Chapter 2
Educational Policy, Governance, and Leadership

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Abstract This chapter investigates the educational policy and governance, and also leadership in educational contexts in Finland from the 1950s into today's on-going reforms. The investigation continues the debates of several Finnish researchers on past Finnish educational policy and administration. In addition, it follows the recent research on how school keeping has evolved into the present educational leadership in Finland. This research also presented the general definition for Finnish educational leadership applied in this chapter. As to the description and definition of educational policy and governance, the handling will follow research on the development of Finnish educational policy and governance in the Finnish complex and dynamic operational environment during the 2000s. Finally, the chapter investigates how Finland appears to be directing and developing its educational policy, governance, and leadership into the future. This includes the analysis of the Finnish government Education Policy Account 2021, which maps Finnish educational policy, governance, and leadership into 2040, and of other relevant topical education policy documents. With the analysis, we present both future aspirations and educational policy mechanisms, efforts, and experimentation to reach the aspired education policy goals.

Keywords Education · Policy · Governance · Leadership · Finland

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Introduction

It is widely accepted that education is one of the key drivers in societal development. There are several examples where the efforts in improving education have made a significant impact on the overall well-being of citizens. The role and forms of educational solutions vary a lot depending on the status of the nation in question. Some countries are talking about nation building and some others about future creation. The aim of this chapter is to describe this development in Finland.

The development of education is determined by the educational policy and governance of the nation. These, as we know, change radically because of different assumptions and practices. Therefore, it is essential to get to know the various paradigms that guide different models and study their impact in the various fields of education – from national and local policy and governance to school-level leadership and management solutions, and to teacher education and teaching practices. This chapter takes a closer look in their development in Finland and analyses the impact of different policy and governance solutions. Additional focus is on the present situation which gives the foundation for developmental trajectories.

The analyses and discussions in this chapter are based on an intensive literature review of Finnish education policy and governance, especially in mind of the changing role of educational leaders and staff in general in the altering operational environment. The description of the change and development process also includes the publications and personal experiences of the writers of this chapter lasting jointly over 50 years as educators, principals, educational administrators, and researchers starting from the early 1970s up to today.

As an illustrative framework and analytical tool, a metaphor of pendulum is used developed by Jukka Alava and both presented and applied in Alava et al. (2012) to describe the paradigmatic changes of educational administration from the extreme autocratic, top-down government to the almost opposite, democratic, bottom-up governance where most decisions were delegated, and how there has been a turn towards a more regulated system again. Figure 2.1 presents the pendulum metaphor used in this chapter in an arbitrary point for the symbolic description of change in the paradigm of educational governance.

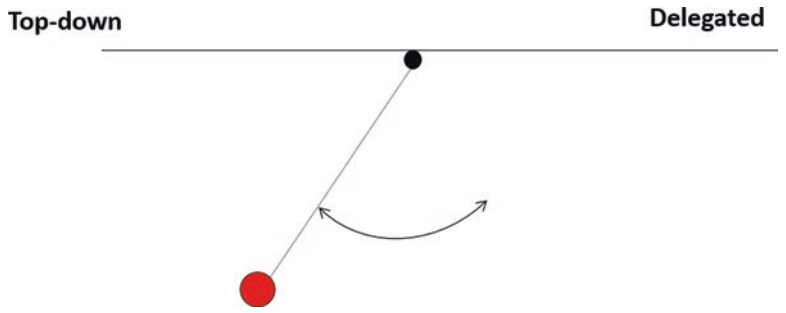

Fig. 2.1 Pendulum at an arbitrary point of governance evolvement

Figure 2.1 presents the pendulum metaphor used in this chapter, just as an example, in an arbitrary point, for the symbolic description of change in the paradigm of educational governance.

Conceptualisation of Educational Policy, Governance, and Leadership in Finland

As the heading implies, we will here focus on how Finns conceptualise educational policy, governance, and leadership. Special emphasis is given to provide a foundation to interpret the historical and topical description of Finnish educational policy, governance, and leadership in this chapter and book.

Seek (2008) claims that Finland has not been able to develop internationally adopted leadership theories, models, and practices. In addition, she argues that Finnish ways of organisation and leadership have not been identified or recognised internationally, nor domestically really. Furthermore, she states that global leadership paradigms have been adopted late in Finland, and in ways peculiar for Finland. The last notion can be extended to apply also to global policy and governance trends (e.g., Risku et al., 2016; Risku & Tian, 2020; Simola et al., 2017). Hence, we consider it not surprising how the conceptions of educational policy, governance, and leadership have been evolving in ways peculiar to Finland, too. In fact, following contingency theory, we would anticipate that there is no universal uniform understanding of the concepts.

Of the three concepts of educational policy, governance, and leadership, we regard educational policy the most consistently conceived by Finns. According to the fundamental work on the concept of educational policy in Finland by Lehtisalo and Raivola (1999), Finnish educational policy refers to the will society expresses for education. Education, they define as society's formal arrangements for learning. Policy, in turn, they relate with how various actors construct, determine, and enact the societal will for the educational goals and for the arrangements to achieve them. Furthermore, they position Finnish educational policy within the general societal decision-making and regard it as one of the means to enact overall social policy. This is also the conception we apply in this chapter,

Furthermore, Finnish educational policy reflects the societal aspirations to proactively meet the changes in the operational environment (Hellström, 2008). For example, Tian and Risku (2019) identified a strong connection between the socioeconomic and ideological status of Finnish society and the goals set in the national core curriculums throughout the independence of Finland.

Finnish educational policy is both contextual and dynamic. It also contains its own special characteristics. For example, as earlier noted, Risku et al. (2016) learnt that Finnish education policy follows international ideological trends somewhat delayed and, when following, enacts them at an intensive pace, unlike the other Nordic countries (Simola et al., 2017).

As earlier noted, in the same way as educational policy follows overall societal policy, how the legal activities of the state and of other public actors enact their tasks and functions, including their administrative organisations and authorities, educational governance appears to follow overall societal governance in Finland (Risku & Tian, 2020). In this chapter, we will try to describe how government has evolved into governance in the Finnish educational setting and what Finnish educational governance looks like today.

As for educational leadership, there was no concept for it until 2013 in the Finnish language. Either people referred to the various formal leadership positions in education, as to principals, or to general leadership concepts, such as shared leadership. The introduction of the concept of school leadership was a significant step forward towards a more comprehensive understanding of leadership in the field of education. However, as the operational environment evolved altering educational organisations and their leadership, neither referring to formal leadership positions, to general leadership concepts, or to schools was enough to serve the research, education, and development of leadership in the field of education (Risku & Alava, 2021).

In 2013, the University of Jyväskylä opened a vacancy for a professorship to focus on the phenomenon of leadership in the field of education. There were several options for the Finnish concept for the discipline due to the English concept of education having several possible counterparts in the Finnish language, all of them containing their own special connotations. Following the taxonomy of educational policy concepts in Finland, the discipline was named educational leadership (Risku & Alava, 2021). Today, it also includes emphasizing that it comprises also early childhood education.

In this chapter, we try to describe how the view on leadership in the field of education has evolved from being narrowed to formal leadership positions and managing schools into the diversity, collaboration, and dynamism of today's educational leadership, and what it is like in present-day Finland.

