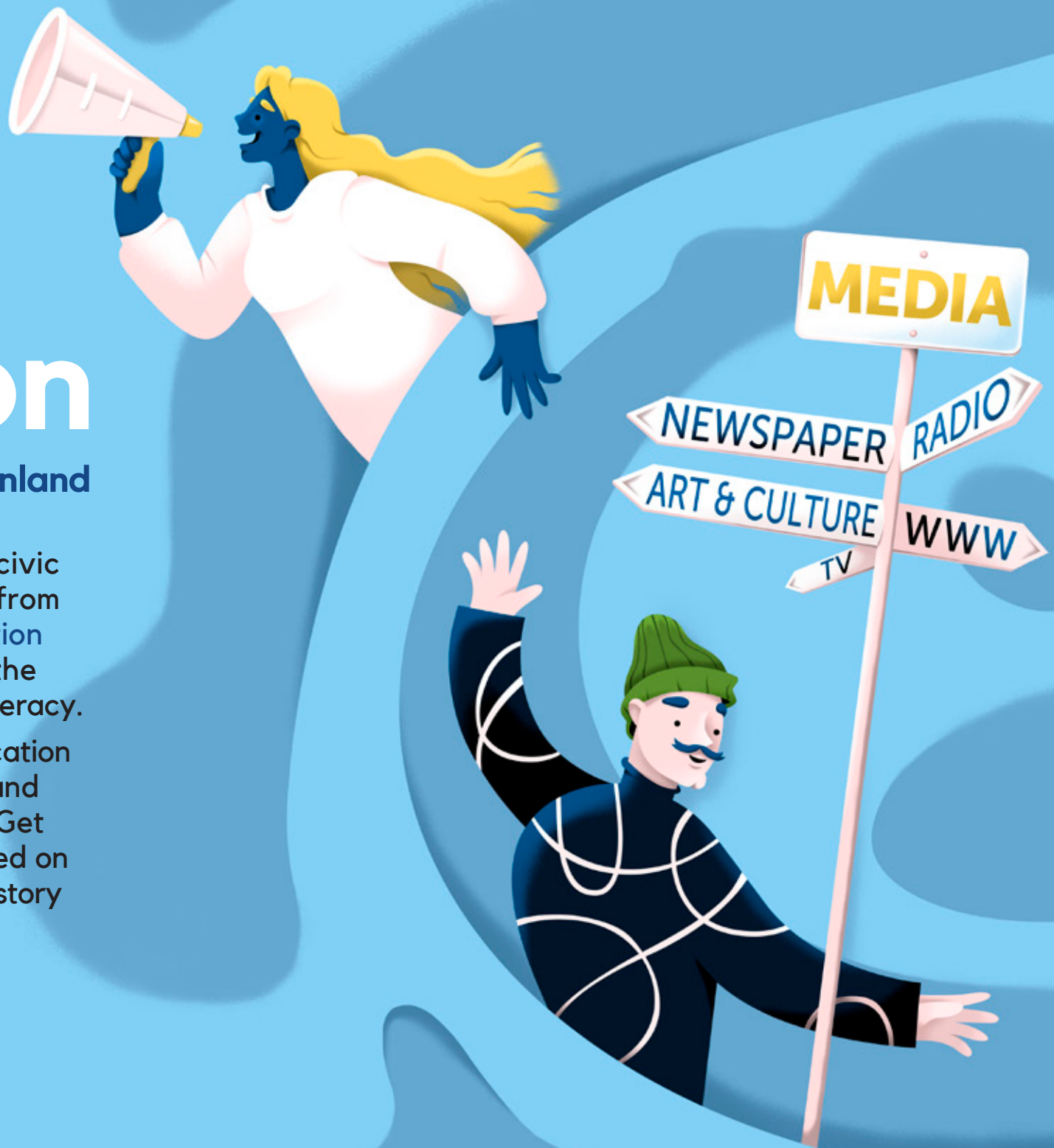


Finnish Media Education

Promoting Media Literacy in Finland

In Finland, media literacy is seen as civic competence; important to everyone from an early age. The term media education (mediakasvatus in Finnish) refers to the educational actions promoting media literacy.

Take a look at how Finnish media education is promoted through national policies and in various organisations and projects. Get a taste of a few shining examples based on joint national efforts, and see a brief history of how Finland has developed into a forerunner in media education.



