



## Youth Wiki national description

# Youth policies in Estonia

## 2017

The Youth Wiki is Europe's online encyclopaedia in the area of national youth policies. The platform is a comprehensive database of national structures, policies and actions supporting young people. For the updated version of this national description, please visit

<https://eacea.ec.europa.eu/national-policies/en/youthwiki>



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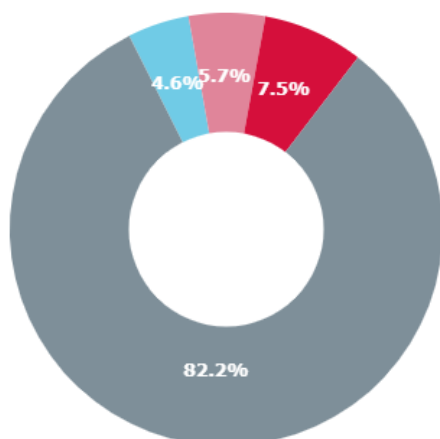
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## Overview

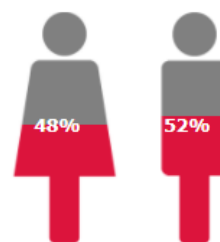
### Young People in Estonia

Ratio of young people in the total population on 1st January



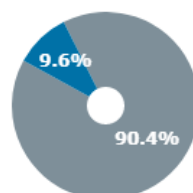
- Age group 15-19
- Age group 20-24
- Age group 25-29
- Other age groups

Total number of young people: 233 567



Ratio of men and women in the youth population

Ratio of young immigrants in all immigrants from non-EU countries



- Age group 15-29
- Other age groups

#### References:

Ratio (%) of young people in the total population (2016): Eurostat, yth\_demo\_020 [data extracted on 21/09/2017].

Absolute number of young people on 1 January for the age group 15-29 (2016): Eurostat, yth\_demo\_010 [data extracted on 21/09/2017].

Ratio (%) of men and women in the youth population (2016): Eurostat, yth\_demo\_020 [data extracted on 21/09/2017].

Young immigrants from non-EU countries (2015): Eurostat, yth\_demo\_070 [data extracted on 21/09/2017].

## Youth Policy in Estonia

### General Information

The youth field (youth policy and youth work) in Estonia is defined by many legal acts. According to the Youth Work Act a young person is a natural person between the ages of 7 and 26. The Youth Field Development Plan 2014-2020 outlines the strategic goals in the field of youth. See more in Chapters [1.1.](#) and [1.3.](#)

### Level of Policy-Making for Youth Policy

The institution in charge of youth is the Ministry of Education and Research and in to be exact, the Youth Affairs Department. The main goals of the department are connected with developing legislation, ensuring purposefulness and consistency, planning of resources, ensuring cohesiveness and holding a public dialogue with partners regarding the implementation of youth policy. Estonian Youth Work Centre is a national centre for youth work under the administrative authority of the Ministry of Education and Research. The main objective of Estonian Youth Work Centre is to develop and organize youth work in the framework of the national youth policy. According to the Local Government

Organisation Act, the local governments have a key role in organizing the topics related to local life, including youth work. Most of the financing of youth work comes also from the budget and own income of the local municipalities. [See more in Chapter 1.4.](#)

### Status of youth policy in the general policy-making

The youth policy in Estonia is well established and has been a special policy field almost since the adoption of the Youth Work Act in 1999. The term youth policy was first used in the Estonian Youth Work Concept, which was adopted in 2001..

### Statistics of the target group (04.10.2017)

Age group of young people	Total	Young Men	Young Women
7-14 years	112 970	57 880	55 090
15-19 years	59 546	30 730	28 816
20-24 years	70 389	36 013	34 376
25-26 years	35 962	18 805	17 157
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>278 867</b>	<b>143 428</b>	<b>135 439</b>

The total population of Estonia is 1 315 635 (data from 04/10/2017), the young people make up more than 21% of the whole population

## 1. Youth Policy Governance

The [Youth Work Act](#) states that a young person is a natural person between 7 and 26 years of age. The Youth Field Development Plan 2014-2020 outlines the strategic goals set in the field of youth. The main goals in the development plan are (See more in [Chapter 1.1.](#) and [Chapter 1.3.](#)):

- the young people will have more choices in terms of discovering their creative and developmental potential;
- the young people will face a lower risk of exclusion;
- the participation of young people in the decision-making will be supported more;
- the youth field operates more efficiently.

Ministry in charge of youth is the [Estonian Ministry of Education and Research](#). Department responsible for youth is the [Youth Affairs Department](#). [Estonian Youth Work Centre](#) is a national centre for youth work under the administrative authority of the Ministry of Education and Research - the national youth work agency. Its main objective is to develop and organize youth work in the framework of the national youth policy. According to the [Local Government Organisation Act](#), the local governments have a key role in organizing the topics related to local life, including youth work. Most of the financing of youth work comes also from the budget and own income of the local municipalities. See more in [Chapter 1.4.](#) The whole budget of state funding to youth policy and youth work is more than 13 million euros. See more in [Chapter 1.7.](#)

### 1.1 Target population of youth policy

Defining the target population of different public policy measures targeted to youth is based on legislation of the Republic of Estonia. Legislative acts constitute a framework that determines and regulates the activities, programmes, services and benefits targeting young people. The youth field (youth policy and youth work) in Estonia is defined by many legal acts, but as a key legal act the [Youth Work Act](#) is considered. The act states that young person is a natural person between 7 and 26 years of age. The [Youth Field Development Plan 2014-2020](#) also considers the same age group as young people and it has no specific age groups for different policy measures. Other official documents define some more narrow age groups according to the particular field of youth policy (e.g. child welfare, labor market, etc.).



