



# CURRICULUM IN FINLAND

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Finnish National Board of Education  
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# Finland at glance

Independent since 1917, member of the **European Union** since 1995

- Total area 338,000 km<sup>2</sup>, Population **5.5 million** (17 inhabitants / km<sup>2</sup>)

- **Two official languages: Finnish 92 %, Swedish 6 %, (Saami 0,03%)**

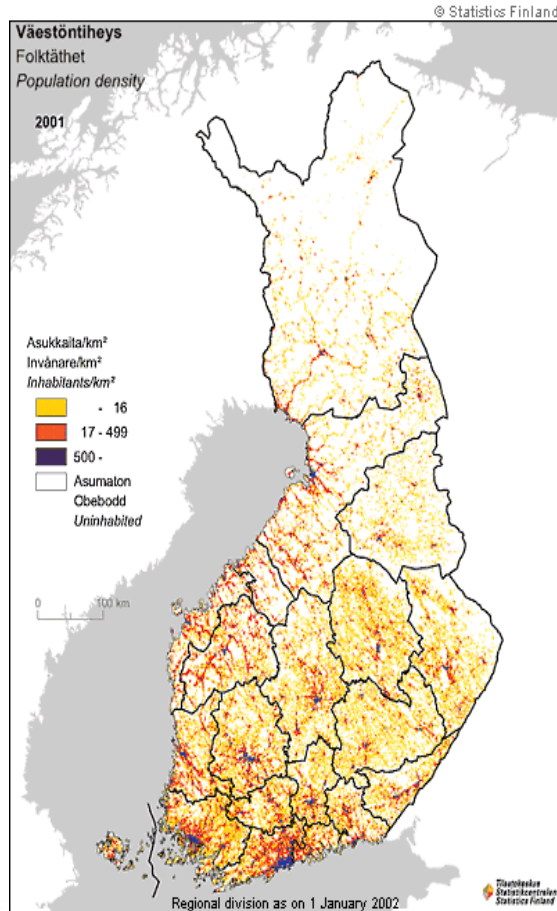
- Religion: **Lutheran (84 %), orthodox (1 %)**

-74,6 % of population (aged 25 to 64) have completed **upper secondary or tertiary education**. 33,2 % have **university or other tertiary qualifications**

-Immigrants: 2 % of population

-Main exports: **electronics, metal and engineering, forest industry**

-Working life: 86 % of **women** (aged 25 to 64) are employed outside the home. Average monthly **income** (men) 2832 and (women) 2273 euros.



