

Finland

Finland will undertake its 2nd Voluntary National Review in July 2020. With a focus this year on development accelerators and transformative action, it is a key moment to consider activities and tools which can unlock progress, for all, across the board.

Access to information – understood as the physical possibility and right for all to seek and find information, and the skills to use it – can make just such a contribution. This access can help at all levels. It supports individuals to take better decisions about how to farm, where to look for work or how to look after their own and their families' health. It gives governments the possibility to define better policies. It allows researchers to understand the world around us, establish new insights and innovate. Libraries are a key part of the infrastructure for ensuring that this is the case.

But where does Finland stand today as concerns its libraries and access to information? This data sheet provides background based on data from the Development and Access to Information report produced by IFLA in partnership with the Technology and Social Change Group at the University of Washington, as well as IFLA's own Library Map of the World.

KEY CONCLUSIONS

- *Finland has a very strong library field, both in terms of public and academic libraries. Public libraries are particularly strong, with the highest number of visits per person in the world. There may be scope for more action to facilitate digital lending.*
- *Finland's government – at the national and local levels – has recognised the contribution that libraries make to implementing the SDGs through strong references in Voluntary National and Local Reviews, highlighting roles in supporting education, wellbeing and community cohesion.*
- *Finland scores highly on all four pillars of the development and access to information framework, in particular on questions around equality, skills and rights. In such a digitised society, the importance of providing solutions for those who are not connected, for example through libraries, becomes all the more pressing.*

LIBRARIES IN FINLAND

Finland has a well-developed and well-supported library field. It has more than double the global average number of academic libraries and library workers per 100 000 people (2.75 and 23.69 respectively), a factor that tends to correlate with higher rates of patenting and publishing.

There is also a strong public library network, with over 850 libraries including the new Oodi library in Helsinki, which won Public Library of the Year in 2019, and which features on the front page of Helsinki's Voluntary Local Review in the same year. Each public library serves an area, on average, of 396km² – higher than the global average of 254km², but are well staffed (there are almost four times as many public librarians per 100 000 people as the global average), and Finnish public libraries are the most visited in the world, with over 9 visits per person per year. Nonetheless, only 1 in 43 loans from Finnish libraries are electronic.

Finnish libraries have participated strongly in the country's efforts to deliver on the SDGs, and are well featured in both the Finnish Voluntary National Review, and the Local Reviews carried out by the cities of Turku and Espoo.