The list of different acts that mention young people gives an idea of what aspects of the young people's lives are regulated by. The number of laws is 28 and these are the following:

1. [Constitution of the Republic of Estonia](#)
2. [General Part of the Civil Code Act](#)
3. [Basic Schools and Upper Secondary School Act](#)
4. [Vocational Educational Institutions Act](#)
5. [Institutions of Professional Higher Education Act](#)
6. [Universities Act](#)
7. [Private Schools Act](#)
8. [Hobby Schools Act](#)
9. [Study Allowances and Study Loans Act](#)
10. [Family Law Act](#)
11. [State Family Benefits Act](#)
12. [Commercial Code](#)
13. [Non-profit Associations Act](#)
14. [Child Protection Act](#)
15. [Military Service Act](#)
16. [Penal Code](#)
17. [Code of Criminal Procedure](#)
18. [Code of Civil Procedure](#)
19. [Imprisonment Act](#)
20. [Traffic Act](#)
21. [Employment Contracts Act](#)
22. [Labor Market Services and Benefits Act](#)
23. [Weapons Act](#)
24. [Alcohol Act](#)
25. [Tobacco Act](#)
26. [Health Insurance Act](#)
27. [Social Welfare Act](#)
28. [Local Government Organisation Act](#)

Based on the review of the acts, one can conclude that they make a difference between the following age groups:

- children from age 0 until approximately 10 years of age;
- children and young people from age 10 until mid-teens;
- children and young people from mid-teens until the age of 18;
- young adults / emerging adulthood, from age 18 until early and mid-twenties;
- young adults / emerging adulthood, onward from mid-twenties.

Majority of young people remain in the brackets from approximately 10 years of age to early and mid-twenties. Splitting the youth into different sub-ranges of age is highly relevant in the context of establishing the link between youth and public policy.

## **1.2 National youth law**

### **Existence of a National Youth Law**

There are two most important acts:

- the renewed [Child Protection Act](#), which defines the principles of ensuring the rights and well-being of children in the age group of 0-18;
- the [Youth Work Act](#), which defines the age range for young people from 7-26 and the obligations of different authorities in the youth field.

As described in the previous section of the chapter, there are 29 different laws which carry more or less direct relevance for young people as they define the obligations and

rights of municipalities and central government towards the young people as well as entitlements, rights, duties and limitations of young people.

Therefore, in the following paragraph the main focus is on the [Youth Work Act](#) that was approved in 1999 by the Parliament and it was re-adopted in 2010.

### Scope and contents

[Youth Work Act](#) provides the legal basis for the organization and financing of youth work. The Act defines the main terms used in the youth field, main institutions, organizations and forms of youth work, the principles of youth work, financing of youth work, etc. The Act provides the responsibilities regarding youth work of the Ministry of Education and Research, county governors, and local municipality. The Act defines municipal and local youth councils.

There is no description of the rights and obligations of young people in the act.

The key policy domains relevant for the youth field identified in the [Youth Work Act](#) are written in the 2nd and 3rd chapter of the act.

### Revisions/updates

Youth Work Act has been adopted two times:

- Adoption in [01.04.1999](#)
- Adoption in [01.09.2010](#)

Since the last adoption the act has been revised 5 times:

- 01.01.2011 - revision on the paragraphs regarding youth camp injunctions, charges in violation of the limitation on working with youth and children (regarding the transition to new currency - euro);
- 23.12.2013 - revision on the paragraphs regarding limitation on working with youth and children;
- 01.07.2014 - revision on the paragraphs regarding youth camps' organization, tasks of the Ministry of Education and Science, tasks of the county governors, permits of youth camps and requirements to the keeper of a youth camp, qualifications of youth camp counsellors and directors, governmental supervision over youth camps;
- 01.01.2015 - revision on the paragraphs regarding the limitations on working with youth and children;
- 18.01.2016 - revision on the paragraphs regarding the permits of youth camps and project camps, recognition of the professional qualifications of a foreign country.

Young people have been consulted. During the development of amendments in 2010 Estonian National Youth Council was active partner in designing the new regulations. There is a systematic approach to involving representatives of young people when amendments of the Youth Work Act are planned and discussed by the Ministry of Education and Research.

## **1.3 National youth strategy**

### **Existence of a National Youth Strategy**

Estonia does have a National Youth Strategy. In 2013, "Noortevaldkonna arengukava 2014-2020" ([Youth Field Development Plan 2014-2020](#)) was adopted by the government of Estonia. The document outlines strategic goals in the field of youth. The main goal introduced in the development plan is to provide young people with opportunities of development and self-realization which support socially coherent and creative society in general.

This development plan addresses causes of problems pertaining to young people (such as the growing emigration of youth, high unemployment rate of youth aged 15–19, the number of young people not studying or working, high relative poverty rate, problematic

health behavior, including in particular the risk behavior of young men) as well as strengthens positive trends. In the development plan, youth work is seen as a policy measure helping to implement activities aimed to achieve policy goals in the field of youth.

### Scope and contents

The main elements of the [Youth Field Development Plan 2014-2020](#) are the following:

- the starting points of the development plan, the background and an overview of the present situation of young people, their needs and opportunities;
- main principles, goals, activities and indicators for the years 2014-2020;
- the management and implementation of the development plan, monitoring and financing, connections to other national strategies and taking into account overarching topics.

The goals of the youth field for the years 2014-2020 are identified in the [Youth Field Development Plan 2014-2020](#). Adoption of the development plan announces a shift toward consolidation of youth field as a separate policy field both in terms of substantive goals as well as in terms of its position in Estonian administrative political system.

The difference of the current development plan from the previous similar documents is in the approach to focus on goals and measures that are designed to achieve a positive change in the challenges that were identified as most significant. The plan does not describe concrete measures in all areas of youth work and youth policy. The main goal of the development plan maintains that young people will have a comprehensive range of opportunities for self-development and self-realization, and that the youth field will support development of social cohesion and creativity in society in general.

### The plan contains four sub-goals:

- the young people will have more choices in terms of discovering their creative and developmental potential,
- the young people will face a lower risk of exclusion,
- the participation of young people in the decision-making will be supported more,
- the youth field operates more efficiently.

### Principles of national youth policy are outlined in the Youth Field Development Plan 2014-2020:

- to address the young people as a whole - it means that in order to implement really efficient activities to achieve any objective or solve any problem concerning young people, it is necessary to observe young people's living in its entity as well as factors affecting it and not to stay within the limits of an area of administration of the institutions or fields;
- to involve the young people - it means that the involvement is the tool to ensure the quality and impact of the planned measures;
- to achieve synergies - it means to pursue the greatest common impact through the use of different fields and knowledges.

