

3.rd EUSTORY competition in Finland

Change in life

The Association for Teachers of History and Social Studies in Finland arranged the third round of the Finnish EUSTORY competition during academic year 2010-2011. The competition was open to students at the upper secondary (16-19 years old) and pupils at the upper level of comprehensive school (13-15 years old). All in all around 670 students and pupils took part in the competition which was quite a lot more than the previous year. However, only 15 contributions were sent in from upper secondary schools. The organizers know that many more upper secondary students planned to participate in the competition but didn't manage to finish their entries. Due to the fact that there are no obligatory research courses in history at the upper secondary level students find it hard to fit the competition in their schedule.

The competition round was quite long so as to give the students at the upper secondary more time to finish their entries: posters were sent to schools and the competition website was updated already at the end of the previous academic year. At the beginning of the academic year 2010-2011 teachers also got a new tutors' manual and the association's project coordinator visited a few local sections to inform teachers of the competition. The organizers also used the association's periodical and newsletter to remind teachers' of the competition.

The topic of the second competition round was "Change in life", 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 as well as entries in English in the series for the upper secondary students. The latter ones were 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, and they had decided to examine changes in life from very different perspectives: the subjects covered in the entries included e.g. structural changes and its causes to one's family or locality, Finlandisation in history text books in the 1970s, changes in the public transport system in one's home town as well as other changes in everyday life. Interviews were used as primary sources in many entries, but quite a few students had also found different literary sources such as magazines, official documents and diaries.

All in all, the organizers were quite happy with the third competition round. Entries were sent in from all around the country and there were both male and female students among the prize winners. Feedback from teachers and students was also very positive: the method of learning by research really helped the participants to realize just how important history is for the understanding for today's world as well as one's place in it. In the future the organizers would like to see many more upper secondary students participating in the competition. This will be the main target during the next competition round.