the Government Decree on Youth Work and Policy form the basis for the network of these centres, which are funded by the government. They all provide information on youth work and engage in training youth workers. Nationwide, there are 11 centres for expertise in developing methods for encouraging young people's participation in society; social inclusion and outreach youth work; information and counselling; digital youth work; service, quality and evaluation of youth work. The training offered by these centres enables youth workers to learn about topics requiring extensive expertise.
- 2) Many NGOs organise seminars and other training opportunities. An umbrella organisation of youth NGOs, Youth Co-operation – Allianssi, provides training in many topics. They also organise national seminars on youth work. In March 2019, the NUORI2019

(Young2019) brought together 1,500 youth workers to participate in discussions, trainings and workshops during two days.

- 3) Regional state administrative agencies organise training in youth work. There are regional youth work seminars and training for outreach youth workers. In July 2019, webpages of regional state administrative agencies listed 79 meetings and seminars on youth work, some of them organised together with centres of expertise.
- 4) Municipalities organise seminars and trainings for their workers. There are no statistics on the scope of training, but based on the experiences of the author of this text, there are dozens of meetings every year, some of them organised for youth club workers, some open to all youth workers in the city, and some are organised together with other municipalities. The centre of expertise of municipal youth work Kanuuna (Cannon), which is backed by Kanuuna network of municipal youth work, hosts different networks which offers training and provide arenas for peer support on different topics such as digital youth work, equity, multi-cultural youth work, shopping centre youth work or assessment of youth work (Centre of Expertise for Municipal Youth Work Kanuuna 2019).

The above four examples are by no means an extensive list of providers of non-formal education. Trade unions, parishes, youth worker associations and multi-professional networks also organise relevant training for youth workers. There are plenty of opportunities for continuous non-formal learning in Finland.

II.3.5. FINNISH YOUTH WORK EDUCATION SYSTEM IN THE EUROPEAN CONTEXT

The Finnish youth work education system consists of vocational education, universities of applied sciences and university education up through doctoral studies. These programmes are supplemented by non-formal learning options. Following the principles of life-long learning, the Finnish government ensures that there are no dead-ends in formal education, which means that Finnish youth workers are able to continue their

studies in other parts of the educational system if they wish further their education. Education is free, and the number of degrees one person has is not limited. The education system is flexible and allows the individual to pursue a variety career paths.

How does the Finnish model of youth work education appear from a broader European perspective? The diversity of European youth work cultures and structures is well-known. When examining them from a European perspective, ‘we have to be aware of the different realities and underlying theories, concepts and strategies when we think seriously about youth work in Europe’ (Schild & Vanhee & Williamson 2017, 8). The first European Youth Work Convention celebrated diversity, to the point of claiming that youth work ‘is characterised by diversity, tension and development’ (Declaration of 1st Youth Work Convention, 2). Dana Fusco and her colleagues (2018, 628) note that youth work education is as diverse as youth work itself. If this is true, youth work education in Europe must surely be quite diverse.

The Youth Partnership commissioned a study on the educational pathways of youth workers in Europe. The respondents (correspondents from the European Knowledge Centre for Youth Policy and other relevant ministries) were asked about formal and accredited courses in youth work. Out of 44 countries or regions studied, 17 offered university-level courses in youth work, and 40 per cent of the countries and regions offered some university degree education on youth work. This fact alone reveals the considerable diversity in youth work education in Europe: the availability of university education in youth work is still a dream for the majority of European countries (O’Donovan et al. 2019; Kiilakoski 2019a).

The results of the study were further analysed using a theory of practice architectures developed by Stephen Kemmis. Countries were grouped using a three-fold analysis that asked: if a country had an official framework for discussing youth work through legislation, competency descriptions of youth workers or quality assurance systems; if they offered university education, vocational education, state resources for non-formal learning and sustainable career paths; if they had youth worker associations. Based on this analysis, four types of youth work practice architectures were identified. According to the results, Finland belongs to the category of countries with strong youth work architectures. Eleven countries and

regions (of the 44 studied) belonged to this group.¹⁰ All of these countries and regions have legislative definitions of youth work and either a competency description or quality assurance system, if not both. They have a foundation for discussing youth work and defining what quality youth work consists of. They all use public resources for creating non-formal learning opportunities and clearly identifiable career paths. They offer formal education in youth work, half of them both vocational and tertiary education, as well as associations for youth work. Finland does not have a competency description of youth workers, although competency-based programmes of youth work education could certainly be said to serve this purpose (Kiilakoski 2018).

According to these results, Finland has a well-established system for youth work, and the Finnish youth work education model described in this chapter is part of the country's existing community of practice of youth work (Wenger 2008). It is the belief of the author of this text that it likely does not make sense to ask whether the Finnish community of practice of youth work is strong because the youth work education system is strong or whether the youth work education is strong because there is strong youth work practice architecture which supports education. The two have evolved together and contributed to each other, strengthening both. To better understand why youth work education in Finland is strong, it is necessary to briefly analyse how the existing structures of Finnish youth work support youth work education.

10 Belarus, Belgium (French), Estonia, Finland, France, Germany, Ireland, Luxembourg, Slovak Republic, the United Kingdom (England) and the United Kingdom (Wales).

III PRACTICE ARCHITECTURES OF YOUTH WORK IN FINLAND

The professional attributes of youth work can be interpreted as signs of recognition and identification of youth work professionals' special relationship with young people. Correspondingly, professional strategies can be seen as ways to ensure that youth work based on the special relationship between youth workers and young people as clients can be carried out. (Nieminen 2014, 37.)

Australian educationalist and philosopher Stephen Kemmis has emphasised the profound importance of *practices* in our lives. Practices such as youth work¹¹ are historically formed. They are based on existing tradition which has shaped those practices in the past. They are also social and shared and based on social relations and interaction. Practices unite people who participate in them and make it possible to say certain things in a certain manner about doing things and relating to others. According to this theory, what an individual practitioner does and is able to do is shaped by a wide background of discourses, social and political practice, material facilities and available resources.

In this conception, education is not about *initiation into knowledge*. It is about *initiation to practices*. This conception emphasises the profound importance of practices as an ontological backbone of our learning. (Kemmis 2014; Heikkinen et al. 2018.) Through participating in practices, we become members of larger communities and consequently

11 For the purposes of this text, I have made a presupposition that youth work is a practice. The counter-argument to this would be that youth work actually consists of many different practices in Finland: for example, outreach youth work, youth club work, promotion of participation, cultural youth work, workshops, outdoor education and so on. In fact, it can be claimed that since some of these youth work sub-cultures have developed their own vocabularies, associations and meetings, there is a danger of youth work becoming tribalised and of the idea of what unites youth workers being lost (Kiilakoski 2011). However, in this text, I am supposing that youth work is a distinct and unified practice and that it therefore makes sense to talk about practice architectures of youth work as a whole.

learn how other members of these communities do things, how they talk about what they do, and what they value. Participating in practices reproduces and transforms existing dispositions held by an individual. (Kemmis 2014.) When an individual youth worker learns how to be a youth worker, he or she joins the community and *learns by participation* (Wenger 2008). According to this perspective, educating of youth workers means introducing them to the practice of youth work. This initiation happens in a variety of arenas, both formal and non-formal.

The theory of practice architectures is based on the idea that there are certain *arrangements* that shape a practice. Through analysing how practices are formed, it aims to '[make] visible the conditions that make a practice possible – the arrangements that enable and constrain them' (Kemmis & Edwards-Groves 2018, 127). According to the theory, every practice consists of three things – sayings, doings and relatings. These things do not exist in a vacuum. They are made possible by a set of arrangements. In Kiilakoski (2019a), these arrangements were formulated as follows:

- 1) Cultural-discursive arrangements, or 'sayings', make possible the language in and about these practices. These shared understandings, often taken for granted, that practitioners draw upon are used to describe, interpret and justify the practice (Kemmis 2009). This dimension is about professional vocabulary, professional recognition and theories of how good practice is organised.
- 2) Material-economic arrangements, or 'doings', refer to physical and economic realities which shape the practice. These resources make possible the activities undertaken in the course of the practice. They also enable the "doings" that are characteristic of the practice (for example, the creation of youth centres or other arenas of youth work, wages of the youth workers, economic status of youth work organisations, sustainable career paths available or not available in a country or region).
- 3) Social-political arrangements, or 'relatings', concern social relationships and power. These resources make possible the relationships between non-human objects, people and professional cultures. In the case of youth work, it relates differently to children, young, social work, different professional cultures and colleagues in the field.

