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Maailman parhaiksi opettajiksi – Vuosina 2016–2018 toimineen Opettajankoulutusfoorumin arviointi (The world's most competent teachers – Evaluation of the Teacher Education Forum in 2016-2018)

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The goal of Prime Minister Sipilä's government's key project KNOWLEDGE AND EDUCATION 1 was to reform teachers' basic, introductory and continuing education. In order to reform teacher education, the Ministry of Education and Culture established a Teacher Education Forum. The Finnish Education Evaluation Centre (FINEEC) was commissioned to complete an external evaluation of the Forum. The evaluation produced information on whether the selected measures have been an effective way to improve teacher education, on the status of the implementation of the Teacher Education Development Programme in the teacher training institutions, and on the factors promoting and preventing reform. In addition, the evaluation produced recommendations on how the renewal of teacher education should be continued.

According to the evaluation team, the teacher education reform model that was prepared at the Teacher Education Forum, had the following strengths:

- The core strength of the Teacher Education Forum was their approach based on networking and bringing together different national and regional teacher education actors.
- The Teacher Education Development Programme recognised the need to continue to develop the continuum of teachers' basic, induction and continuing training. Another strength was that the teacher education projects funded by the Ministry of Education and Culture were connected to the goals of the development programme.
- At the end of 2018, implementation of the Development Programme has started on all six strategic target areas and across all teacher education programmes.
- It is expected that the teacher education development projects will provide new tools for teachers' continuing professional development, covering themes such as teacher student selection, contents and methods of professional training and as well as support parallel Finnish educational reforms from early childhood education to vocational education.
- Many of the teacher education development projects have a strong emphasis on community building. Many new partnerships have been formed between teacher education institutions and with local actors. About half of Finland's municipalities are involved in the projects.

The evaluation team's main recommendations for the ongoing reform of teacher education include:

- 1. The strategic objectives of the Teacher Education Development Programme should be monitored, supported and actively updated**
 - The numerous measures related to the Teacher Education Development Programme six main strategic objectives should be structured into coherent entities. There should be a clear plan on the responsibilities, schedule and follow-up to support achievement of objectives.
 - The development programme should be updated regularly in a way that anticipates the changing needs of the teacher education. Additionally, education providers and representatives from the municipalities should be included in this work so that the programme better reflects the needs of municipalities, schools and teachers.
- 2. A permanent national structure is needed to support the change management of teacher education**
 - A national forum for co-operation and development should be set up to consolidate development work. Its mission would be to ensure that the ongoing changes in teachers' basic, induction and continuing training are carried out at all levels of the education system; at macro-level (structures, resources and legislation), institutional-level (teacher education institutions and education providers, schools), and at micro-level (the personal development and competence of teachers and students).
- 3. The effectiveness of the new operating models produced by the development projects should be ensured in co-operation between projects, education providers and beneficiaries**
 - The effectiveness of the teacher education development projects should be monitored and evaluated during and after project completion in 2023-2024.
 - The development projects should draw up a dissemination plan on how the municipalities outside the project partners will be informed about the project results and new models.
- 4. The macro-level structural problems must be resolved in order to accomplish the continuum of teacher education**
 - The macro-level structural problems of teacher education need to be dealt with by a national level legislative group. The group's goal would be to find solutions to the problems, which for several decades have prevented the reform of induction phase and continuing professional training. The problems include the funding mechanisms, resources and structures of introductory and professional training, lacking obligations and teacher employment contracts.
 - A national strategic action plan needs to be drawn up for the reform of introductory and continuing training education of teachers.
- 5. Ensure that the development of the basic and continuing education of teachers is integrated in normal work**
 - The reform of teacher education requires dedication and strong change management from the teacher education institutions.
 - Municipalities and the education providers should develop strategic guidelines for developing the skills of teachers throughout their careers. The long-term goal should be that all Finnish teachers have a development plan that is monitored regularly. It is also important that municipalities ensure that the educational leaders have appropriate leadership skills and are supported in their work.

Keywords

Evaluation, universities, universities of applied sciences, teacher education, continuing education of teachers