

EDINA
Country report
Finland

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Introduction

The Nordic country of Finland, member of the European Union since 1995, currently has a population of 300,000 immigrants (5.4% of the entire population) who speak over 150 languages (Statistics Finland, 2015). A total of 32,400 asylum-seekers arrived in Finland in 2015 – 10 times more than 2014 (Ministry of Education and Culture, 2016). For the first time in the history of the country immigration surpasses emigration. As the immigrant population grows more information is needed for monitoring integration and success in the world’s ‘best’ education system (OECD, 2004, 2008, 2010a, 2010b, 2014).

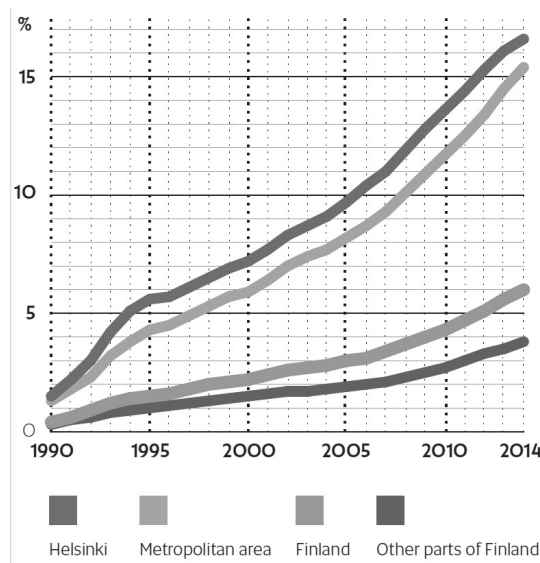


Figure 1 – Percentage of 4-16 years olds with a foreign language as their first language 1990-2014. Source: Statistics Finland.

This report provides an overview of the situation concerning the schooling of Newly Arrived Migrants (NAMS) in Finnish mainstream education (primary and secondary), especially in the Helsinki capital area, by examining strategy and policy measures as well as recent research and in comparison to international data.

It is important to start by saying that under Finland's constitution, all pre-primary- and comprehensive-school-age children should receive free basic education even if they live in the municipality temporarily or if the municipality is not their own municipality.

Country context: From the 'miracle' of PISA to a more complex image

Finnish students' success in international comparisons of student assessments (such as the OECD's PISA) in the last decade has been celebrated at the national level and remained a topic of interest internationally. Finnish students' performance has been among the best in all the domains in each PISA cycle, albeit on the decline in the latest one (e.g. Darling-Hammond, 2010; Hargreaves & Shirley, 2009; Sahlberg, 2015). According to the Finnish National Board of Education (FNBE), education is seen as a key to competitiveness and well-being of the society.

Education has long had a reputation as a basic right of all citizens and, until today, is provided free of charge. Quality, efficiency, equity and internationalization stand out as key terms in Finnish education policies. In spite of all the fame that Finnish education has recently received, it does not mean that there is no room or need for development. According to recent studies by Finnish researchers Bernelius (2013), Riitaoja (2013) and Kalalahti & Varjo (2012), among others, educational equality in Finland has weakened due to increasingly neo-liberal policies and the repeated economic crises since 2008. Studies also show that Finland has been facing threats of youth marginalization (FNBE, 2014), lower performance of boys, Swedish-speakers, and immigrants (Kilpi-Jakonen 2011), and reduced well-being at comprehensive schools (Harinen & Halme, 2012).

Elina Kilpi-Jakonen shows that, regardless of current policies and measures, children of immigrants tend to have lower levels of school achievement at the end of

comprehensive school than the majority and that their lower parental resources are partly the reason. Refugees have the lowest levels of achievement overall. But there seem to be exceptions: Asian immigrants outperform the majority, while children of one Finnish-born and one foreign-born parent do not differ from the majority (Kilpi-Jakonen, 2012).

Multiculturalism and discussion around diversities in education are fairly recent in Finland. This is particularly relevant in times when Finland is suffering, like most countries in Europe, from anti-immigrant, xenophobic and racist discourses in the media and on the street. Dealing with diversities of any kind in schools often produces differentiation and hierarchization in spite of teachers' professionalism and goodwill to treat students fairly and equally. Teachers seem to lack tools to analyse and detect discourses that create othering.