### Main principles of the measures of the development plan:

- The target group consisting of youth is not homogeneous. In developing and implementing any measures and activities, the actual conditions and needs of specific group of young people must be followed and specialties arising from the gender, nationality, culture, state of health, place of residence, socio-economic situation, etc., must be taken into account.
- Youth work supports the health as well as values and attitudes promoting healthy lifestyle of youth through all the measures. This presumes the continuous development of competencies and tools of people working in the field of youth and relies on knowledge-based approach by target groups, training courses, tools and interventions.

- Youth affairs also contribute to the integration of society, including promotion of equality and prevention of discrimination as well as care for the surrounding environment.
- Upon developing and implementing measures of youth policy and youth work, it is important to assist youth in obtaining self-confidence and ability to cope with crucial spheres of life, such as studies, labour market, family relations, etc. The difficulties of youth must be early noticed and, if necessary, assistance must be provided to find the required professional support.
- Youth affairs form a part of the functioning cooperation between different areas related to the life of youth. If necessary, systemic cooperation must be initiated and the operation thereof must be supported.

### Responsible authority for the implementation of the Youth Strategy

Ministry in charge of youth is the [Estonian Ministry of Education and Research](#). Department responsible for youth is the [Youth Affairs Department](#). Main goals of the department:

- Developing legislation to ensure appropriate legislative environment for implementing youth policy.
- Ensuring purposefulness and consistency in implementation of youth policy.
- Planning of resources necessary for implementation of youth policy.
- Ensuring cohesiveness of youth policy.
- Holding a public dialogue with partners to come to a social agreement on questions pertaining to youth policy.

To succeed in achieving the goals listed above, the department carries out a range of tasks. The main task of the department is to arrange activities pertaining to youth policy and youth at the Ministry of Education and Research and to consult the Minister and other ministerial officials in youth policy and youth work related themes.

[Estonian Youth Work Centre](#) (Eesti Noorsootöö Keskus) is a national centre for youth work under the administrative authority of the Ministry of Education and Research - the national youth work agency. Its main objective is to develop and organize youth work in the framework of the national youth policy. It implements the [Estonian Youth Field Development Plan 2014-2020](#) and performs other functions arising from the Youth Work Act and other relevant laws.

Evidence-based monitoring or assessment of the implementation of the national development plan is being conducted annually through the indicators set in the development plan. The indicators and the results according to the [annual report from 2014](#) are the following:

Indicator	Starting level in 2012	Planned goal for 2014	Real result for 2014	Goal for 2020
The proportion of the young people aged 18-24 with basic education or lower, who do not continue their studies	10,5%	11%	11,6%	9,5%
The youth unemployment rate amongst young people aged 15-24	20,9%	17%	15%	10%
The involvement of young people in youth work (% of all young people)	42%	46%	47,4%	60%
Young people per hobby school*	596	525	492	400
Young people per youth center	1384	1250	1181	1000
The organized opportunities to participate (youth councils)	85	80	85	200
The satisfaction of young people in youth work	N/A	N/A	N/A	85%
The youth workers participating training programmes in a year	10%	8%	12,2%	15%

*\* A hobby school is an educational establishment operating in the area of youth work which creates an opportunity for the acquisition of hobby education and for the diverse development of the personality, including cultivation of one's own language and culture, in different areas of hobby education.*

### Revisions/updates

No revisions and updates have been made to the Estonian Youth Field Development Plan 2014-2020.

The consultation of young people and their representatives was important part of the development of the plan. There were online consultations, working groups and written consultation opportunities during the whole process.

## 1.4 Youth policy decision-making

### Structure of Decision-making

#### Governmental Level

The ministry in charge of youth is the [Ministry of Education and Research](#). The department in the ministry responsible for youth is the Youth Affairs Department.

Main goals of the department are as following:

- Developing legislation to ensure appropriate legislative environment for implementing youth policy.
- Ensuring purposefulness and consistency in implementation of youth policy.
- Planning of resources necessary for implementation of youth policy.
- Ensuring cohesiveness of youth policy.
- Holding a public dialogue with partners to come to a social agreement on questions pertaining to youth policy.

To succeed in achieving the goals listed above, the department carries out a range of tasks. The main task of the department is to arrange activities pertaining to youth policy and youth at the Ministry of Education and Research and to consult the Minister and other ministerial officials in youth policy and youth work related themes.

[Estonian Youth Work Centre](#) (Eesti Noorsootöö Keskus) is a national centre for youth work under the administrative authority of the Ministry of Education and Research - the national youth work agency. Its main objective is to develop and organize youth work in the framework of the national youth policy.

#### Local level

According to the [Local Government Organisation Act](#), the local governments have a key role in organizing the topics related to local life, including youth work. Most of the financing of youth work comes also from the budget and own income of the local municipalities.

#### Cooperation with other organizations

The main partners highlighted in the [Youth Field Development Plan's activity plan for 2014-2017](#) and in overall implementation of the youth policy are the following:

- the [Foundation Archimedes Youth Agency, Estonian NA for Erasmus+ programme](#) - cooperation regarding the financial support to youth projects from Erasmus+ programme; increasing the possibilities of international cooperation and the usage of its results; increasing the professionalization of youth workers, including through the development of level education and trainings and monitoring the competences; supporting the activities and sustainable development of the NA;
- the [Ministry of Culture](#) and the [Ministry of Finance](#) - cooperation regarding the new support scheme to increase the participation of young people in youth work;