Development of Finnish Educational Policy, Governance, and Leadership

To understand changes in Finnish society, Lehtisalo and Raivola (1999) and Lampinen (2000) used the theories of long cycles in societal development. They studied a period of almost 100 years starting from the period of autonomy (1809–1919) until the end of the last millennium. They divided the development in five major cycles out of which the two latest are of great interest in this chapter because the changes of the 1970s, 1980s, and 1990s are of utmost importance in understanding the development of educational leadership in Finland.

The fourth long cycle in their analyses can be seen started after the war lasting to the end of the 1980s. There can be two distinct phases located in this cycle: the 1950 to the 1960s often called Nation-building characterised by the expansion of

schooling, and the 1970s to the 1980s characterised by the turn towards decentralisation. Since the work of Lehtisalo and Raivola (1999), also other researchers have utilised the framework of long cycles (Temmes, 2008; Uljens & Nyman, 2013). Temmes (2008) considered that the year 1966 was a major turning point. During the rule of several left-centre governments, the building of the welfare state accelerated, and the administrative structures and culture were renewed, and planning and managerialism increased.

The cycle starting in the 1980s meant new changes. The economic development was significant. Market-driven economy started to replace the earlier strongly state-driven and regulated economy. Freedom and individualism became main drivers for society, with less emphasis on equality, which had been one of the core issues for decades. The new postmodern era liberated the society from conformity into individualism and freedom of choice (Lehtisalo & Raivola, 1999). Securing the national competitiveness became one of the key arguments and doctrines also in developing education. Schooling was seen as a path towards material wealth. The economic aspects of education were emphasised with focus in the quality of education leading to the 1990s with an emphasis on results-based education continuing to present millennium.

As we can see from the studies of the long cycles mentioned above, the educational policy and governance of Finland have been fluctuating from a highly autocratic and hierarchical system via a decentralised period into a widely delegated administration, and then returning somewhat back towards centralisation. This fluctuation can be called 'the pendulum effect', described earlier, and it reflects the overall development of the Finnish society, and we use it below to explain the changes that took place.

In the 1950s, which is the starting pointing for our investigation, the pendulum was at its extreme on one side of the pendulum swing – let us say the left – practically having the pendulum in a vertical position for the highly autocratic and top-down government. The reasons for this can be traced to Finnish history. The traditions from the Swedish and Russian eras of Finland have had long-lasting effects in all administration in Finland with a strong central guidance and control in all aspects of society manifesting a rather weak civil society (Risku, 2014).

Just after the Second World War, Finland was in a bad shape. As Finns express it, Finland became second in the war but stayed independent. It was a beaten, poor, agrarian society. The educational policy in Finland in the early 1950s was, according to Lampinen (2000), strongly reactive to the changes in the operational environment. First, the large war indemnities caused a sudden demand of skilled workers in the respective industries. Second, the significantly risen birth rate resulted in a growing demand for all-round education. The third major factor that changed the education was the fast transformation from an agricultural society into an industrial one, which typical of Finland took place internationally viewed rather late. The number of primary schools grew rapidly, especially in rural areas. Also, several vocational schools were founded in the 1950s. Most importantly, Finns saw the first phases of continuous educational renewal in the country (Aho et al., 2006).

Post–Second World War Finland has had two main education policy eras. Both eras correspond to the general societal development in Finland. In fact, one could say that they were formed to meet the challenges the Finnish society encountered during the period. The first era, 1944–1980, comprises of the final stage in the state's aspiration to transform the class society deriving from the Middle Ages into an egalitarian democracy and welfare state through a centralised, norm-based, and system-oriented government. The second one starting in the 1980s involved the preservation and advancement of social justice, and also the development of local autonomy in an economically and demographically challenging context through a decentralised governance (Risku, 2014).

The National Board of Education guided the schoolwork in primary schools with statues from 1952 and 1957. Despite the state guidance, the schools had a significant amount of autonomy in conducting education. The structure of educational governance, however, remained hierarchical. The curriculum was planned by the teachers, approved by the local school board, and confirmed by the primary school inspector. The decision-making in primary schools was very different from that of curriculum planning. The educational administration was in the hands of the state, but schools had considerable autonomy in their own curriculum work (Risku, 2014).

The function of educational planning was, according to Lampinen (2000), one of the key means of Finnish social policy. There are other views, too. Kivinen (1988) argued that the educational policy in Finland in the 1950s and the 1960s did not regard education as a force for change and development but as a force to dampen the underlying societal change forces. The educational doctrine emphasised comprehensiveness, long-term focus, and integration with overall societal planning. The state regulated education through government subsides, inspections, and the obligation to have all major decisions confirmed by the state. For example, the local school boards elected the headmasters and teachers, but the decisions had to be confirmed by the inspectors (Sarjala, 1982).

The status of the headmaster in the primary school was defined in legislation in 1957. The headmaster was appointed by the local school board for a four-year period. The position was not very much wished for; teachers were appointed as headmasters even against their will particularly in small rural schools. The status or the salary of the headmaster was not high. The position was practically not the position of the headmaster, but that of the teacher with somewhat reduced teaching duties added with the duties of the headmaster. Only in larger cities the position began to resemble 'real' principalship (Isosomppi, 1996). No official statutes for the eligibility of the headmaster existed nor significant organised training for the task.

The years after the Second World War meant a major development both economically, technologically, and socially changing the context dramatically. Education was one of the drivers for this change, but it was also under pressure to change and develop itself (Alava, 2007).

The educational policy and administration were strongly in the hands of the government and the National of the Board of Education. The limited resources of local authorities called for a strongly centralised system. The post-war period was characterised by a strong centrally guided educational policy with the focus on

effectiveness. The educational doctrine emphasised comprehensiveness, long-term focus, and integration with overall societal planning. The state regulated education through government subsides, inspections, and requiring all major decisions to be confirmed by the state. The local school boards elected the headmasters and teachers, but the decisions had to be confirmed by the inspectors.

As presented in Fig. 2.2, the pendulum had its peak in the early 1970s, when the role of the Ministry of Education was strengthened reflecting the hierarchical, centre-oriented planning philosophy in education. Special planning departments were founded in the Ministry of Education, in the National Board of Education, and in the Provincial State Offices. Many inspectors oversaw everything that took place in schools (Nikki, 2000; Varjo, 2007). It has been argued that schoolwork in the 1970s presupposed teachers working closely following the very detailed legislature. Everything was managed top-down, and the quality of competence of highly qualified teachers was heavily undermined (Alava, 2007).

The tight top-down administration was, however, needed so that the next important renewal could take place. Up until the 1970s, compulsory education was provided in the folk school system. After its fourth form, students could apply to grammar school, which was divided into the five-year lower and three-year upper secondary school. Others continued in the folk school for 2–4 years more, and then possibly continued in vocational education (Alava, 2007).

A major renewal took place in the 1970s. Then, a nine-year compulsory school common to the entire age group, i.e., the comprehensive school was created based on the earlier folk and lower secondary school (Ministry of Education, 1999), forming the foundation for the present education system as presented later in Fig. 2.6. The first curriculum for the new comprehensive school continued to reflect the tight governmental control of the time (Alava, 2007).