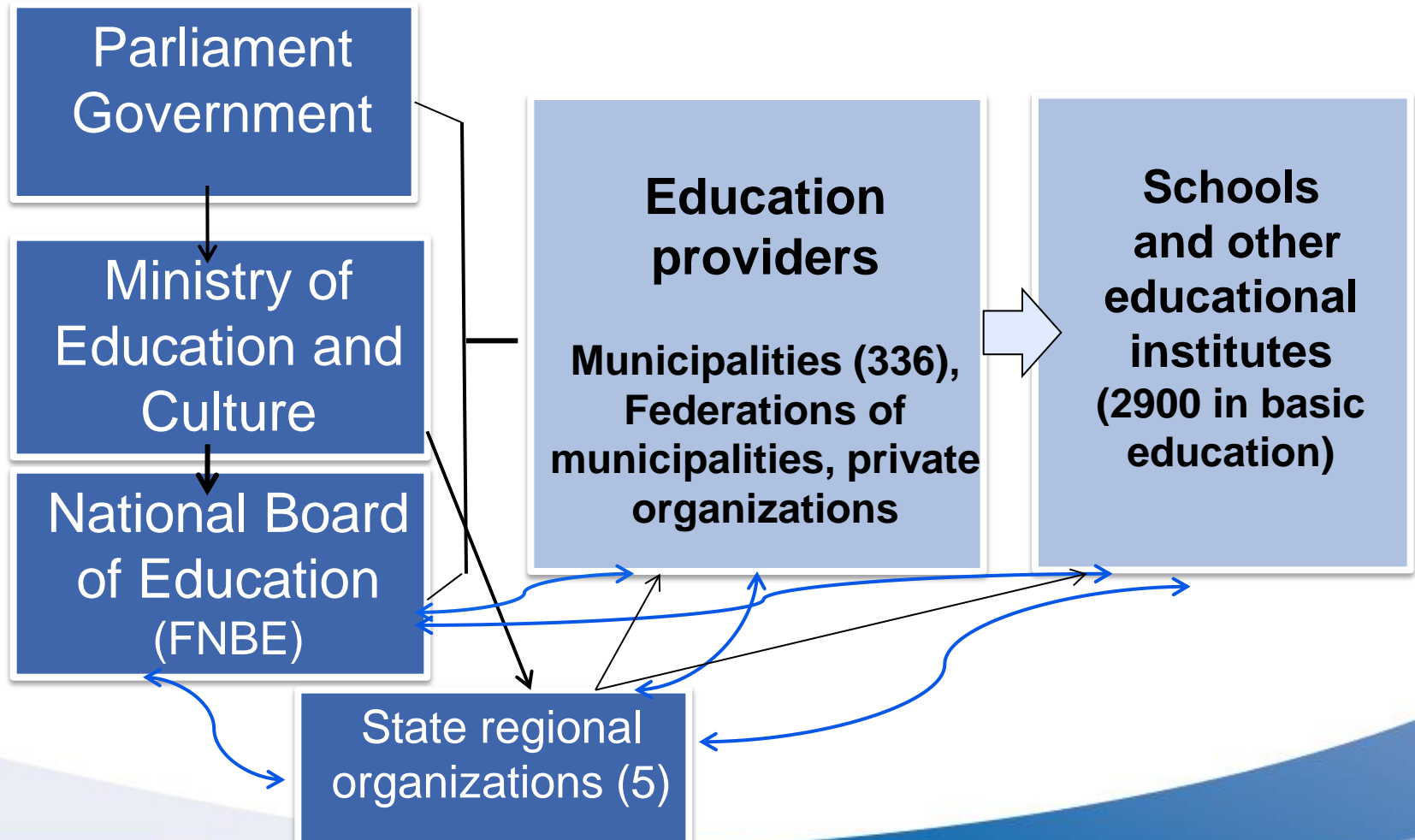


# ADMINISTRATION AND FUNDING OF EDUCATION

- Education is the responsibility of the Ministry of Education and Culture
- The Finnish National Board of Education (FNBE) works with the Ministry of Education to develop educational aims, content and methods for primary, secondary and adult education
- Local administration is the responsibility of the local authorities (municipalities) which play a prominent role as education providers
- Most institutions providing basic and upper secondary level education are maintained by local authorities or joint municipal boards



# Education providers have a central role in the governance structure





# FINNISH NATIONAL BOARD OF EDUCATION

## The Finnish National Board of Education

is the agency responsible for the development of education and training in Finland, working under the auspices of the Ministry of Education.

**It is responsible for** developing early childhood education and care, pre-primary and basic education, morning and afternoon activities for schoolchildren, general upper secondary education, vocational upper secondary education and training, adult education and training, liberal adult education and basic education in the arts.