- the [Association Estonian Open Youth Centres](#) - cooperation regarding the support to open youth work centres on local level and services for NEET-youth; cooperation regarding the creation of the opportunities for youth workers to get consulting and support; cooperation regarding the support for the development of the youth information system;
- the [Ministry of Interior](#) - cooperation regarding the prevention policy and the development of civil society;
- the [Ministry of Social Affairs](#) (labor market policy sector) and [Töötukassa](#) (Estonian Unemployment Insurance Fund) - cooperation regarding labor market policy for young people, including information and early working experience, as well as work with hard-to-reach youth;
- the [Ministry of Justice](#) and the [Ministry of Social Affairs](#) - cooperation regarding the development of methods to prevent, intervent, and rehabilitate youth risk behaviour. See also the programme "[Children and Youth at Risk](#)";
- the [Ministry of Social Affairs](#) (child and family policy sector) - cooperation regarding child participation, ensuring the well-being of the children, and the juvenile committees;
- the [Eesti Noorsootöötajate Ühendus](#) (Association of Estonian Youth Workers) - cooperation regarding the creation of the opportunity for youth workers to get consulting and support;
- the [Estonian National Youth Council](#) - cooperation regarding the support for the sustainable development of traditional forms of youth participation in decision-making, and the development of the funding system of annual support for youth organizations;
- the [Estonian National Youth Council](#), the [Foundation Archimedes Youth Agency](#) (Estonian NA for Erasmus+ programme), and the [Association Estonian Open Youth Centres](#) - cooperation regarding the development and support for new possibilities for the young people's participation;
- the [Ministry of Social Affairs](#), the [Ministry of Interior](#), and the [Ministry of Justice](#) - cooperation regarding ensuring the compliance with the principles of the development plan in the implementation of measures in policy fields the ministries are responsible for;
- the Ministry of Economic Affairs and Communications - cooperation regarding the development of e-services for youth and youth entrepreneurial spirit.

## Main themes

The main themes in the [Youth Field Development Plan 2014-2020](#) are creativity development, entrepreneurship, social inclusion and the development of employability, active participation in the society and decision-making, quality youth policy and development of youth work. The choice of themes was based on the particular situation of the youth, youth field and the challenges in the society. All fields of the EU are covered by the National Youth Strategy on the level of principles, horizontal topics or particular measures. Many topics are also covered by other strategies, for example the [Lifelong Learning Strategy](#), the [Integration Strategy](#), the [Health Strategy](#), etc.

The main target group for the Youth Field Development plan is according to the [Youth Work Act](#) young people aged 7-26. The plan does not narrow different measures for specific age groups.

## The National Agency for Youth

The National Agency for Youth Policy and Work is a government agency.

[Estonian Youth Work Centre](#) an agency under the administration of the [Ministry of Education and Research](#) which was established in 1999.

Estonian Youth Work Centre has a wide range of tasks for the implementation of youth policy and the development of youth work. For example, the centre:



- implements the Estonian Youth Field Development Plan 2014-2020 and performs other functions arising from the Youth Work Act and other relevant laws;
- manages the cross-sectorial programme for education, youth work, child protection, and justice;
- develops international cooperation;
- coordinates networking activities;
- awards and recognizes the professional qualifications of youth workers;
- recognizes the knowledge and skills acquired through youth work;
- assesses the quality of youth work;
- manages national youth monitor;
- finances and manages projects and programmes supported by national and EU structural funds;
- advises youth work providers and local municipalities;
- manages the Kloogaranna youth camp;
- organizes the Youth Information Fair „Teeviit“.

The [budget for Estonian Youth Work Centre](#) for the year 2017 is about 10 million euros.

## **1.5 Cross-sectoral approach with other ministries**

### **Mechanisms and actors**

#### **Mechanisms**

Cross-sectoral cooperation in youth policy is subject to the overall system of policy planning and delivery in Estonia.

At the structural level the drafting and adopting of sectoral development plans and strategies as well as implementation of them is framed by the [State Budget Act](#).

Paragraph 19 in the [State Budget Act](#) defines the **strategic development documents** and its aspects. The strategic development documents include the **general principles of policy** (a development document which determines the vision, national objective and priorities for one or several interrelated policy areas), **sectoral development plan** (a development document which comprehensively determines the general objective and sub-objectives for one or several policy areas and the indicators providing an opportunity to measure these, and the policy instruments through which it is planned to achieve the established objectives), **development plan of the area of government** (a development document which records the contributions by a ministry and the authorities in its area of government to the achievement of the general objectives of the performance areas) and **programme** (a development document which determines the measures, indicators, activities and financing scheme targeted at the achievement of a sub-objective of a policy area). It also states that the strategic development documents shall be mutually consistent and the constitutional institutions are not required to prepare the strategic development documents.

Paragraph 20 in the [State Budget Act](#) describes the preparation and implementation of strategic development documents and amendments thereto. All of the **general principles of policy-making** have to be approved by the Estonian parliament [Riigikogu](#) and that can happen either on its own initiative or on the proposal from the [Government](#) of the Republic. The **development plan of** has to be prepared for the budget strategy period and approved by the minister. The **programme** has to be prepared in compliance with the budget strategy period and approved by the minister.

As development plans and policy programmes make claims to state budget, all development plans are reviewed by the Ministry of Finance, which has the final word in deciding exact costs of a development plan or a programme.

The [State Budget Act](#) creates an organizational environment that implies collaboration between ministries and ministerial departments. The need to collaborate in the process of developing a sectoral development plan is stipulated also in the by-law [“Types of](#)

[strategic development plans. The order of drafting, updating, implementing, evaluation and reporting on development plans](#)". The by-law clarifies the strategic documents which need to be taken into account when drafting a development plan - national development plans aimed at increasing competitiveness of Estonia and the action plan of the Government of the Republic. These documents must be taken into account in the development plans and policy programmes targeting young people.

Consistent with the [State Budget Act](#), collaboration between ministries occurs in two contexts:

- drafting development plans and strategies;
- implementing the development plans, divided into two strands:
  - implementing policy programmes;
  - carrying out other activities.

For drafting a development plan or a strategy, the ministry responsible for a particular plan sets up a working group which has the task to lead the whole drafting process. In practical terms, this includes the exchange of information between departments and ministries using generally recognized practices of organizational work, including:

- exchange of official correspondence between ministries and offices;
- participation in working group meetings;
- expression of opinions and feedback on the draft of a development plan;
- informal exchanges of ideas.

In addition to inter-ministerial working groups, other working groups may be set up to involve other partners outside ministries.

All development plans and strategies contain a section, which explains the drafting process and gives the names and institutions that were involved in the process. Each development plan or strategy refers to a range of other strategic documents which influenced its goals and contents and to a number of representatives of other organizations participated in drafting the document.

## Actors

Activities for achieving goals and objectives outlined in the development plans and strategies as well as responsible institutions are described in the implementation plans where concrete activities are linked to implementing agencies and budget.

