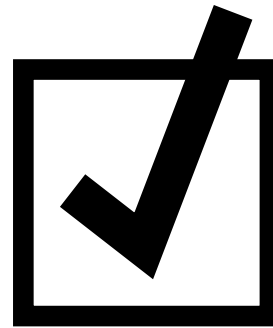
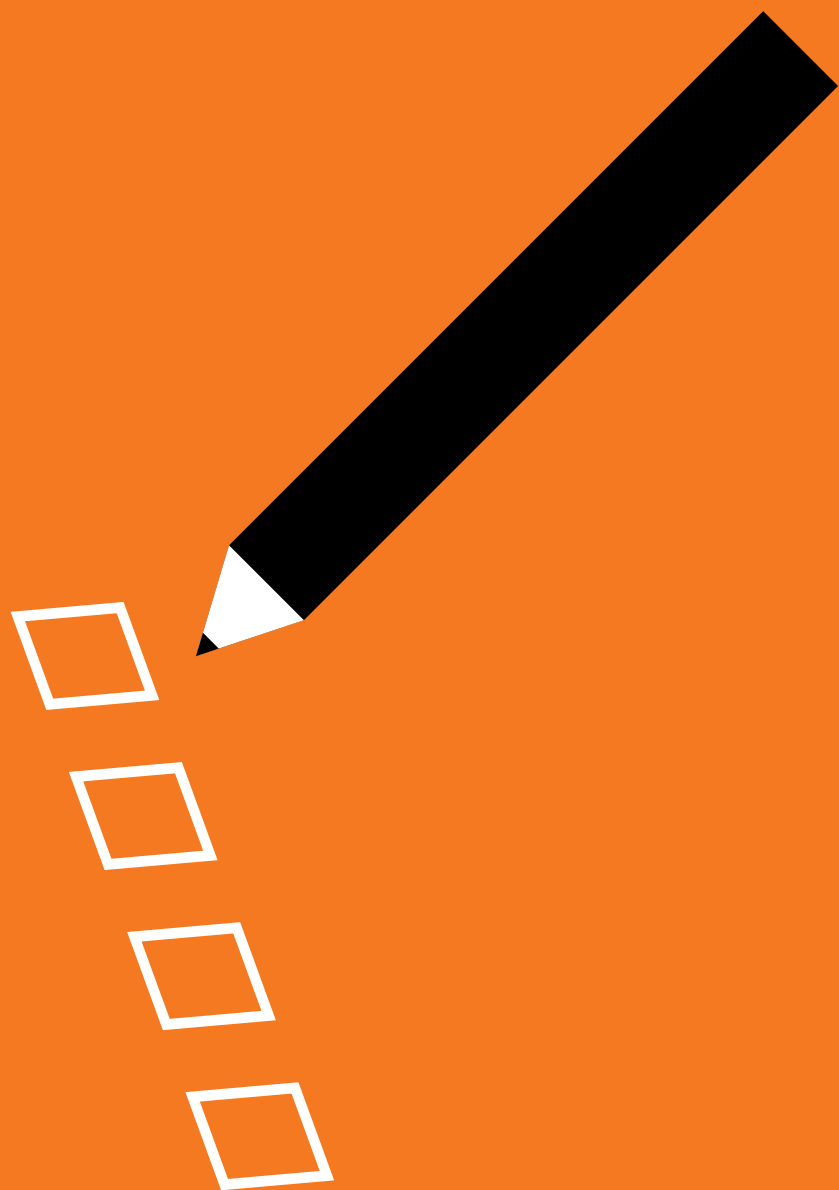


Update your learning material!

Towards active global citizenship





Test how well your learning materials incorporate the themes of global citizenship education

The national foundations for curricula in Finland emphasise human rights education, the adoption of sustainable lifestyles and active global citizenship in accordance with the UN Sustainable Development Goals. Additionally, the educational approach of schools is guided by the Non-Discrimination Act and the Act on Equality between Women and Men. These important areas of emphasis shall be reflected in all levels of the everyday work and operational culture of schools.

