

**Higher Education Training and Development (HETD)  
&  
The University Teaching & Learning Office (UTLO)**

Cordially invites you to a Public Lecture on

**Higher Education as an Instrument of Equity and  
Equality: The Finnish Experience**



by

**Professor Harri Melin**  
Vice Rector, University of  
Tampere, Finland

**Seminar Details**

**DATE:** Thursday, 30 April 2015  
**TIME:** 14h00 – 15h30  
**VENUE:** Lecture Room 1, UNITE Building, Gate 8, Rick Turner  
Road (formerly Francios Road), Howard College Campus  
UKZN

**RSVP Essential**

**By:** 28 April 2015      **Tel:** (031) 260-3257  
**To:** Ms Sheryl Jeenarain      **Email:** jeenarains@ukzn.ac.za

**Seminar Overview**

**The Finnish Success Story:** In many international comparisons Finland seems to do very well. Finland is highly ranked in such studies like PISA, anti-corruption and happiness indices. 50 years ago, Finland was a part of European periphery; but today the country is among the richest nations in the world. What is the secret behind this? Why is Finland, a small Nordic country with the population of 5,5 million people, so successful?

One explanation is that the population is homogenous. More than 97% are native Finns and national minorities (Roma, Same and Swedish) are well integrated. The country has established traditions of parliamentary democracy. Women got the voting rights in 1907. Parliament has played an important role in the modernization of Finnish society. There is strong trust amongst fellow citizens and confidence in social institutions. Social institutions have played an important role in the process of social change. Effective institutional solutions concerning e.g. social security and education have created space for development.

Since the late 1960s, industrial relations have been based on trust. Since 1980s, Finland has had an open and effective innovation system. This facilitated close working relationships between private companies, universities and public funding organizations which helped to promote innovation. Finally, the Finnish education system promotes equality and supports all pupils regardless of their social background. The basic principle is that the whole populace gets an education that allows for mobility - from basic education to higher education.

**About Professor Harri Melin**

**Professor Harri Melin** is a Vice Rector and Professor of Sociology at the University of Tampere, Finland. After completing his MA in Sociology at the University of Tampere, he remained at the institute to become Docent of Sociology in 1997; he has held the position of Professor of Sociology since 1998. Melin was a Senior Research Fellow at the Academy of Finland and also a Chair and Professor of Sociology at the University of Turku, Finland. He has been a project director and served as consultant to many national and international research projects. He served as the Secretary and President of the Finnish Sociological Association. He also served as Editor of *Acta Sociologica* and is currently referee for *International Sociology*, *Acta Sociologica* and *Sociology of Education*. He has been the Second Vice Rector of the University of Tampere since 2009. His research interests include inequality and social classes.