

## **2.nd EUSTORY competition in Finland**

### **Change in the 20th century**

The second round of the Finnish EUSTORY competition was arranged during academic year 2009-2010. After the first years pilot project the Association for Teachers of History and Social Studies decided to broaden the target group so that in addition to students at the upper secondary (16-19 years old) also pupils at the upper level of comprehensive school (13-15 years old) could take part in the competition. This proved to be quite a successful decision: the preliminary jury got 93 competition entries from a little less than 200 pupils. However, of these entries only 10 (written by 12 students) came from students at the upper secondary. Many more upper secondary students planned to participate in the competition but didn't manage to finish their entries. Still, the competition time was very long: the organizers started to spread information of the competition by posters, teacher's manual, the competition website and articles in the association's pedagogical publication at the end of the previous academic year and continued to remind teachers of the competition through the whole competition time.

The topic of the second competition round was "Change in the 20<sup>th</sup> century", and it was possible to participate in Finnish, Swedish and English, either alone or in groups of max. three persons. The majority of the entries were written in Finnish, but there were also a few entries in Swedish in both competition series and a couple of English language entries in the series for pupils at comprehensive school. Some of the entries written in Swedish came from Swedish speaking students, but a part of them as well as all the entries written in English were done by pupils whose native language was Finnish. In these cases the competition had been used in projects that combined studying of history and foreign language.

The topic of this year's EUSTORY competition was very wide, because the organizers wanted to make sure that history teachers had many possibilities to integrate the competition in the national curriculum. It was up to the participants to define their research topic further, and they had decided to examine changes in life from very different perspectives: the subjects covered in the entries varied from structural changes and its causes to one's family or locality, migration from Finland, development of the equality of the sexes to different changes in everyday life, such as school and studying, spare time and fashion. The majority of the participants had used interviews as their primary sources, but a few had also visited archives or managed to acquire other literal sources.

The fact that there were participants from all over the country was very good regarding the future of the competition. The organizers were also very pleased that there were both male and female award winners in both competition series. Almost all award winners at the upper secondary decided to apply for the EUSTORY Youth Academies. The academy participants will write reports in the association's pedagogical publication and this way the Finnish EUSTORY will gain positive publicity especially among teachers working with older students.

All in all, the second round of the Finnish EUSTORY competition was much more successful than the pilot project of the previous year. Feedback from those teachers who took part in the competition as tutors was very positive: the competition and the method of “learning by research” fits well in the Finnish history curriculum. Teachers also felt that history had become more vivid and concrete for their students as they had had the chance to combine their “own narratives” with history learned at school. This way the organizers felt that at least some of the goals of the competition had been achieved, although they would want to see the participation rate growing in the coming years. In the future there will be two competition series and the topic will remain wide in order to give teachers more possibilities to integrate the competition in other school work. The main challenge for the future will be to get more participants from the upper secondary level, but the organizers are quite positive this goal can be achieved.