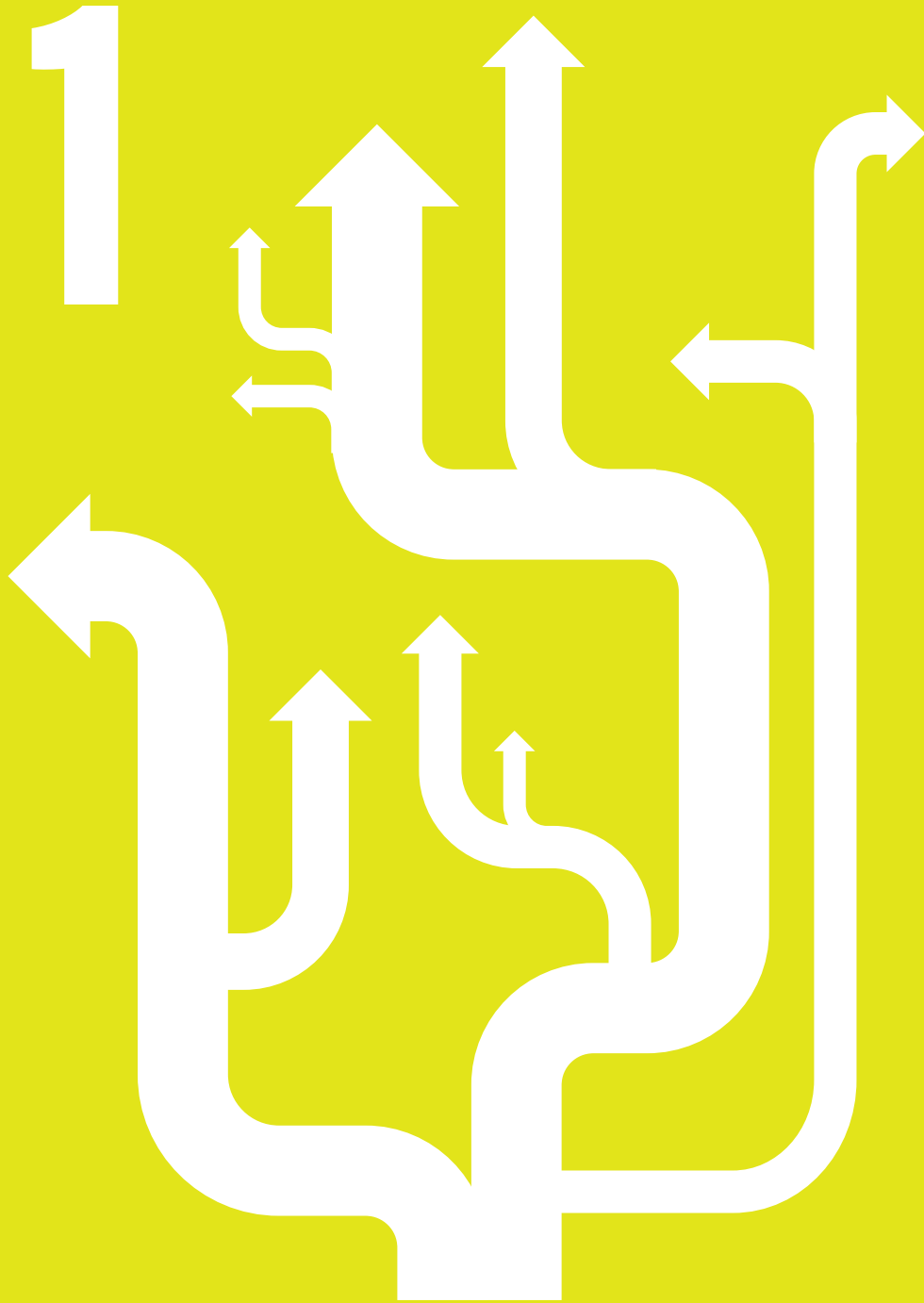
Learning materials are a vital aspect of this as well, and those who create the learning materials play a key role in conveying the emphases of the curriculum to classrooms.

