

Grundtvig Project : Effective Induction for Prison Teachers

Desk research: Finland



In Finland, prisons are part of the administrative sector of the Ministry of Justice. There are altogether 16 closed prisons and 18 open prisons in Finland. The number of prisoner places varies from 50 to 328 in closed prisons and from 21 to 101 in open prisons.

Prisons in Finland



The prison population rate of Finland has decreased significantly since the 1970s when the daily number of prisoner was approximately 6 000. At the moment, there are about 3 400 prisoners in the Finnish prisons every day.

Number of prisoners (average per day)

year	Number of prisoners
1976	5 582
1980	4 524
1994	3 275
2000	2 855
2005	3 888
2009	3 492

Most prisoners are convicted of homicides, violent offences, or drug offences.

Principal offences of sentenced prisoners

Crime	
Homicide	20 %
Violent offences	20 %
Drug offences	16 %
Drunk driving	13 %
Theft	13 %
Robbery	6 %

Approximately 36 % of all prisoners stay in prison less than 12 months. Every fourth prisoner is sentenced to serve over four years in prison. On average, prison terms are eight months long.

Expected time on imprisonment May 1st, 2008

Under 6 months	20 %
6 to 12 months	16 %
12 to 24 months	23 %
2 years to 4 years	19 %
Over 4 years	22 %

The average age of prisoners is 30 years. Approximately seven per cent of all prisoners are women. Compared to other prisoner groups, only the number of female prisoners is increasing in Finland. Prisoners who are under 20 years old compose about three per cent of all prisoners. Roughly ten per cent of the prison population are foreigners. Life sentence prisoners form about four per cent of all prisoners.

Of all Prisoners...

Female	7 %
Under 20 years old prisoners	3 % (both female and male)
Foreigners	10 %
Lifesentence*	4 %

*In Finland, prisoners sentenced to life imprisonment may be released after serving 12 years. A petition for pardon is presented to the Helsinki Court of Appeal or the President of the Republic. The average length of life imprisonment is nowadays 16 years in Finland.

Approximately ten per cent of prisoners participate in education or training during the prison term.

Basic principles of arranging education in prison

Three prisons in Finland have professional teachers of their own, other teachers are from educational institutes outside prison. Teachers work for the education provider which gets the funding from the Ministry of Education. The education provider decides whether it wants to arrange education in prison or not. There is no separate budgeting system for prison education. The prisons fund a part of the education in some cases.

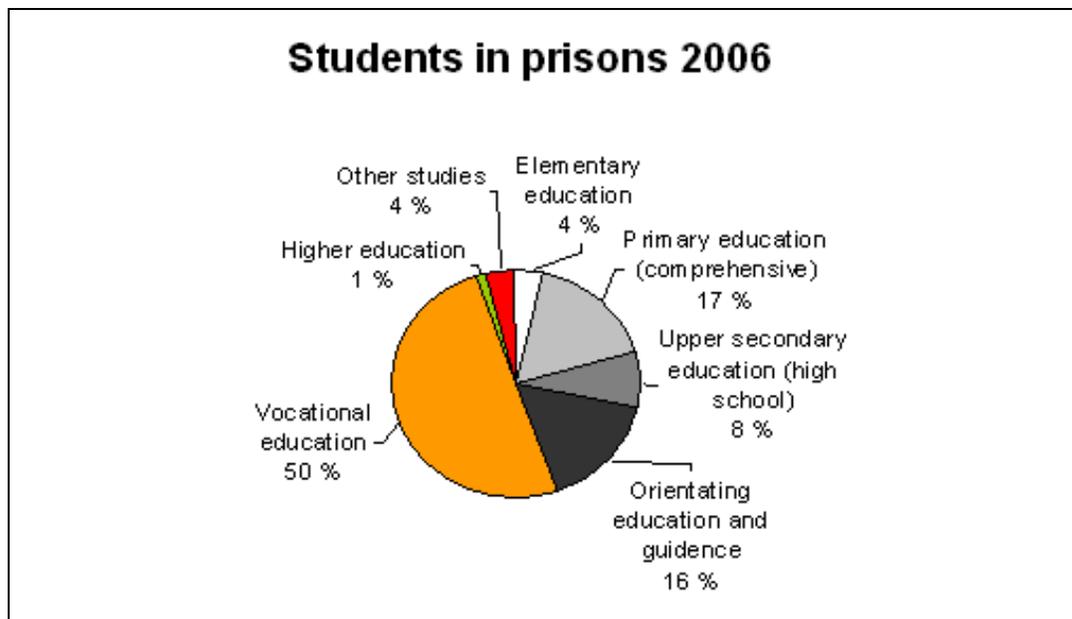
The normal educational legislation is in force in prison education – the education in prison should be the same as civil education. Prisoners receive their certificates from an educational institute with no mention of the prison school.

