



Finland

The **Finnish Committee on Sustainable Development** was set up in 1993 to enhance cooperation on the promotion of sustainable development. The committee was reinstated on 30 January 2003 and it has a mandate till the end of 2007. It is led by the Prime Minister and includes representatives of the state including the Ministry of Education, civil society and the private sector. The committee serves as an advisory body on matters related to the UN and especially the UN's Committee on Sustainable Development (CSD). It also functions as a discussion forum and takes the initiative in matters that need to be dealt by decision-makers. The committee's secretariat is located in the Ministry of Environment.

The Finnish National Strategy for Education for Sustainable Development

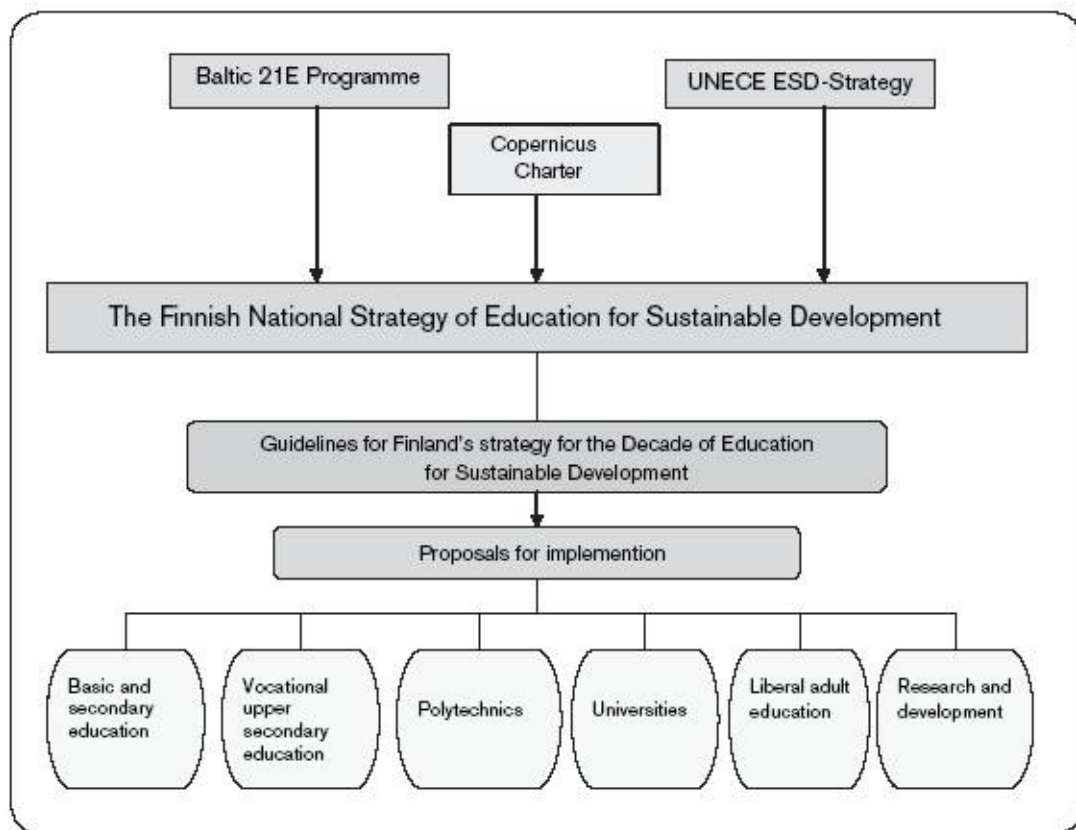


Diagram of the Finnish National Strategy of Education for Sustainable Development

The Finnish National Strategy for Sustainable Development emphasizes adopting a way of life based on the principle of sustainable development. A commission set up in 2003 by the Ministry of the Environment and the Ministry of Trade and Industry (Kestävän kulutuksen ja tuotannon toimikunta, KULTU: Commission for Sustainable Development and Production) identifies the education system as an important way of transmitting values, information and skills. The reports of the Ministry of Education (*Sustainable Development in Education- Implementation of Baltic 21E- Programme and Finnish Strategy for the Decade of Education for Sustainable Development 2005- 2014*), mention the following few Guidelines for Finland's DESD:

- *"Promote sustainable development in education and training:* education and training for sustainable development will be one of the focal areas of the education system, and this includes sustainable consumption and production. This will apply to both compulsory education and vocational education, to polytechnics, universities and adult education.
- *Endorse an ethical and integrated line of approach:* in all matters take into consideration the ecological, economic and socio-cultural aspects whilst keeping in mind that all three are complementary.
- *Interdisciplinarity:* Encourage schools and other educational institutions to engage in interdisciplinary education as well as in teaching and research projects related to sustainable development so that these form a core function of all education in schools and educational institutions. Children and teenagers should be brought up as responsible citizens by approaching different subjects in a holistic manner using different means and teaching methods. Tradition and skills should be transmitted and made good use of.
- *Disseminate information:* devise easily accessible teaching material and teaching programmes, organise lectures open for the general public, and collaborate with the media. Develop Internet services so that the goals of sustainable development and the means for achieving these goals can be widely spread through virtual teaching and web course platforms. Widely accessible Internet services should also be used to disseminate information to private persons, businesses, corporations and the public sector on how to participate in building a sustainable future and who to contact.
- *Networking and increased co-operation:* Reinforce the local, national, regional and international network of interdisciplinary education experts for sustainable development in order to collaborate within the framework of teaching and research programmes. This means that student and researcher exchange programmes should receive sufficient support as well. Develop co-operation between other relevant actors in society, plan and implement co-ordinated strategies and action plans. Improve implementation and make it more transparent through wide collaboration between different professional groups.
- *Participation:* Create genuine opportunities for citizens to participate and influence decision-making through non-governmental organisations. Enlarge the learning environment to encompass the surrounding society and working life.
- *Research, post-graduate and continuing education programmes:* Promote research so as to advance sustainable development. Devise specific programmes for different target groups, such as teachers, the business world, public administration, NGOs and the mass media.
- *Putting innovations to good use:* Encourage the use and incorporation of innovative, sustainable development friendly technologies in teaching".

The report also aims that by 2014, sustainable development will be a focal point of the Ministry of Education's research and education strategy, of the National Board of Education, and of the further education of school management and teachers. The same will apply on a local level. The report cites the most important aims of sustainable development as following:

- "to produce information on the environment, society and cultures so that the precursors of as well as possible hindrances to sustainable development can be identified and analysed;
- to produce information and to develop action plans and technology that advance sustainable development, including education and training content and method;
- to create know-how whereby people can assimilate and apply research results that have been produced elsewhere;
- to help as a nation those in a weaker position and to make an effort in solving global problems".

Resources

ENO-Environment Online

This is a global virtual school and portal for sustainable development made by the Department of Education, The City of Joensuu. Four environmental dimensions of sustainable development (social, natural, cultural environment and a sustainable way of living) are studied on a weekly basis during a school year. ENO, a strong and active network of schools, has been running since 2000. There are about 300 active schools from 90 countries involved (2006-07), and about 30,000 students and 2,000 teachers are direct beneficiaries. In addition, the material on the website is available for the public at large. The initiative aims to foster environmental themes and sustainable development in education, use of ICT for the environment and sustainable development, and to unite people from different cultures and nationalities to work for a common goal: a more sustainable future.