This guide is intended for anyone who creates learning materials for educational use. The checklist included in the guide will enable you to easily check whether your learning material promotes the emphases of the curricula and supports the active global citizenship of students.

Test your own material against the checklist - and make changes as needed!

Keep in mind that you can always ask for more information or tips on developing your learning material with a global citizenship perspective from the Global Citizenship Education Network of CSOs coordinated by Fingo. You can learn more about the activities of the network and the materials produced by its organisations at www.gloaalikasvatus.fi.





Choices are power

The learning material both describes the current society and world and influences them towards a desired direction. The content of learning materials will affect the thoughts, emotions and activities of any students who use them.

The authors of the learning material exercise power when making their content choices, so it is important for them to be aware of their reasoning and the potential impacts of their choices. Choices related to the themes, concepts, examples, images and perspectives of the learning material must support the objectives of the national curriculum and its emphases.

- I will make conscious and educated choices regarding the content of the learning material** and consider the image they convey regarding society, the world and people.
- I will present topics from as diverse a perspective as possible.**
- I will remember that I am exercising power**, for example, in my choices of words and definition of concepts.
- I will take into account the diverse users of the learning material and the fact that the topics discussed may affect the users of the learning material on a personal level.** I will ensure that the material does not violate anyone's human dignity or discriminate against them.

Tip:

Think about your own position and privileges as well as the perspectives of different groups of people.

2



Are human rights the basis of the learning material?

Human rights belong to all people in the world. They have been defined in international human rights treaties to which Finland is committed. At the core of human rights is the idea of the equality and inviolability of human dignity. The purpose of human rights is to secure the basic conditions for a life worth living.

Human rights are an integral part of all aspects of the curriculum, both in terms of its value base, subjects and operating culture. The aim is to apply a human rights-based approach to all activities of the school community as a whole.

Respect for and advancement of human rights are among the statutory tasks of schools, and they must be supported by the learning material used.

- I will increase students' knowledge of human rights.** I will highlight, for example, the content of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and human rights treaties, the past and current situation regarding human rights and the activities of those organisations working to defend human rights.
- I will cover the rights of different groups of people in an equal manner.** I will ensure that the material discusses, in particular, the rights of those who are particularly vulnerable or at risk of exclusion.
- I will promote the comprehensive implementation of human rights and children's rights** at school by, for example, supporting students' participation in the preparation of the learning material and promoting the importance of hearing their perspectives. I will ensure that the learning material offers students and the school community opportunities to act for the advancement of human rights.

3



Does the material promote equality?

The Non-Discrimination Act and Act on Equality between Women and Men oblige schools to promote equality and draft their own school-specific plan. Equality will only become true if they are actively incorporated in all interactions and activities of the school.

The learning material must support the implementation of equality in a comprehensive manner in its content, images, examples and exercises. It should also respect the diversity of members of the school community and encourage people to engage respectfully with one another to ensure that no one is ignored or experiences discrimination.

- I will increase awareness of diversity and actively break down stereotypes and narrow-minded-social norms** through the inclusion of a diverse range of people with all types of characteristics. I will ensure that the learning material does not reinforce stereotypes or portray individual people or groups of people in a biased way. I will develop material that includes characters, people and role models with which many students can identify.
- I will describe people in a respectful way and as active participants** in their own lives and society. I will help facilitate an atmosphere in which people can express themselves through their own diverse identities and roles. I will pay particular attention to the way in which I portray people who are in a vulnerable position or at risk of discrimination without exaggerating their distress or making them passive objects of others' actions.