The 1968 Act on the Foundations of the Education System (1968/467) mandated local authorities to establish a separate office for the director or secretary of the local provision of education, i.e., the office of the municipal director of education. They were to aid the local school board in the preparation, supervision, and execution of local educational issues. The municipality-level school boards appointed the headmasters of the comprehensive schools after consulting with the teachers. (Risku, 2014).

As discussed earlier, there was not much room in real educational leadership or management in the schools because of the tight legislature. The tasks of the headmaster changed significantly towards a government official, a civil servant, and a

Fig. 2.2 Pendulum at its extreme point of centralised government in the 1970s

school advisory board secretary with the focus in collecting information (Isosomppi, 1969). Although the legislature talked about leading and guiding schoolwork, the real possibilities of the headmaster to affect the work of the school were limited due to the weak status of the school advisory boards. However, the role of instructional leadership was mentioned in the statues stronger than earlier. The means of management were the norms for schoolwork and for the overall administrative collection of rules and regulations. The focus of the work of the headmaster was passing administrative information amongst the hierarchical levels in the educational administration. The state-centred aim was securing the structural reform in education (Alava, 2007).

The central government had a strict control over local authorities. The school head was the local representative of the state's school administration at the school level (Mustonen, 2003). During the 1960s and 1970s, the authoritarian top-down school administration was emphasised – and culminated – in the work of principals and school heads, until it started to unravel in around 1972 and 1973 due to the growing social pressure (Alava, 2007).

The Role of Teachers and Principals

Educational policy decisions for teacher education have been of outmost importance for Finland. Finnish teacher education started in 1863 in the city of Jyväskylä, in a seminary, which became a university in 1966. The first teacher training programme took three years to complete. In 1974, teacher training was renewed in Finland, transformed and offered at four other universities, too, and extended to five years of education, with the aim of obtaining a master's degree upon completion. And, as argued by Alava (2016), this policy, linked with the popularity of the teacher's profession in Finland, has been recognised as one of the key factors behind the good PISA results in Finland.

In 1978, individual principals' status changed considerably due to a so-called principal decision, which introduced overall working hours for principals in general education for secondary and for large primary education schools. According to Alava et al. (2012), this reform realised the objective of permanent posts for principals, advocated by individual principals and the Finnish Association of Principals since the 1950s. The recognition of the principal's occupation as a specific profession made considerable progress.

New Perspectives for Administration

The economic development in Finland in the 1980s was significant. Market-driven economy started to replace the earlier strongly state-driven and regulated economy. Freedom and individualism became main drivers for society, with diminished

emphasis on equality, which had been the core goal for decades (Alava, 2007; Risku, 2014). The new postmodern era liberated society from conformity into individualism and freedom of choice (Lehtisalo & Raivola, 1999). Securing the national competitiveness became one of the key arguments and doctrines also in developing education. At the school level, teachers started to criticise the tight curriculum, and a 'silent revolution' started in the late 1970s (Alava et al., 2012). The pendulum started to move from its extreme position towards a more democratic way as presented in Fig. 2.3. This change was inevitable, but it needed major reforms in society and many years to be completed.

The changes were materialised in the amendments of educational legislation in 1983/1985 emphasising decentralisation and internal development of schools. According to Lehtisalo and Raivola (1999), this new legislation was the largest school reform yet in the history of Finnish educational administration. The ultimate reform was prepared under six different Ministers of Education. The legislation implied a new strategy to develop schools demanding action at the school level (Isosomppi, 1996). The ruling focused on improving the overall effectiveness of education and the results of individual schools. Responsibility was significantly transferred to local authorities and schools. The legislation of 1983 also stated that each municipality must have its own director of educational affairs – the municipal director of education (Risku, 2014).

The curriculum renewal in 1985 was another step towards more delegation in educational governance. It had some national elements, but it also left space for municipal-level applications. Individual schools could be more independent and innovative. Some schools started to focus more on sports and others in languages. The earlier uniform school culture began to diversify and have new school-based nuances. The metaphor of the pendulum used in this chapter can be seen moved to its mid-point in administration and still moving towards a more delegated and bottom-up position, as presented in Fig. 2.4 (Alava, 2007).

The 1990s was the final step in the long process of decentralising educational administration and transformation into the results-oriented educational policy

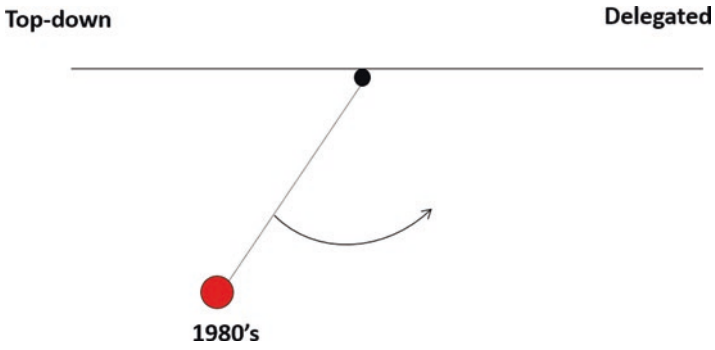

Fig. 2.3 Pendulum starting to move in the early 1970s towards a more democratic way reaching the mid-point of this evolvement in the late-1980s

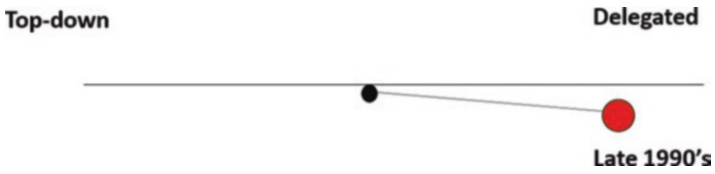

Fig. 2.4 Pendulum starting to reach its peak in the bottom-up paradigm in the late 1990s

(Lampinen, 2000). Several changes in the external environment of the nation and its educational system forced it into reorientations. Finland was transforming from the industrial society into the service and information one with a strong new demand for knowledge work and for high technology (Kivinen, 1988), In addition, international cooperation increased, globalisation took wide steps, and the geopolitical situation of Finland changed radically, when it joined the European Union in 1995 (Simola et al., 2017) and the next major wave of change was clearly on the way, often called the period of sustainable development (Uljens & Nyman, 2013). It was not a smooth period, though. A deep recession in early 1990s shook up the society thoroughly (Risku, 2014).

Simultaneously with the new legislation, a new effort was made to improve educational leadership education and preparation for principals. The first official statute regarding principal eligibility was set in 1992. The law of 1992 stated that a special examination of educational administration was a prerequisite for an appointment to the principalship. The examination focused on administrative issues, the legislature, and the finances of the school; no elements of educational leadership were included.

Looking to the Future

The mid-1990s meant the rise of strategic thinking in the development of educational policy and educational governance in Finland. It is also the decade during which several Finnish scholars (e.g., Anttiroiko et al., 2007; Varjo, 2007; Salminen, 2008) argue Finland moved from government into governance thinking. The centralised state government system no longer corresponded to the needs of the evolving operational environment and to the altering value climate of Finland. The centralised, norm-based, and system-oriented government had become inflexible, undemocratic, and outworn. It was no longer able to meet with the requirements of the changing operational environment and with the altering value climate of Finland. It was replaced by a new approach to meet local authorities' demands for more autonomy with fewer regulations and less control (Committee Report, 1986; Niemelä, 2008; Risku, 2014).

