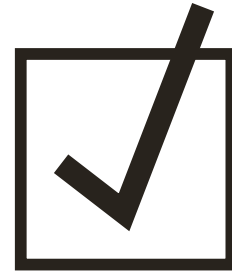


# Update Your Learning Materials!

Towards Active Global Citizenship



# Test your Learning Material: Does it Enhance Active Global Citizenship

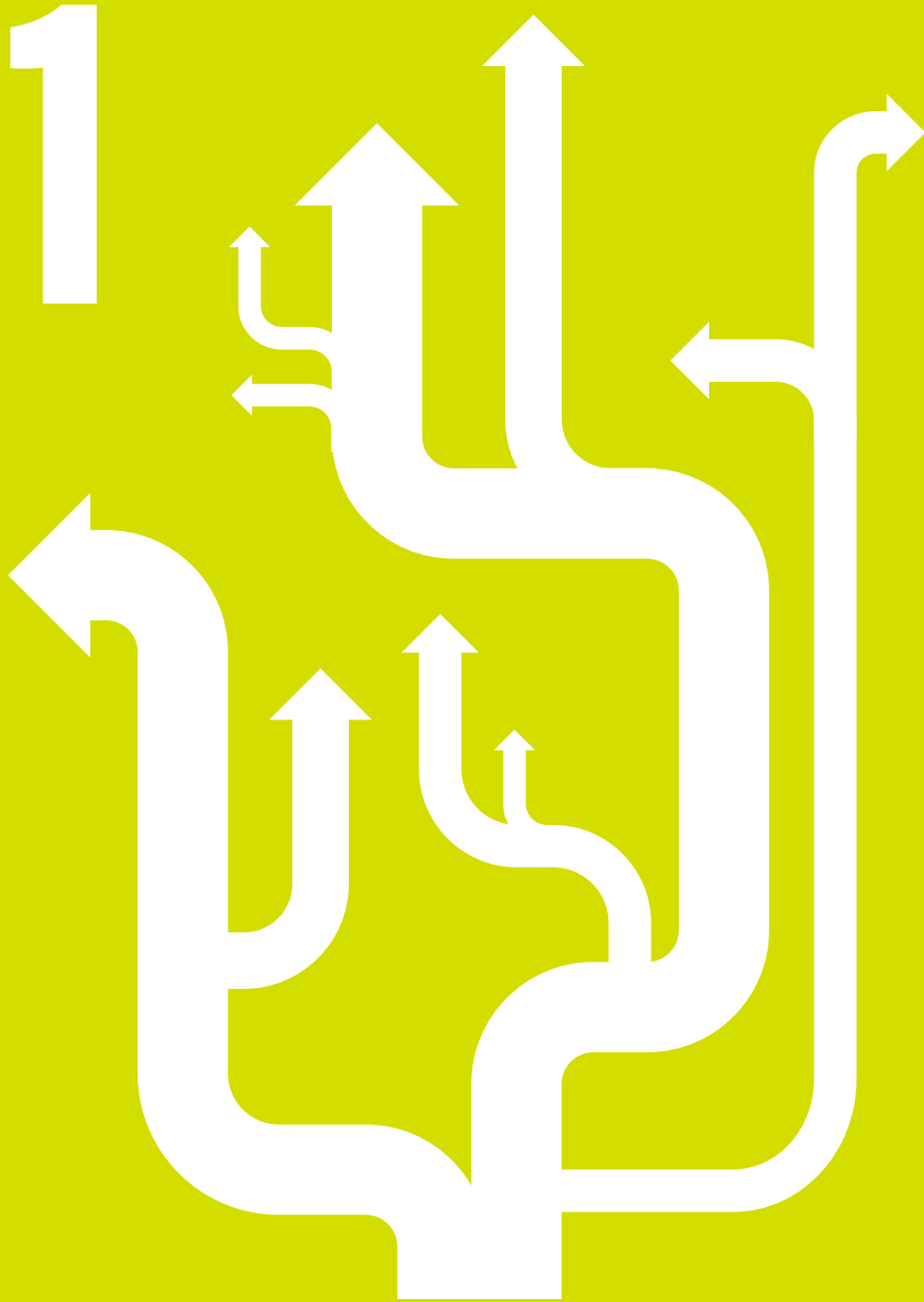
In Finland the national grounds for curricula place an emphasis on human rights education, the adoption of a sustainable way of life and active global citizenship in accordance with the development goals of the UN. Further educational guidelines are provided by the Non-Discrimination Act and the Act on Equality between Women and Men.

Schools have an important role in enhancing active global citizenship. Important emphases should be visible in the school's everyday work and its operational culture on all levels – including learning materials.

This checklist is intended for anyone who creates learning materials for schools. It makes it easy to check whether the learning material promotes global citizenship education.

Test your materials against the checklist!