3

jatkuu

- I will, as appropriate, bring attention to the history and impacts of colonialism,** particularly when dealing with relations between nations and cultures. I will not, directly or indirectly, portray Finland, Europe or the West as being better than or superior to others.
- I will use diverse examples that positively reflect gender diversity.** I will advance gender equality by ensuring that the material does not reinforce a biased view of different genders and expressions of gender.
- I will not racialise any persons included in the learning material.** I will avoid attaching assumptions, stereotypes and prejudices to people based on, for example, their skin colour or ethnic background. I will endeavour to mitigate racism through the choices I make for the material.
- I will make language-conscious choices in the learning material.** I will take into account the linguistic diversity, varied linguistic skills and backgrounds of students. I will highlight different language skills and promote their use as part of the learning process.
- I will promote the accessibility of the learning material,** as far as possible by, for example, diversifying the ways in which tasks can be carried out or including easy language material.

Tips:

1. **Review the learning material from different perspectives.** How does it come across, for example, to a brown girl, a disabled boy or a non-binary young person? What changes could be made to the material to ensure that all people feel that they are being seen? Many times, it only requires minor changes in the use of language or imagery. Remember, when reviewing the material, to also recognise and question the assumptions and stereotypes that you may implicitly carry as part of your role.
2. **When describing a foreign culture using text or images, consider the following questions:**
 - What is my relationship with the country or people whose lives are being discussed in the learning material?
 - Is the text based on experienced and lived life, or is it based on my imagination or common perceptions of life in the place in question?
 - Have the representatives of that culture been heard as part of the preparation of the learning material or have they been given the opportunity to comment on the learning material?
 - From whose point of view have the issues or events been presented?
 - Who are portrayed as active parties and who as passive parties whose life events are the result of the actions of others?
 - What picture does the learning material give of the people described, their lives and their homeland?

4



Does the learning material include a focus on sustainable lifestyles?

School is a key actor in building a sustainable future. In accordance with the Finnish curriculum, teaching must promote a sustainable way of life and the UN Sustainable Development Goals (Agenda 2030).

The implementation of sustainable development requires consideration for its social, economic, cultural and ecological dimensions and the links between those dimensions.

Sustainable development is not an individual subject area in teaching but, rather, must be consistently integrated into all school activities and aspects of teaching.

- I will help students to perceive global phenomena and their manifestations** in their own lives, different communities and society.
- I will encourage students to examine these phenomena in depth and diversely and to seek links** between different subjects in accordance with the curriculum.
- I will consider the Earth's ecological carrying capacity and climate change in the learning material.** I will encourage students to adopt a sustainable lifestyle and to critically examine the consumer-centred economic system.

4

jatkuu

- Through my choice of perspectives, I will advance ecosocial education** by helping students to understand human dependence on a healthy environment and promoting well-being within the parameters of the Earth's carrying capacity and with respect for the diversity of nature.
- I will handle global issues, including conflicts and disagreements, in a way that advocates peace and advances human rights.** Peaceful coexistence is a precondition for the implementation of sustainable development.
- I will address global challenges in a solution-oriented way** that does not incite fear or threats.

Agenda 2030: Sustainable Development Goals



5



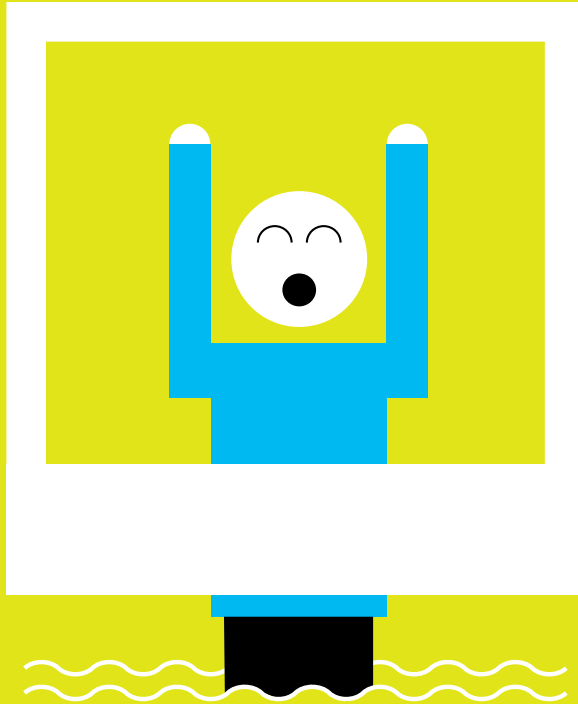
Does the material promote active citizenship?