These arrangements are always inter-linked and in dynamic relation to each other. To spell out the nature of the arrangements and their relationships, an example from digital youth work might be useful. Digital youth work and the challenge of developing it in the youth work community can be briefly summarised as follows:

Digital youth work means applying digital media and technology to youth work. Ideally, the use of digital media and technology supports the organisation's own objectives and operations of youth work. According to the understanding gained over the years in Verke [National Centre of Expertise for Digital Youth Work in Finland], the objectives of digital youth work can be roughly divided into two bundles: 1) making youth work up-to-date and appealing to young people by utilising digital technology in youth work services and 2) enhancing young people's technology related skills. (Kiviniemi & Tuominen 2017, 9.)

Developing digital youth work requires renewing the *sayings* dimension and asking questions such as: *What is digital youth work? How is it connected to traditional ways of talking about youth work? How we can conceptualise its aims?* This probably requires rethinking traditional youth work vocabulary and finding a way to integrate new perspectives into the youth work practice. Finding ways of talking about new digital tools and digital cultures and their use in youth work is required in order to reach a consensus on how to develop digital youth work. Discursive-cultural arrangements also deal with issues of value: the development digital youth work is based on an understanding of the value of digital cultures and how their different tools are seen. When using commercial platforms, the issues of brands also affects how the work is done.

Material-economic arrangements deal with questions such as: *How much time is allocated to digital youth work? Where is digital youth work done? What type of equipment does the work community have or wish to acquire?* All of these affect what youth workers are capable of doing or willing to do. Digital youth work may require profound changes in the economic and material basis of youth work, since it requires 'allocating resources to youth worker training [and] the development of innovative digital youth work methodologies, working time, infrastructure, and technologies to be used with young people. In addition, account should be

taken of digitalisation and young people's digital cultures when designing youth work policy at the local, national or European level' (Lauha 2019, 17). Digital youth work may also change material sites and the tools used in these sites, as well as daily routines. For example, activities such as keeping blogs and producing media content together with young people are not currently common in Finnish youth work (Tuovinen 2017, 27).

Social-political arrangements (*relatings*) also affect how digital youth work can be developed. The evolution of maker cultures, for example, has changed the way people use digital tools. Digital tools change the way people come together, interact and have fun with each other. Digital media has led to the democratisation of public sphere, since people are freer to speak out and express their opinions. The possibilities for digital participation in youth work are promising (Pajustik 2019), since digital culture creates new possibilities for changing power structures in society. This also, however, creates new difficulties when various interest groups take over the public sphere. Issues of power are present in the digital world, and old structures are changing. The use of digital tools requires looking at these new digital cultures and the evolving use of technology.

All of the above arrangements are interconnected, forming a bundle (Kemmis & Edwards-Groves 2018). Developing digital youth work requires finding new ways of conceptualising and discussing youth work practices and the cultures of the young, of doing youth work and perhaps of integrating digital activities to existing ways of doing things and finding new resources. It also requires relating to other professions and interacting with the young in a new way. All of these features change the practice architectures of the field considerably. While such analysis of arrangements may seem detached from real-world practice, the theory is focused on understanding the practices – that is, 'what particular people do, in a particular place and time' (Kemmis 2009, 23).

In the following sections, the theory of practice architectures is used to analyse the community of practice of Finnish youth work by asking what elements in the Finnish youth work community enable youth workers to talk about their field and develop professional vocabulary; what economic and material arrangements there are for doing youth work; and how youth workers relate to other youth workers and other professions. The analysis 'zooms out' (Nicolini 2013) on the structures of Finnish

youth work and explains how these different sets of arrangements make possible the existing youth work education model. This analysis aims to demonstrate that Finland's strong youth work practice gives rise to its youth work education.

III.1. SAYINGS: THE SEMANTIC DIMENSION

People encounter each other in semantic spaces and use language to make sense of their world. Practitioners describe their action using certain language. This means that what 'youth work' means for youth workers is always shaped by established ideas in discourses about youth work. That is, what people talk about when they talk about youth work, what words they use and how they understand its practices are shaped by pre-existing cultural-discursive arrangements (Kemmis 2010, 466–467). The broader structures of youth work make understanding of and talk about youth work possible and create ideas about the value and societal meaning of youth work.

Finnish law has included a Youth Work Act or Youth Act since 1972, with the newest Youth Act passed in 2016. There is also the Government Decree on Youth Work and Policy 2017 and the National Youth Work and Policy Programme (2017–2019). These programmes are significant because they create a framework for what youth work is about. The Youth Act has been influential in shaping the way youth workers talk about their field and how they plan its development (Komonen & Suurpää & Söderlund 2012, 12–13). The Youth Act contains an official and powerful definition of youth work and youth policy. According to the Youth Act § (3):

- 'Young people' means those under 29 years of age.
- 'Youth work' means efforts to support the growth, independence and social inclusion of young people in society.
- 'Youth policy' means coordinated actions to improve young people's growth and living conditions and intergenerational interaction.
- 'Youth activities' means activities in which young people engage in voluntarily on their own terms.

Youth work is accepted as one of the services for which the public sector must provide. It is seen as an independent professional tradition, distinct from any formal learning system, juvenile justice, social work and other leisure activities. Legislation also requires municipalities to offer various youth work services and to coordinate these services within a youth policy framework (Kiilakoski 2017). The universalist concept of youth work as a general welfare service intended for all young people, not only or primarily for young people with problems, has been an important idea in the field (Siurala 2012, 107). The issue of voluntarism – that is, of young people engaging in the services by their own choice – has also been significant.

The Youth Act defines youth work as efforts to support the growth, independence and social inclusion of young people. This definition is connected to the pedagogical component of youth work. There is a long history in Finland of seeing youth work as education – different from schools, but education nonetheless. There have been academic dissertations (Purjo 2011) and scientific monographs (Nivala & Saastamoinen 2007; Kiilakoski & Kinnunen & Djupsund 2015, cf. also Kiilakoski 2017) dedicated to analysing youth work as youth education. Youth work is also discussed from the perspective of social pedagogy (cf. Nivala & Ryyänen 2019). Many youth NGOs consider education an essential component of their mission (Laitinen 2018). In a 2017 study on the future expectations of youth workers, 80 per cent of the respondents fully agreed and 15 per cent somewhat agreed that youth work has an educational mission (Allianssi 2017, 68). Youth work is commonly seen as an independent agent in the national network of various types of educators, a fact which provides a solid reason for specialised education in youth work and explains why the professional title in universities of applied sciences is ‘community *educator*.’ Since youth work is considered a type of education, it has been able to connect to the national pedagogical narratives (See Chapter 4).

Despite legislative descriptions, defining what exactly youth work is about has proven to be a difficult task. The role of tacit knowledge in youth work is high, and the tradition of youth work is built more on ‘doing’ than on ‘theorizing about doing’ (Kiilakoski & Kinnunen & Djupsund 2018). However, the role of research in contributing to discourse on

youth work has increased in recent years (Kiilakoski & Honkatukia 2018; Moisala & Ronkainen 2018), and most research in the field is available in Finnish. Also, links between practice and research have been developed, and much of the research utilises this connection. Studies done in co-operation with the youth work practice analyse multicultural youth work (Honkasalo 2011; Honkasalo & Kivijärvi 2011; Kivijärvi 2015), youth clubs (Gretschel 2011; Kiilakoski 2011), anti-racist youth work (Perho 2010), outreach youth work (Puuronen 2016), school-based youth work (Kiilakoski 2014; Gretschel & Hästbacka 2016), cultural youth work (Siivonen et al. 2011; Kuoppamäki & Vilmilä 2017), gender-sensitive youth work (Bahmani & Honkasalo 2016), railroad youth work (Malm 2018), food education in youth work (Kauppinen 2018) and evaluation of youth work and its indicators (Gretschel et al. 2016; Cooper & Gretschel 2018). Aside from data collected for research, there is also the youth work data that the government makes freely available on the internet.