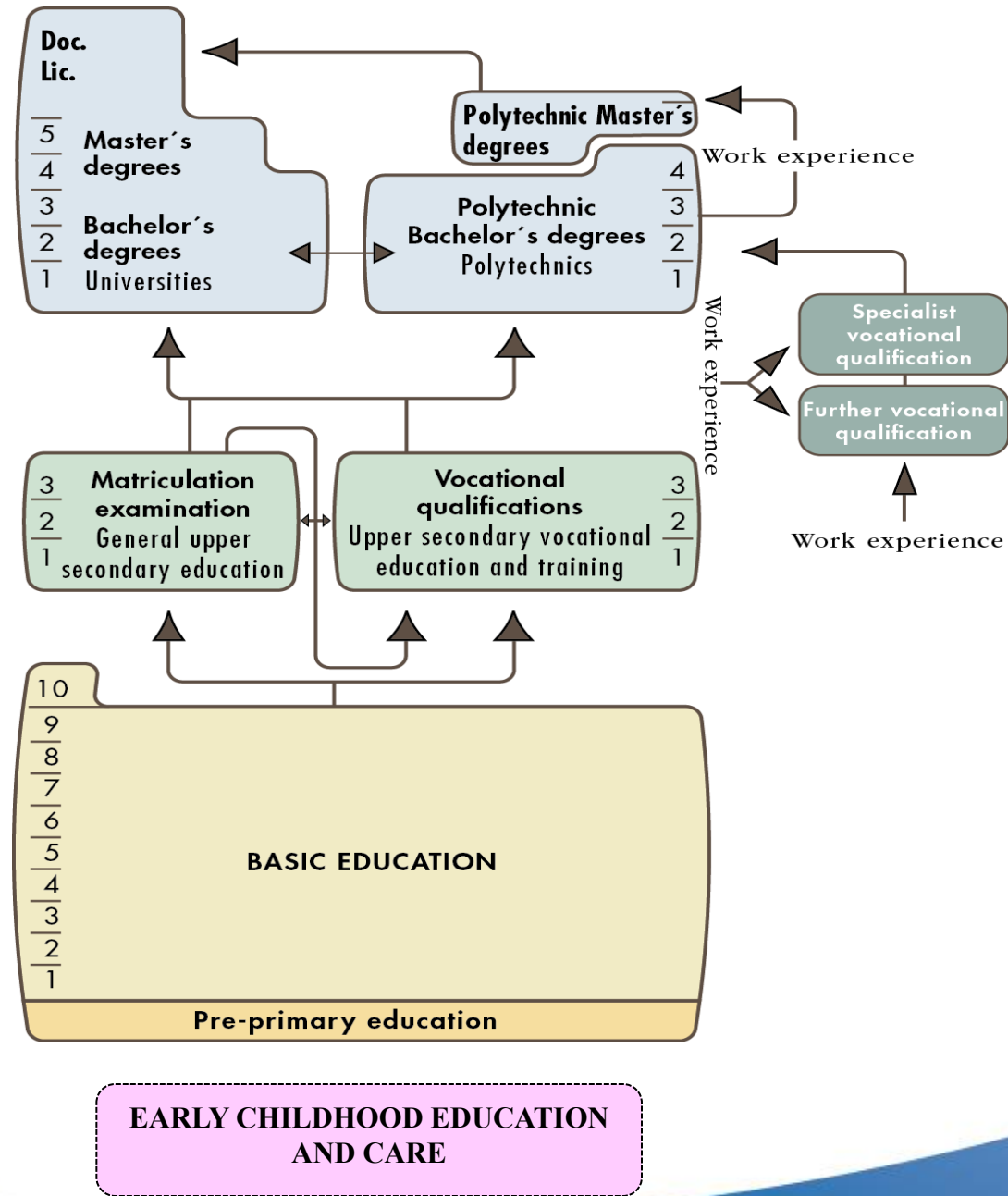


**FNBE** was established in 1991 – background since 1869



## FNBE: DEVELOPING EDUCATION

- draws up National Core Curricula for early childhood education and care, pre-primary education, basic education, general upper secondary education and upper secondary vocational qualifications and the Requirements of Competence-based Qualifications
- these documents determine the core objectives, contents and guidelines for teaching. Education providers prepare their own local curricula based on these national documents
- steers implementation of curricula and explores reform needs. It undertakes various projects to develop education.