In 1993, the Ministry of Education prepared a National Strategy for Education and Culture. The document also included the strategy for continuous learning. It was followed by the National Strategy for education in 1994 and the Knowledge strategy for Education and Research in 1996, renewed in 1999. The parliament also

agreed that the success factors for Finland in the future would be conscious participation in globalisation, full utilisation of knowledge and technology, humanity and innovations, and personal control of life. All the previous are, according to Lehtisalo and Raivola (1999), issues of learning. Thus, learning, know-how, and life-long-learning became the main strategies for the whole country towards the new millennium (Alava, 2016; Risku, 2014).

In 1999, Finland completed a major reform of educational legislation, which was preceded by earlier reforms in 1985, 1991, and 1993. The 1985 reform for comprehensive schools and general upper secondary schools introduced the lesson framework system significantly ensuring and increasing school-based decision-making. The changes in 1991 legislature abolished the task lists of school heads and principals from both the Comprehensive Schools Decree and the General Upper Secondary Schools Decree. In addition, the 1992 Act on the Administration in the Local Provision of Education (1992/706) did no longer require the municipalities to have a separate office of the municipal director of education introduced to guarantee the implementation of the comprehensive education reform in 1968.

The legislation of 1999 was significant in many ways. The main issue in the legislation was the system of regulating education. The new doctrine in this cycle was a totally different perspective on regulation. Instead of ruling and guiding the work in individual educational institutions, as it had been for over 100 years, the ruling now focused on education as a function in society. The ruling thus covered issues as goals of education, content of education, quality of education, evaluation of educational results, forms, and levels of education, and the right and duties of students (Lehtisalo & Raivola, 1999).

There are no more rulings about the rights and duties of teachers nor specifications for the appointment procedures of teachers in educational legislation. In the new system, all those are determined in general legislation, and in the local ordinances of municipalities and other education providers. Local authorities and other education providers thus have strong autonomy in deciding education. They can independently decide what teaching positions schools have and what are the duties of teachers, as well as of other educational staff and leaders (Risku, 2014, see also Souri, 2009). The pendulum of educational administration had moved to the other extreme position, as presented in Fig. 2.4.

The Changing Roles of the Relationship Between the State and the Municipalities

It is important to notice that Finland is divided into municipalities whose autonomy is ensured in the constitution. The primary task of local authorities is to enhance the well-being of their inhabitants and the sustainable progress of themselves. Local authorities have the responsibility to fulfil the tasks which are mandated to them; in several education forms, they are the main local education providers with an

educational administrator as a chief officer. Local authorities have a wide autonomy how they carry out their tasks (Risku, 2014).

The concept of the fourth way introduced by Hargreaves and Shirley (2009) as a perspective to describe the relationship between the state and local authorities well corresponds with the Finnish education system. Accordingly, the education system is steered from the top, built from the bottom and supported from the sides. One example of the guidance and support functions of the National Board of Education was publishing the quality criteria for basic education in 2012. The aim was to give concrete guidelines for schools to help their self-evaluation processes. It consisted of several 'quality cards' in areas of leadership, personnel, finances, and evaluation. The use of these quality criteria was voluntary, and there is no data describing how many schools really utilised them in practice, but the general opinion is that their effect was short term.

In vocational education, the National Board of Education published in 2009 a recommendation of quality criteria based on the (European Quality Assurance Reference Framework for Vocational Education and Training (EQARF) framework) including different phases in quality assurance: planning, execution, evaluation, and verifying. There are specific quality criteria and indicators to support the utilisation of the framework in practice.

A more recent effort starting in 2019 is an initiative called 'Varda' which is a major project collecting various data, first on early childhood institutions' operational practices and then to be utilised in overall quality work of these institutions. There is also a plan to widen this concept to basic education.

Although international research had showed a long time ago the importance of principals' leadership competencies in schools, university-level qualification education for principals was enabled as late as in 1998 in the Teaching Qualifications Decree (986/1998). The possibility initiated by the Institute of Educational Leadership at the University of Jyväskylä marks the beginning of systematic academic research, education, and development of educational leadership in Finland and is regarded as a necessary qualifying education by, for example, most Finnish municipal directors of education (Alava et al., 2021; Kanervio & Risku, 2009).

According to the Decree, which is still in force, a person is qualified as a principal, when he or she has a higher university degree; the teaching qualifications in the relevant form of education; sufficient work experience in teaching assignments; and a completed qualification in educational administration in accordance with requirements adopted by the Finnish National Board of Education, or studies in educational administration with no less than 25 ECTS credits organised by a university, or otherwise obtained sufficient knowledge of educational administration.

Already in 1996, the importance of principals' training was realised in the University of Jyväskylä, when the university president Sallinen founded the Institute of Educational leadership and gave it a significant task: to develop studies beyond the minimum of 25 ECTS credits, develop the path to doctoral studies, launch the first cohort of PhD students, and develop international contacts. This all has taken place, and later several other universities in Finland have also launched similar programmes.

New Supportive National Institutions

At present, the general steering of the educational system is still decided by the Ministry of Education. However, several matters have been entrusted to education providers. Their operations are steered through the core curricula, and their objectives are laid down in legislation. Feedback concerning operations of the educational system and of individual schools is collected by means of statistics and evaluation reports. According to the Ministry of Education (1999), these provide the basis of information to steer education. This transformation to self-evaluation meant a total paradigm shift in educational administration. The shift was possible mainly because of the trusting culture in the entire education system in Finland – people trust teachers, principals, and decision-makers. In practice, many elements were left unsolved to ensure education providers autonomy to establish and develop their evaluation practices. The objectivity of self-evaluations remained a question, and the lack of feedback and support from the municipal education provider based on the evaluation was a major drawback (Lapiolahti, 2007). In addition to trust, a resource-based cause for the drawback can be found, too. The number of people in educational administration outside schools faced a 40% drop during 1990–1995 (Hirvi, 1996). As a result of the drop, the size of administrative staff supporting the work of educational staff and leaders is mostly very small in both Finnish municipalities and schools (Kanervio & Risku, 2009; Risku, 2014).

An important step further was the foundation of the Finnish Education Evaluation Council at the University of Jyväskylä, which was later transformed into the Finnish Education Evaluation Centre (FEEC) operating both in Helsinki and in Jyväskylä, and today attached to the Finnish National Agency for Education. Its evaluation activities comprise national learning outcome assessments, thematic and system evaluations, and evaluations of quality systems, including audits of higher education institutions.

Another highly important institute supporting education was the foundation of the Finnish Institute for Educational Research already in 1968, attached at the University of Jyväskylä. Its aim is to support teachers, educational establishments, and decision-makers in the promotion of learning and development of education. The research and development activities have opened different views to educational phenomena and produced reliable information to support both national-level and educational establishment policies (see Fig. 2.6).

A major reform to enhance education in Finland was the renewal of vocational education in 2018. The education for young people and adults was consolidated, forming a single entity with its own steering and regulation system, and financing model. The earlier supply-oriented approach was refocused into a demand-driven approach. Education is competence-based and customer-oriented: Each student is offered the possibility to design an individually appropriate path to finish an entire qualification or a supplementary skill set. The primary importance is on what the student learns and can do (Ministry of Education and Culture, 2022).