The leading role in all implementation plans is carried by the ministry responsible for a concrete development plan, but a considerable number of activities are carried out by other ministries or by several ministries or organizations jointly. Implementation plans indicate a considerable amount of inter-ministerial collaboration.

Below is a list of some activities and programmes that are implemented in collaboration between two or more ministries.

- The programme "[Youth Guarantee](#)" is a programme tackling youth unemployment which ensures that all young people under 25 – whether registered with employment services or not – get a good-quality, concrete offer within 4 months of them leaving formal education or becoming unemployed. The programme was initiated by the [European Commission](#) and in Estonia it is implemented in the collaboration of the [Ministry of Education and Research](#) and the [Ministry of Social Affairs](#). (Ministry of Social Affairs, 2016)
- Development of cross-sectoral policy making in the youth field, in cooperation of the [Ministry of Social Affairs](#), the [Ministry of Interior](#), the [Ministry of Justice](#), and [Estonian Youth Work Centre](#) (governmental organization under the administration of the [Ministry of Education and Research](#)).
- Support to learning Estonian, cultural integration, and provision of opportunities for youth participation, social activism and also labor market services to young people in cooperation of the [Ministry of Culture](#) and the [Ministry of Education and Research](#).



- Prevention of school bullying is carried out in the collaboration of the [Ministry of Justice](#), the [Ministry of Education and Research](#), and the [Ministry of Social Affairs](#).
- Activities aimed to decrease close relationship violence are carried out in cooperation of the [Ministry of Justice](#) and the [Ministry of Social Affairs](#).
- Activities aimed to increase the internet security of children is carried out in the collaboration of the [Ministry of Justice](#), the [Ministry of Social Affairs](#), and the [Ministry of Interior](#).
- Projects supporting the development of integration among young people with different background are carried out in cooperation of the [Ministry of Culture](#).
- The programme "[Children and Youth at Risk](#)" is implemented by Estonian Youth Work Centre in cooperation of the [Ministry of Education and Research](#), the [Ministry of Social Affairs](#), and the [Ministry of Justice](#). The programme is aimed to improve the well-being of children and young people (aged up to 26 in Estonia) through prevention and cross-sectoral cooperation.

For carrying out sectorial programmes and activities, the ministries rely on organizations within their area of administrative power. For instance, inside and outside the youth field, the ministries are in a close cooperation with (some examples):

- [Ministry of Interior](#):
  - [Police and Border Guard Board](#),
  - [Rescue Service Board](#).
- [Ministry of Social Affairs](#):
  - [National Institute for Health Development](#),
  - [National Social Insurance Board](#).
- [Ministry of Education and Research](#):
  - [Foundation Innove](#),
  - [Foundation Archimedes](#),
  - [Estonian Youth Work Centre](#).
- [Ministry of Culture](#):
  - [Integration and Migration Foundation Our People](#).

## 1.6 Evidence-based youth policy

### Political Commitment to Evidence-Based Youth Policy

In general, the entire Estonian public administration system uses the same framework of evidence-based policy making. There is also a framework for evidence-based youth policy. Identification of needs for drafting and planning, implementation and evaluation of public policy measures targeting young people follows the same rules as other sectors. As an exception, youth policy planning relies on the youth monitoring system [Noorteseire](#). The youth monitor helps to map the situation of the young people in related policy areas to create a holistic picture of the youth.

Assuring the quality of legislation in Estonia is the responsibility of the [Ministry of Justice](#). The ministry has developed regulations and recommendations to support the evidence-based policy making. The evaluation of expected impact of a legislative act constitutes the backbone of evidence-based policy processes, though this is not the only aspect which needs be taken into account. The following documents have been adopted to support evaluation and evidence based policy making in general:

- [Rules for Good Legislative Practice and Legislative Drafting](#),
- a form to initiate a discussion on drafting a legislative act,
- guidelines for impact evaluation.

In 2015, the [National Audit Office](#) published a report describing the utilization of research in policy making during 2010-2013. According to the report, in general, the ministries rarely live up to the good standards of utilizing the research and policy-relevant information in drafting legislative acts and policy programs.

A review of the sectorial development plans and strategies reveals that the plans were informed by the following type of information and research:

- general cross-sectional and longitudinal national statistics (e.g. demographic data);
- sectorial statistics (e.g. the rate of recidivism);
- European Union and EU member states' statistics obtained from Eurostat;
- earlier ministerial and sectorial policy documents containing analysis, analytical papers and reports (e.g. Integration monitoring);
- policy papers and recommendations of international organizations (e.g. OECD reports),
- reviews and evaluations of policy programmes (e.g. Blueprints Programs);
- opinion polls, time-series of opinion polls;
- academic research papers published in peer-reviewed journals.

The [Statistics Estonia](#) is a governmental agency under the administration of the Ministry of Finance. The main task of the Statistics Estonia is to provide public institutions, business and research circles, international organizations and individuals with reliable and objective information on the economic, demographic, social and environmental situation and trends in Estonia. In producing statistics, the Statistics Estonia is guided by the [Official Statistics Act](#).

In the process of drafting the Youth Field Development Plan 2014-2020, all available statistical information was used, also research and analyses.

The strategic planning in the youth field is considered to be on a very good level. As mentioned, there is the youth monitoring system, consultations with young people and social partners, cooperation with researches.

### **Cooperation between policy-making and research**

Each policy field in Estonia works in their own way for the connection between policy and research in general. (e.g. institutes, studies, analysis, department of the ministry). In the context of policy making, every ministry is responsible for carrying out research in its area of responsibility to assure that policy making is evidence-based. In the youth field the [Ministry of Education and Research](#) and [Estonian Youth Work Centre](#) manage the youth monitoring system [Noorteseire](#) and the research-practice-decision co-operation triangle.

[Estonian Youth Work Centre](#) (EYWC) has different research reports on youth work available on its website. The EYWC is also responsible for running the youth monitoring website ([www.noorteseire.ee](http://www.noorteseire.ee)) and for that the EYWC subcontracts a research organization.

Activities of the former Youth in Action programme, current Erasmus+ programme in Estonia have been subjected to evaluation studies since 2006, since the start of the previous programme period. Outcomes of the evaluation are presented in the cross-national website of this research initiative.