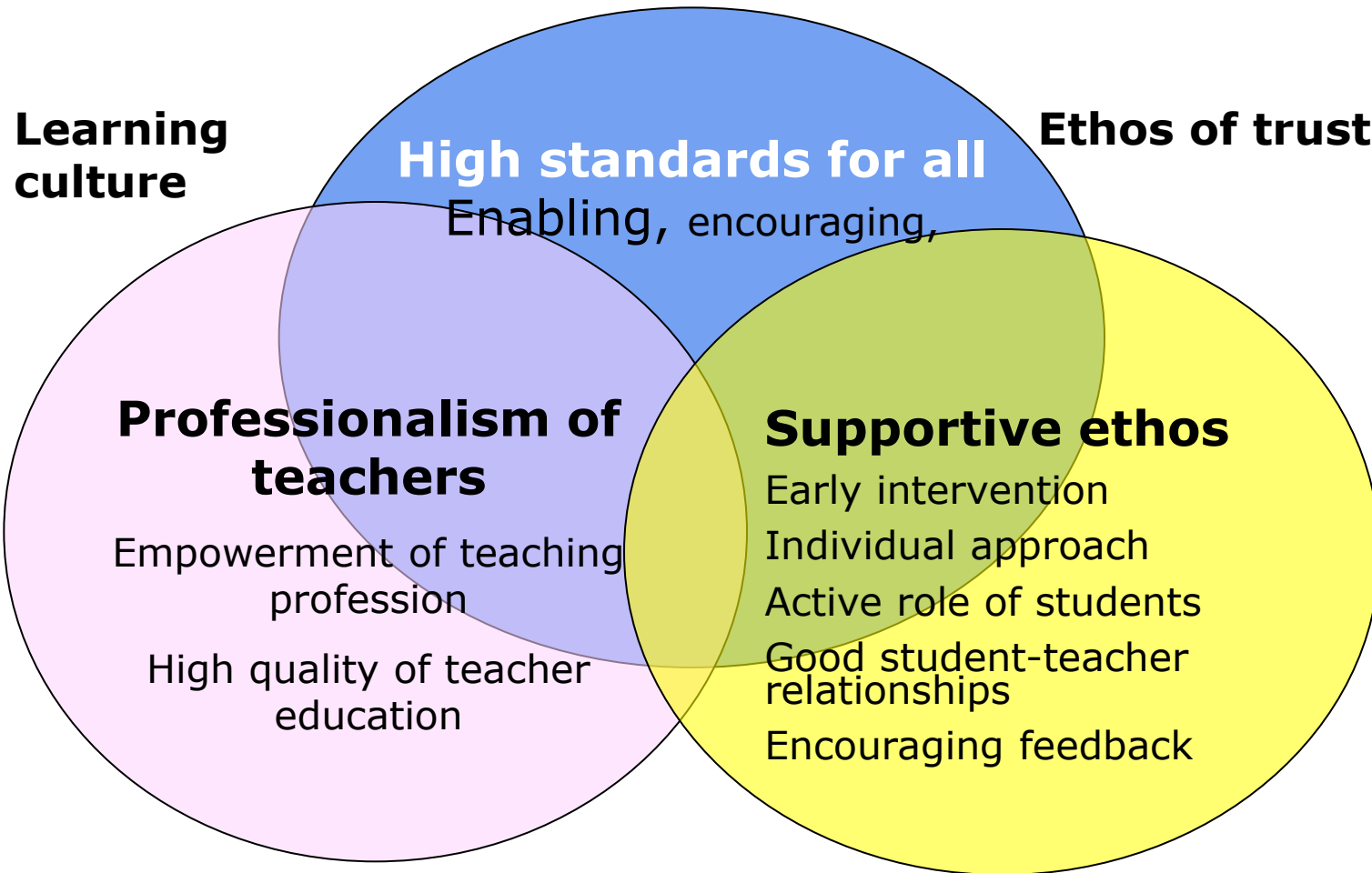
# Short History of the Present Education System

- Comprehensive School Reform 1970-1977 and birth of the present Upper Secondary System 1975
  1. Old parallel school system was replaced by nine-year compulsory comprehensive education > same basic education for all
  2. Flexible, non-graded general upper secondary education and high quality vocational education were also developed later in 70's and 80's
- Preschool education for 6-year olds became a subjective right for all children 2001
- National Core Curriculum for Basic Education has been renewed in 1985, 1994, 2004 and 2014
- Through these years: growing municipal autonomy and empowerment of schools and teachers