Policies related to NAMS and implementation

As explained before, the values of Finnish education comprise quality and equality/equity regardless of nationality, race or socio-economic backgrounds. This is reflected in the fact that Finland guarantees immigrants the same educational opportunities as the majority. The Act on the Promotion of Immigrant Integration, which came into force in 2011, aims at promoting integration into Finnish society and advocates support for participation. Different measures and strategies are defined for, on the one hand, the parents of immigrant families (*“Key services for families with children are the services provided at child welfare clinics, early childhood education, basic education and pupil welfare services”*) and, on the other, adult immigrants (*“teaching of Finnish or Swedish and, if necessary, literacy education are arranged in the form of integration training. In addition, other instruction is organised to promote the immigrant’s social competencies, cultural and life management skills, and entry into working life and further education”*) (Ministry of Employment and the Economy, n. d.). The Ministry of Employment and Economy is responsible for integration matters while the Ministry of the Interior deals with nationality issues and the promotion of good ethnic relations. Two institutions deal with education and training for immigrants at all levels of education: The Ministry of Education and Culture and the National Board of Education. Municipalities are relatively free to implement education and thus to

integrate immigrants in education in whatever ways. Aid is granted to them to provide instruction in Finnish or Swedish as a second language and pupils' own native languages. Finally many government-funded NGOs contribute to working towards educational integration.

The Finnish national curricula represent powerful tools for facilitating integration in mainstream education. Bearing in mind that the new National Core Curricula will be introduced in August 2016, we review the latest versions available in May 2015.

In the National Core Curriculum for Pre-primary Education (2010) it is stipulated that special pre-primary education may be organized for immigrant children. Every year about 2,000 students receive special instruction preparing them for basic education. The educational and learning objectives are the same as the general ones but there are specific objectives for immigrants and their linguistic and cultural backgrounds are taken into account. One of the underlying principles is that "The key prerequisites for good command of the Finnish/Swedish language include command of the native language and focused learning" (Core Curriculum for Pre-Primary Education, 2010).

In Helsinki there are preparatory classes that follow a specific curriculum for NAMS. In this approach NAMS have instruction in Finnish language and participate in school subjects for one year (under 10 years old = 900 hours and over 10 years old = 1000 hours). Preparatory classes are in specific schools and pupils need to travel to the nearest school. A pupil may live next to the school, but if there's no preparatory teaching, the pupil may travel to the other side of the city for the preparatory classes.

This preparatory group has their own teacher (*luokanopettaja*) who teaches the group in every subject and in Finnish. After studying a few months in this group the pupil is integrated into the basic education group based on his/her abilities. These integrations haven't always been successful. Success depends on what kind of structures and working culture the school has.

In this approach the municipality funds the teacher for the group, and in this new approach, each pupil brings funding to the school. The funding school offers support for the pupil (for example, L 2 lessons, more teachers for one group - the other teacher

can be a Finnish L 2 teacher, a L1 teacher, a special needs teacher or a regular teacher), funding may be also used for teaching aids in the classroom or for extra lessons for NAMS pupils.

When teachers work in pairs or as a group they can have more flexibility over class arrangements and structures, they can plan lessons together and focus on pupils who require additional help. They can also support pupils to collaborate together, which can have a positive impact upon NAMS inclusion.

Finnish as a second language represents another central goal especially since its inclusion in the curriculum for basic education in 1994. In terms of integration the instruction should “support the pupil’s growth into active and balanced membership of both the Finnish linguistic and cultural community and the pupil’s own linguistic and cultural community” (Core Curriculum for Basic Education, 2004). Class teachers are responsible for managing and negotiating the instruction of immigrant students (Voipio-Huovinen & Martin, 2012: 100). For NAMS in their first year of Finnish education an individual curriculum is tailored to the needs of the pupil. The “rules”, tasks and educational aims for NAM pupils are set by their teachers in co-operation with the pupils and their families. The aims are based on the pupils’ previous school history and age as well as other situations that may affect their school work (for example, Children without parents, history of ‘unstable’ situations like war). Home-school cooperation is also viewed as an essential way of integration into mainstream education. At the basic level the aim is for immigrants to participate in education in the same ratio as native Finns.