### **National Statistics and available data sources**

#### **National Statistics**

[Estonian Youth Work Centre](#) runs a website [Noorteseire](#) (Youth Monitor, [www.noorteseire.ee](http://www.noorteseire.ee)). This website gives an overview of studies related to youth, and some basic demographic, health, criminal behavior, education and labor market, youth work participation, social activism and leisure time spending preferences data on young people. Most of the data presented there comes from Statistics Estonia and some from other sources. The data is collected mostly annually, except for some researches that are conducted in every 2 or 4 years.

Besides data collected for the general population there are some indicators specially used for describing the situation of the young people. These indicators are set in the [Youth Field Development Plan 2014-2020](#). For example:

Indicator	Data collection body	Data collection time
The proportion of the young people aged 18-24 with basic education or lower, who do not continue their studies	Statistics Estonia	Annually in February
The youth unemployment rate amongst young people aged 15-24	Statistics Estonia	Annually in February
The involvement of young people in youth work (% of all young people)	Estonian Youth Work Centre (in cooperation with the Ministry of Education and Research and Statistics Estonia)	Annually in January
Young people per hobby school	Estonian Youth Work Centre (in cooperation with the Ministry of Education and Research and Statistics Estonia)	Annually in January
Young people per youth center	Estonian Youth Work Centre (in cooperation with the Ministry of Education and Research and Statistics Estonia)	Annually in January
The organized opportunities to participate (youth councils)	Estonian Youth Work Centre (in cooperation with the National Youth Council)	Annually in January
The satisfaction of young people in youth work	Estonian Youth Work Centre (in cooperation with a research company or organization)	First time in 2016, new results in 2018

A more general situation of the young people in the society can be obtained from the [Statistics Estonia](#) website.

As a part of the youth monitoring system [Noorteseire](#), a yearbook is annually published starting from 2009. The yearbook contains of two sections:

- a statistical overview of youth population in the country;
- an in-depth analysis or research of a specific theme.

Throughout the years the focal themes of the yearbook have been the following:

- 2009 – [Youth Monitor](#);
- 2010 – [Youth and labor market](#);
- 2011 – [Youth and youth work](#);
- 2012 – [Youth and social inclusion](#);
- 2013 – [Evaluation of the impact of youth work](#);
- 2014/2015 – [Young people with special needs and youth work](#);
- 2016 – [Non-formal and informal learning](#);
- 2017 – Participation of young people in decision making (will be published in 2018).

### Youth reports

There are regular EU youth reports submitted to the European Commission. The Statistics Estonia issues from time to time a general overview of the situation of children and young people at the national level. There are annual reports of the [Youth Monitor](#) and [Youth Field Programme](#) which are compiled by the [Ministry of Education and Research](#) in cooperation with Estonian Youth Work Centre. All reports are compiled in the first quarter of the year and published on the website of the [Ministry of Education and Research](#).

### Other data regarding the youth population

In 2016, there is a wide range of registers and databases which contain information on young people. Between the period of 2011-2020 the importance of the registers increases significantly because in 2020/2021 the national population and housing census

is planned to be conducted entirely register-based. The last survey-based census was conducted in 2010/2011.

Some examples from the registers and databases that contain information of young people that is relevant for assessing the situation of youth in society and for policy making:

- Estonian Education Information System EEIS ([Eesti Hariduse Infosüsteem EHIS](#)) - a state database holding data about education system. It covers preschool, general, vocational, higher, hobby, and adult education for students, pedagogical staff, institutions, curricula, school education certificates, and juvenile committees. The register is maintained by the [Ministry of Education and Research](#). There is another database [HaridusSilm](#) ("Eye of Education") which visualizes the information contained in EEIS.
- Social Services and Benefits Register STAR ([Sotsiaalteenuste ja -toetuste andmeregister STAR](#)) - a state database, which is used for carrying out case-based social work at the municipal level. The register is maintained by the [Ministry of Social Affairs](#).
- [Register of Employment](#) (Töötamise register) - a database of the Estonian Unemployment Insurance Fund ([Eesti Töötukassa](#)) which contains personalized information on employment status of every person.
- Population Register ([Rahvastikuregister](#)) - a database which unites the main personal data on Estonian citizens, citizens of the European Union who are registered residents in Estonia, and aliens who have been granted with a residence permit or right of residence in Estonia. The register is maintained and developed by the [Ministry of Interior](#).

An overview of academic research on young people can be obtained from [Estonian Research Portal](#) and the [Youth Monitor Portal](#).

### **Budgetary Allocations supporting research in the youth field**

There are concrete budgetary allocations for research in youth field each year (youth monitor, studies and researched, development). In 2017, the amount of 130 000 euros are planned for youth monitoring and research.

## **1.7 Funding youth policy**

### **How Youth policy is funded**

There is a specific budget for youth policy and youth work development. Different policy areas and measures are funded from different sources and responsible ministries, which include:

- national budget;
- municipal budgets (municipalities are responsible for youth work, social work, formal education system, local transport, hobby education);
- different taxes and funds (e.g. the Council of the Gambling Tax);
- private initiatives (e.g. entrepreneurship development programme ENTRUM in 2014/2015);
- European funds (e.g. European Social Fund);
- other foreign funds (e.g. EEA Grants and Norway Grants);
- other funds.

### **What is funded?**

Usually all of the sources are for funding the capacity building of service providers in youth work, including training, implementing of concrete measures and provision of the youth work services, analysis, and monitoring. There is no all-included overview of the funds spent on policy measures targeting young people in all areas of youth policy.

For 2016, the following sums have been allocated to the [Youth Affairs Department at Ministry of Education and Research](#) and to [Estonian Youth Work Centre](#) (including external funds):

- Budgetary Allocations supporting research in the youth field: 0,1 million euros;
- evaluation of the impact of activities targeting vulnerable young people: 0,18 million euros;
- the entire budget of the Youth Affairs Department (8 million euros) and Estonian Youth Work Centre (5 million euros): 13 million euros.