The youth work community itself has many arenas for talking about youth work. There is a professional journal for youth work (*Nuorisotyö*), and a quality framework for local youth work has been developed for use all over Finland (Nöjdt & Siurala 2016). There are different local methods of describing what youth work is about, including but not limited to youth work curricula, productisation, basic mission statements and evaluation methods such as balanced score cards. There are social media groups which unite youth field. Various non-formal training and learning environments also contribute to describing what youth work is about.

The above-mentioned structures show that (1) there are different ways for describing that youth work is an independent agent, different from schools, social work, or youth care; (2) there is an ongoing discussion about the nature, goals and methods of youth work; (3) youth work has a vocabulary of its own, which is developed by different members of the youth field, including youth workers, youth researchers and policy makers; (4) there is a tradition that reveals the social value of youth work and legitimises the existence of youth workers. Formal education in youth work obviously contributes to all of these factors, but they in turn help strengthen youth work education.

III.2. DOINGS: MATERIAL AND ECONOMIC RESOURCES

What youth workers do is affected by material and economic arrangements in youth work. One of the most obvious facts is that if youth workers do not have sustainable career paths, youth work education is not going to benefit the field's community of practice in the long-term. Since youth work in Finland is seen as a part of public service system, it must be financed. The state, municipalities, parishes and NGOs all provide resources for youth work.

One of the peculiarities of Finnish resourcing of youth work, sports and culture is the fact that some of the money comes from the profits of Veikkaus, a Finnish company with a monopoly on gaming in Finland. In 2018, 54,770,000 euros was given to youth work from the lottery profits. In addition to this, targeted youth work organisations were given 19.5 million euros. The amount of special subsidies was 1.5 million euros. (Ministry of Finance 2018.) The primary providers of resources for youth work are the municipalities. However, calculating an exact total of financial resources allocated to youth work and youth services is not possible.

There are no national qualifications for youth work and, consequently, no national registries for youth workers. Around 3,800 youth workers are employed by the municipalities, a number covering all youth workers including outreach youth workers and workshop workers. Twelve hundred youth workers are employed by parishes. (Hoikkala & Kuivakangas 2017, 10.) Around 1,100 people are employed by NGOs. Out of these, roughly 700 work at the national level and over 400 hundred at the district and local level (Taavetti 2015, 24–25). These numbers are measured in man-years. The actual number of paid youth workers is higher, since some of them work on a part-time basis. Volunteer numbers are only rough estimates. It is thought that around 10,000 volunteer in youth NGOs (Taavetti 2015, 18).

Based on the calculation above, the total number of professional youth workers in Finland is around 6,000. The number of young people aged 15 to 29 in Finland is roughly one million (State Youth Council 2019). This means that there is, roughly speaking, one youth worker for every 166 young people living in Finland.

Economic arrangements are important in youth work education for many reasons.¹² The most obvious is that building a professional culture requires secure and sustainable career paths, so that people with youth work education can enter the field. In addition, the existing system of youth work allows opportunities for on-the-job learning in education on a systematic and continuous basis.

Material resources for Finnish youth work are varied. Almost every municipality has a youth club or youth centre, and some of the facilities are rather impressive. Although youth work is conducted in many settings, youth centres as controlled learning environments maybe important for developing youth work practices (Williamson 2012, 41), but youth work is conducted in a wide variety of settings and material arrangements, including (Kiilakoski 2011; Kiilakoski 2015):

Public indoor arenas designed for youth work. The most common is the youth club, an age-specific public space and learning environment created, decorated and designed for the purpose of youth work. Others include youth information centres, or youth work facilities in schools or shopping malls. In the 2010s, the one-stop shop guidance centers (Ohjaamos) have become important places for providing low-threshold counselling, outreach youth work and other services for young people (Määttä 2017 ed.).

Public indoor arenas not designed for youth work. In these settings, youth work must adapt to an existing organisational culture. For example, youth workers in schools must negotiate their professional identity in a school culture, which usually differs from the traditional ideals of youth work, and find new ways of doing youth work (Sapin 2009, Kiilakoski 2014). One interesting development is the start of mobile youth work, which is conducted in both indoor and outdoor arenas, such as trains or stations (Malm 2018).

Public outdoor arenas. Targeted youth work in the streets can connect youth workers to young people who are not usually reachable through

12 One aspect of the economic arrangements of youth work is the allocation function of Finnish youth work, to use the terminology of Juha Nieminen (2007). Finnish municipal youth work allocates resources for youth NGOs and youth activities conducted by young people themselves. This brings about a youth policy factor in youth work, since one of the missions of youth work is ensuring that civil society agents provide services and activities for young people.

other forms of youth work or public services. Here, youth workers enter places where young people have ownership of the surroundings (Kiilakoski 2011; Malm 2018). Other outdoor arenas include adventure education settings both in the countryside and in urban area, where participants co-operate to achieve success in demanding tasks, and camps, which are common summer activities in Finnish youth work.

Digital spaces: Virtual interaction has acquired more importance in the world of the young. Aside from the rather obvious fact that youth work must reach young people in the settings where they like to be, developing digital youth work is also important as a way to engage with the digital world young people live in and deal with the fundamental issue in any type of education: how to live well in a world worth living in (Kemmis 2014) with technology.

Material-economic arrangements are needed for the youth community to have an impact. The historical developments of the youth work community in Finland show that resources have been allotted to youth work and youth work education simultaneously. This has meant that youth work education has prepared youth workers for the youth work realities in which they are engaging. The economy and environment have supported youth work. This is a background factor for explaining the youth work model in Finland.

III.3. RELATINGS

Relatings happen in social spaces, and they are realised through the medium of power and solidarity. Social-political arrangements affect how social relations within the practice are formed, as well as how practitioners communicate outside the field (Kemmis 2014; Kemmis & Erwards-Groves 2018). This dimension affects how youth workers relate to not only children and young people, parents, the wider public, but also other professionals and youth work colleagues. The issue of power determines how youth work is seen and what societal impact it may have in different societies. Finnish youth field is connected through many different professional associations.

Youth workers' associations provide sites for connecting and sharing with other members of the community of practice. Trade unions are

one example. Nuoli is an expert organisation for youth work and sports activities open to both practising youth workers and students of youth work. Nuoli deals with issues of power by promoting the recognition and working conditions for youth work. The Trade Union for the Public and Welfare Sectors (JHL) includes a department for youth work, sports and leisure time activities. Allianssi is an umbrella organisation for youth work financed by the Ministry of Education and Culture and focused on advocacy. All of these organisations are about solidarity (they bring youth workers, youth managers and/or youth leaders together) as well as about power, since they have also an advocacy mission.

An interesting example of lifelong commitment to the community of practice of youth work is the Senior Club of Youth Work, a national network which connects veterans in the field, both working and retired. The club is part of Finnish Youth Research Society, providing an example of the interconnectedness of the youth work field. Other indication of the interconnectedness of the youth field is the co-operation network of youth work, which has members from the fields of education of youth work, youth research, NGOs and faith-based and municipal youth work.

One of the most popular current topics of youth work is increased multiprofessional co-operation. The co-operation between schools and youth work has been developed throughout the 2010s and has become increasingly common (Kiilakoski 2014). Youth work is mentioned in the national core curriculum of Finland as one of the potential partners of schools. The curriculum also emphasises youth participation, children's rights and the importance of connecting schools to non-formal learning, which creates good opportunities for youth work to be a part of multiprofessional teams in schools (National Agency of Education 2014). Youth work is also included in multiprofessional networks in the field of social inclusion, child welfare and policy, employment, counselling for young people outside education and labour markets and crime prevention, to name only a few.

