

Can education change the world? Educational eco-systems for equity and quality of learning

The presentation will draw a comprehensive picture of the foundations necessary for sustainable change through education. It also provides examples of the best practices in the Finnish educational system. The presentation highlights the importance of **system-wide structures** that provide people with equal opportunities for education and high-quality learning. The system-wide approach ensures frames for opportunities to different human beings to learn and develop throughout their life-course. The presentation introduces the educational eco-system concept which includes the idea that educational systems have many **sub-systems**, such as **curriculum development processes, quality assurance systems, strategies for life-long learning, and teacher education systems**. They must be interconnected to create real, functioning structures for different learning paths. In addition, these structures must be **connected to other sectors in society, particularly the healthcare, housing, business, and working life sectors**. Although education provides the foundations for a nation's sustainable development, education cannot create a future on its own. Connections with other system-level actors are a precondition for sustainability.

Education can change the world more human and empower individuals in their lives by connecting different system structures at the macro level. The interconnectedness of different parts must also occur at the **meso- or mid-levels, which consist of organizational structures and social practices in educational institutions and communities**. In educational institutions, commitment to principles that promote equality and high-quality learning are key factors for providing **inclusive and lifelong learning opportunities for all learners**. Eco-systems also cross borders. Connections between formal and informal learning environments are becoming resources for institutions and individuals, and technological tools and **digital learning environments** are more and more crucial for equitable and quality learning. Education also has **micro-level ecosystems** in which **individuals** are learning and creating knowledge through their prior knowledge, skills, attitudes, and cultural backgrounds. Students' motivation and engagement as well as their learning outcomes often depend on system-level factors and the institutional teaching and learning culture.