At the general upper secondary level it is important to note that fewer young immigrants go on to study compared to the majority population. In 2014 provisions concerning preparatory education to this level of education were included in legislation. According to the National Core Curriculum and the local upper secondary school curriculum the backgrounds and previous knowledge of students (e.g. language skills) should be taken into account. Like the Basic level the Curriculum calls for supporting the students’ growth into “active and balanced members of the Finnish linguistic and cultural community and their own linguistic and cultural community” (National Core Curriculum for General Upper Secondary Education, 2003: 23). One cross-curricular

theme at this level of education includes “Cultural identity and knowledge of cultures” which aims at, amongst others, “provid(ing) students with opportunities to build their cultural identity by means of their native language, analysis of the past, religion, artistic and natural experiences and other aspects that are meaningful to them” (ibid.: 27). Instruction in L1s is possible but not compulsory. Special arrangements and rights in the matriculation examination can be organized for immigrants. L1 instruction in Finland is based on the ‘goodwill’ of the local municipality. The Finnish National Board of Education (*Opetushallitus*) funds 86% of L1 instruction. Funding becomes available when there are 4 or more L1 speakers of a particular language. For example, there are 8 pupils in Helsinki who speak Norwegian, the City of Helsinki Department of Education can obtain funding from The Finnish National Board of Education (*Opetushallitus*). In this case, pupils will have two lessons per week of L1 instruction. L1 instruction lessons are after school and takes place in a venue which is easily accessible (for example, the city centre).

L1 instruction is dependent upon the demand of a particular language. Languages like Somali, Estonian and Russian are ‘more common’ in Finland and are often available at the pupil’s own school. For example, there are 80 L1 Somali language groups in Helsinki. Currently, in Helsinki we give instruction in 47 different languages.

The City of Helsinki Department of Education has started to develop L1 support during the school day. This has been used as an aid for existing school subjects rather than L1 instruction. Currently a number of on-going pilots are in place across Helsinki and have been funded by the Finnish Ministry of Education (*Koulutuksellisen tasa-arvon edistämisen hanke*).

Finally, Finnish teacher education is increasingly contributing to the integration of immigrants into mainstream education. Many programs based on multicultural, intercultural, social justice and/or global teacher education aim at preparing teachers for working with and for immigrant students (Dervin & Hahl, 2015; Jokikokko, 2010). In 2014 guidance counsellors’ training relating to young immigrants was systematically organized. At the University of Helsinki for instance, multicultural education is implemented more systematically in teacher education. A research group, Education for Diversities, specializes in this issue and has produced research and action research

on the use of textbooks in diverse educational contexts, successful immigrant in Finland and the use of educational place-space in the inclusion of diverse students. Multiculturalism, societal participation and internationality are amongst the 7 core values of the department of teacher education (Hahl et al., 2015; Dervin et al., 2013).

Although many policies and measures appear to have been successful in the Finnish context, several important issues, which are related to curricula contents, access to certain levels of education, and teacher education, still deserve attention.

- In terms of curricula although the emphasis on Finnish and Swedish as second languages is well developed, the relegation of L1s to the 'extracurricular' is often criticised as being counter-productive for integration into mainstream education. There are also often discrepancies between municipalities in terms of second language teaching provision.

- Access to upper secondary education is still limited for immigrants in Finland. General upper secondary education is more accessible than vocational education although Kilpi-Jakonen (2011) shows that the Sub-Saharan African second generation and mixed-origin groups are more likely than the majority to enter the vocational strand.

- Although the current project deals essentially with primary and secondary levels, it is important to note that in adult education, Pöyhönen and Tarnanen (2015) note that in integration training, teachers have been trained as Finnish L1 language teachers and that they have little experience with working life and the kind of literacy needed in this specific context. The often 'one-size fits all' type of approach is also problematic even if the training is quite flexible. This might have an impact on schools-parents interaction.

