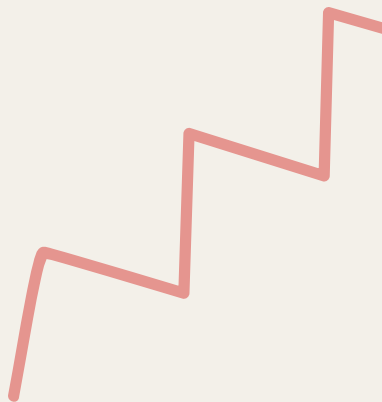


# Cultural heritage as a source of strength in a time of change

The Strategy of the Association of  
Cultural Heritage Education in Finland  
2022–2030



Association of  
Cultural Heritage  
Education in Finland

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# Foreword

The association's board of directors started the association's strategy work by appointing a strategy working group to prepare the strategy on 30 March 2021. This is the association's third strategy. The previous strategy periods were 2013–2016 and 2017–2021.

Anna-Maija Halme, Mari Immonen, Riitta Korhonen, Suvi Kuikka and Eeva Snellman were appointed to the working group from the membership, Executive Director Hanna Lämsä and Specialist Ira Vihreälehto from the staff, and Terhi Pietiläinen and Milla Öystilä from the board. Members interested in the Strategy Group were sought through a separate questionnaire addressed to all members.

The working group started working with Annika Kabata, a master's degree student at the HUMAK University of Applied Sciences, in August 2021. Kabata contributed to the design and implementation of the strategy process. Kabata's tasks included designing and compiling data for an online survey and participatory strategy workshops, and preparing a monitoring and evaluation model for the strategy. Kabata is preparing a thesis on the strategy process as part of her studies in community education. Annika Kabata and Hanna Lämsä acted as presenters and secretaries of the Strategy Group.

The Strategy Group met 9 times between 28 April 2021 and 26 April 2022. A joint strategy workshop for the group was held on 29 January 2022. In addition to the working group meetings, the pairs of working group members organised meetings to plan the workshops and work on the strategy text. Two smaller group meetings to finalise the strategy text were also held in April 2022. Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, the working group met only remotely.

All members of the working group were actively involved in the different stages of the strategy's development; planning the

strategy process and the strategy itself, organising workshops and consultations, analysing the material, and producing, editing and commenting on the text.

In addition to an online survey sent to partners (approx. 450 recipients / 42 responses), the working group organised three strategy workshops for members, staff and the board in autumn 2021 (approx. 20 participants in total). In addition, personal interviews with experts were conducted (4 interviews). The working group organised a commenting round on the strategy for children and young people in spring 2022, to which eight history club members responded.

The board discussed the first draft of the strategy at its meeting on 23 February 2022 and the association's staff had the opportunity to comment on the different versions of the strategy in February-April 2022.

At its meeting on 21 April 2022, the board approved the strategy to be presented to the membership at the spring meeting on 11 May 2022.

The aim is for the new strategy to become both a practical tool to support the development of the association's activities and a catalyst for strategic and societal debate on cultural heritage education. To this end, the board and the staff will monitor and evaluate the effectiveness

of the strategy, together with members, children and young people and other stakeholders.

A summary of the laws, strategies and agreements that are relevant to the association's activities is attached to the online version of the strategy.

**The aim is for the new strategy to become both a practical tool to support the development of the association's activities and a catalyst for strategic and societal debate on cultural heritage education.**

# Description of the operating environment

By 2015, the world was a better place by many measures.<sup>1</sup> However, at the time of writing this strategy, the approach to the future is influenced by both Russia's invasion of Ukraine and the acceleration of climate change.<sup>2</sup>

## The importance of cultural literacy and the misrepresentation of cultural heritage

Around the world, the role of democracy has been challenged for many years. The attack on an independent state has undermined faith in the prospects for peace and democracy. This change is visible in the lives of children, young people and adults and is reflected in feelings of insecurity.