There is no standardized training for prison teachers at national level, although occasional courses covering various topics have been arranged.

A general induction booklet for civilians in prison work published by Criminal Sanctions Agency is also available to prison teachers, and some institutes provide their employees with a set of guidelines to prison work.

Prison education in statistics

The need for studies varies greatly. Prisoners need basic education and orientating education and guidance because many prisoners have weak study capabilities and most prisoners have a poor educational background. Many have interrupted their comprehensive school: 6 % of prisoners have not completed their comprehensive education (9 years).



Students in prisons 2006	%	N
Elementary education	4	63
Primary education (comprehensive)	17	281
Upper secondary education (high school)	8	134
Orientating education and guidance	16	273
Vocational education	51	858
Higher education	1	22
Other studies	4	61
Total	100	1692

Developmental challenges

- There should be equal opportunities for education in every district prison.
- Educational needs of different prisoner groups (women, foreigners and minorities, those with special needs) should be screened.
- The supply should meet the demand.
- Planning a comprehensive study path from a closed prison to an open prison (study permits for studies outside prison when possible) and/or in supervised probationary freedom and finally continued studies after release.

Oulun aikuiskoulukio/ Oulu Upper Secondary School for Adults

Oulu Upper Secondary School for Adults is a state-supported school providing general secondary education for adult students. Young persons (under 18 years old) can study comprehensive school subjects, and they can be enrolled in senior secondary school for special reasons. The lessons are mainly held in the evenings from Monday to Thursday. The teaching is completely course-based, and each student can plan his/her studies independently: timetables, number of lessons per day/week, number of courses per teaching period etc. It is also possible to study individual subjects and *to* obtain a certificate of the studies. The completion of the comprehensive or the upper secondary school takes the minimum of two years. Students can participate in the National Matriculation Examination in the final year of senior secondary school.

In the autumn 2009 the school had 1096 students and 42 teachers.

The school also offers revision or completion of basic education. In this unit there were 94 students.

Oulun aikuiskoulutus co-operates with Oulu vocational college offering students a chance to combine general upper secondary studies and the matriculation examination with a vocational degree. This unit had 551 students in the autumn 2009.

Oulun aikuiskoulutus belongs to a network of upper secondary schools comprising 26 schools around northern Finland. The schools offer distance learning courses making use of conventional course books, videoconference lessons, a web-based learning platform and email. Most students participate in the National Matriculation Examination, but studying individual subjects is also possible. In 2003, the network was awarded the European Label of language teaching and learning.

Migrant education offers courses in basic education for migrants over the age of 16. In the autumn 2009 there were 20 students and 60 students attended courses in Finnish language for foreigners.

Prison education in Oulu

The prison school of northern Finland is a virtual school of *Oulun aikuiskoulutus*. The school offers revision and completion of basic education with different ability groups. Within the general upper secondary school syllabus it is possible for the students to participate in the National Matriculation Examination as well as take courses that can be accepted as part of vocational training programme.

The teaching in prison school is arranged via videoconferencing. Videoconferencing network across several prison schools allows students from other prison schools to take part in simultaneous distant learning classes. The subjects taught both in basic level as well as in secondary education were Finnish and literature, mathematics, English, social studies, history, geography and biology. The lessons are held from Monday till Friday about four lessons (à 80 min) per day.

In the term 2008 - 2009 the number of completed courses was 64 in comprehensive school, 121 in upper secondary school. Four students passed their matriculation exams.

In the autumn 2009 special basic courses were started for Romani students.

There were about 30 students and 8 teachers in Oulu prison school in the autumn 2009.