- Schools in Finland are not required to hire migrant-background teachers. During the recent years schools have been advised to increase the knowledge of 'language awareness'. At their yearly plan (*toimintasuunnitelma*) schools write how they will deal with the diversity of languages. Though, the basic guidance comes from the national curriculum (for example, the evaluation of L2 learners in general).

- Another issue related to teacher education is that no coherent agreement at a national level has been sought in terms of what multicultural and/or intercultural education entails for student teachers and their future students. Ideological perspectives can differ immensely thus leading to many and varied approaches to the educational integration

of immigrant students, with some leading indirectly to new forms of social injustice. Finally in order to make integration more coherent and systematic into mainstream education all student teachers should receive training about multicultural education.

Financial aspects

According to the National Teachers Trade Union in Finland (OAJ, 2015) preparatory instruction for early childhood education and basic education costs 14,000-15,000e for each pupil per year.

The recent working group of the Ministry of Education and Culture on immigration issues (2016) has identified the following costs related to NAMS at national levels:

- Speeding up of education path (2017-2020: 2 million euros per year)
- Entry into vocational education and support (2017: 8.8 million; 2018-2020: 11 million per year)
- Cultural integration (2017-2020: 4.2 million per year)
- Training of migrant-background teachers (2017: 2.4 million per year; 2018: 3.2; 2019 & 2020: 3.6 million per year – a burning issue in Finland as there is a dire need for such teachers in schools).

The total amount of support is approximately 80 million euros for 2017-2020 (ibid.).

The education of NAMS in Finland: Recent research

First starting from a positive approach to the issue of migration the Nordforsk project entitled *Learning Spaces for Inclusion and Social Justice* (2013-2015) looked into success stories from immigrant students and school communities in Finland, Iceland, Norway and Sweden. By looking at ‘good examples’ the Finnish part of the project describes how social justice – and thus the integration of immigrants into mainstream education – is implemented in some schools in three Finnish cities, through shared leadership, developing a sense of belonging, the commitment of key teachers and proper support for L1 and Finnish/Swedish as second languages teaching. Social integration is also deemed to be an important contribution to integration into education.

The yearly Migrant Integration Policy Index (MIPEX) is a good indicator of the effectiveness of measures and policies used to integrate migrants socially and civically in all EU member states and countries outside Europe. Over 150 policy indicators summarize migrants' opportunities to participate in a given society. Education is one of the 8 policy areas with political participation, access to nationality, etc. MIPEX 2015 ranks Finland 4 out of 38 with a score of 69 of a total possible 100 points. Education scored 60 out of 100. In general MIPEX shows that Finland has *slightly favorable policies* on equal opportunities for immigrants, who appear to benefit well from training opportunities. However MIPEX also notes the following needs for improvement: better adapted Finnish/Swedish training available throughout the country (rural areas too); more equal access to training and study grants; shorter waiting time to access vocational training.

Regardless of the positive results as far as educational integration is concerned, recent discussions concerning the 2012 Finnish results for the triennial Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA) reveal that 15-year-old immigrants are behind other students in mathematics, science, reading literacy, and problem solving performances and that many do not reach the minimum level required (Harju-Luukkainen et al., 2014). This is not specific to Finland as many other countries in Europe face the same issue. Yet, according to the Finnish report, first generation immigrants lag two school years behind and second generation immigrants slightly less behind the majority. Considering these worrying results, Hanna-Maija Sinkkonen and Minna Kyttälä (2014) go as far as asking whether the Finnish school system has been able to offer equal educational opportunities for students with immigrant backgrounds in basic education.

One central issue in the integration of immigrants in mainstream education is represented by the transition and continuation of immigrants to upper secondary education in Finland and then to higher education. Elina Kilpi-Jakonen (2011) notes that first generations immigrants are less likely to continue in general schools than the majority and the second generation. She also explains that there are differences between groups of immigrants, for instance, Sub-Saharan first generation students are most likely to drop out, non-Europeans more than Europeans.