Linked to these rapid changes and developments in society and industry, the system of polytechnics, also called universities of applied sciences, was created in the 1990s. As explained by Alava (2016), these colleges are tertiary-level institutions, but they are not universities; rather they are linked to practical professions mainly in the industrial sector (see Fig. 2.1). So, we can see that the development of education and that of society have been walking together on the path of our national development.

Special Aspects of Finnish Education Reforms

Continuity has been of great importance in the Finnish education policy. After the Second World War, the field of education enjoyed remarkable national appreciation. Everyone, including politicians, practitioners, university professors, and the media, valued education highly. Debates on education have mainly had a very positive sound, too. In addition, there has been broad unison on the main goals of Finnish education policy (Alava, 2016).

Even if local political decision-makers have changed during elections (every 4 years), the main education resolutions have remained unchanged. This has laid a solid foundation for managing and leading local, municipal-level education policies, and practices at the school level. Administrators and school heads have been able to plan several years ahead. In many other countries, such as England and the United States, radical changes for the better could have occurred had there been no major policy change after the election of a new political party.

Another noticeable element in the new way of educational administration was the planning of the new curriculum in comprehensive education in 2014. It was a lengthy process initiated by the director of the National Board of Education with a planning process involving many educators and professionals with two rounds of public commentary open for everyone. This transparent and participatory process was a key element in the wide commitment to the renewal (Tian & Risku, 2019).

The bottom-up administrative system created a new situation. Because the municipalities and schools now had the power to make their own decisions and models for local education administration, several different arrangements also took place. Municipalities made decisions that best suited their needs, and schools made novel and innovative practices. The schools both had to, and were able to, make these. This, on the other hand, created new demand for principals' leadership competencies and new challenges for institutions of educational leadership.

In addition to the change of the guiding paradigm – from top-down into bottom-up – there have been several important policy changes in education. In 2013, early childhood education was moved from the Ministry of Social Affairs and Health into the Ministry of Education. This had significant effects on the local level because both schools and day-care centres are now part of educational governance. Furthermore, the health and social services reform of 2021 moved health and social

services from the local to the new regional level at the beginning of 2023, which has increased the importance of education in all municipalities.

Another important reform concerns special education services. It now begins already in early childhood education and comprises also comprehensive and secondary education. The key factor is the early recognition of learning difficulties and problems, followed by immediate support. There are three tiers of support – general, intensified, and special. The needed support may vary from temporary to continuous, from minor to major, or from one to several forms of support. This reform, however, has not taken place without problems. The new system of three tiers is developed further to meet with students' increasingly diverse needs with the main concern of the inadequate funding at school level. The demand for special education teachers is more than municipalities can provide to schools, which increases the pressure on all teachers significantly.

Also, vocational education has been radically transformed in 2018 following the changes at workplaces and amid shrinking financial possibilities. The aim was to make studies more flexible and individual for students, to move a significant part of learning to workplaces, and to introduce competence demonstrations to earn the degrees. Somewhat conflicting with the goals of this reform is the cut of funding in vocational education leading, for example, to an increased amount of distant learning, which is a big challenge in many areas of getting practical work experience.

The Finnish Education System and Its Governance

Education in Finland is steered by legislation, economy, national and local strategies, and educational evaluation (Varjo et al., 2016) following global ideological and policy trends typical of Finland (Risku & Tian, 2020). In the operations of educational institutions, particularly legislation and curriculums have significance (Eisenschmidt et al., 2021). Policy affects educational institutions through various steering systems that direct local provisions of public services nationally (normative, financial, and information steering) (Rinkinen, 2020).

The end result of the development of the educational system in Finland as described above is presented in Fig. 2.5. The present system consists of early childhood education and care, pre-primary, comprehensive (basic) and general upper secondary education, vocational education and training, higher education, as well as of basic education in the arts and liberal adult education.

According to the present education policy, every child under 6 years old has a subjective right to attend early childhood education and care (ECEC). This can take place at day-care centres or in smaller family day-care groups in private homes. ECEC services can be provided both by local authorities and by private education providers. The fees are moderate and based on parents' incomes. This principle applies to all education forms in the Finnish education system; compulsory education is totally free of charge, and other forms are heavily subsidised by the government. The parents of the child decide whether their child participates in early

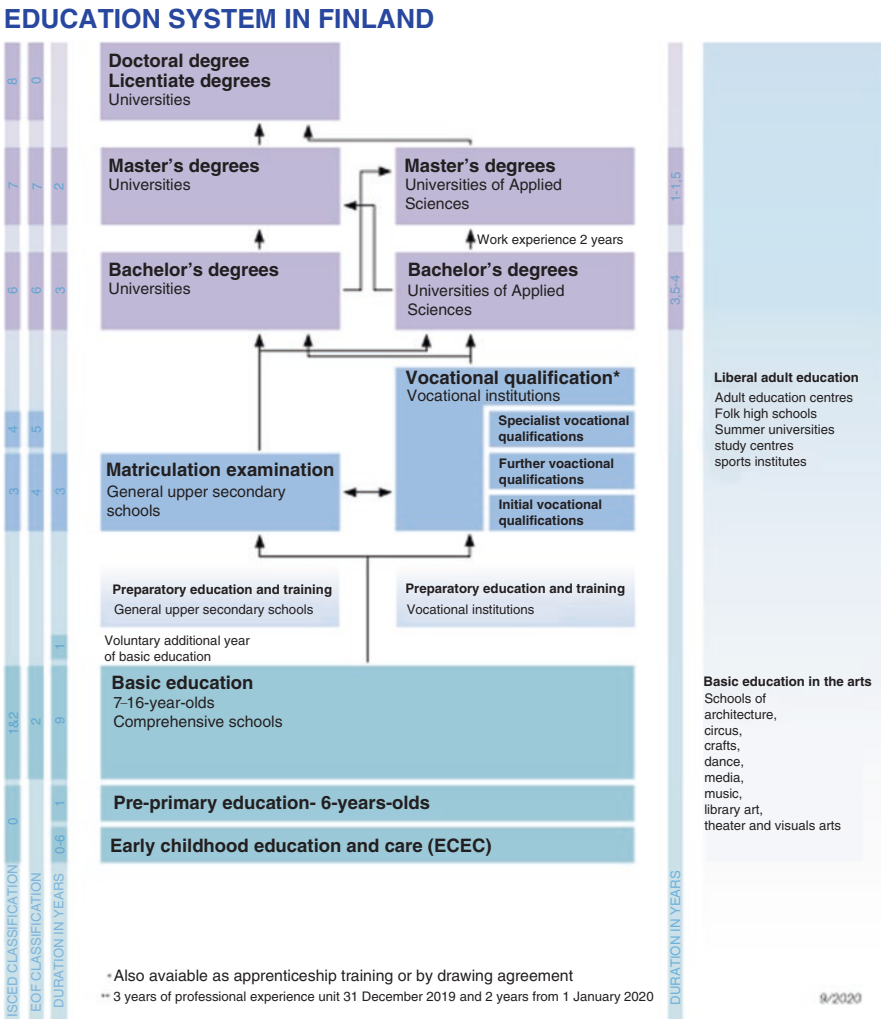

Fig. 2.5 Finnish education system. (Finnish Government, 2021, p. 11)

childhood education and care. It is also possible to care for the child at home until the child turns 6 years. For the three first years of home care, families can receive home care allowance. Pre-primary education is compulsory for children of the age of 6. Pre-primary education is provided both at kindergartens and at schools.

