

**FULBRIGHT-HAYS SEMINARS ABROAD PROGRAM
DESCRIPTION FOR ELEMENTARY EDUCATORS
(GRADES K-8)**

Finland

Seminar Title: Demystifying the Infrastructure of Happiness in Finnish Society
Dates: Four Weeks, June 2024 – July 2024 (exact dates to be determined)
Participants: U.S. teachers, curriculum specialists, librarians, media resource specialists, and education administrators at the elementary and middle (K-8) level

Program Content:

“I’ll have to calm down a bit. Or else I’ll burst with happiness.” - Moomintroll in Moominsummer Madness by Tove Jansson

Built on a foundation of trust, Finland strives to be an open, caring, innovative and well-functioning society that advocates globally for democracy, good governance, human rights, equality, and sustainability. From digital innovation to future skills in culture, research and business, Finnish people seek out new ways to add to the country’s overall quality of life. This ethos is reflected in Finland’s educational system which has consistently ranked as one of the top educational systems in the world. Since 2018, the World Happiness Report has ranked Finland, a Nordic country of 5.6 million people, the happiest country in the world. Many people – Finns included – have tried to demystify the infrastructure of happiness in Finnish society.

This seminar will provide U.S. K-8 educators a unique opportunity to explore the Finnish infrastructure contributing to the overall happiness of the country, with a focus on the following key strengths: 1) education and know how; 2) nature and sustainable development; and, 3) functionality and well-being.

The program will begin in Helsinki where participants will attend briefings and strategic discussions with government representatives and educators to provide the framework and background for Finland’s society and education system. As the Finnish education system is rooted in the values and culture of the Finnish society, the seminar will shed light on the historical and societal elements that contribute to the strength of the national education system while also contributing to people’s happiness and wellbeing.

Participants will examine how Finland’s long-standing experience in sustainability stems from a strong relationship between humans and nature. The participants will get to experience this relationship through phenomenon-based learning at a nature school in a national park, by exploring the history and culture of the sauna in Finland, by experiencing the Baltic Sea, and visiting organizations involved in environmental protection and combating climate change. During visits to different parts of the country educators will see historical sites and modern treasures of Finland, including the new Helsinki Central Library Oodi, the Fortress of Suomenlinna (UNESCO World Heritage site), and Heureka, the Finnish Science Center, that serve as examples of diverse learning environments that play a critical role in the Finnish curriculum.

Through taking part in this seminar, participants will better understand Finland’s contemporary global stance as well. After Russia’s invasion of Ukraine, Finland reassessed its security policy situation and applied for NATO membership, officially becoming a NATO member in April 2023. In light of this recent development, participants’ experience in-country will enable them to better understand the Finnish government’s engagement in international dialogues to seek solutions through cooperation.

Throughout the program participants will be able to reflect on foundations of education and their impact on the wellbeing of society with the expert speakers, fellow U.S. Fulbrighters, and Fulbright alumni from Finland. The program will enable the participants to develop curricula to disseminate what they have learned within their home education systems.

We are inviting applications to allow enough time to complete the grant process; nonetheless, Seminar is contingent upon many factors, such as the availability of funds, the number or the quality of applications, and travel alerts. The actual level of funding, if any, depends on final Congressional action. The Department is not bound by any estimates in this notice.