In her 2012 study Elina Kilpi-Jakonen bluntly asks the following question: *does Finnish educational equality extend to children of immigrants?* She shows that, regardless of current policies and measures, children of immigrants tend to have lower levels of school achievement at the end of comprehensive school than the majority and that their lower parental resources are partly the reason. Refugees have the lowest levels of achievement overall. But there are exceptions: Asian immigrants outperforms the majority while children of one Finnish-born and one foreign-born parent do not differ from the majority. Interestingly in a later article Kilpi-Jakonen (2014) examined the relationship between naturalisation and educational attainment in Finland. Her results show that Finnish citizenship is associated with higher educational attainment among children of immigrants. The scholar demonstrates that citizenship acquisition also reflects the economic integration of families.

The importance of location is also increasingly deemed important in the treatment of NAMS in the Finnish context. Large cities such as Helsinki, Espoo and Turku have recently experienced changing patterns of spatial socioeconomic and ethnic differentiation (e.g. Seppänen, Kalalahti, Rinne & Simola, 2015). These patterns directly impact housing and school choices and the ways schools operate (Bernelius, 2013). The phenomenon of school shopping is detected in the larger urban areas (Seppänen et al., 2015; Varjo, Kalalahti, & Silvennoinen, 2014), while disadvantaged neighbourhoods are rejected by many parents (Kosunen, 2014; Seppänen, et al., 2015). Linnansaari-Rajalin et al. (2015) show a link between the socioeconomic status of a school neighbourhood and teachers' work commitment, especially in terms of organisational commitment. This indicates a potential increase of inequalities in children's learning opportunities. In reaction to this, the city of Helsinki, amongst others, has built rental flats in the same areas as owner-occupied flats in order to create an economically and socially diverse population.

Many recent studies have also examined more in depth the development of language education policies in Finland – language being a central aspect of integration into education. Their results are less positive in this regard. For instance Suni and Latomaa (2012) note that there tends to be a gap between the policies and their actual implementation. The two researchers write: “Finland might seem like an educational paradise, a place where all students are ensured equal opportunities (...) However, the

actual grassroots reality of immigrant students may be quite different, and one may well ask whatever they really do enjoy a satisfactory level of equality” (Sunni & Latomaa, 2014: 68). They thus draw the conclusion that practices are still largely monolingually oriented in Finnish education and that L1s have a weak status (ibid.). They explain this by reminding that current legislation does not force the providers of education to take the specific needs of immigrant students into account (ibid.). In a similar vein Voipio-Huovinen and Martin (2014) claim that many class supervisors in basic education in the Helsinki Greater Area show a lack of interest in immigrant students. This is explained by the fact that these teachers are often overworked and lack the skills to deal with immigrants. This is why more professional development is needed regarding this matter.

Finally, in their 2016 report entitled *Finnish as a second language syllabus learning outcomes in the 9th grade of basic education in 2015*, the Finnish Education Evaluation Centre (FINEEC) shows that amongst the 1,530 pupils who participated in the study (which included 66% of pupils who had been granted intensified or special support) the language proficiency was fairly good (Kuukka & Metsämuuronen, 2016). 87% had reached a threshold level (B1.1/B1.2), with their comprehension skills being stronger than their production ones. The pupils who performed best were Estonian, Russian, Chinese and English-speaking, regardless of how many years they had attended school in Finland. The pupils’ socioeconomic background was also one of the factors explaining their learning outcomes, again, regardless of the amount of years spent in Finland.

Examples of good practice in relation to NAMS: The case of Helsinki

Based on the number of registered native languages, 13.5% of the residents of Helsinki are immigrants. Helsinki currently has 630,000 inhabitants. By 2030 it is expected that 23% of Helsinki’s population will be speakers of a foreign language (Viljanen, 2016). This rather heterogeneous population deserves differentiated educational paths instead of a ‘size fits all’ approach. Like other children, all asylum-seeking children in Helsinki are granted a place in school. Over the last 15 years, preparatory classes are offered (reading, writing, Finnish language and culture, and a combination of language and

vocational studies). Extra funding is available to hire additional teachers or purchase teaching material. In 2015 €2.55 million were granted to schools for such activities.

Services of enhanced and special needs support are also proposed. Helsinki schools provide diverse types of assistance and support for schoolwork: diversified and varying activities, learning in flexible groups, guidance counselling, remedial teaching, special needs education and student welfare services. The City tries to make sure that parents are aware of these different services and have the opportunities to meet with the providers.