# The Ethos of the Finnish Education system

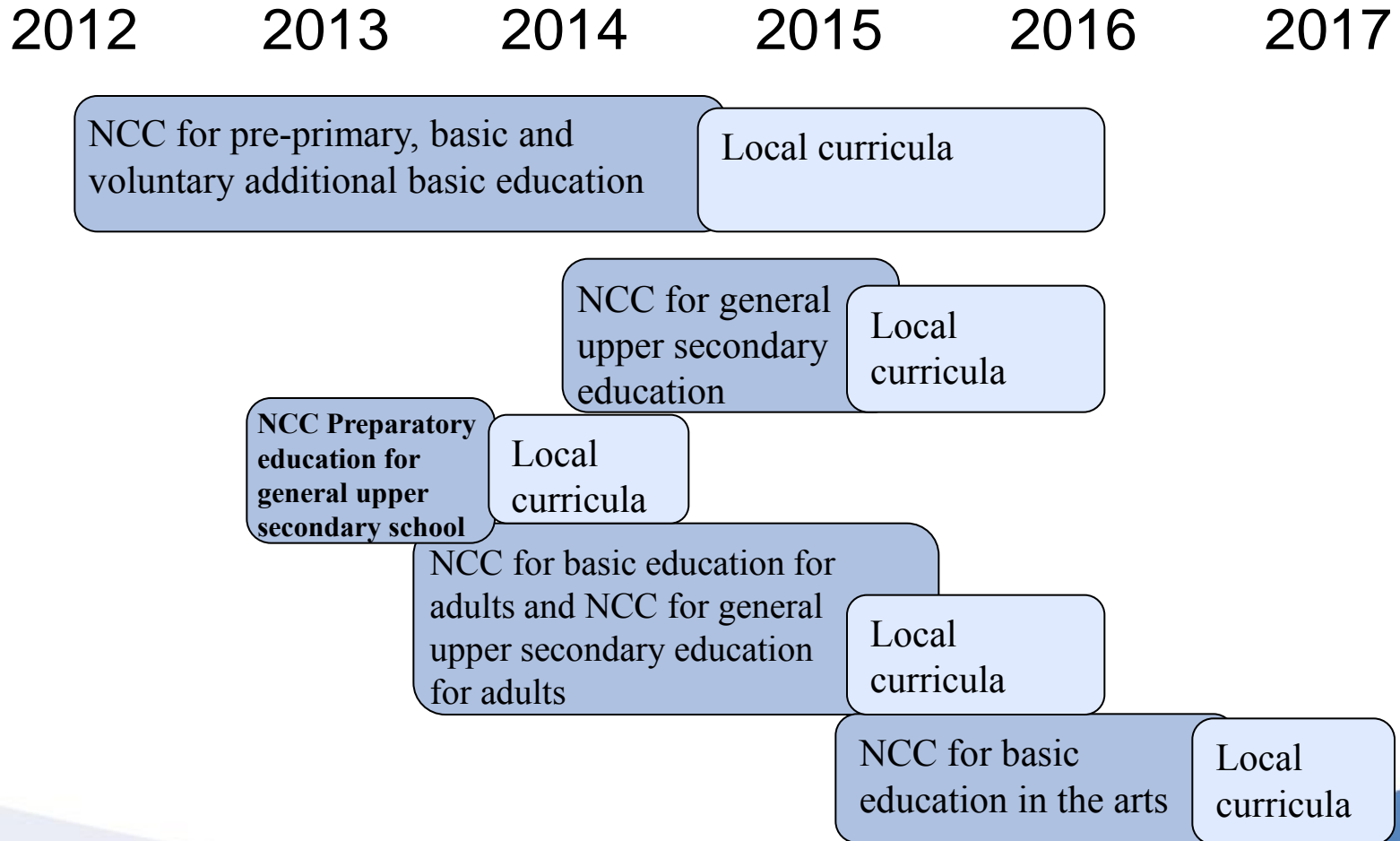


**Education system:**  
comprehensive, non-selective, central guidelines and goals,  
local implementation and innovation