The war in Ukraine has been a reminder of how cultural heritage is used to justify violence and confrontation between different groups of people. Behind these efforts to gain power are factual interpretations of cultural heritage, distortions of history and fake news. The role of the cultural heritage sector is to monitor how cultural heritage is presented and interpreted and to work actively to strengthen cultural literacy.

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1 Extreme poverty was halved and reduced everywhere. More than 90% of school-age boys and girls in developing countries go to school. The number of deaths from complications of pregnancy or childbirth fell by 45% and infant mortality halved by 2015. In addition, statistics show that wars in which at least 1,000 people die each year have fallen by 78% since 1988. Statistics Finland: [https://www.stat.fi/artikkelit/2011/art\\_2011-12-21\\_004.html](https://www.stat.fi/artikkelit/2011/art_2011-12-21_004.html))

2 Heat waves, droughts and forest fires are becoming more common around the world, affecting all natural ecosystems. In addition, food and water security have deteriorated. IPCC (Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change) report published on 24 February 2022 <https://ym.fi/-/ipcc-n-raportti-ilmastonmuutos-on-vaikuttanut-vakavalla-tavalla-luontoon-ja-ihmisiin-vaikutukset-jakautuvat-epatasaisesti>.

## Migration and cultural heritage diversity

The preservation of our diverse cultural heritage is affected by migration caused by wars, conflicts, climate change and structural change. Supporting the equal practice of a living cultural heritage that is meaningful to the individual supports people to build their identity and participate fully in their new community.

Cultural heritage has been and still is used to build a sense of nationalism and a narrow national identity. Finnish culture is diverse and constantly changing as a result of cultural influences and currents. Marginalised and silenced heritages and the related struggles of identity, voice, recognition and ownership are central to the debate on cultural heritage. Each generation wants to form its own relationship with its cultural heritage. The debate on cultural values and ideals continues.

Each of us is not only a representative of our culture, but we have multiple identities. Cultural continuity is necessary for the balanced growth and holistic well-being and creativity of children and adolescents. Solutions must be found to ensure the safe growth and development of children and adolescents in the midst of change.

Cultural heritage is not only beautiful and touching, but also difficult and silenced. Every family, region and country has its own hero and anti-hero traditions and stories. The potential of cultural heritage as a unifying force must be further strengthened, while, at the same time, rejecting its use as a tool of exclusion. Cultural heritage is the common capital of humanity, from which everyone has the right to learn and be inspired.

### Children, adolescents and the future

Young people want to participate and contribute to solving societal problems and solutions must be found together.<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>3</sup> Research on climate anxiety among children and adolescents has shown that environmental anxiety has



In Finland, the divide between well and poorly-off children deepened further during the Covid pandemic. Most children and young people are doing well. Remote learning highlighted different learning styles and the diversity of children and adolescents and their different backgrounds.

Vulnerable children and adolescents, in particular, experienced a deepening learning loss, increased mental health problems and difficulties in maintaining and building social networks. Overall, the number of mental health problems among children and adolescents has increased significantly in recent years.<sup>4</sup>

## Equal participation

Inequality is also linked to cultural heritage and intergenerational heritage. Child poverty in Finland is internationally low, but it tripled between 1995 and 2007 and has continued to rise<sup>5</sup>. Marginalisation and the experience of exclusion not only cause human suffering, but they also erode trust and expose people to disinformation and radicalisation.