In what follows snapshots of ‘good’ practice in catering for NAMS in a Helsinki school are presented. These practices were collected in a Nordic project examining the success of migrant students in Finland. The school was founded in 1915 so it is old and monumental, but the children are diverse, colourful and lively. There are currently about 200 students in first through sixth grades and the number of staff is around 20 with class teachers, subject teachers, special needs teachers and school assistants. The demographic structure of the population in the area has changed a lot during the last twenty years. There is for instance a big Somali minority. Around 25 per cent of the students speak Somali as their mother tongue. Many students speak for example Arabic, Turkish, Kurdish, Russian, Estonian, Pasto, Bengali, Lingala, French, Portuguese and so on. The school year that the data was collected, a bit over 50 per cent of the students speak something else than Finnish as their first language. There are also many students that have Finnish as a third language. The number of bilingual families is also higher in this school than the average in Helsinki. The data was collected mainly in the second grade, which was an inclusion classroom. The following people were interviewed: a special education teacher, a 2nd grade teacher, a school assistant, a preparatory classroom/Finish as a second language teacher, and the principal. This school took part in an opera project with the Finnish National Opera and the My Roots-workshop days that took place in the school during the data collection. This school has French immersion classrooms and all the children have an opportunity to get teaching in French.

Example 1: Second grade – inclusion as a good practise

In the fall of 2013 there were 25 second graders, aged between seven to eight years old. The class is an inclusion class, which means it is collaboratively taught between a class teacher and a special needs teacher. There are three special needs students in the class. Half of the students in the class speak Finnish as second or third language. One third has parents with different mother tongues. They have two classrooms at their disposal so they can flexibly divide the group or work all together in the same classroom.

When the class starts in the morning they begin by multilingual greetings: *Hyvää huomenta! Bonjour! Good Morning! Salam alaikum! Sabah al-khair! Günaydin! Kim jaa! Strastuitze! Bon dia! Tere!* From the start the teachers have been making a big issue in the class about how great it is that they speak so many languages. They also discuss a lot about different kind of families. Some families in the class have many children. The record is ten. Some families have only a mother and a child, and one family consist of one child and a father. They aim to discuss these family issues with interest and open-mindedness. In this kind of classroom each child is similar and different in their very own way, and this type of inclusion classroom breaks the barriers between who is normal and who is special or Finnish or immigrant.

The teaching in the classroom is flexible and they work a lot in the groups. During the data collection they completed two separate projects. During the first grade the classroom did not work very well together, and there were many cases of bullying. This year the teachers, especially the special education teacher put a lot of emphasis on group work, and getting the children to work together. They built jointly in groups carbon box houses and planned, and built the furniture for the house. Students also had short exercises during the classes that they needed to solve in groups. During the science class the theme was different types of maps: map of the city, country, world and the special education teacher opened the Google map and the globe, and in a very concrete way children were able to see how far or close, or how big or small their homelands, or their parents' homelands were compared to Finland.

Example 2: Workshops, innovativeness of teaching methods and peace education

This particular school has many events and special occasions in the school life outside the classrooms during our data collection period. The Finnish National Opera collaborated with them every other year on an opera-project and the sixth grade students took part in the show in the Finnish National opera. All the students, regardless their national, racial, or religious background, took part in this project.

During the data collection the special education teacher organised for the whole school their annual “My roots”-workshop day. This means that they invite different art teachers to give workshops for students with a team “My root”. The idea is that children choose one workshop and they stay in the workshop for a whole day. The workshops were: visual arts, dance, fabric printing and wood work.

The Evangelic Lutheran Church is one of the state religions in Finland. This is why students in compulsory schools take part in church services during the Christmas and Easter. These events normally divide the children to those who take part in religion teaching and then some other activities are organised at school for those who do not go to church. Special education teachers organised a Nelson Mandela memorial event for the whole school instead of church as their non Evangelic Lutheran community is so big, and this way the children were not divided into “we” and “others” based on their religious background. A special education teacher is an active member of the Peace education institute in Finland. She actively takes the students to events that open their perspective on global education and at the same time this teacher actively motivates other teachers in the school to take part in such activities.