Media Education Goes National

KAVI – The Finnish Media Education Authority

In Finland, media education is promoted by a governmental authority. The National Audiovisual Institute (KAVI), with its Department for Media Education and Audiovisual Media (MEKU), has a legal duty to promote media education. MEKU also supervises the provision of audiovisual programmes. KAVI is a subordinate of the Ministry of Education and Culture and acts in cooperation with stakeholders.



Media education in the central government

Ministry of Education and Culture has supported media education in Finland for a long time. The Ministry of Education and Culture promotes media literacy through allocating resources, providing relevant information and developing legislation, including educational, cultural, youth and art policies.

Other governmental bodies support media education as well, for example, the Ministry of Justice addresses media literacy from the viewpoint of inclusion and as part of a democratic education. The Digital and Population Data Services Agency promotes the digitisation of society and digital support services. The Finnish Competition and Consumer Agency works from the perspective of consumer education, producing media related material based on consumer awareness information and education. The Ministry of Transport and Communications is in charge of the development of media policies in Finland. The Ministry of the Interior is responsible for promoting internal security in Finland for example by preventing violent radicalisation and extremism, which is relevant to media education.



Media Literacy in the Finnish policies

Media education and media literacy are seen in versatile manner in the Finnish policies. Media education is addressed widely across the policies in the different administrative sectors, but most often by the Ministry of Education and Culture. In 2019, the Ministry of Education and Culture published the revised national media literacy policy which guides the development and practice of media education throughout Finland. Policy was prepared in broad-based, participatory, cross-administrative collaboration with stakeholders.

According to the vision of the policy, everyone's opportunities to develop their media literacy are improved in Finland. Media literacy is promoted and supported with the help of high-quality, systematic and comprehensive media education.

Thanks to media education, people in all age groups have better possibilities to participate in society and culture, and to develop as individuals. Media literacy is also a way to tackle challenges in the everyday life, and it is a key factor of the resilient society.

Media Education in Finnish Educational System

The Finnish educational system has often been seen as one of the best in the world. All children and young people have an equal opportunity, free of charge, for a basic education, and the teachers are highly educated. Aspects of media literacy are connected to all subjects studied at the schools.



Communities, schools and teachers in Finland have a lot of freedom in planning educational actions. This creates opportunities in teaching and learning in locally meaningful ways.

Promoting media literacy starts at a very early age in the Finnish education system. National Core Curricula for Early Childhood Education and Care, Pre-Primary Education and Basic Education include transversal competence areas called Multiliteracy and Information and communication technologies (ICT). In the core curriculum for General Upper Secondary Education, the role of media is highlighted as part of the transversal competence and subject-specific contents.

In these competence areas, media literacy plays an important part. For example, multi-literacy highlights the importance of multi-modality, and the critical abilities both to interpret and to produce different media. In the curricula, ICT is seen both as the target of and as a tool for education. In the competence area of ICT, information skills and exploratory and creative learning are emphasised. Media culture is seen as an important resource and environment for learning across the disciplines.

In vocational education, objectives related to media literacy are included in the communications and interaction skills module. The module is a part of the common studies included in vocational upper secondary qualifications.

The Ministry of Education and Culture (MoEC) supports the development of media literacy and media education pedagogies through resource allocation and developing legislation in this sector. The Finnish National Agency for Education, a state institution under the authority of the MoEC, is responsible for curricula development.

Higher Education and Media Education Research

Master's degree program in media education is available in the University of Lapland. In addition to the University of Lapland, also the University of Tampere have a professorship in media education. Additionally, smaller scale study modules in media education are available in several Finnish universities and universities of applied science.

The field of media education research is multidisciplinary and covers a great variety of topics. Related research is being done in the majority of Finnish universities, most often in the departments of educational sciences, but also in humanities and social sciences, for example.



The Many Players in the Field of Media Education

Significant media educational work takes place all over the country, and Finland benefits from a rich variety of operators in the field. There are almost 100 different organisations promoting media literacy in Finland. This is in addition to media education carried out in formal education, youth work, libraries and other public cultural services.

The large number of organisations contributing to media education is impressive for a small country like Finland. Most often, organisations are promoting media literacy as a part of their work, and integrating it into their specific areas of expertise.