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increased among children and adolescents (Pekkarinen & Tuukkanen [eds] 2020), but not all children and adolescents experience it (Piispa & Pihkala 2020). Increased feelings about the environment and climate can be seen as a natural consequence of increased environmental awareness. <https://www.ymparistoahdistus.fi/artikkelit/lasten-ja-nuorten-ymparistoahdistus-tuoreen-tutkimuksen-valossa/>

4 Several sources, including "Nuorten mielenterveyden häiriöiden kasvu on hätähuuto yhteiskunnan muutoksesta", TAYS 10 February 2020: [https://www.tays.fi/fi-fi/Nuorten\\_mielenterveyden\\_hairioiden\\_kasvu\(102911\)](https://www.tays.fi/fi-fi/Nuorten_mielenterveyden_hairioiden_kasvu(102911)) According to the results of the School Health Survey conducted in spring 2021, anxiety and loneliness experienced by girls in 8th and 9th grades of primary school in particular have increased significantly. The results also show the effect of the Covid pandemic period. School Health Survey 2021: <https://thl.fi/fi/tutkimus-ja-kehittaminen/tutkimukset-ja-hankkeet/kouluterveyskysely>

5 Child poverty has increased by 22% between 2017 and 2021. Karvonen, Sakari, Salmi, Minna: Lapsiköyhyys Suomessa 2010-luvulla, THL 2016, and Kai Kaila, Sixten Korkman, Taina Laajasalo, Anne Patana, Tiina Ristikari: "Köyhyys aiheuttaa lapsille toksista stressiä", Helsingin Sanomat 3 March 2019 (<https://www.hs.fi/sunnuntai/art-200006019428.html>).

Socio-economic status affects the way both adults and children engage in and consume arts and culture.<sup>6</sup> The concept of cultural heritage is still linked in the minds of the general public to higher culture and academic education. Recognition and appreciation of one's own life, everyday life, the local environment and nearby culture as cultural heritage is still limited<sup>7</sup>.

## Digitalisation

Technological inventions and new applications, and the development of information technology skills and digitalisation are increasing the opportunities for cultural heritage education. The promotion and use of existing digital cultural heritage resources, such as Finna and Europeanana, will increase.

Technology offers opportunities for the creativity and authorship of children in interpreting or creating new cultural heritage. Artificial intelligence and robotics will be part of everyday learning, working and interacting. Questions of ethics and humanity must be placed at the heart of the debate.

The isolation of the Covid period brought into focus the importance of the relationship with nature and the local environment, as well as the local region as a tourist destination, among other things.<sup>8</sup> In the

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6 Af Ursin, Pia, 2016, Art as Public Service: Strategic Steps towards Equality, Näkökulmia kansalliseen lapsistrategiaan (Eeva Anttila, Marja-Leena Juntunen 2018) <https://okm.fi/documents/1410845/12479361/04+Eeva+Anttila+Taideyliopisto.pdf>

7 Cultural Heritage Barometers 2017 and 2021: <https://www.museovirasto.fi/fi/palvelut-ja-ohjeet/julkaisut/kulttuuriperintobarometri>

8 According to the Nature Relationship Barometer, the impact of the Covid pandemic on the relationship with nature is most pronounced among people under 25: compared to 2019, young people attached more importance to nature, were more active in nature and were more concerned about the state of nature. <https://www.mdi.fi/content/uploads/Luontosuhdebarometri-2020-tulokset.pdf>. Also Sandell, Markku: Koronakevät muutti suomalaisten luontosuhdetta myönteisemmäksi, mutta harva on huolestunut luonnon yksipuolistumisesta, YLE 26 June 2020 (<https://yle.fi/uutiset/3-11418159>.) See also the Cultural Heritage Barometer (2021), which shows that people consider the natural environment to be the most important cultural heritage to preserve.



future, there is a need to promote the responsible and sustainable commercial exploitation of cultural heritage as part of the creative economy. Opportunities to work and interact in several places and to engage in activities such as culture and sport increased. There was an increased awareness of our dependence on technology and how it works in everything we do.

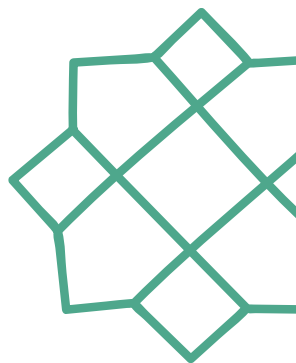
## **Changes at national level**

Important changes for national cultural heritage policy include the development of a Cultural Heritage Strategy in the 2019 Government Programme, the creation of well-being services counties and European initiatives and programmes.