Example 3: Continuing development of preparatory classroom teaching and Finnish as a second language teaching

This school emphasises the importance of inclusion, and the ways that all the same age children could study together. They actively collaborate and join together preparatory classroom students and “normal” classroom students. Their emphasis is that there would be as little objective categorisation by the school as possible.

Partner schools for EDINA (description)

Vuosaari Comprehensive School

Vuosaari Comprehensive School has a preparatory class for pupils aged from 13 to 17 years old. There is a classroom teacher who teaches Finnish as L2 and other school subjects for this specific group of NAMS. Teaching follows the curriculum for preparatory education for basic education. Pupils start preparatory classes at different times throughout the year and they can stay there for a one year. During that time the school provides NAMS with at least 1000 hours of teaching.

Every pupil has their own learning plan based on the skills they have. Personal educational aims are established at the start of school entrance though these aims are flexible and can be changed. An individual's learning plan is written by the teacher in conjunction with the pupil and his/her guardians.

NAMS pupils are integrated as soon as possible into basic education. They usually start with subjects like sports and crafts, later, NAMS will be integrated into foreign languages lessons and other lessons. It is common for pupils stay at the preparatory class for the whole year and after the year they will move to their nearest school. The aim of the preparatory year is to give NAMS the required skills in Finnish language to be able to participate basic education.

The Helsinki municipality funds the teacher for NAMS. Pupils are advised to take L1 lessons.

Pohjois-Haaga Primary School

Pohjois-Haaga Primary School places NAMS into basic education groups. Pohjois-Haaga Primary School does not have any preparatory classes. The teaching of NAMS follows the curriculum for preparatory education for basic education and some sections of the basic education curriculum.

The support NAMS is given in the basic education group. The ages of NAMS varies between 7 and 10 years old. The school provides 900 hours of teaching for those who are under 10 years of age and 1000 hours for those who are over 10 years old.

The funding of NAMS pupils comes directly from the Helsinki municipality. The school receives €3500 a year per NAMS pupil. The school decides how they use the funding (for example, they may have extra hours of teaching for NAMS, an extra classroom teacher in Pohjois-Haaga, a special education teacher, a Finnish L2 teacher).

In Pohjois-Haaga, NAMS have more lessons than there are pupils at basic education level due to the preparatory curriculum. NAM pupils have time to concentrate on Finnish language skills before and after basic education lessons.

Every pupil has their own learning plan based on the skills they have. Personal aims are set established following school entrance however these aims can be modified at a later point in time. An individual learning plan is written by the teacher in conjunction with the pupil and his/her guardians.

After the preparatory year the NAMS pupil will start to follow the basic education curriculum with a personal learning plan at the school.

Conclusion

Despite Finland's 'educational miracle' as one of the 'best' education systems PISA reports portray a generalised masquerade. The situation is, of course, much more complex. These complexities are neither localised nor generalised, they are not confined to NAMS education and often fall outside 'simple' forms of 'empirical' analyses. Regardless of Finland's 'ranking' as one of the 'best' educational systems we have highlighted a number of issues related to NAMS education that are not 'assessed' within PISA criteria.

Although Helsinki City seems to have chosen an interesting path, much remains to be done. We have identified a number of areas Finland needs to do better, these include, national discourses on multiculturalism/interculturality – Finnish educational policy papers are saturated with these terms but more work is required on the meanings generated from these discourses and how these logics/meanings/discourses are translated into pedagogical processes and actions. More specifically, a cause for

concern is that teachers seem to lack the tools necessary in order to analyse and detect discourses that create othering. We have identified a number of other issues, including; the recruitment of migrant teachers or migrant-background teachers in Finland, discrepancies between municipalities in terms of second language teaching provisions, upper-secondary education and the opportunities of NAMS students, and, adult education provisions for migrants in Finland.

To summarise, when it comes to NAMS education, Finland, like most countries inhibit practices and logics which may be ‘described’ as ‘good’ [n]or ‘bad’. The multiplicity of cultural, social and linguistic processes involved in NAM education mean that simple classification, assumptions and/or generalisations can, and should, be avoided. Instead, we call for reflexive and ‘critical’ approaches when attempting to understand more about NAMS education.

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