## Choices are power

- I am aware** of my own starting points as a learning material maker. I make sure I present things from various points of view.
- I keep in mind** that when creating learning materials, I make many choices and use power, for instance, when defining concepts and choosing topics to highlight in the material.
- I understand** that the topics handled and views presented in the learning material may be of personal interest to users. I make sure that the material does not violate anyone's human dignity or discriminate against them.

# Are human rights the basis of the learning material?

The respect for and advancement of human rights are included in the statutory obligations of schools, and the learning materials must support them. In Finland human rights are built into all areas of the new curriculum, including into its values, the curriculum subjects and the operational culture. The objective is to adopt the human rights based approach (HRBA) in all activities of the school community.

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

- I will make sure** that the learning material increases the students' knowledge of human rights and advocates the comprehensive implementation of human rights and children's rights at schools in the form of stories, images and assignments.
- I will make sure** that the learning material handles the rights of different groups of humans in an equal manner.
- I will make sure** that the learning material provides opportunities to act for the advancement of human rights.



# 3



## Does the material promote indiscrimina-tion and equality?

In Finland the Non-Discrimination Act and the Act on Equality between Women and Men obligate schools to promote the implementation of indiscrimina-tion and equality and draw up a school-specific plan. However, indiscrimina-tion and equality will only become true if they are actively implemented in all interac-tion and activities at schools.

Learning materials should support and promote the implemen-tation of indiscrimina-tion and equality. They should also respect the diversity of the members of the school community and encourage respectful encounters between people.

- I will make sure** that diversity of the members of the school community in all its forms is taken into consideration in the learning material, leaving no member of the community invisible. I will comprehensively promote diversity in the text content, images, examples and assignments used in the learning material.
- I am aware** of the society's unwritten rules, i.e. social norms. I will highlight and actively dismantle narrow-minded norms



# 3

(continued)

by introducing a wide range of people with diverse characteristics. I will ensure that the learning material does not reinforce stereotypes or present individual people or groups of people in a biased way.

- I shall pay** attention to the way in which I depict people who are in a vulnerable position or in threat of discrimination. I shall depict people in a respectful manner without exaggerating their distress or turning them into passive objects of action. I shall depict people as active participants of their own lives and societies. I will give people space to show themselves through their diverse identities and roles.
- I will promote** equality between genders by ensuring that the material does not reinforce a biased view of different genders and expressions of gender. I will use a wide range of examples that positively reflect on the diversity of genders.
- When talking about** the relationships between nations and cultures, I will not present Finland, Europe or the Western World as a more special or better place than others, neither directly nor indirectly.
- I will not racialise** the persons handled in the learning material. I shall avoid resorting to presumptions, stereotypes or prejudices regarding people because of their skin colour or ethnicity, etc.
- I shall make** language-conscious choices regarding the learning material. I shall take into account the linguistic diversity, different linguistic facilities and backgrounds of the students. I will highlight different linguistic abilities and guide the learners to use them for learning.

## Tips:

1. Read the learning material in different roles. How will the learning material appear, for instance, to a white heterosexual male, an elderly Roma female or a transgender youth?
2. When you use text or images to portray a culture that is unfamiliar to you, consider the following questions:
  - What is your personal relationship with the country or people whose life the learning material talks about?
  - Is the text based on life experienced and lived, my own imagination or general views on what life is like in that place?
  - Have the representatives of the culture been heard in the preparation of the learning material? Have they been given the opportunity to comment on it?
  - From whose point of view are things portrayed?
  - Who are the active parties and who are portrayed as being passive, with their life events the result of the actions of others?
  - In what light does the learning material display people, their lives and their homeland?

# Are you promoting a sustainable way of life?

According to the Finnish curriculum, teaching should promote a sustainable way of life and the Global Goals (2030 Agenda). School is a key player from the viewpoint of a sustainable future. Sustainability is not an individual issue in teaching. Instead, it should be consistently integrated into all school activities and teaching.

In order to implement sustainability, its social, economic, cultural and ecological dimensions and the links between them should be considered.

- I will help** learners to identify global phenomena and their manifestations in their own lives, different communities and society.
- I will present** different viewpoints to an in-depth and diverse learning of global phenomena. I will encourage learners to find links between different school subjects.
- I will ensure** that the learning material looks into the Earth's carrying capacity and climate change. I will encourage learners to adopt a sustainable way of life and look at the consumer-oriented economic system with a critical eye.



# 4

(continued)

- With** my chosen points of view, I will support ecosocial education, which helps students to understand human beings' dependency on a healthy environment, and promote well-being within the parameters of the globe's capacity, respecting the diversity of nature.
- I will handle** global issues, including conflicts and disagreements, in a manner that advocates peace and human rights. Peaceful coexistence is a precondition of the implementation of sustainability.
- I will handle** global challenges with an emphasis on solutions, without fomenting fear or threats.