The world keeps changing as a result of our actions and this should also be reflected in learning materials. The learning material should support students' growth towards active global citizenship and the building of a sustainable future in accordance with the curriculum.

It is important for students to view themselves as members of society in a global world, learn social impact skills at school, and gain experience from using those skills in real situations.

- I will encourage students to engage in active knowledge acquisition and critical thinking.** I will not oversimplify complex issues in the learning material.
- I will highlight different political agendas and the rationale behind them.** Differences of opinions are part of democracy and there must be space for them in education as well.
- I will encourage students to engage in active and respectful dialogue and to take responsibility within the limits of freedom of expression.** I will clearly state that freedom of expression does not justify discrimination, the defamation of others or incitement to violence.
- I will highlight the diverse and changing forms of participation and influence** facilitated by representative democracy and civil society.
- I will offer students opportunities to envision and work towards alternative sustainable futures.** I will strengthen future thinking and the belief that we can influence the direction of the future through our own actions.
- I will encourage students to enhance their creativity and problem-solving skills** to build a more sustainable society.

6



What do the images in the material convey?

Images and visual messages influence people's worldviews, opinions, attitudes and beliefs. They are also very memorable. Images can contribute to learning and the achievement of the objectives of the curriculum.

Image selections are never insignificant. Images always contain a variety of meanings and, alongside the text, can serve as a significant source of information. Illustrations also affect students in many different ways, including subconsciously. Therefore, it is essential to consider the types of images used in the learning material and how they are being used.

- I will produce texts and captions that support the understanding and interpretation of the image.** I am aware of the symbols included in the images and the many ways people can interpret them. I am aware of and will address the information that the chosen images include and that which is or has been excluded from them.
- I will select images for the material that are sufficiently diverse,** that do not reinforce stereotypes about the topic (culture, continent, event or situation) or the group of people being discussed.
- I will select images that present people in a dignified manner and with respect for diversity, and I will supply sufficient related information,** such as the shooting location, the names of the people featured in the image and the photographer's information. I will ensure that any images of minorities and groups at risk of discrimination, in particular, portray the subjects as active parties in their own lives.
- I will provide opportunities for students to deal with the emotions and thoughts that the chosen images evoke.** As far as possible, I will encourage students to reflect critically on the images used in the learning material or relayed by the media.

Tips:

Where can I get images? Organisations are happy to share their own image material for use in textbooks. Don't hesitate to ask! You can request quality photos from, for example, the following organisations: Plan International Finland, UN Association of Finland, Amnesty, Seta and UNICEF.

Images are also available from international image banks, for example:

www.media.un.org/photo/en/

www.unhcr.org/media-centre.html.

UNICEF's image bank: <https://weshare.unicef.org/>





Update your learning material! is a guide prepared by CSOs in the Finnish Global Citizenship Education Network for textbook authors, teachers and anyone looking to promote active global citizenship through the learning materials. The checklist included in this guide is the result of years of collaboration with textbook publishers and teachers, as well as the desire of organisations to produce quality learning materials. The Global Citizenship Education Network also provides educators with support for the implementation of global citizenship education in accordance with the national curriculum.

The guide was originally published in 2018 and has been updated in 2021 and 2024. The updating of the guide was carried out by Sanni Palomäki.

The following Finnish CSOs (in the Finnish Global Citizenship Education Network) participated in creating this checklist:

Amnesty International, Pro Ethical Trade Finland, The Finnish League for Human Rights, Fingo, Friends of the Earth Finland, Finnish Youth Cooperation Allianssi, Youth Academy, Development Centre Opinkirjo, Plan International Finland, Peace Education Institute, Seta, Felm, Finnish Red Cross, Unicef Finland, UNA Finland, Taksvärkki, and WWF Finland.



GLBAALIKASVATUS

www.gloaalikasvatus.fi

Gloaalikasvatusverkostoa koordinoi

fingo