The social recognition of youth work has increased in 2010s. In a survey conducted by Allianssi, 80% of respondents felt that the significance of youth work has increased in the last five years. Over 80% also believed that the significance of youth work will continue to increase in the future (Allianssi 2017, 12–15). Increased co-operation requires negotiating vari-

ous professional roles. According to one research and development study, youth work can contribute to the learning environments of schools by concentrating on group dynamics, promoting participation of the young and helping to bridge different generations working in schools. The growing interest in combining schools and youth work appears to support the idea that they share general ideas (supporting growth, promoting learning) while also differing in ethos and methodologies. For youth workers, working in schools means that they need to have a strong professional identity. (Kiilakoski 2014.) This is an example of how autonomy through dependency in youth work (Siurala 2016) can be created. A scholar and former manager of youth work in Helsinki, Lasse Siurala makes the following observation on the co-operation between different professions and integration of youth work into government initiatives:

The Finnish context appears to have benefited from adopting a strategy based on resilience and patience and compromising with government priorities, developing and modifying existing working methods, as well as actively cooperating with larger sectors – a more successful strategy than attacking the government and refusing to make compromises. (Siurala 2018, 55.)

Social-political arrangements in Finnish youth work create conditions for co-operation within the youth work community and with other professions. The autonomy of youth work is granted by the idea of youth work as an independent part of the service system, which is acknowledged as having expertise in matters concerning the young. Through this idea, youth work is able to meet requirements of professionalism which are presupposed for a differentiated professional field with independent status.

III.4. ARRANGEMENTS SUPPORTING THE PROFESSIONALISM OF YOUTH WORK

Practice architecture influences what the practitioners are able to say and do and how they can relate to other practitioners. The impact of practice architectures can be seen in the professionalisation of youth work in Finland. There are many theories about professions, and there is no

consensus on what exactly a profession consists of. For the purposes of this text, the following features will be considered:

- Legislation related to the profession, and, through this, state recognition that the profession exists. This should be connected to financing.
- Independent status from other fields.
- Preferably, a high level of education based on scientific knowledge of the field.
- Acknowledgement that what the profession does is beneficial to society (image-building activity and public recognition).
- Professional autonomy and the ways to advocate and influence society on the matters concerning the profession.

(Forsyth & Danisiewicz 1985; Hirvonen 2009; Nieminen 2014)

Professionalisation requires that the field's practice architectures are developed on many levels. It requires cultural-discursive arrangements which enable talking and thinking about youth work and the value it brings to society. In Finland, this is achieved through the definitions in legislation, the curricula of youth work education, professional discourses in the media and other outlets, including research. It requires material-economic arrangements, so that sufficient resources are given for learning environments in which youth workers can help young people to develop their personality, build skills, engage in peer activities, integrate themselves into society and influence it, think critically and, to influence Finnish society so that it can better take into account the aspirations of the future generations. Social-political arrangements are needed so that youth work is seen as valuable and beneficial and is taken seriously by other professions, giving youth workers the power to influence society. All of these arrangements contribute to the way youth work is viewed by society in general.

Formal education is part of the professionalised framework. Education affects the way youth work is considered and discussed (by analysing the core competencies of youth work and what concepts and theories are used to describe youth work), how youth work is done (by teaching how a competent youth worker works) and how youth workers relate to other professions (by producing or recognizing multiprofessional and interna-

tional competencies and by teaching methods for making the value of youth work visible). Education in turn is shaped by the professionalised field of youth work. Receiving youth work education is only possible in a society that recognises the value and independence of the youth work field and believes that allocating resources for youth work education brings about societal value and that those with youth work education can find their place in the labour market. Youth work education and youth work practice architectures are interdependent and contribute to each other. Therefore, understanding youth work education requires understanding the practice architectures of youth work itself.

IV EDUCATION IN FINLAND

Education policies are necessarily intertwined with other social policies, and with the overall political culture of the nation. The key success factor in Finland's development of a well-performing knowledge economy with good governance and a respected education system has been its ability to reach broad consensus on most major issues concerning the future for Finland as a nation. ... Education in Finland is seen as a public good and therefore has a strong nation-building function. (Sahlberg 2011, 39.)

The development of Finnish youth work education has been influenced by the role of youth work in Finnish society and by developments in education as a whole. In this chapter, three features of educational policy are analysed more closely. Firstly, the belief in education in Finland has created a favourable social attitude towards formal education and has enabled various professions to develop education for their field. Secondly, educational policy in Finland has been based on national narratives. Youth work has managed to fit into these narratives and thus been able to secure a place in the service system. Thirdly, the expansion of education means that youth work has needed to adapt to developments outside its own field.

IV.1. BELIEF IN EDUCATION

Belief in education has been an important societal motivation for modern societies, both in the industrial and post-industrial ages. When citizens believe in education, they are convinced that getting an education will result in higher social status. For this reason, investing time and other resources in formal education is seen as a rational choice. This is not something that has happened by itself. Building confidence in education in Finland has been a national project, which required convincing the working classes that they should devote time to education. This was helped by the strong commitment to education of the labour movements. For a society, belief in education means seeing education as a way to boost

economic competitiveness, to create environments for innovation and build a more just society. For an individual, believing in education means trusting that education is an egalitarian mechanism in which grades are not based on the background of pupils but on their individual abilities and dedication. In Finland, it has also meant believing in teachers as professionals who treat pupils rightly and who are experts in their field. (Silvennoinen & Kalalahti & Varjo 2018.)

Developments in Finnish legislation have created a basis for belief in education. Ever since the first educational legislation was passed in the 1850s, the state has worked to demonstrate the value of education (Silvennoinen & Kalalahti & Varjo 2018). Belief in education and the expansion of the education system have walked hand in hand. The expansion of education has occurred simultaneously with the increase in economic productivity and the creation of welfare state, which may indicate that education has been a beneficial investment both from the state and the individual perspective (cf. Simola 2015). The basic principles of Finnish education – free education, egalitarianism and *Bildung* as a value in itself – have also meant that people are willing to invest time in education.

Belief in education is very much alive in the youth cultures of the 2010s in Finland. According to Youth Barometer 2017, a national representative survey conducted annually, the young in Finland still believe strongly in education and value learning, both practical and theoretical, in and of itself. Ninety-six per cent of the young agree that general knowledge is valuable as such – a commitment which demonstrates the lasting impact of seeing *Bildung* as end in itself. Ninety-four per cent think that learning useful practical skills is the most important, and ninety-six per cent agree that learning new things is fun. The Youth Barometer also shows that young people recognise the importance of informal learning, with 97 per cent agreeing with the statement that they have learnt a great deal of important knowledge and skills outside school.

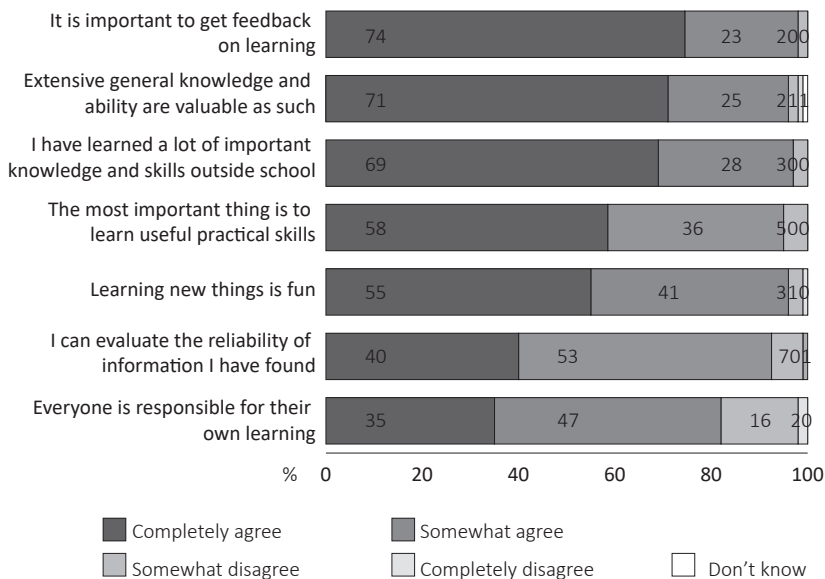


Figure 5. Attitudes of young people in Finland towards education (Myllyniemi & Kiilakoski 2018).