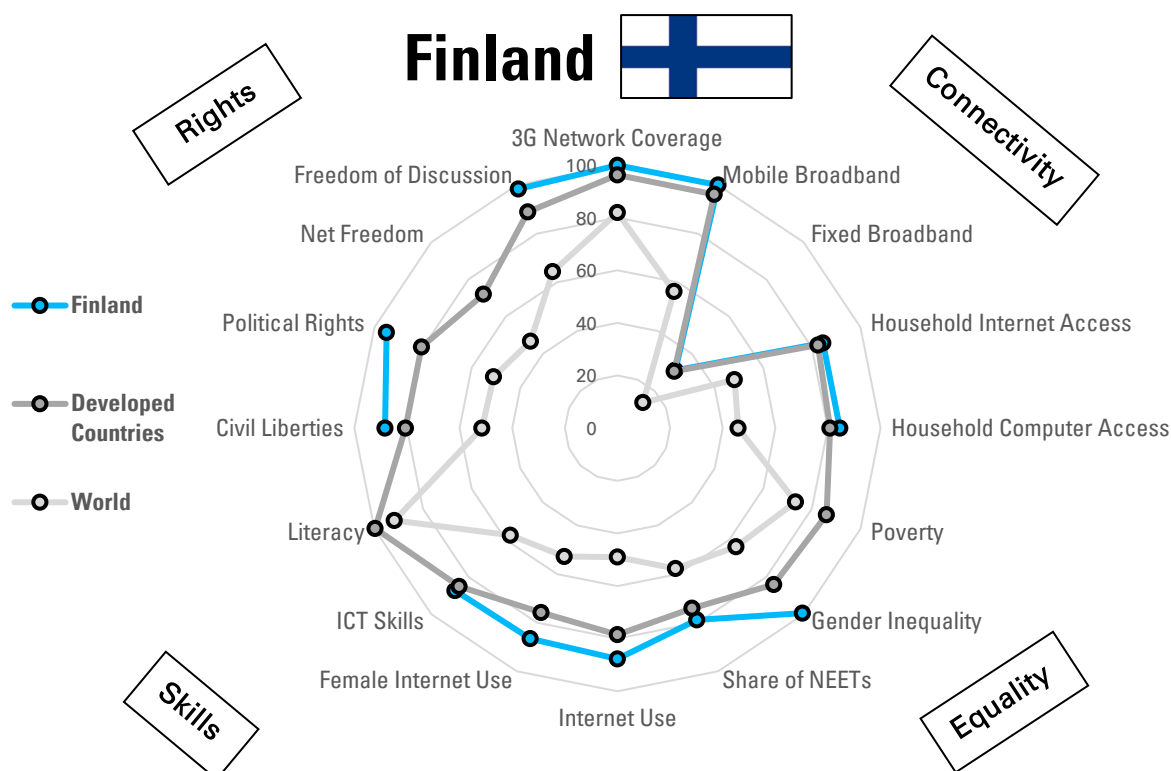
DEVELOPMENT AND ACCESS TO INFORMATION IN FINLAND

The Development and Access to Information report draws on a range of indicators highlighting where countries stand on four key pillars of access to information: connectivity, equality, skills and rights. For meaningful access to information to be a reality for all, performance needs to be strong across all of these categories.

Finland scores very highly on **connectivity**, with almost universal 3G coverage, and multiple mobile broadband subscriptions per person. Household internet and computer access are both above the average for developed countries, while numbers of home broadband are more in line with the average. Nonetheless, around 15% of households do not have internet access or a computer, giving them fewer possibilities to make use of the potential the web brings.

Concerning **equality**, Finland is also a very strong performer, with high levels of gender equality compared to averages both for the world and developed countries, and how numbers of young people not in employment, education or training. There is a small gender gap in internet use in favour of men.

On **skills**, Finland again scores very highly, and has long been a model in terms of its focus on education and skills. Similarly, on **rights**, Finland scores well above average on political rights and civic liberties, as well as on freedom of discussion. In short, there is a very positive environment for access to information. The main challenge, on the basis of the data, will be to ensure that those who are not currently online do not risk being isolated from opportunities to access and use information.



How to read the graph: this graph displays a range of indicators used within the DA2I framework, adjusted to fit on a scale of 0-100, where 100 is the most positive outcome in terms of access to information.

TABLE OF DATA

See below for explanations. * = or latest available year. Regional averages are based on available data.

PILLAR	INDICATOR	FINLAND	Year	DEVELOPED COUNTRIES	Year	WORLD	Year
CONNECTIVITY	3G Network Coverage	99.90%	2016	96.23%	2016	81.92%	2016
	Mobile Broadband (Subscriptions per 100 People)	152.31	2016	96.15	2016	56.22	2016
	Fixed Broadband (Subscriptions per 100 People)	31.11	2016	30.55	2016	13.71	2016
	Household Internet Access	84.57%	2016	82.49%	2016	48.16%	2016
	Household Computer Access	84.54%	2016	80.82%	2016	45.88%	2016
EQUALITY	Poverty (Share of pop'n below national poverty line)			13.99	2015*	26.69%	2015*
	Gender Inequality (0 = More equal, 1 = Less equal)	0.0056	2015	0.16	2015	0.36*	2015*
	Share of NEETs	10.56%	2015	12.95%	2015*	21.12%	2015*
	Internet Use	87.70%	2016	78.50%	2016*	49%	2016*
	Female Internet Use	86.60%	2016	75.85%	2016*	52.79%	2016*
SKILLS	ICT Skills	8.73	2017	8.51	2017	5.76	2017
	Literacy			99.67%	2015	91.75	2015
RIGHTS	Civil Liberties (0 = least free, 60 = most free)	53.00	2018	48.33	2018	30.9	2018
	Political Rights (0 = least free, 40 = most free)	38.00	2018	32.24	2018	20.37	2018
	Net Freedom (0 = most free, 100 = least free)			28.02	2016	53.29	2016
	Freedom of Discussion	0.98	2016	0.89	2016	0.64	2016

