

4th EUSTORY competition in Finland **“Life in Change”**

The Association for Teachers of History and Social Studies in Finland arranged the fourth round of the Finnish EUSTORY competition during academic year 2011-2012. The competition was open to students at the upper secondary school (16-19 years old) and pupils at the upper level of comprehensive school (13-15 years old).

All in all around 560 students and pupils took part in the competition on the levels combined, which is quite similar result compared to the last years' competition round. The competition is still more popular in the comprehensive school than in upper secondary school, but this years' result of 29 contributions in secondary school was better compared to the last year. Due to the fact that there are no obligatory research courses in history at the upper secondary level in Finland, students find it hard to fit the competition in their schedule.

The long competition round gave the students more time to finish their entries: The competition website was updated already at the end of the previous academic year. At the beginning of the academic year 2011-2012 teachers also got a new tutors' manual and competition poster. The organizers also used the association's periodical and newsletter and to remind teachers' of the competition.

The topic of the fourth competition round was “Life in Change”, and it was possible to participate in Finnish, Swedish and English, either alone or in group of max. three persons. The majority of the entries were written in Finnish, but there were also entries in Swedish and English in both competition series. The English ones were mostly sent from schools that follow the International Baccalaureate program.

With a wide competition topic 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. The changes in occupations, hobbies and in the everyday life were popular themes this year together, with the entries about the Second World War, family history and the history of one's hometown. Interviews were used as primary sources in many entries, but students had also used other primary sources such as archives, magazines and autobiography.

Previous project coordinator Hanna Kokkonen resigned in September 2011 and the new project coordinator Hanna Ylönen started 9th of November 2011. In the late 2011 project coordinator took the time to familiarize oneself with the project. Considering the changes in organization the competition round went well and according to the plans. Entries were sent in from all around the country and there were both male and female students among the prize winners. The competition is little by little gaining ground among the teachers and becoming more well-known in Finland.

In the future the organizers would like to see many more upper secondary students participating in the competition, but there aren't any simple solutions for the problem, since the biggest problem seems to be the lack of obligatory research course in the Finnish curriculum. The possible new strategy is to make young people more interested in the competition, for example by starting to plan Youth Academy to Finland and bring light to the competition that way. Competition also has new theme for the next year: “Two stories”, in which the idea is to study the chosen topic from the two points of view.