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# General education reform: Curriculum development 2012–2017



*NCC = National Core Curriculum*



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# LEARNING AND TEACHING

POSSIBLE SCHOOL-SPECIFIC  
CURRICULUM

LOCAL CURRICULUM – MUNICIPAL LEVEL

Teacher  
training

*Local  
needs*

Quality  
criteria

*and  
policies*

Learning  
material

National Core Curriculum 2014

**Government Decree 422/2012 governing the general national objectives and distribution of lesson hours in basic education**

**Basic Education Act and Decree**



# Teaching and learning are on the top in Finland

- All parts of the system aim at supporting teaching and learning – national norms form a strong basis for local provision of education
- Quality is based on national standards given in Education Acts and Decrees, National Core Curricula, and in national teacher qualification criteria, on financial guidance, and on internal (self) evaluation and external evaluation.
- Vertical and horizontal interaction and cooperation are the means for creating common understanding, and also for getting information for the new development processes
- Curriculum has a central role in the system, both as the means of interaction and as the basis for evaluation and pupil assessment



# Curriculum as an interactive and strategically important process

- Three layers of curriculum: national core curriculum, municipal curriculum, school curriculum and year plan
- All these are created in an open, extensive and interactive process – curriculum is more a process than a product
- Curriculum is a strategic document and it reflects our best understanding of humanity, society and learning; it also connects the work of every school to municipal and national strategies
- National quality criteria for basic education support the conceptualization of the core curriculum at the local level



## Qualities of Curriculum

- Curriculum is the expression of our insight and will and it gives common direction to the processes and development of teaching and learning
- Curriculum is holistic and compact – it covers all areas of learning and school life, not only different subjects
- Goals for learning and prerequisites for successful learning process are more important than subject contents
- Curriculum is inclusive – it covers education for all students
- Curriculum looks for the balance between academic achievement and student welfare
- Curriculum is based on future orientation and competence-based thinking

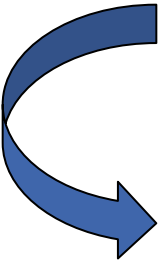


# Why is reform needed?

The world surrounding school has changed essentially since the beginning of the 21st century – the effects of globalisation and the challenges of a sustainable future



Competencies required in society and working life have changed – skills to build a sustainable future



It is necessary to examine educational contents, pedagogy and schools' working practices and reform these in relation to changes in the operating environment and competencies.





# Focus of the curriculum reform

- ◆ Rethinking the learning conception
  - Importance of students own experiences and activities, feelings and joy
  - Importance of working together, learning to learn in dialogue with others
  - Renewing the idea of learning environment
- ◆ Rethinking the school culture and the relationship between the school and the community
  - School as a learning community
  - Diverse and open cooperation
- ◆ Rethinking the roles, goals and content of school subjects
  - Transversal competences to support the identity development and the ability to live in a sustainable way



# Core of the reform

Why? What?  How?

**The school will be developed both as a growth community and as a learning environment**



# The ground of the curriculum reform in basic education

## **Pedagogical reform**

- Transforming from WHAT to learn to HOW to learn

## **Building integrity of basic education**

- Broad competences, school culture, connections and collaboration between subjects