Comprehensive education starts in the year when the child turns 7 and lasts for 9 years. General and vocational upper secondary education was given the status of compulsory education in 2021. Completion of upper secondary education, both general and vocational, gives students eligibility to continue to higher education. Higher education institutions offer lower, upper, and doctoral higher education degrees, as well as specialist education and continual learning.

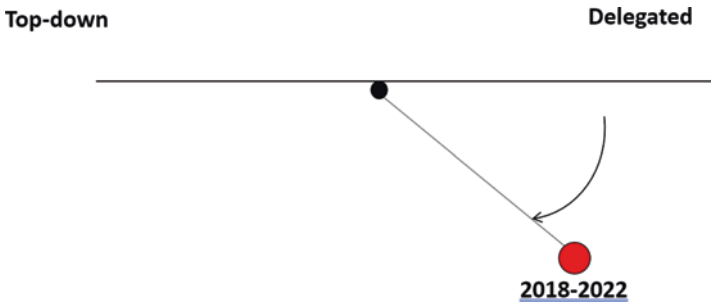

Fig. 2.6 Pendulum starting to move back towards more regulation in late 2010s and looking for an optimum position

In basic education for arts, students study architecture, visual arts, handicrafts, media arts, music, word art, circus arts, dance, and theatre arts. Liberal adult education offers non-formal studies promoting personal growth, health, and well-being by offering courses relating to citizenship skills and society and in different crafts and subjects on a recreational basis.

Parallel to overall societal development and to the evolvement of the education system, the ruling of the education system has evolved correspondingly. In the pendulum metaphor we have used, the pendulum, describing the paradigm of educational governance first moved from the extreme left of centralised government to the right of almost full autonomy, and then has started to return towards the more state-controlled position, as presented in Fig. 2.6. It seems to be in flux trying to locate an optimal position finding its way in the concept of the fourth way discussed earlier.

Figure 2.7 presents the Finnish education governance system, as it is today. It comprises of four governance lines: the state, local authorities, labour market organisations, and civic organisations. (Risku & Tian, 2020). In the system, whatever actor in whichever governance line on whatever tier of the hierarchy can contact whatever actor for interaction and cooperation. The system corresponds explicitly to how educational government in Finland has transformed into an open, dynamic, and complex educational governance.

The parliament makes decisions on legislation, funding and policies concerning the education system. The Finnish government, with the Ministry of Education and Culture under it, oversees the planning and execution of education policies. In Finland, the national administration of education and training has a two-tier structure. First, the Ministry of Education and Culture outlines the general lines and strategy of education, science, culture, sport, and youth policies, and also those for international cooperation in these fields. The Ministry of Education and Culture is also responsible for preparing educational legislation and all publicly funded education in Finland. Second, the Finnish National Agency for Education is the national development agency responsible for early childhood education and care, pre-primary, basic, general, and vocational upper secondary education as well as for adult education and training. Higher education is the responsibility of the Ministry

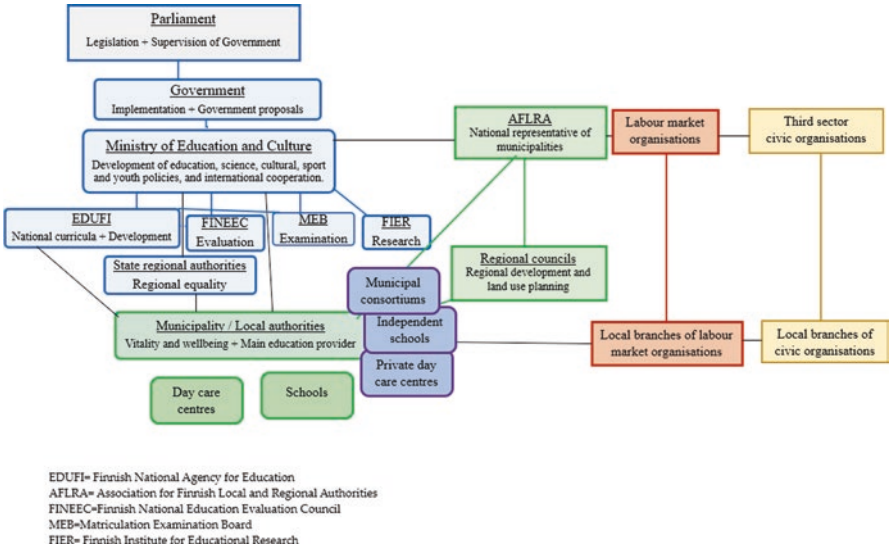

Fig. 2.7 Finnish education governance system. (Modified from Risku & Tian, 2020)

of Education and Culture. Research in higher education institutions is overseen by the Academy of Finland.

The Finnish Education Evaluation Centre (FINEEC) and the Matriculation Examination Board (MEB) are attached to the National Agency for Education as independent governmental agencies. The Finnish Education Evaluation Centre (FINEEC) answers for the national evaluation of education. The Matriculation Examination Board (MEB) is a governmental bureau responsible for administering, arranging, and executing the national high-stake examination for upper secondary students.

At the regional level, state governance is presently divided into six State Regional Administrative Agencies. The Regional State Administrative Agencies promote the legal protection of pupils and students by handling complaints and assessment rectification requests. Regional councils conduct planning and development projects regionally under the authority of Finnish municipalities.

Local authorities are responsible for providing pre-primary, basic education, and early childhood education for all children in their area. Upper secondary education and vocational training can be organised by municipalities, joint municipal authorities, (private) registered communities, or foundations. In some cases, vocational training is also offered by the government or state-owned enterprises.

The provision of Finnish education is often presented as uniform and solely consisting of municipal educational institutions. However, as the latest government education policy report (2021) states, the overall situation is much more diverse. In pre-primary and comprehensive education, other education providers than local authorities are exceptions. In early childhood education, there are large numbers of private education providers, too. Most general education upper secondary schools

are municipal, but the separation from lower secondary education schools and the obligation to cooperate with vocational upper secondary education is changing the situation. As for vocational education, only the largest cities can operate vocational education as sole education providers. Typically, local authorities combine their forces into municipal consortia or other legal entities to provide vocational education. Institutions for liberal adult education and for basic education in arts, as well as universities have various legal forms. Universities have their own autonomy and form of public legal entities.

Present Status of Finnish Educational Policy, Governance, and Leadership

During the past decade, the pace of educational reform processes has accelerated, partly through political guidance, but also due to the influence of social changes. In Finland, the local governance reform in addition to demographic changes, the health and social services reform, the increased cultural diversity, globalisation, as well as economic challenges have been causing functional and structural changes to the education system and its governance.

The effects of the global pandemic have reflected in almost all areas of life, and education is no exception. Distance education in Finnish schools and educational institutions were highly successful considering the circumstances. This is attributed to the high professional skills of teachers and society's investments in education and digitalisation (Finnish National Agency for Education, 2020). The present time challenges educational staff and leaders to reflect how to provide education that is building a sense of community and supporting each child's and student's well-being. Learning takes place everywhere and learning based only on formal curricula has changed. The transformation of learning is explained and described by the fact that a large part of learning has moved outside the school building and classroom. New technologies also offer a new context for learning.