The Youth Barometer 2017 also enquired about the opinions of the young on formal education. An important component of the belief in education is the belief that education will be valued in the labour market. Ninety-four per cent of the young agree that education significantly increases one's chances of getting a job. Finnish egalitarianism tends to value all education, both vocational and academic. The majority of Finnish youth surveyed (59 per cent) believe that higher education guarantees a good income in the future. It appears that the basic principles of the Finnish education system are shared by the next generation. Ninety-two per cent feel that higher education should be free. The proposed changes in the educational system are generally not favoured, aside from the suggestion that upper secondary or vocational education should become compulsory, which roughly two thirds of the young favoured. This point also shows how strong the Finnish belief in education is.

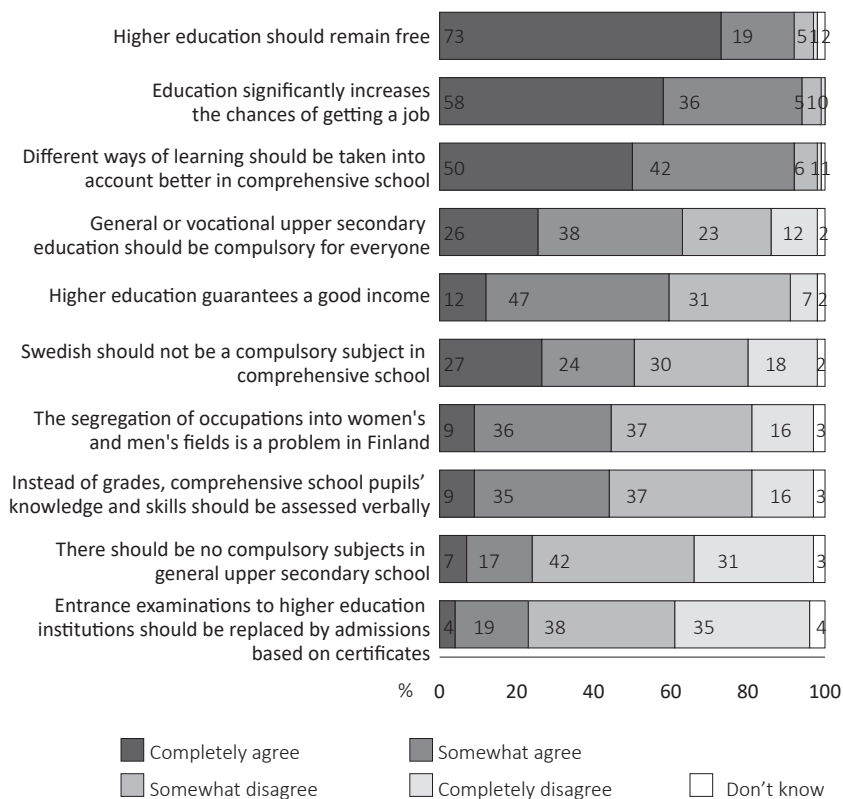


Figure 6. Opinions of the young on school and education (Myllyniemi & Kiilakoski 2018).

The belief in education has provided the social support needed to build a strong education system in Finland and enabled youth work to argue that education in the field is both needed and desirable to the next generation. Thus, it can be argued that belief in education is a major reason why youth work education has developed.

IV.2. EDUCATIONAL POLICY IN THE SECOND AND THIRD REPUBLIC¹³

Practices are always part of a larger history and shaped by social, cultural and technological developments (Kemmis 2014). Youth work education is shaped by the high symbolic value of education in Finnish society, which is manifested in the strong belief in education but is also shaped by educational policy and education as a national project. Various grand narratives have framed the development of education in Finland since the Second World War. Youth work has also been shaped by these narratives. The values and social goals that the youth work community has promoted are connected to larger narratives in Finnish educational and social policy (cf. Höylä & Kiilakoski 2019). For this reason, youth work has been an accepted part of these narratives.

After the war, Finnish society in general entered a new phase, which emphasised social security networks and societal services. Finnish sociologist Pertti Alasuutari has called this period a ‘second republic’ (1996). Great trust was put in societal planning, governmental control and even social engineering, and various services were developed by the state. Having survived the war, Finnish saw the youth question as a main issue in the future of the nation and achieved new understanding of youth. This gave room for theorising and talking about youth work as an activity that cannot simply be modelled on existing services, such as school or social work. Rather, young people and the affairs of the young were analysed as an independent issue (Nieminen 1995; also Nieminen & Honkatukia 2017).

Scholars of educational policy have emphasised that this was a period when the ultimate aim of the curricula and other forms of education was to build Finnish citizenship, with emphasis on creating a unified Finnish society (Värri 2018, 43). It was against this backdrop that youth work education in formal settings began in Finland in 1945. Other public structures were also created to respond to the interest in solving the youth question. In 1944, for instance, the National State Board of Youth

13 A more detailed version of the argument provided in this sub-chapter is provided in Höylä & Kiilakoski 2019.

Work was established. By 1946, there were already over 150 municipal youth boards. (Nieminen & Honkatukia 2017, 35–36.) The role of the service system was to promote Finnish identity and citizenship. Youth work was also seen as important societal agent within this framework, with the roles of developing co-operation between different social circles, teaching civic values to the young and enforcing Finnish identity (Nieminen 2014, 70–71).

In the 1960s, as general educational policy become more system-oriented, the role of the state in organising youth and educational policy in a more systematic manner increased significantly. Higher education also began to expand and was available to a larger population (Lampinen 2000). The expanding education system was one manifestation of the developing idea of a state providing egalitarian opportunities for all of its citizens. The 1970s was an important period for the building of the welfare society in Finland, which saw the first Youth Work Act passed in 1972. During this time, the role of municipalities as providers of youth work began to increase, and the formerly dominant model of NGOs as the main providers of youth work began to vanish. Basic education was reformed at the same time the Youth Act was passed, and early education legislation was passed in 1973. Welfare structures were created at the same time. Centralised governmental planning had its heyday. Structures of welfare society were created using combination of research, professional knowledge, and administrative decisions – even up to the point of social engineering.

In the 1970s, a fairly monocultural idea about civic education shifted towards an individualised code in educational policy, although global education was seen as important as well (Värrä 2018, 71–72). Vocational education in youth work began to take shape in the early 1970s. Youth work education developed at the same time, with the idea that public authorities were responsible for youth policy. Youth policy programmes of this period were ambitious attempting to influence how horizontal youth policy should be done in Finnish municipalities. When it became clear that these lofty goals would not be met in the 1980s, youth policy programmes adopted less ambitious ones (Nieminen 2014). This was an example of how centralised planning's control over Finnish society was beginning to slip.

During the 1970s and 1980s, the professional debate on youth work began to legitimise and examine developing municipal youth work. New financial resources were allotted, and a youth club network was built, which meant that municipal youth workers could influence the learning environments in which they worked. The state gave instructions for how youth clubs should be built (Forkby & Kiilakoski 2014). Legislation and youth policy programmes emerged. Youth work education developed as part of this context as well: ideas about the societal importance of education, offering universal services to all citizens and responding to the urbanising Finland and its emerging urban youth cultures all contributed to how youth work education should be developed (Höylä & Kiilakoski 2019).