## **Changing school culture**

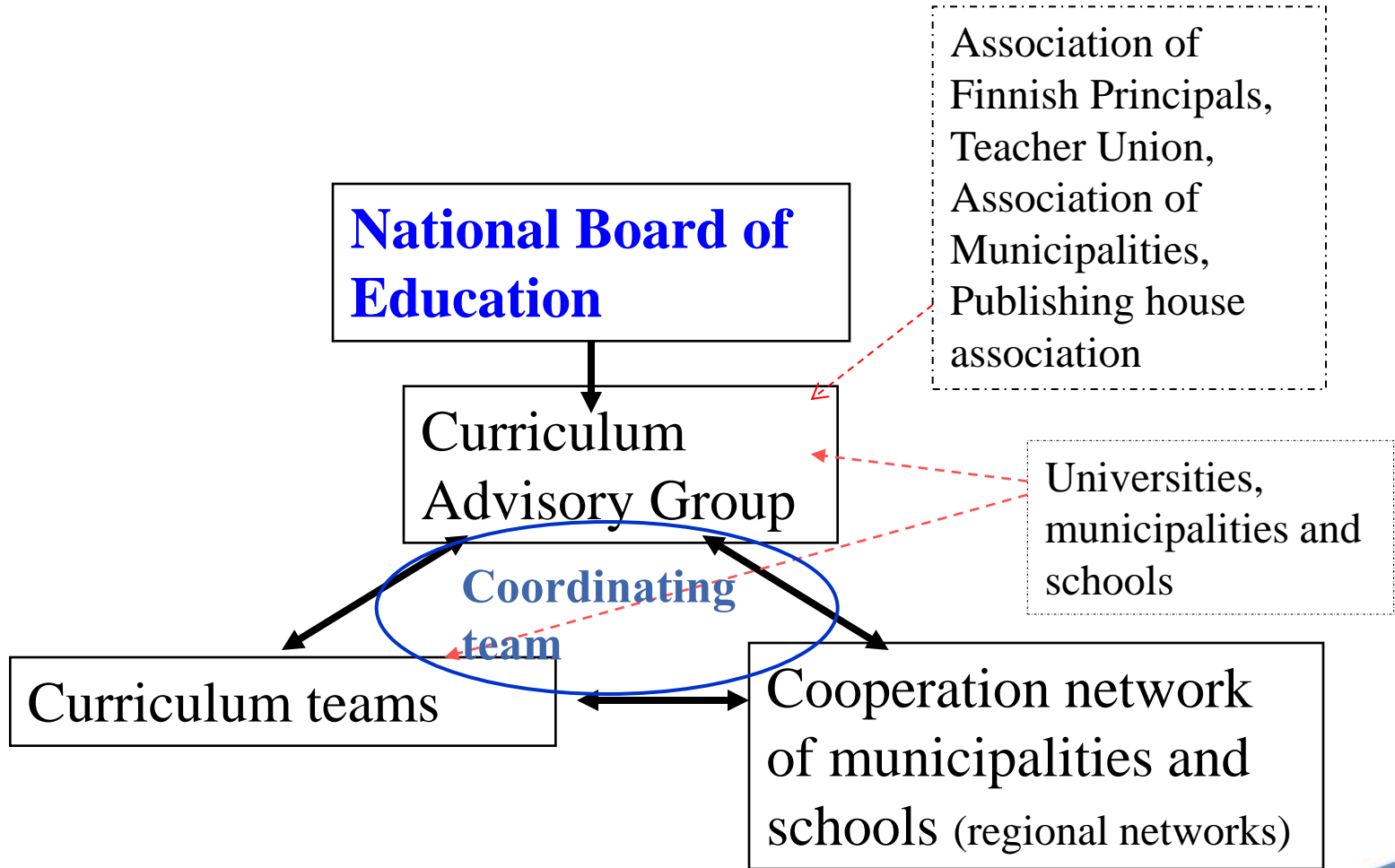
- Renewal of pedagogical thinking, learning environments, working approaches and assessment