Here is a summary of the main organisations promoting media education:

The **National Audiovisual Institute** under the **Ministry of Education and Culture** is the Finnish media educational authority, with a legal duty to promote media education.

Among governmental agencies, the **National Board of Education** is a key actor with its role in developing education in Finland. In addition, the **Ministry of Justice**, the **Ministry of Transport and Communications**, the **Ministry of the Interior**, the **Finnish Competition and Consumer Agency** and the **Digital and Population Data Services Agency** contribute to media literacy as part of their duties.

The **Finnish Society on Media Education (FSME)** is an expert organisation in media education and promotes and develops media literacy education in Finland. FSME operates in a multi-professional manner, combining research and practice. Several other operators in media education are also members of this society.



Libraries, in general, have been major players in areas such as game education and supporting elderly people with media related skills.

Child and youth organisations promote media literacy to ensure the digital wellbeing and participation of children and adolescents.

From the perspective of media literacy, the most active national services of youth work are the **Centre of Expertise in Youth Information and Counselling** (Koordinaatti), the **Centre of Expertise for Digital Youth Work** (Verke), and the **Finnish Youth Research Network**.

Active NGOs include, for example, the **Mannerheim League for Child Welfare**, **Save the Children Finland** and the **Finnish Parents' League**. NGOs often have strong regional networks, which is very important for Finland as a sparsely populated country with long distances.



Organisations promoting art and culture

have been very active and important operators in the field of media education for decades. The national network of children's culture centres brings together a number of organisations that have media education in their regional activities.

Film education, especially, has a long and continuous history in Finland. For example, **Koulukino** (School Cinema Association) and the **Media Education Centre Metka** are promoting film education as part of media education. The **National Audiovisual Institute** enhances film education and the status of Finnish audiovisual culture as part of its legal duties.

Promoting media literacy is also becoming more widespread in **media companies and associations**. The **Finnish National Broadcasting Company (YLE)** has provided media educational projects and materials for several years, but many private companies are also active in supporting and providing media education.

The **Finnish News Media Association** has a long history of media literacy, and the **Federation of the Finnish Media, Finnmedia**, promotes actively media education.

Finnish media education experts have an active role as international co-operators in terms of research, practise and policy development. Media literacy is promoted in Nordic, European and global levels, for example via projects coordinated by The **European Union**, The **Council of Europe** and **UNESCO**. Don't hesitate to contact Finnish professionals when looking for media literacy partnerships!



Teamwork: The Best Practice of Finnish Media Education

In the broad and versatile field of Finnish Media Education, there are simply too many great models to choose from as examples of best practices. Nevertheless, it's easy to name one feature that many good practises have in common: cooperation between different organisations and actors. Here are some successful examples of Finnish Media Education practises based on joint efforts.



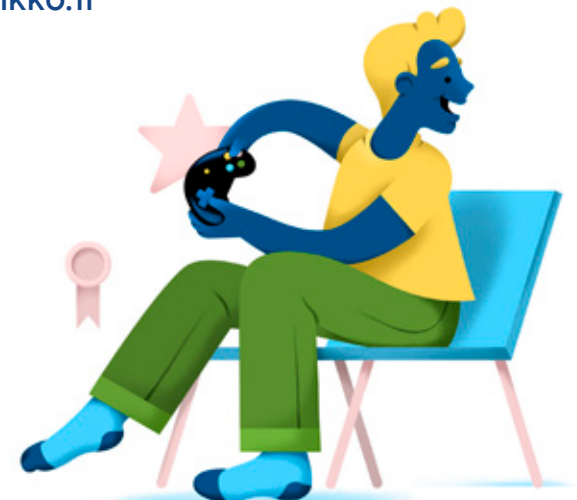
Media Literacy Week (MLW) The aim of the annual MLW in February is to promote the awareness of media literacy and media education, and support professionals working with media skills to develop their work. Approximately 50 organisations (covering ministries, governmental agencies, NGOs, telecom operators, data security companies and media companies) partner up with the MLW every year. Campaigns, awareness materials and events for MLW are planned in co-operation with participating stakeholders. The MLW encourages schools, libraries, museums, youth work and other local organisations to promote media literacy. The National Audiovisual Institute coordinates Media Literacy Week, but it is a joint effort of all participating organisations.