The new era began in the 1980s. The collapse of the neighbouring Soviet Union, the liberalising of the Finnish economy and the restructuring of municipal services all were highly symbolic events which marked the beginning of a phase that Pertti Alasuutari (1996) calls the 'third republic'. Centralised regulation gave more room for local decision-making and ideas about privatising services. Then the rise of consumption culture and economic recession in the early nineties marked the new social era, which put more emphasis on individual choices, and the role of the state was diminished. Central planning and social engineering lost their former importance. Finnish educational policy moved to a decentralised phase which emphasised the autonomous decisions made at the local level (Simola 2015). This was a period of improving through networking and self-regulated change (Sahlberg 2011, 32–33). In the 1990s, the dual-sector model in Finnish education was established, partly in connection with the economic expectations of education. Most of the youth work structures were already in place during this period, and the youth work field was able to argue for its acceptance as part of the new dual model of higher education. The decentralised approach (Simola 2015) in Finnish educational policy also meant that youth work was able to develop curricula for youth and community work based on the practice architectures of the youth field itself.

IV.3. EDUCATIONAL INFLATION

Despite occasional calls to deschool society, the level of required education has risen in most of the industrialised countries. This means that an increasing large share of an individual's life is spent in formal education. At the same time, the level of education required for access to the labour market is increasing and likely to continue to do so. As early as 1976, educational sociologist Dore (1976) talked about a 'diploma disease', in which the educational demands increase considerably. There is also the danger of learning processes becoming rote and ritualised (Simola 2015) as Western countries move towards mass schooling. Against this backdrop, Finland, of course, has stood out as an example of the country that values education highly.

The level of education socially required to enter lucrative employment has risen. As more university-degree-holders enter the labour market, the competition increasingly prefers job-seekers with higher education credentials (Collins 2000). This process is called 'credential inflation'. The theory of credential inflation has analysed how the overall educational level of a society rises because certain degrees are seen as superior to others. Certain interest groups (such as trade unions and employers) maintain the belief that those with higher education degrees possess more advanced skills. Because these interest groups can affect the credentialing process, higher education is valued more. For the workforce, this means that since entry requirements for most jobs have risen and types of degrees which were sufficient for stable employment twenty years ago might not be so in this new, exclusive job market, where their relative value is lower (Isopahkala-Bourdie 2015).

This process is occurring in Finland as well. Expanding education has led to the general increase in the educational level of the population, and so the requirements of the labour market have risen (Aro 2014). From 1987 to 2017, the number of people with only basic education has decreased considerably, from 2.1 million in 1987 to 1.3 million in 2017. The number of people with academic education has risen from 300,000 people with lower or higher academic education in 1987 to 1,000,000 in 2017 (Findikaattori 2019). As the education level in the labour markets has increased, the demand for highly educated workers has risen accord-

ingly. According to the OECD's country report for Finland, credential inflation has clearly progressed: 'In a labour market that demands ever higher levels of qualifications and skills, low educational levels are decisive factors in becoming unemployed or inactive' (OECD 2019, 40).

The increased level of education in society overall creates further incentive for gaining education. Young people in Finland are optimistic towards education. In the Youth Barometer 2017, over 70 per cent of respondents said that they plan to continue to tertiary education. Only 18 per cent planned to stop at secondary education. Their performance in school, the educational level of their parents and the region in which they live also affect their view of education. (Figure 7.)

Like other professions in Finland, youth work is affected by diploma disease. Since roughly 300 youth workers earn a higher education diploma every year, the requirements for entering the field have risen. Thus, credential inflation probably explains the demand for youth workers with higher education degrees. But not only youth workers are affected by this process. The youth work education system has also had to adapt to the rising level of education. This is most visible in the development of dual-sector model in higher education in 1990s. Many histories and narratives of youth work education state that institutions were compelled to develop higher education programmes in the field because of the increase in the general education level (Määttä 2018; Niemi 2018).

The development of youth work education is affected by the general increase in formal education. Developing youth work education on the higher level was more due to fact that the school system itself changed, not the shared and publicly discussed need of youth field itself. This is highlighted by the fact that youth work was relatively slow to develop programs for universities of applied sciences. Secondly, young people themselves in Finland look pretty much to gain high education. The availability of higher education in youth work offers attractive possibilities compared to if only secondary education would be available. Thirdly, since the educational requirements are higher, the requirements for youth workers are likely to change as well. If there would be no higher education on the youth field, students trained in other fields would have an advantage in applying to jobs in youth work.

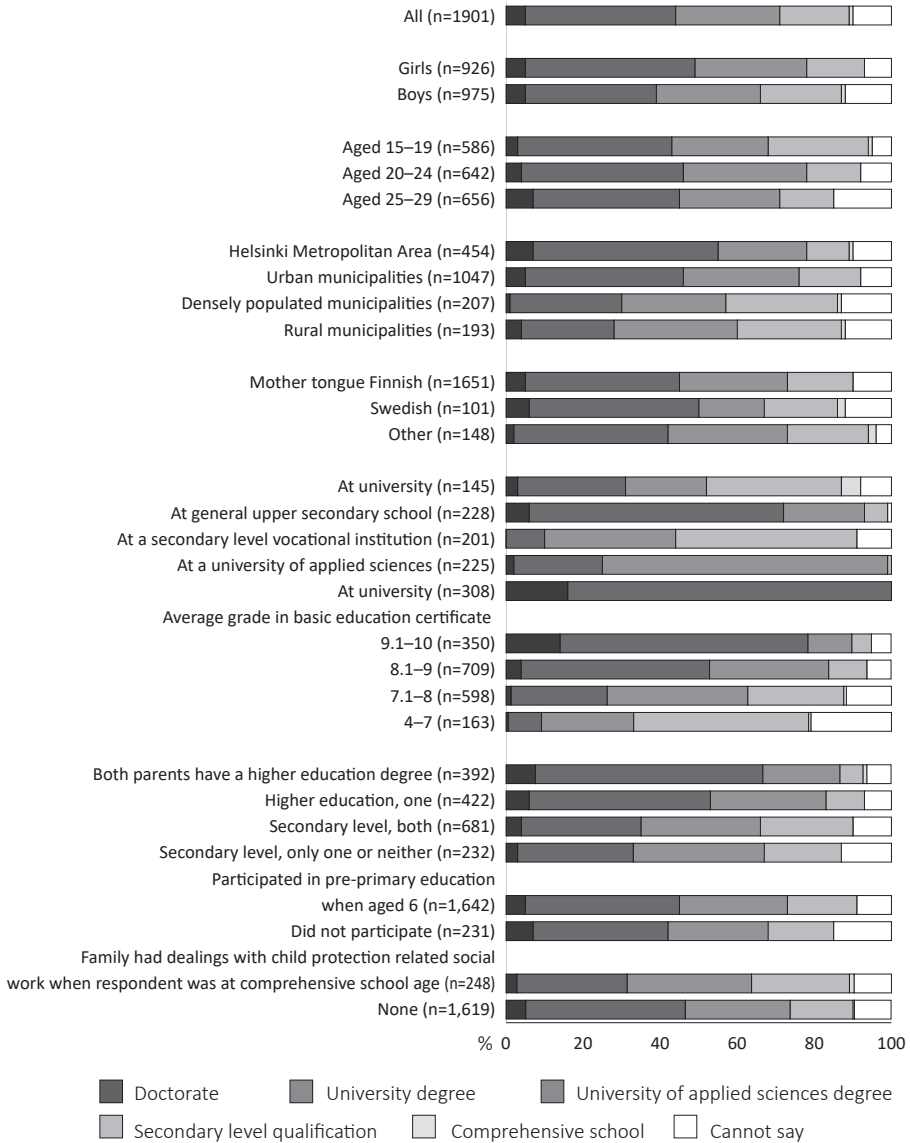


Figure 7. The expected level of education (Myllyniemi & Kiilakoski 2018).