## **Curriculum as a digital tool**

- producing web-based eCurriculum with more functions



## Preparing National Core Curriculum

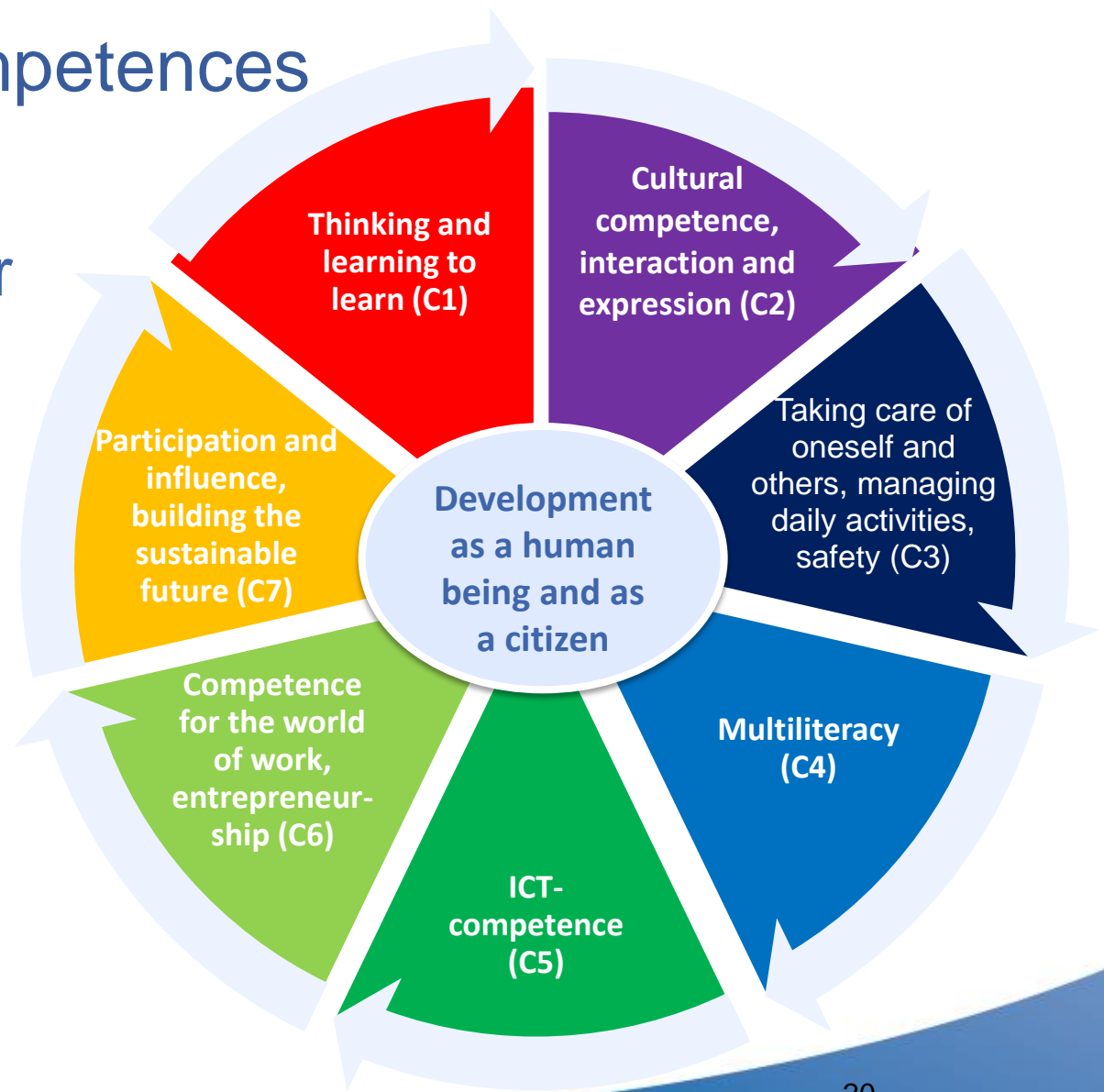




# Rethinking competences

National goals for  
basic education  
and transversal  
competences

- knowledge
- skills
- values
- attitudes
- will





# Rethinking the school culture





## Multidisciplinary learning modules in basic education

- Pupils are entitled to at least one integrative, multidisciplinary learning module every school year
- Learning modules integrate skills and knowledge of various school subjects, teachers work together
- Pupils participate in the planning of these modules
- Goals, content and ways of working are planned and decided at the local level
  - *They should be interesting and meaningful from the pupils' point of view*
  - *They realize the principles of the school culture*
  - *They promote the development of transversal competences*





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# MUITO OBRIGADO!

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