



OPETUSMINISTERIÖ
Undervisningsministeriet

Skills and Abilymbics Competitions in relation to Finnish Education Policy

Competitions for All – International
Abilymbics Conference

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Education policy in Finland (1)

- Finnish education policy stresses
 - quality
 - efficiency
 - equity
 - internationalism.
- The overall lines of Finnish education policy are in line with the EU Lisbon strategy.
- Parliament passes legislation concerning education and research and determines the basic lines of education policy.
- The Government and the Ministry of Education, as part of it, are responsible for preparing and implementing education policy.
- The Government reports on education to the Parliament every other year.
- The Ministry of Education is responsible for education financed from the state budget.

Education policy in Finland (2)

- The Government adopts a Development Plan for education and research every four years based on the objectives set for education policy in the Government Programme.
- The Development Plan forms the political basis for the development and reform of education in the coming years.
- Changes in the coalitions in the Government do not cause any major changes in the long-term aims.
- Social partners are strongly involved in the process of preparation of the Development Plan, especially via the national education and training committees.

Challenges of Vocational Education and Training (VET) (1)

The Finnish VET is responsible for

- preparing students for transferring into the labour market or from one profession into other (strong vocational skills according to the requirements of working life)
- providing students with knowledge, skills and competences they need to operate actively in work and society (lifelong learning, updating and deepening of knowledge, skills and competences)
- improving the competitiveness and innovations of trades (economic growth and employment)
- qualifying students for further studies, especially to polytechnics, and for lifelong learning
- meeting the individual learning needs of students (from vocational top excellence to special education, from young to more mature individuals)
- preventing social exclusion and enhancing the cohesion of society.

Challenges of VET (2)

- In the near future VET will face many challenges due to changes in the operational environment.
- These challenges include
 - changes in the industrial and occupational structures
 - changes in professions and the contents of professions
 - increasing occupational mobility
 - more demanding and also more individual skills requirements
 - global environmental threats, particularly climate change (sustainable development, new business opportunities)
 - demographic change and polarization
 - problems to ensure the adequate supply of skilled labour
 - increasing learning in the work place
 - deepening internationalization
 - rapid technological changes
 - expanding prevention of social exclusion.

Excellence in education

- Excellence in education is generally associated with higher education and research.
- A focus on fostering excellence also in VET has emerged in Finland in the last few years.
- In addition to a solid basis knowledge, skills and competences the labour market needs professional excellence.
- Strong vocational skills are essential in the efficient utilisation of the latest innovations in production.
- VET providers have an increasing role in developing business and working life and in the service sector.
- The national (Taitaja 9, Taitaja and TaitajaPLUS) and international (EuroSkills, WorldSkills and Abilymbics) skills competitions are seen as valuable tools to support the development of vocational excellence and the whole vocational education.

Skills competitions are promoted nationally because they (1)

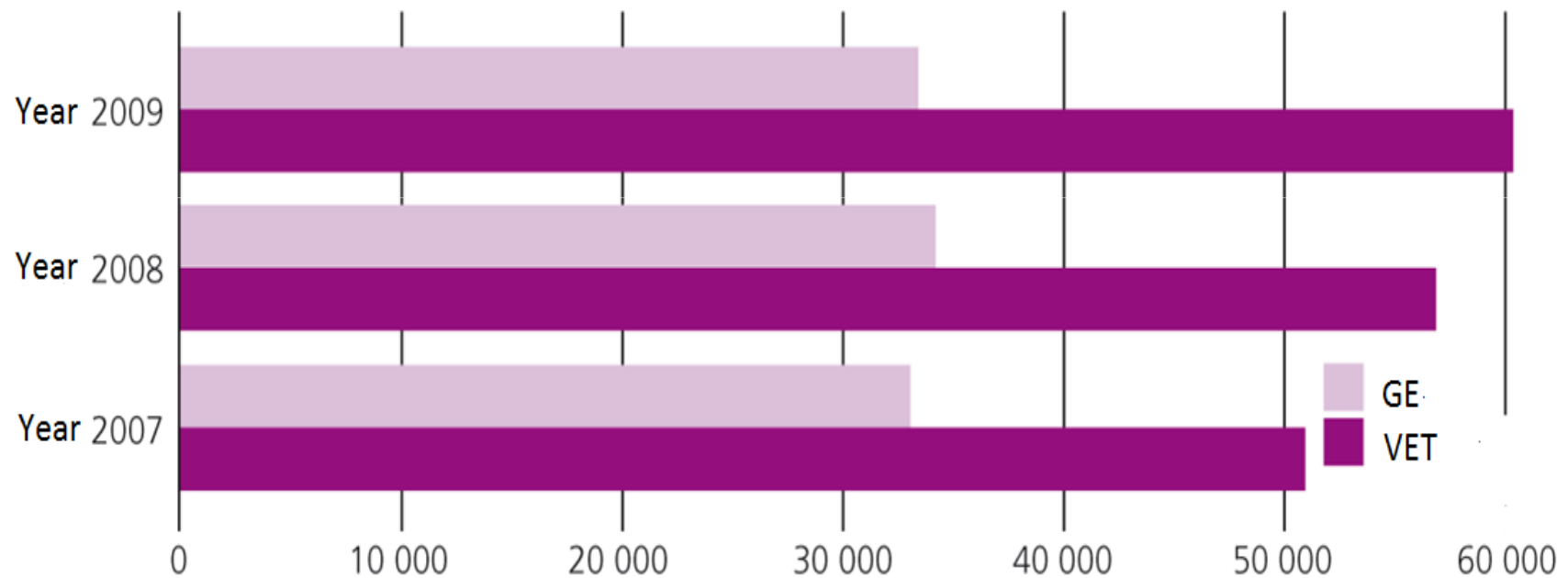
- make known the various opportunities VET offers to all kind of students
- offer information on vocational qualifications and professions
- emphasize the importance of VET and vocational skills to the society, working life and individuals
- enhance public understanding on the vocational abilities of students with special needs
- bring out the vocational expertise and vocational professionals
- support to carry out educational reforms
- help to find ways to further develop VET
- make use of the experience gained from training top performers in developing the teaching of other students, also special groups
- promote cooperation between education and working life and between VET institutions
- from cooperation networks on national and international level
- increase the internationalisation and working life orientation of VET
- strengthen mutual learning

Skills competitions are promoted nationally because they (2)

- encourage young people to improve their professional and entrepreneurial skills
- offer young people a way to develop into experts in their own professions
- offer everyone involved in the competitions a chance to develop their vocational competence and to operate in an training network of top excellence
- offer to the organisations taking part an opportunity to indicate top excellence, product and service innovations and to gain appreciation and visibility to organisations and their products
- promote the employment of students, also those with special needs
- help to secure the availability of qualified work force and enhance the competitiveness of companies
- improve the quality of vocational education
- increases attractiveness and appreciation of VET.

The attractiveness of VET in Finland

Applicants for general and vocational upper secondary education 2007 -2009



After basic education school-leavers