The health and social services reform is also having an impact on Finnish education. The responsibility for organising public health and social services is transferred from municipalities to the well-being services counties from 2023. The key objective of the reform is to improve the availability and quality of basic public services throughout Finland. The effectiveness of cooperation between municipalities and welfare services counties is very important, especially on the connecting surfaces of services. For example, cooperation between comprehensive education and student welfare is essential for the well-being of pupils. Comprehensive education is the responsibility mainly of the municipalities and student welfare of the well-being service counties. The reform will have a significant impact on the operations and finances of municipalities. In its strategic planning, the municipality must set targets for promoting well-being and health and define measures to support the objectives.

Education Policy Report 2021

The Finnish government published an education policy report on 5.4.2021 with the aim of providing a long-term policy and guidelines for the Finnish education system. The previous report was produced more than a decade ago. The new report provides an analysis of the current state of education and presents the goals for the Finnish education, training, and research up until the 2040s. The main goal is to have a strong cultural and educational foundation built on effective and high-quality education, research, and culture. This is achieved by providing all pupils and students the right to learn and grow, and also to receive the support and guidance they need in their learning paths. Further goals include halting educational inequality, providing competent and committed teaching staff all over Finland, and taking into use new technology in all learning (Finnish Government, 2021).

The impacts of the global pandemic have mainly left the objectives and contents of the Government Programme unchanged. The government has realised the planned reforms, including the 2-year pre-primary education experiment and extending compulsory education to general secondary and vocational youth education.

Compulsory education was enacted in 1921 in Finland, as one of the last European countries, and was extended in 1957 and in 1970. The present government has continued the extensions further to raise the level of competence and prevent inequality. Legislation was reformed in 2020, extending the compulsory learning path both at the beginning and at the end. At the end, the compulsory school age was raised from 16 to 18. Compulsory education was extended, because it is increasingly hard to cope in the work-life without secondary education and higher qualifications. The extension of compulsory education aims to raise Finland's level of education and competence, reduce learning gaps, and increase equality and non-discrimination in education. The extension of compulsory education is expected to also increase the employment rate (Finnish Government, 2021).

Raising the age of compulsory education to 18 years and extending compulsory education to upper secondary education requires ensuring that all those who complete compulsory education have the knowledge, skills, and competence required for upper secondary education. Providers of comprehensive school education have the duty to intensify student guidance in compulsory education with the focus on preparing students for the next phase of studies. With this extension, all young people who have completed primary and lower secondary school (comprehensive/basic education) are obliged to apply for further studies.

The extension of compulsory education, like comprehensive education, is free for pupils and students. In addition to the education and school meals that are already free of charge, things like textbooks, school transport, supplies, and other materials needed in learning, as well as final tests are all free of charge. Applying this reform is, however, not without criticism. Opponents argue that it is too expensive for the education providers, the municipalities, which already are struggling with decreased budgets. Others argue that more support is needed in comprehensive

education to help students in need as early as possible. In a few years' time, we can see real impacts of this reform.

In addition to extending the compulsory education, a two-year pre-primary education experiment was also adopted in December 2020. Pre-primary education is usually attended for one year before the start of compulsory education, i.e., at the age of six. In the two-year pre-primary education experiment, pre-primary education is given for two years before the start of compulsory education. The experiment is free of charge for families. Only part of the children aged five and six participate in this experiment between the years 2021 and 2024. The goal of this experiment is to enhance educational equity and develop the quality and impact of the pre-primary education. The two-year pre-primary education experiment aims to increase the number of five-year-old children to participate in early childhood and pre-primary education. Furthermore, it provides insights on the impact of the five-year pre-primary education on children's development and learning competences and social skills.

The basics of the two-year pre-primary education curriculum emphasise child-centred pedagogy based on play and explorative observation, as well as taking care of children's well-being. The curriculum has strengthened competences related to a sustainable lifestyle, and to the objectives of teaching for the development of multiliteracy and linguistic and mathematical thinking. The two years are expected to offer educational staff better opportunities to reach the targets of pre-primary education. The curriculum has been drawn up in such a way that the activities and teaching according to it constitute a continuum from early childhood education and care to comprehensive education. Each child's learning path should continue flexibly from one form of education to the next, and it should be based on children's individual needs.

The strategies and goals of pre-primary education described above are very ambitious and, unfortunately, in many cases come short to be materialised. The main reasons for that are the lack of funding in municipalities and the shortage of qualified personnel in the day-care centres. Linked to the overall economic downturn, this will be one of the most serious challenges for the governments and local school boards to come.

Importance of Educational Leaders and Leadership Education

The Finnish education system gives a lot of responsibility and autonomy to education providers. The success of education reforms depends to a large extent on the enactment of local work and its management. Curricula and the basics of degrees guide the contents of the education. Based on studies, the curriculum brings to practice the latest concepts of learning and teaching, and therefore aims to reform and develop the pedagogical thinking and practices of educational leaders and staff.

In such a far-reaching change as the present reforms or experiments in Finland are, the role of educational leaders in all tiers – schools, day-care centres, and provisions of education providers – is critical. The success of the reforms depends to a great extent on how they are enacted on the local level. The leading principle of education policy is that qualified and skilled staff and educational leaders are the guarantee for good education and learning in Finland. To ensure this, the government education policy report has several goals for the development of teacher and educational leader education. An important goal is also that educational leadership competence and education should be developed systematically and based on research. In fact, the present Government Programme (Finnish Government, 2019) and Government Education Policy Report (Finnish Government, 2021) are the first of their kind in Finland mentioning educational leadership as an essential key for the quality, well-being, and development of educational institutions.

Pedagogical competence, which promotes the realisation of educational values and basic tasks and equal conditions for learning and teaching, can be considered the most important competence of educational leaders and institutions. In building the pedagogical well-being, the participation and action of pupils, students and educational staff is to be strengthened. Educational leadership is to consist of reinforcing individual and communal cooperation. Through competent educational leaders, schools and day-care centres become learning organisations, which is also to improve the quality of education (Fonsén et. al., 2021).

Educational leaders' and staff's professional learning is supported by various school-, district-, and national-level projects or activities. At the school level, teachers are developers of the school community and school culture. Higher education institutions take part in the development work by having research and development projects where educational leaders' and staff's professional learning is supported through research-practice-partnership networks.

The Finnish Teacher Education Forum (2016–2022; all the universities and universities of applied sciences, which educate educational leaders and staff, are members of the forum) has been involved creating a Teacher Education Development Programme (TEDP). The design of the programme has been based on the latest research on learning.

The programme has been prepared in broad cooperation with almost one hundred representatives from teacher and educational leader education, the Trade Union of Education in Finland, the Association of Finnish Local and Regional Authorities, and the Teacher Student Union of Finland, as well as various researchers and practitioners. One of the objectives of the Teacher Education Development Programme is related to teachers' new creative skills. This also includes teachers' competence to take into use and benefit from new pedagogical innovations, such as digital learning environments. Finnish teachers are future-oriented and broad-based experts who create new pedagogical innovations and diversely utilise new learning environments and digital tools. Teachers should be able to develop, in addition to their own competence, their own working communities.