### Financial accountability

The financial accountability for public spending is the responsibility of the Ministry responsible for the policy area. Private legal entities like youth NGOs receive public funding based on contracts and the contract include an obligation to report both spending and results. Generally, the contracts do not include policy level indicators, however, this trend is increasing. Evaluation of the reports is mostly done in comparison to the agreements in the contract and plans usually defined in the application.

Funding from specific sources can have specific demand in terms of reporting (e.g. EU structural assistance, EEA Grants etc. have detailed schemes of reporting and accountability).

In general, all recipients of public funding have the financial accountability. Not all reporting activities have formal regulations.

According to the [Youth Work Act](#), the general state or administrative supervision of the state funding in the field of youth is the task of the Ministry of Education and Research. As the main funding of organizing youth work comes from the local municipalities, the recipients of their funding (youth associations, youth programmes and youth projects) have to report of the usage of the funds to the municipalities by the legislation set by the municipalities themselves.

[The funding of state programmes, youth research and youth work organizations](#) is set by the Minister of Education and Research. Each recipient of the funding will have a contract and will have to present a report (including a financial report) by the date set in the contract.

The Ministry of Education and Research has [annual grants for youth associations](#). The associations will have to report back to the ministry for both activities and funding.

### Use of EU Funds

In order to support the implementation of the [Youth Field Development Plan 2014-2020](#) are EU and EEA funds being used. The measures funded are the following:

- Increasing the availability of youth work services and involving young people at risk - the support for the regional cooperation in providing youth work services (primarily open youth work, hobby education and activities, youth camps, different forms of joint activities, including the activities of youth organizations). The priority areas are the ones with higher risk of youth exclusion.
- Increasing the exposure of young people to the working life, including youth initiative support, creation of occupational laboratories ("*kutselaborid*"), organizing working brigades and community work practice, and ensuring the availability of youth information - continued support to the actions, that help young people (including youth at risk) to enter the labor market, get working experience, and acknowledge and use the things learnt in youth work. There is support for undertakings that offer the young people working opportunities, voluntary activities in the community, and raising awareness of the world of work. The opportunities to experiment different professions and jobs in the occupational laboratories will be created. Raising the awareness of the young people will be implemented through the youth information service.

- Services for NEETs (Young People Not in Education, Employment or Training) - the creation of services that offer additional support for young people, who do not study nor work (NEETs), that would support their return to studies or labor market. The NEETs are searched for, motivated and involved in active activities, they will be offered individual support. Long-term individual support activities are offered for the young people in the most difficult conditions.
- Information regarding the situation of the young people will be collected and assembled, and the status of the youth at risk of exclusion will be analyzed.
- Assessment of the quality and impact of the activities - different evaluation and analyzing forms will be developed in order to assess the effectiveness of the work of youth workers.
- Trainings targeted to the people working in the youth field - in cooperation with different stakeholders of youth field and with the support of the European Social fund it is planned and initiated comprehensive training plans in four main groups:
  1. long-term development programmes to obtain the impact in a certain work field;
  2. thematic trainings, which are based on the priorities of the [Youth Field Development Plan 2014-2020](#) and the changes in the status of young people;
  3. regional trainings for supporting the cooperation and increasing the capabilities of different stakeholders in the municipalities;
  4. training that support international cooperation.
- Supporting the development and quality of the training system - with the support of the European Social Fund the training needs are assessed, the impact and results of the trainings are analyzed. New youth work methods are brought to use. The availability of the information connected to trainings will be increased and the information regarding the training results will be distributed.
- Improvement of the well-being of the children and young people through prevention and cross-sectorial cooperation.

## **1.8 Cross-border cooperation**

### **Cooperation with European countries**

The [Ministry of Education and Research](#) has [cooperation agreements](#) in the youth field with the [Flemish Community in Belgium](#) (including multilateral cooperation with Latvia and Lithuania), Finland, and China. In addition, there are some operational agreements with Japan and Ukraine. All agreements are primarily targeted at exchange of experience between youth policy makers, youth workers, youth work organizations, and youth.

Estonia has a separate [cooperation programme with Moldova](#) with the aim of analyzing the developments of youth policy and youth work in both countries.

In addition, bilateral agreements in the areas of education and culture include notions that support cooperation in youth field.

Estonia is a member of different networks, for example the European Youth Information and Counselling Agency - [ERYICA](#).

Estonia takes part in several youth field activities of the [Council of Europe](#). Estonia is participating in "No Hate Speech" campaign, and the youth centers' quality management and quality sign programme. Estonia also participates in other [Council of Europe](#) activities which the [European Steering Committee for Youth \(CDEJ\)](#) foresees to be carried out. Estonia annually contributes its share to the [European Youth Foundation](#).

### **International cooperation**

At the stage of implementation, an important mechanism of cross-border cooperation is the implementation of the policy programmes which have proved successful in other countries and have passed the test of being evidence-based. The implementation of the programmes in Estonia means frequent contacts and close cooperation with experienced



implementers of the programmes, which is required by the funders of the policy measure. At the present time, the list of such programmes includes:

- programme "[Children and Youth at Risk](#)" (Norway);
- programme "[Veel parem mina](#)" (VEPA - short version in Estonian) / "Even better me" (North-America);
- programme "[Kiusamisest vaba](#)" (KIVA - short version in Estonian) / "KiVa Anti-Bullying Program" (Finland);
- programme [Multidimensional Family Therapy](#) (US);
- programme [SPIN](#) (UK);
- programme [EXPECT-RESPECT](#) (US);
- programme [STEP / "High:Five"](#) (Denmark);
- programme [MARAC](#) (UK).

## **1.9 Current debates and reforms**

The following topics can be mentioned as the topics which are being developed currently:

- supporting child and youth participation and social activism, their involvement in decision-making and getting their opinion taken into account in the legislation and budgeting, but also in daily operation routines of institutions;
- providing support to the vulnerable young people suffering from their disadvantageous social background; this involves also prevention;
- increasing the opportunities of access to youth work services for all children and young people.

Currently, the [EU presidency](#) (2018 second half) takes place and lots of activities and events are being held.