EXPLANATION OF INDICATORS

3G Network Coverage: this provides a measure of whether one part of the basic infrastructure for connectivity exists, although in itself is not enough to guarantee access (users need a device and a relevant subscription to be able to get online). Source: ITU

Mobile Broadband (Mobile Broadband Subscriptions per 100 people): this provides an idea of how many people can use mobile internet, opening up many – if not all – of the possibilities that internet access brings. One person may have more than one subscription. Source: ITU

Fixed Broadband (Fixed Broadband Subscriptions per 100 people): this provides an idea of how widespread home or business internet access is. Fixed access is often associated with the possibility to connect computers to make more advanced uses of the internet. Source: ITU

Household Internet Access (Share of Households with Internet Access): access to the internet at home allows for access to information at any time without having to go outside, but may be controlled by some members of the family. Source: ITU

Household Computer Access (Share of Households with a Computer): this focuses on access to computers. This is crucial for people to be able to carry out more advanced activities on the internet that might be impossible on a phone, such as writing resumes or analysing data. Source: ITU

Poverty: this indicator measures the number of people living below the national poverty line, which varies from country to country. It is a measure of economic inequality in a country. The indicator is inversed in the chart (i.e. the share of people not under the poverty line). Source: World Bank

Gender Inequality: this is calculated using the Gender Inequality Index. This index uses a basket of indicators in different areas of social development including: reproductive health, proportion of women in parliament, relative shares of men and women with at least some secondary education, and labour market participation in order to provide a broad idea of the extent of gender inequality in a country. The indicator runs from 0 (most equal) to 1 (least equal) and is inversed and adapted in the chart above. Source: UNDP

Share of NEETS (People aged 15-24 Not in Education, Employment or Training): this measures the share of young people cut off from education or the job market. Being 'NEET' can bring long-term scarring effects, and so reducing numbers is a key priority. The indicator is inversed and adapted in the chart (i.e. the share of young people who are not NEET). Source: ILO.

Internet Use (Share of People Using the Internet): looking beyond household access data (which will be affected by the structure of households in general), this gives a figure for the number of people using the internet. Source: ITU

Female Internet Use: this measure, in conjunction with the share of the overall population using the internet, allows us to understand to what extent there is a gender digital divide. Source: ITU

ICT Skills: there are relatively few global metrics of ICT skills, with those that exist only focusing on certain regions. The Skills Sub-Index of the ICT Development Index created by the ITU aims to work in this direction using levels of secondary and tertiary education enrolment, plus mean years of schooling, as proxies. Source: ITU

Literacy: this measures literacy among 15-24 year olds – i.e. people who have finished formal education. While there are online resources available for people with low literacy, being able to read, type, and understand information remains a fundamental skill. Source: UNESCO Institute for Statistics.

Civil Liberties: this provides an indication of the degree to which citizens of a country enjoy fundamental civic rights, including freedom of expression and association, as well as the strength of the rule of law, based on expert judgements. Scores run from 0 (least free) to 60 (most free) and have been adapted to fit the graphic above. Source: Freedom House.

Political Rights: this provides a measure of the rights people have to participate in the political process, including fair and free elections, political pluralism, and the functioning of government in general. Scores run from 0 (least free) to 40 (most free) and have been adapted to fit the graphic above. Source: Freedom House.

Net Freedom: this metric assesses the level of restrictions on rights online by both public and private actors. It draws on assessments of obstacles to access (legal, economic and practical), limits on content, and violations of rights. Scores run from 100 (least free) to 0 (most free) and so are inverted in the graphic above. Source: Freedom House.

Freedom of Discussion: this indicator looks at whether people are able to hold private discussions without fear of repercussions either from the authorities or society in general due to cultural restrictions or norms. Scores run from 0 (least free) to 1 (most free), and so are adapted to fit into the graphic above. Source: V-Dem dataset codebook.