V QUALITY YOUTH WORK AND QUALIFIED YOUTH WORKER

The aim of this book is to present Finnish youth work education from the perspective of learning theories that emphasise the communal and participatory aspects of learning. Sometimes learning is talked about as information sharing. This concept of learning sees learning as acquisition (Wenger 2008) and as initiation into knowledge (Kemmis & Edwards-Groves 2018). If a wider perspective on learning is adopted, one can talk about *learning as participation* (Wenger 2008) and as *initiation into practices* (Kemmis & Edwards-Groves 2018, 18). In this wider understanding, education is viewed as a process where children, the young and adults are initiated into forms of understanding, modes of action and ways of relating to one another and the world. From this perspective, learning is a combination of: acquiring knowledge, learning the professional vocabulary and value commitments of the practice, learning how the practitioners do things, seeing how things are arranged and how the community relates to other professions. Education is distinct from mere schooling, which is a formal societal answer to the need to ensure that new generations are initiated into practices that are formed socially and historically. (Kemmis & Edwards-Groves 2018.)

The view of education as an initiation into practices has shaped the arguments in this book. First, youth work education in Finland is viewed as a process where new members of the youth work community become members of the community of practice of youth work. All education aims at initiating the new youth workers to features of the community and helping the more experienced ones to learn new things. Therefore, an understanding of how the youth work community is supported in semantic, physical and social space is needed. (Cf. Kemmis 2014; Kemmis & Edwards-Groves 2018). Second, formal education itself is a practice influenced by national histories, pedagogical developments and ideas of the country. The Finnish model of formal youth work education is dependent on wider educational thinking and doing and is related to other fields and society in general. Youth work education cannot be un-

derstood by looking at the community of youth work only. One has to also understand how the practice of education has developed in Finland. Third, one needs to understand how the wider, macro-level features of Finnish society have influenced youth work education. Although all the answers in a brief chapter are going to be partial, it is important to note that education is seen as an important part of the national narrative, and consequently, the state is seen as having a highly positive role in the development of the youth work community.

The formation and historical development of Finnish youth work education can be seen as a process in which path dependencies (how prior educational and youth policies influence what is possible now) and contingencies (elements which could have happened otherwise) play a role. In this summary, an overview of the elements of youth work education is offered to spell out how Finland has been able to develop a concise model of youth work education that is different from its Scandinavian neighbours. The overall structure of youth work education is explained in chapter II.3. In this chapter the aim is to summarise some of the factors in the youth work community and in the educational community in Finland that have contributed to the Finnish youth work education model.

V.1. YOUTH WORK IN FINLAND

Immediately after the Second World War, the youth question was seen as an important societal task which needed responses at different levels. Youth work education was developed at the same time as other youth work structures. From the beginning, there was an understanding that youth work was a complex affair. Because of this complexity, education on relevant topics was needed. This meant that youth work was seen as independent and different from formal education and schools alike. Some European countries are struggling with the recognition of youth work, and there is a need to spell out how youth work could be promoted. The Finnish case shows that given the right societal circumstances, the youth work community can be rapidly developed.

There are several features of the Finnish youth work community which help it distinguish itself as an independent profession. These features also

help to define the practice of youth work (Kiilakoski 2017). First, youth work is an age-specific activity. Youth workers work with the young. Both semantically and symbolically, Finnish society has recognised a need to talk about young people as an age group which has special needs, and as citizens of Finland, young people are entitled to gain access to services. Youth work activities have been supported both financially and materially. The youth work community has been able to show Finnish society that the work they do has been beneficial both for the young and for society in general.

Second, youth work is based on the principles of voluntarism and universalism. From an early start, youth work has been about creating activities and possibilities for young people who engage in it on a voluntary basis. This means that youth work has to be attractive and fun for the young, instead of being controlling and boring. The importance of voluntarism has been respected throughout the history of youth work in Finland. The voluntary nature of youth work helps to create connections between youth workers and young people that are not based on disciplinary power but on cooperation. This element of youth work, which a lot of the youth workers in Finland call encountering, is one of the constitutive features of the ethos of Finnish youth work. Voluntarism influences the way youth work is talked about, how it is done and how the youth workers relate to young people, their parents and other professionals. Connected to voluntarism is the principle of universalism: although some of the youth work activities are targeted, youth workers feel that youth work should be open for everybody (Siurala 2012). In practice, this has meant creating low-threshold activities and services which do not in principle stigmatise the participants.

Third, the importance of peer activities, youth cultures and peer learning are essential to youth workers. Peer dynamics and being able to create conditions for positive interdependence is at the heart of the professional know-how of youth work. The sense of group activities means in practice that youth work creates spaces where young people can hang out, do activities, cooperate, and have fun with their peer group. This brings a youth cultural element to youth work: respecting what young people do together requires staying in touch with cultural movements, the ways in which the young express their hopes and criticisms, and ideas

that interest young people in this time and age. Youth work is based on a belief that group activities of the young will most likely produce effective results, although one does not know the exact outcomes. This credo in the positive effects and growth obtained through group activities has been dominant in youth work.

Fourth, the conception of youth work as education has been important in the history of Finnish youth policy (Nieminen 1995; Purjo 2011; Kiilakoski & Kinnunen & Djupsund 2018). Emphasising the educative nature of youth work has meant that youth work is seen as being distinct from youth care. The youth work community has been able to argue for the necessity of having a profession which works outside formal education. This is most likely helped by the idea of folk education or folk *Bildung* in Nordic countries, emphasising that citizens need learning arenas outside formal education and that they need to be able to cultivate each other in the process. This idea has been an important part of the cultural order of the Finnish state (Alasuutari 1996, 228).

Fifth, youth work has for a long time promoted democratic education, citizenship training and youth participation. Youth work aims at promoting youth participation both within itself, such as by participatory budgeting, and in society as a whole, for example by organising youth councils. This involves a dual element—empowering youth, but also contributing to society as a whole by creating social structures that help them express themselves and be heard. This means that youth work has contributed to national narratives on building enlightened citizens.

Sixth, the social policy aspect of youth work (Forkby & Kiilakoski 2014) should create conditions to help less well-to-do youth gain access to services, be empowered and interact with other young people. In recent years this perspective has been emphasised more, and the issues of youth unemployment, marginalisation, poverty and dropping out of school have been addressed by creating new youth work structures, such as one-stop guidance shops for helping young people outside education and work. What is noteworthy, however, is the fact that these developments too are shaped by the ideas of voluntarism, universalism and peer learning, and help young people to grow as citizens and as people.

These six features emphasise that youth work in Finland has a distinct role in the Finnish service system, with unique features as well as simi-

larities and synergies with other professions. This helps to convince the general public that youth work is beneficial, and that undertaking this task is a complex affair which requires knowledge and expertise.

The six features of Finnish youth work described above also help youth work to argue for its universal nature as opposed to being a deficit- and problem-oriented affair. This means that it is seen as having social value, even though some of the features of youth work might be hard to measure in a reliable manner. Practices change with time, and even basic values and principles need to be reevaluated, reconceptualised and sometimes rediscovered (Corney 2019) when the technologies of governance, youth cultures and societies change. So far, the basic principles of universalism, voluntarism and trust in the positive effects of peer activities have been held dear by the youth work practice. These have been supplemented by the human rights perspective, which has helped youth work sharpen its stance when dealing with racism or working with migrant young.

It has been argued that educators, perhaps more so than other professionals, should be attuned 'to what and how we make this world into initiating people into practices' and should 'understand clearly what the consequences of these practices be like' (Kemmis & Edwards-Groves 2018, 130). Through helping the youth workers to be initiated into youth work practices, educators are able to contribute to how youth workers talk about things, what they value, their methods, how they negotiate their relationships both with the young and with the wider requirements of youth policy goals (Williamson 2019), the professional networks they join, where and with whom they work, and so on. In Finland, the long history and social recognition of youth work practice means that there is a community in which one can participate and which has legal, social and economic recognition in society.

V.2. FORMAL AND NON-FORMAL YOUTH EDUCATION

In Finland, youth work education is available at all levels of education system. The programmes in vocational education and training in the universities of applied sciences and at the University of Tampere all have a distinct character. Since education is free and flexible and there are no

dead-ends inside the educational system, the learning paths of youth workers can continue in both formal and non-formal education.