As a result of the creation of well-being services counties, the activities of municipalities will focus on early childhood education, schools, culture and leisure. The role of education services in supporting the well-being of citizens and the vitality of the municipality will be strengthened.

For the association, increasing the understanding and appreciation of cultural heritage by municipalities is key. The history and diversity of regions, municipalities and cities must be seen and exploited. Opening up cooperation and developing new practices in collaboration with the cultural, educational, youth work and environmental sectors requires an active approach, in which the association's members also play an important role.

Cultural heritage supports good and meaningful lives, social cohesion, democracy, human rights and a sustainable future. Cultural heritage education strengthens the sense of participation and involvement, active citizenship and hopefulness of children and young people, and reinforces key skills for the future.



## **Vision**

Children and young people feel that they are part of society as influential actors and that their voices are heard. Children and young people can experience, wonder, feel, appreciate and create cultural heritage in their everyday lives. The cultural rights of children and young people are reflected in research, in various policy areas and in the activities of various organisations, as well as in the growth of the association's resources, visibility and activities.

## **Mission statement**

The association strengthens cultural heritage inclusion and competence and supports the growth, well-being and agency of children and young people. Through cultural heritage education, the association builds a sustainable, culturally diverse, intergenerational and equal society and world.

As a learning expert organisation, the Association of Cultural Heritage Education in Finland is renewing itself and networking nationally, locally and internationally. The association responds to change and shares the results of its work in an open, consistent and clear manner.



# Values

## Education

For us, education is about awareness, knowledge management and a wide range of skills for action and empathy. Education is seeing reality and phenomena from different perspectives. Education includes the ability to think creatively and actively contribute.

An educated person understands the importance of nature for humanity and the emergence of culture and is prepared to work to preserve biodiversity.

An educated person recognises their limitations and understands the need for continuous learning. Ancora imparo – I am still learning, as the Italian master Michelangelo is told to have said on his deathbed.

## Sensitivity

Sensitivity means an investigative approach, a thirst for knowledge and an open curiosity about the phenomena of our time. It means the ability to respond to changing trends in a proactive, reflective and perceptive way.

Sensitivity requires the courage to recognise one's own feelings and emotions and to act on them. Sensitivity is the ability to listen, to hear, to be present and to understand even when things are different.

Interaction between people requires sensitivity, which is also empowering, and strengthens mutual understanding.

## Hopefulness

Hopefulness comes from working together, sharing experiences and enabling and strengthening a sense of inclusion among all people.

Culture, and cultural heritage in particular, is a constructive and sustaining force for both individuals and society. It builds bridges between people and cultures and provides resilience in the face of change.

# Themes

## **1. A well-known and recognised expert influencer**

- We support the work of those involved in education and training. We produce learning materials, provide and develop training, methods and operating models in cooperation with national and international partners, and contribute to the development of supporting structures (e.g. the Annual Clock of Culture, cultural education plans and the Finnish Model of Recreation).
- We influence curriculum and qualification criteria, government programmes and other key documents and processes through our opinions and expertise.
- We monitor and contribute to the development of research in the field of cultural heritage and education, cultural, educational, youth, environmental and sustainable development policies, and the activities of civil society, both in Finland and internationally.
- We support the functioning of a culturally diverse society. We support the integration of immigrants by promoting both knowledge and understanding of the new local cultural heritage and by strengthening intercultural dialogue.

## **2. Involved in the lives of children and young people**

- Cultural heritage learning is based on the experience, agency and participation of children and young people. It supports creativity and critical thinking and the development of a relationship with the environment.
- We target, in particular, those areas and schools, as well as children and young people, who have fewer opportunities to participate in existing provision, or have limited access to it.
- We will strengthen the role of cultural heritage education as part of preventive mental health work. We support the resilience and space for growing of children and young people by focusing on the development of emotional skills, identity and self-esteem, a sense of belonging, inclusion and continuity, and a sense of

meaning. We promote the use of creative and arts-based methods in cultural heritage education.

