Summary: Review and Barometer 2022 of the Field of Education and Research

The publication consists of two parts: a barometer and a field review. The field review has compiled some highlights from various statistics. The highlights are mainly from statistics compiled by Statistics Finland (http://www.tilastokeskus.fi/) and the OECD (https://stats.oecd.org/).

THE KEY RESULTS OF THE BAROMETER

The development of the general outlook over the past 12 months is still seen as weakening, although not to the same extent as a year ago. Expectations of the general outlook for the next 12 months have turned weaker. In the midst of general uncertainty, there is a bit of pessimism in the air among education providers – and especially with regard to the next 12 months.

The economy

Taken as a whole, funding has increased more often than decreased. Funding has only fallen in liberal adult education. Public funding has not fallen as expected, especially in vocational education and training and liberal adult education. The balance figure is slightly positive despite the decrease in funding in universities and basic education in the arts. Similarly, other funding has increased slightly – although not to the extent expected.

Fewer people expect funding to increase over the next 12 months – especially in general education. Expectations are slightly better than one year ago in public funding. Similarly, in terms of growth in other funding, expectations are moderate, with the exception of universities of applied sciences.

For 47 per cent of the respondents, the most recent financial statements have been in surplus, 25 per cent in balance and 28 per cent in deficit. The share of those with deficits has risen by good 10 percentage points and that of those in surplus correspondingly fell from one year ago. There is more pessimism about the balance for the current financial year. 8 per cent of respondents expect the surplus to increase or the deficit to decrease instead of the actual 37 per cent. 54 per cent are waiting for the deficit to increase or for the surplus to be reduced, instead of the actual 25 per cent. The clearest way to struggle with profitability seems to be to continue in basic education in the arts.

Personnel

36 per cent of the respondents report that their number of employees has increased over the past 12 months and 12 per cent have decreased. Growth has been more common in higher education and general education. The number of personnel in basic education in the arts seems to have decreased. There has been growth in both the teaching staff and other personnel. Expectations of staff growth over the next 12 months are slightly lower than realized in the past 12 months.

35 per cent of the respondents believe that recruitment problems have increased over the past 12 months. Almost the same, 33 per cent, expect the problems to increase over the next 12 months. As a whole, recruitment problems are estimated to have grown and continue to grow. In teaching staff, recruitment problems have increased and are expected to grow slightly more often than other staff.

Available study places and student numbers

Nearly 40 per cent of the respondents see that there has been a need for an increase in the study places for their form of education over the past 12 months, and good 40 per cent see the need growing over the next 12 months. Nearly 60 per cent have felt that the need for starting places has remained unchanged and good 50 per cent remain unchanged. The desire and readiness to increase the number of study places is even more common and at the level of one year ago. More than 80 per cent of the respondents are ready to increase the number of places to start. Almost all of the rest are ready to maintain the current number of study places.

The number of students in educational institutions has grown clearly more than the number of those who have decreased over the past 12 months. The numbers have increased especially in higher education institutions. In liberal adult education and basic education in the arts, the numbers have started to grow. Over the next 12 months, the number of students is expected to remain unchanged in just under half of educational institutions. There are clearly more educational institutions throughout where the number of students is estimated to increase rather than decrease. However, expectations are more moderate than a year ago.

The barometer material has been compiled on a form from private training providers. Each organization has received one link. A representative of the organizers has been asked to evaluate actual and future developments (positive, no change, negative) for certain criteria. The balance figure is formed by subtracting the share of negative assessments from the share of positive assessments. Thus, the balance figure tells the percentage point difference between positive assessments and negative ones. This time, responses were received from 103 private training providers (30 per cent) at the middle of October.

In addition to the themes mentioned above, the barometer has inquired about the situation of the recent past and future regarding co-operation with other education and research organizations as well as companies and other working life, recruitment problems, investment and education exports.

KEY FINDINGS OF THE FIELD REVIEW

At the end of 2021, there were 689 active providers of education with 3,049 educational institutions. Education employed 181,000 persons, which corresponds to 7.1 per cent of employed persons. Private education providers employ about one-third of the teaching staff.

Today, public investment in education is just over 5 per cent of GDP and about 10 per cent relative to total public finances. As an estimate based on statistics, it can be said that nearly 2.5 million Finns participate in education per year as degree and adult students. If we take into account the education provided by others and the most informal forms of study, such as individual lectures, more than half of Finns are educated every year.

In 2020, half a per cent of those who had completed comprehensive school did not apply immediately for further education. In all, 6.6 per cent did not continue in education leading to a qualification or degree. Of the secondary school graduates, 84 per cent applied for a postgraduate study place. However, 63 per cent did not continue in degree education in the year of matriculation examination. In the academic year 2019/2020, 6.8 per cent of students interrupted their studies and did not immediately continue in education aimed at a degree.

At the end of 2020, altogether 3,469,000 persons, or 74 per cent, of the population aged 15 or over had completed post-comprehensive level qualifications. The share of attainers of qualifications remained unchanged. In Finland, the participation of 25 to 64-year-olds in education is among the highest in Europe: 30.5 per cent of adults of that age participated in education within the four weeks prior to the survey in 2021.

Research expenditure by higher education institutions has more than doubled since the beginning of the millennium. The development slowed down in 2010 to 2016, but turned to growth in 2017. In 2021, higher education institutions' research expenditure amounted to EUR 1.73 billion. Of this funding, 43 per cent was central government budget funding and 55 per cent other external funding.

As a whole, R&D expenditure amounted to EUR 7.5 billion in 2021. The ratio of R&D expenditure to GDP was 3.0 per cent. In 2021, a total of 87,364 persons worked in R&D tasks, 39 per cent of whom worked in the higher education sector.

The industry review highlights the latest statistical information, e.g. education providers, funding and personnel, students, access to studies, study progress, level of education, employment and research and development. Four recent studies in the field of education and research concerning evidence on the effect of technology on employment and skill demand, among others, are also highlighted.