It has been argued in this paper that several features of Finnish society have shaped youth work education in Finland. The importance of education in the national narrative, the continuing societal effort to create social justification for believing in education as a way to develop as a person and also as a way to increase the economic productivity of the nation, the development of both educational policy and the Finnish universalist welfare state and the increasing educational levels and the consequent credential inflation have all contributed to the creation of the Finnish youth work education model. The educational practice in Finland, alongside youth work practice itself, influences the way youth work education is organised.

As has been described in chapter I, not all youth workers have a degree in youth work education, and not all people with a youth work degree work in the field of youth work. This is not uncommon in Finland, since the educational system enables social mobility. The Finnish educational system is based on the idea of not creating dead-ends within the education system. Because of this, one is always able to learn new skills and is able to change work when needed. Learning is supported by the state, education is free and the idea of *Bildung*, of creating an independent relationship between oneself and the social system one interacts with, is still a goal in itself instead of looking at education only from an economic point of view. All of these conditions mean that individuals have many options for educating themselves and consequently for changing their profession if they so wish.

The Finnish youth work education system enables youth workers to continue their education throughout their professional career. The Finnish youth work education system described in detail in chapter II.3 combines formal learning at all levels of education with different non-formal learning possibilities. Youth workers are able to learn in the initial phase of their career and gain more education in the continuous phase, both inside the formal system and in the non-formal learning system. The strong Finnish youth work practice architecture means that learning opportunities are numerous.

Finland has been highly favourable towards education throughout its history. It is believed that all social fields will benefit from education.

Against this background, it is understandable that youth work education has systematically developed. While this development has obviously required a lot of effort from stakeholders inside the youth field, policy-makers, other educators and professionals have also contributed to the creation of the Finnish youth work education model.

Several factors may help explain the wide scope of Finnish youth work education. First, there is a long and shared understanding that young people in society are entitled to have their own space and access to services. Youth work is seen as a complex profession which is connected to these ideas and must be supported by specialised education. Second, there is a consensus that the youth field needs to be financed and youth work facilities developed. The financial and material structures of youth work have created a need for trained workers; the latest advancements, which require transparency and assessment of the quality of the work, point to the need for specialised education in the field. Third, different sectors have cooperated to create a proper educational network. The state and leading governmental officials in the youth field have been active in enabling the development of youth work education. The educational system for youth work has developed based on the ethos of the field. There are sustainable career paths for youth workers, and these career paths have clear connections to education. The expansion of education and the consequent credential inflation has also meant that youth work education has expanded as part of educational system reforms.

V.3. THE POSITIVE ROLE OF THE STATE

Some youth work scholars are suspicious about state interference in youth work. Examining the Finnish model shows that Finnish youth work community has a more positive idea about the state. In Finland, the state finances youth work research, provides both formal and non-formal learning, legislates and governs youth work activities, allocates resources to grassroots youth work, takes part in professional networks and has several structures for developing youth work activities and training youth workers. This is not seen as a negative thing in Finland, and the role of the state is accepted as being beneficial for youth work by the

youth work community. This has also meant that youth work has been shaped by the national narratives which have influenced the development of Finnish society.

In the current debate, the state is attacked from many perspectives. The neoliberals and libertarians criticise the state for not being productive enough and see the markets as the most desirable mechanism to achieve anything. On the other side of the political spectrum, state intervention is seen as ideological control, or as a form of biopower. Both of these criticisms make it hard to think and theorise positively about the role of the state. Yet Scandinavian countries have developed a model where the state plays a strong constructive role in society and provides opportunities for different people from different backgrounds. (Kuusela 2014.) This positive reliance on the state is echoed in the Eurobarometer, a series of surveys in which citizens of the European Union were asked if the state intervenes too much in their lives. The Finns disagreed the most. Only 38 percent of Finns agreed, while 58 percent disagreed. The EU average from twenty-eight countries showed that 62 percent agreed with the statement and 33 percent disagreed (European Commission 2017, 148), indicating that Finns have a highly favourable idea about the state.

The emergence of Finnish youth work education, and perhaps youth work practice as well, can be seen as an example of the chain of events where the role of the state has been considerably different from the critical perspectives on state interference. The state has safeguarded the role of youth work without controlling or standardising it too much. The connection to the state and to the national project has also meant that the societal value of youth work is visible to wider audiences.

Nobody in Finland sings about needing no education. Nobody talks seriously about deschooling Finnish society. Finland is an example of a country that values education as beneficial for both society and the individual and is willing to spend money on creating a thorough and accessible formal education system in youth work as well as other professions.

The Finnish minister responsible for youth affairs, Annika Saarikko, expressed the Finnish credo at the EU Youth Conference in Helsinki in July 2019, stating that both quality youth work and qualified youth workers are needed. This remark indicates that the Finnish youth work community has successfully convinced the general public that working

with youth requires a specialised body of knowledge and skills, that a move towards a research-based, reflective professional practice rather than a reliance on instincts alone is needed and that there is public acknowledgment of the value and worth of this work, which leads to financial remuneration (Pozzoboni & Kirshner 2016). Recognition of youth work means also recognising that youth workers are entitled to be supported in seeking education.

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ABSTRACT

This book offers an overview of Finnish youth work education to a wider international audience interested in promoting youth work education. Youth work education in Finland as part of the formal education system began in 1945, when the first course on the subject was established in an institution that is now part of Tampere University. Since then, the youth work education system has been expanding and currently covers all levels of the formal education system. Finland also has a well-developed non-formal education system. To understand this development, the basic features of Finnish youth work education are described. Based on the existing research literature, youth work education is located within the tradition of Finnish youth work and within the wider context of educational policy and tradition in Finland.

The book presents the basic features and core values of the Finnish pedagogical tradition, which manifest themselves in the way educational policy is organised in Finland. The Finnish youth work education system that ranges from vocational education to doctoral studies is described in detail. Finland has adopted a dual sector model in higher education, and most youth work students in higher education study at universities of applied sciences. Compared with many European countries, the Finnish youth work education system is well-financed and developed.

The book analyses the tradition of Finnish youth work using the theory of practice architectures. According to this perspective, youth work education aims at initiating the new youth workers to the features of the community and helping the more experienced ones to learn new skills. The book argues that to understand the way Finnish youth work education has developed, one must understand the wider context of how the field's community of practice has developed. The cultural-discursive, material-economic and social-political arrangements of Finnish youth work are studied. The Finnish youth work community has successfully convinced the general public that working with youth requires a specialised body of knowledge and skills. Moreover, the value and worth of this work have received public acknowledgement. Recognising youth work means also recognising that youth workers are entitled to be supported in seeking education.

The development of Finnish youth work education has been influenced by the role of youth work in Finnish society and by the developments in the educational policy as a whole. The book analyses three features in greater depth. In Finland, the belief in education has created a favourable social attitude towards formal education and has enabled various professions to develop educational courses for their field. Educational policy has been based on national narratives. Youth work has managed to fit into these narratives and has thus been able to secure a place in the educational system. The expansion of education and the consequent credential inflation mean that youth work has needed to adapt to the developments outside its own field.

AUTHOR

Tomi Kiilakoski, PhD, is a senior researcher in the Finnish Youth Research Network and an adjunct professor in Tampere University on the scientific research on youth work. His areas of expertise include youth work, youth participation, educational policy, cultural philosophy and critical pedagogy. He has worked in the university of Tampere and in the Humak University of Applied Sciences. He has authored eight books on youth work, youth participation, and schools and critical pedagogy in his native language, Finnish. He engages actively in promoting participation and developing youth work on the local and state level in Finland.

Finland has developed a well-established youth work education and training system which helps youth workers in different stages of their careers learn the values and practices of the youth work community. This report analyses the core values and principles of Finnish education and provides both an overview of the educational system and a detailed description of youth work education.

The book claims that an understanding of Finnish youth work education requires knowledge of the tradition and practices of youth work as well as the main elements of Finnish educational thinking. Belief in education and equity, a commitment to continuous learning and a view of education as an integral part of the national narrative have created a uniquely Finnish model of education.

This book is aimed at an international audience interested in youth work and developing youth policies.

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