The main themes of the Teacher Education Development Programmes development process are as follows:

- Attractive teacher education with well-functioning structures, forecast, and successful student admissions
- Teachers' competence, and continuous and life-long professional learning.
- Strengthening teacher education through collaboration and networks.
- Developing educational institutions and communities with professional management and leadership.

As for educational leadership, there were four Ministry of Education key projects developing research-based educational leadership programmes 2019–2022, as presented in Chap. 4 of this book. In addition, the Ministry of Education launched a national educational leadership education development process to construct an educational entity and its curriculum for the systematic development of educational leadership education for Finland with a roadmap reaching to year 2035. The plan considers the systemic nature of the education system, the competences that educational leaders are required to have in various education forms and positions, and the continuation of the career paths of educational staff. The forthcoming educational leadership education concentrates on increasing overall leadership competencies, for example, pedagogical leadership as discussed in Chaps. 7 and 8. Special focus is set on strengthening educational equality, inclusion, gender awareness and sensitivity, and multi-professional collaboration. To achieve this, both the structures and funding models of educational leadership education are to be revised, too.

Changes in educational administration in the 1990s and 2000s have significantly affected educational leadership and job descriptions, competences, education, and qualifications of educational leaders. During this time, steering with norms was transformed into information steering expanding educational leaders' responsibilities and increasing the variation in their working environments both in relation to educational provider and unit level (Alava et al., 2012). These, in turn, have strengthened collaborative leadership in educational institutions. Collaborative leadership may be considered as one of the core characteristics of Finnish educational leadership (Jäppinen & Ciussi, 2016; Hellström et al., 2015).

Discussion

As we know from several countries, the solutions of educational administration have been rather contextual, bound to the historical situation and culture of each country. We also know that educational solutions do not travel well from one country to another. But we can learn a lot by following the different ways other countries have tried to solve the multifaceted problems in educational policy, governance, and leadership.

This chapter covers the changes and development that have taken place in Finland. What might be the most significant aspect here is the dramatic overhaul of the educational administration from top-down to bottom-up and then towards a more balanced administration.

The shift is described with the metaphor of the pendulum, which has moved from one extreme to the other and then backwards to its present state. The main lessons to learn from this change is to understand how profound the change has been and what radical modifications it has caused to the entire sector of educational policy, governance, and leadership.

According to Tian and Risku (2019), Finnish education policy has been following the overall societal policy throughout the independence of Finland. What has particularly advanced is how the various stakeholders in society are involved and included in the decision-making processes. This illustrates explicitly how ruling education in Finland has moved from government into governance both allowing the broad participation and having renewed the structures, processes, and practices for the participation. Finally, the latest Government Programme (Finnish Government, 2019) and Government Education Policy report (Finnish Government, 2021) recognise the nature and importance of educational leadership for Finnish education.

As rapid changes in the operating environment challenge the leadership and management of educational institutions, we consider it high time to recognise the collaborative nature and increasing importance of educational leadership for Finnish education. According to the leadership survey of the Finnish National Agency for Education, Finnish Education Employers, and Association of Finnish Municipalities (2020), three out of four leaders in the field of education feel that there have been a lot of changes in the operating environment over the past five years. Changes have been caused by the Covid-19 pandemic, by the increased use of digitalisation, as well as by educational reforms and changes at the local level in the organisation of education.

Only reforms that are perceived to be meaningful will succeed. The management of reform is not just a decision, but a process at different levels of the education system. It has been said that the Finnish education system is based on trust, and now this trust and leadership have been challenged during the pandemic at different levels of the system. In exceptional circumstances, the management of the crisis has become familiar to every educational leader.

The importance of information flow and communication has increased even further. Situations may have been changing daily, and anticipation and preparedness for changes have been difficult to foresee in advance. The relationship between well-being and learning has also taken on a major role during the pandemic. How is well-being managed in educational communities? We have inevitably had to learn new things and operating models by experimenting. According to the experience of educational leaders, strong and clear leadership has helped us to succeed.

The modern concept of learning challenges teachers and educational leaders to consider the dimensions of educational leadership, the construction of well-being and communality, and the support for the well-being of every child, pupil, and student. The leadership systems of Finnish educational institutions should be developed to meet the needs of modern educational institutions. It also remains to be considered how national objectives and reforms, as well as changes in society,

coincide with the current concept of educational leadership. All in all, education and educational leaders need strong support for their leadership work.

Related to the previous, we also need to rethink new roles for educational staff and leaders. We can argue that the role of educational staff and leaders is facing a major change all over the world: we can term this a paradigm change. Like argued by Alava et al. (2012), Kovalainen (2020), and Alava et al. (2021), the role of the teacher is more and more linked to the future; teachers must be viewed as creators of the future. In addition, the Finnish government Education Policy Account (2021) and the well-being services counties are renewing the mission of educational institutions in Finland. They will carry increasing responsibility for the well-being of their local communities, and their staff will all be educational leaders leading multi-professional teams for this purpose. These new challenges mean much more than the traditional role of the teacher – teaching a class or a subject for a certain number of hours per week. This leads to the need to evaluate the entire work contract and salary system of teachers, and other educational staff and leaders.

And, if the work of teachers is shaping the future, then the teacher education departments and programmes at universities need to change. According to Alava (2016), these institutions need to be the educators and builders of future creators. This, in turn, is a great challenge for university professors and lecturers, because this has not been their orientation. Also, if the teachers are creators of the future, then at the day-care centre and at the school level, day-care centre and school leaders are people who lead the creation of the future, and at the education provider, regional, and national level, other educational leaders support those working in the day-care centres and schools. This calls for a major change in the orientation of educational staff and leaders, as well as a change in their competencies and skills (Alava, 2016). The next challenge, then, is to all those responsible for university programmes educating educational leaders; they need to transform their programmes so that they educate educational leaders who are creators of the future. And, finally, the ministries that guide and fund universities need to realise all the previous and support this renewal.

There remains one more final notion to include in this chapter. It is about how to meet the future in educational policy, governance, and leadership. The Finnish way at least since the national core curriculum in 1994 has been that of experimenting and not knowing the results of the experiments in advance. In their introduction for the investigation for the future municipality in Finland, Nyholm et al. (2017) present this research- and experiment-based future orientation of Finnish education policy, governance, and leadership from various perspectives. In their chapter in the same book, Pakarinen and Erkkilä (2017) argue that we must abandon planning culture and replace it with an experimenting one. That Finland is no longer uniform but diverse attempting to meet the dynamic and complex operational environment proactively with research and experiments resulting in a variety of contextual solutions forming the overall Finnish education policy, governance, and leadership. This research, experimenting and diversity, we also hope this book can present.

PostScript

As a final remark in this chapter – using the notion of inadequacies – we can state that there is a main problem in the Finnish society that deals with all the main areas of society: public policy, social policy, educational policy and governance, and educational leadership, all seem to operate rather isolated from each other. There is a need to synchronise all of them.

Second, at the time of finalizing this chapter, a new and dramatic change was occurring. The war in Ukraine, the economic downturn in the whole Europe and the uncertainty all over the world had an effect in all aspects of societies and people's lives. The next period in the chain of long cycles is clearly on the way with no clear trajectory at sight. However, the writers of this chapter firmly believe that whatever the results and conclusions of the present turmoil will be, education in all its forms will be a solid base and foundation for societies to come.

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