## Agenda 2030: Sustainable Development Goals





# 5



## Are we bringing up active citizens?

The world keeps changing as a result of our actions, and that should also be manifest in learning materials. Learning materials should support students' growth towards active global citizenship and the building of a sustainable future.

It is important that the students understand that they are members of the society in a global world, that they learn at school the skills for social influencing, and gain experience of using those skills in authentic situations.

- I will not oversimplify** complex issues but rather encourage students to become active information-seekers and critical thinkers.
- Differences of views** are part of democracy and they should be given space in education as well. I will showcase different political aims and the justifications for them.
- I will encourage** students to engage in active and respectful dialogue and take responsibility within the boundaries of the freedom of expression. I will state it clearly that freedom of expression does not justify discrimination, the defamation of others or the incitement of violence.
- I will highlight** the diverse and changing forms of participation and influencing enabled by representative democracy and civil society.
- I will encourage** learners to develop their creativity as well as thinking and problem-solving skills to build the society.

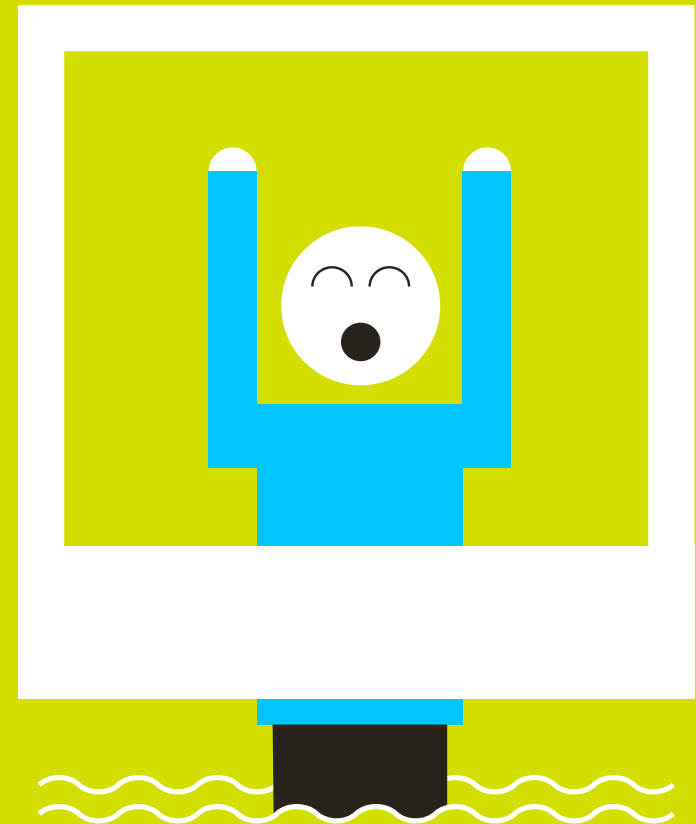
# What do the images we use convey?

Images and visual messages influence people's world views, opinions, attitudes and beliefs.

They are also very memorable. Images for their part can enhance learning and critical thinking.

Images always contain many different meanings. Together with text, they can be a powerful source of information. Illustrations can also affect students in many ways. The choice of an image is never insignificant. This is why it is essential to think about what types of images should be used in learning materials and how.

- I am aware** of the information that the chosen image includes and excludes. I will ensure that the text and caption text support the understanding and interpretation of the image.
- I will make sure** that the image choices made in the learning material are sufficiently versatile, and that they do not reinforce a stereotypical view of the people or topic discussed (culture, continent, events or a situation).
- I will make sure** that people in the images are depicted with dignity and respect for diversity, including sufficient information about them (the shooting location, the names of the people featured in the image, the photographer's information).



# 6

(continued)

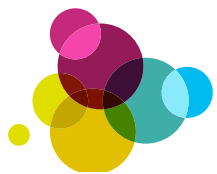
- I shall pay special attention** to images depicting minorities and groups in danger of discrimination and make sure that the images show them as active actors in their own lives.
- I am aware** of the symbols contained by the images and the way they can be interpreted.

## Tips:

Where can I get images? Organisations are happy to share their picture materials with text-book-makers. Don't hesitate to ask!

You can also acquire images from international image banks, such as:

- [www.unmultimedia.org/photo/](http://www.unmultimedia.org/photo/)
- [www.unicef.org/photography/](http://www.unicef.org/photography/)
- [www.unhcr.org/media-centre.html](http://www.unhcr.org/media-centre.html)



# GLOBAALIKASVATUS

[www.gloaalikasvatus.fi](http://www.gloaalikasvatus.fi)

The Finnish Global Education Network is coordinated by



**The following Finnish CSOs in the Finnish Global Education Network participated in creating this checklist:**

Amnesty International, Pro Ethical Trade Finland, The Finnish League for Human Rights, Kepa, 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.