mediataitoviikko.fi



Finnish Games Week (FGW) consists of hundreds of local events that discuss the merits, meanings and influences games can have on players. FGW also promotes fact-based public debate about digital games, and encourages children and adults to play together. Activities during the week in November are organised by the Finnish Game Educators' Network, which includes professionals from NGOs, public libraries, schools, youth centres, museums and other organisations all across the country. The FGW is coordinated by the National Audiovisual Institute.

peliviikko.fi



Media Education Forum for Professionals

The annual Media Education Forum is a national seminar day for researchers, decision-makers, governmental officers, and all other professionals working with issues related to media education. The forum aims to support partnerships and co-operation within the field and discusses promoting media education in Finland. The Forum is organised by the National Audiovisual Institute.

From the Grassroots Level to Mainstream Media –The Youth Voice Editorial Board

works as a news producing group delivering material to different media. The aim is to support young people in producing media content, and to activate and enable them to have public discussions in the media about issues which are important to them. Cooperation with organisations such as the National Broadcasting Company (YLE) and the biggest national newspaper (Helsingin Sanomat) guarantees visibility in the mainstream media.

Decades of Good Practice – News Week

is a week of cooperation between newspapers and schools, during which the Finnish News Media Association's member newspapers supply schools and kindergartens with free copies of their publications. The Association annually develops new media education materials. The News Week was arranged for the first time in 1994, under the name of Newspaper Week.

Stay Informed about Finnish Media Education!

The National Audiovisual Institute's Media Literacy in Finland -web page provides information about implementation of the national media literacy policy as well as topical issues related to media education.

medialiteracy.fi

The Finnish Society on Media Education (FSME) raises awareness and disseminate information, best practices and research on media literacy. FSME provides a portal and a newsletter with current information about media education as well as tools and material for its implementation.

mediakasvatus.fi



From Mass Media to the Digital Age

A Brief Look at the History of Media Education in Finland

The different phases of Finnish media education have, for their part, contributed to the development and identity of Finland as a nation. Educating the masses has played a vital role in building the participatory citizenship of Finland. Today, mobile and digital cultures are breaking new ground in media education.



In the **1950s**, questions about mass communication and, especially, the effects of films on the individual and on society were discussed both academically and in public. Educational approaches regarding films were often protective or emphasised the distinction between 'bad' entertainment and propaganda, on the one hand, and 'good' art, on the other.

During the **1960s**, the winds of liberation shaped media education. In art education, themes like war, sex and equality were scrutinised by using materials from mass media and popular culture. Television entered Finnish households.



1970s began a new, more systematic era in Finnish (mass) media education. The observation and interpretation of media, critical and selective “adoption”, and understanding the modes of expression and narratives of information technology were called for. This approach was implemented in the comprehensive school curricular principles for the first time in 1972.

The **1980s** saw the rise of new kinds of audiovisual media, such as Music Television and home videos. Media education had to answer to the needs of a new generation and youth movement, and a powerful perspective entered media education through media culture research.

In the **1990s** the focus of media education turned from mass media to communication, including more aspects of individual expression and production. Computers, the everyday use of the internet, as well as mobile phones affected society and media education. The use of communication and information technology and virtual learning environments became more and more common in educational institutions.





The **new millennium** both expanded and fragmented the field of media education. Its importance was recognised more strongly at the governmental level, and Finland became one of the pioneering countries for promoting media literacy among young children. The NGO Finnish Society on Media Education, was founded by researchers and practitioners to support and develop the field. In research, children's and young people's relationships with media were highlighted. Media education became less bound by certain technologies, even though the use of the internet and social media was widely discussed.



The **2010s** have already seen the strengthening of the position of media education on a national level. Media education is included in several governmental policies. Successful media education activities enhance the well-being and participation opportunities of all, especially children and young people. The breakthrough of digital games as "everyone's media" has generated active promotion of game education. A governmental media education authority was founded under the Ministry of Education and Culture in 2012. The first national media literacy policy was published in 2013, and revised in 2019.

What's next? The hot topics right now include the growing significance of media in people's lives, through trends like democracy in mediated societies, digital games as part of the everyday life, digital wellbeing and the accelerating digitalisation and datafication. The meaning of media literacy for the resilient societies is a more and more evident in the age of disinformation. The initiatives provided for media education among the adult population are growing rapidly.





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