- We support the visibility and inclusion of children and young people's diversity in society.

### **3. Network builder and project operator**

- We work in a network with experts and organisations in the fields of cultural heritage, environment, education and training, both in Finland and internationally. We are open to new partners and reach new target groups.
- During the strategy period, we will focus, in particular, on large-scale, national and international development projects that build on the high-quality work already done and implement our strategic objectives. The results will be used for expert and advocacy work, communication and stakeholder cooperation.

### **4. An open, active and effective communicator**

- We communicate our work and its results openly, actively and strategically to different target groups, using up-to-date communication channels and tools.
- We will increase communication resources to raise awareness and access to information on cultural heritage education and to promote dialogue and debate.
- We will redesign the association's visual identity and website.

### **5. Well-being staff – a competent organisation**

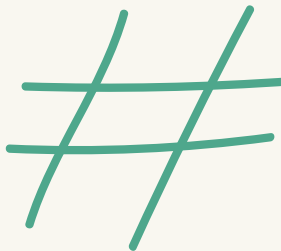
- We care about well-being at work. We will monitor and develop it systematically.
- We support on-the-job learning and training.
- We will ensure that the skills of both staff and board members are adequate and relevant to the achievement of our strategic objectives.
- We will strengthen the role of members in the association's activities.
- We will improve our feedback processes and the evaluation of our effectiveness.

# Monitoring and evaluation

The board and the staff will monitor the strategy and evaluate its effectiveness as part of the annual planning and development of the association's activities. The board and the staff are also responsible for updating the strategy as necessary to maintain it as a living and up-to-date tool for work.

The strategic debate and evaluation will be conducted together with the members, children and young people and other stakeholders. The strategy will be reviewed, for example, as part of development projects and in separate workshops and events.

A separate model for monitoring and evaluating the strategy will be created to support the work of the board and the staff. The model includes measures and their timing for the strategy period.



# What is cultural heritage education

Cultural heritage education is a goal-oriented activity that supports the growth and development of children and adolescents by strengthening their cultural competences and ensuring their inclusion. The aim is to provide everyone with cultural literacy: the knowledge, skills and abilities to identify, define, evaluate, manage and protect cultural heritage and to create new cultural heritage.

Cultural heritage education strengthens the voice of children and young people in the heritage process by supporting identity building, self-esteem, emotional skills and creativity, participation and empowerment, critical thinking and observation.

The multi-disciplinary exploration of children and adolescent of their own cultural heritage and the cultural phenomena of humanity as a whole, together with others, broadens their understanding of cultural diversity and strengthens intercultural dialogue. Cultural heritage education strengthens the ability of children and young people to understand the importance of culture for individuals, communities and societies: for overall well-being, sustainability and democracy. It also strengthens the ability to identify silent and difficult cultural heritage and the use of cultural heritage to promote political or other interests. The ability to identify and the courage to dismantle oppressive and discriminatory structures is growing.

Cultural heritage education teaches culturally sustainable development and overall sustainability skills. It strengthens the ability to openly and critically evaluate past solutions and the cultural ideals, values and societal developments that underpin them. Cultural heritage education strengthens the ability to make responsible, fair and ecologically sustainable choices for the future.

**Cultural heritage** is the result of human activity and interaction with the environment. It is about changing values, beliefs, knowledge, skills and traditions. Cultural heritage can be tangible, intangible or digital. Cultural heritage is renewed, preserved and passed on to future generations.

Cultural heritage as a resource for a sustainable future and a good life. Proposal for a cultural heritage strategy 2022–2030.

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[kulttuuriperintokasvatus.fi](http://kulttuuriperintokasvatus.fi)

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