

STUDY TOUR PROGRAM FOR EDUCATION POLICYMAKERS, Spring 2025

Background:

Finland's educational administration operates with a decentralized and low-hierarchy structure. Schools have significant autonomy, allowing principals and teachers to make independent decisions. They have a lot of freedom inside the national curriculum. The Finnish approach emphasizes trust, collaboration, and minimal bureaucratic oversight. This fosters innovation, equality, and adaptability, with education policies shaped by research and input from educators rather than top-down mandates.

DAY 1: Arrival and Networking

- Pick-up from the airport
- Free time (recommendations on cultural and educational highlights in Helsinki)
- **Welcome dinner:** Networking and icebreaking

DAY 2: Introduction to Finnish Education and Governance

- **Visit to the National Agency for Education:** Discussions on the agency's role in national policy development, governance, and the implementation of educational reforms
- **Lunch**
- **Sightseeing tour:** Explore Helsinki city center and key public and governmental sites (incl. PARLIAMENT)

DAY 3: Early Childhood Education and Care (ECEC) Management

- **Job shadowing:** Visit a kindergarten and discuss leading a kindergarten unit.
- **Lunch**
- **Mini-seminar on ECEC Policy:** Insights into municipal strategies, funding, and quality assurance systems in early childhood education
- **Sauna & swimming:** Traditional Finnish experience

DAY 4: Basic Education Governance

- **School Visit to Primary School** (grades 1-6) in Porvoo: Focus on school management and leadership, discussions with local administrators on strategic decision-making at the school level and at the municipal level
- **Lunch**
- **Walking tour in Old Porvoo**

DAY 5: Policy and Future Planning

- **Morning:** Visit to **Teacher Training School or Faculty of Education** for discussions on teacher education
- **Lunch**
- **Action Plan Seminar:** Develop action plans based on learnings from the tour, with a focus on implementing administrative innovations
- **Farewell dinner:** Networking and final reflections

DAY 6: Departure

- Transport to the airport