## **2. Voluntary Activities**

Volunteering as an activity has a long history in Estonia. However, only since the turn of the millennium, has volunteering been approached in an organized way. The first national strategy on volunteering – Estonian National Development Plan for Volunteering 2007-2010 – was adopted in 2006. Since the very beginning, the [Ministry of Interior](#) has played an important role in the process of institutionalization of volunteering and civil society, as a partner to voluntary organizations and civil society. In Estonia, there is no legal definition of volunteering in general. See more in [Chapter 2.1.](#)

In Estonia, no distinct governance system exists for youth volunteering. There is no legislation on youth volunteering as such, but the volunteering has been described in the fields of rescue services. The [European Voluntary Service](#) is organized by the Youth in Action National Agency [Foundation Archimedes Youth Agency](#). See more in [Chapter 2.2..](#)

### **2.1 General context**

#### **Historical developments**

Volunteering as an activity has a long history in Estonia. However, only since the turn of the millennium, has volunteering been approached in an organized way.

In Estonia, the first steps towards obtaining an evidence-based overview of volunteering were based on studies of individuals volunteering in the context of NGOs and civil society. The First National Forum of Volunteers gathered on April 25, 2003 to discuss the problems of communication between individual volunteers and organizations. It was organized by the [Peipsi Center for Transboundary Cooperation](#), an NGO established in 1993, Tartu Volunteering Center, an NGO established in 2000 and [Network of Estonian Nonprofit Organizations](#), NENO, established in 1991.

The first national strategy on volunteering – Estonian National Development Plan for Volunteering 2007-2010 ([Eesti vabatahtliku tegevuse arengukava aastateks 2007-2010](#)) – was adopted in 2006. It followed the [Concept of Development of Civil Society in Estonia](#) which was adopted in 2002 by Estonian Parliament [Riigikogu](#).

Since the very beginning, the [Ministry of Interior](#) has played an important role in the process of institutionalization of volunteering and civil society, as a partner to voluntary organizations and civil society.

### Main concepts

In Estonia, there is no legal definition of volunteering in general.

At the moment, the highest administrative level definition appears to be the one which is used in the [National Civil Society Development Plan 2015-2020](#). The volunteering has been described on the level of laws also, for example in the rescue services.

Volunteering is defined as the commitment of time, energy or skills, out of one's free will and without getting paid. Volunteers help others or undertake activities mainly for the public benefit and the benefit of society. Helping one's family members is not considered to be voluntary activity.

A similar definition of voluntary activity in Estonia is provided in [ILO report](#): "activity voluntarily undertaken without pay to help someone other than members of your household or relatives". It can be any kind of help to individuals directly or through organizations or associations, also self-initiative joint action for improving the environment of your neighbourhood or community or activity for the benefit of society. The same definition, used at the end of 1990s, is also valid today and is used in the [National Civil Society Development Plan 2015-2020](#).

The [Youth Field Development Plan 2014-2020](#), which is the national strategic document in the field of youth, does not contain a definition of youth volunteering. However, volunteering is mentioned in three contexts:

- Youth volunteering as a way of taking part in youth work activities, which have a potential to contribute to development of skills and personal features (p.5, 6);
- Youth volunteering as a preparation for work life, as an opportunity to obtain work experience which is especially relevant for specific youth groups (p.9);
- Youth volunteering as a way of participation in local community life and strengthening local democracy (p.9).

## 2.2 Administration and governance of youth volunteering

### Governance

In Estonia, no distinct governance system exists for youth volunteering. There is no legislation on youth volunteering as such, but the volunteering has been described in the fields of rescue services. The [European Voluntary Service](#) is organized by the Youth in Action National Agency [Foundation Archimedes Youth Agency](#).

Instead, two other structures are being used for this purpose. On the one hand, youth volunteering takes place within the legislative and administrative framework for volunteering in general. This aspect of youth volunteering is structured by general civil society regulations and organizational practices. On the other hand, youth volunteering takes place within youth work settings (e.g. youth organizations, youth centres, youth projects, etc.). This aspect of youth volunteering is regulated by youth work regulations and organizational practices.

Supporting and organizing youth work is the responsibility of the [Ministry of Education and Research](#), more concretely Youth Affairs Department in the ministry.

Supporting and organizing the development of volunteering in general is the responsibility of the [Ministry of Interior](#). At ministerial level, themes and issues related to



volunteering are addressed in the [Civil Society Development Plan 2015-2020](#). In the development plan, volunteering is seen to be an integral part of civil society and NGO movement in the country.

For the period 2014-2018, the Ministry of Interior has set up a collaboration agreement in the field of volunteering development with [Kodukant](#), the Estonian Village Movement. Neither this collaboration agreement nor action plan for 2016 mention anything on youth volunteering specifically. However, the list of organizations in Volunteering Network, which is comprised of 30 organizations, includes also youth or youth work organizations ([Youth in Action National Agency](#), [The Foundation Domus Dorpatensis](#), [Association of Open Youth Centres in Estonia](#), [Estonian National Youth Council](#)). Young people volunteer through these organizations as well as through other organizations, for example [Estonian Food Bank](#), [Estonian Fund for Nature](#), [Estonian Society for the Protection of Animals](#), village movement [Kodukant](#) and others.

In 2017, there were no ongoing debates or discussion on whether the situation needs changing or in what direction and how much it might need changing.

### **Cross-sectoral cooperation**

As no distinct governance system for specifically youth volunteering exists, there is also no cross-sectorial cooperation regarding youth volunteering.

The Civil Society Development Plan addresses mainly the cooperation between the public sector and citizens' associations.

## **2.3 National strategy on youth volunteering**

### **Existence of a National Strategy**

There is no single strategy in Estonia on youth volunteering. Youth volunteering is addressed in the [Civil Society Development Plan 2015-2020](#), important policy in relation to the volunteering is also defined in the area of youth work in the Youth Field Development Plan 2014-2020. At the present time, the strategy for youth volunteering is not being discussed.

### **Scope and contents**

In the [Civil Society Development Plan 2015-2020](#), volunteering is seen as a method that supports the development of youth social-political activism and participation in society. According to the development plan, a challenge that needs to be addressed is that though young people have a good understanding of principles of participation, it does not always translate into actual behaviour. This situation has been identified as a call for ministerial action to support the development of civic activism among young people. Youth volunteering is also supported by the [Youth Field Development Plan 2014-2020](#). In the [Youth Field Development Plan 2014-2020](#), volunteering is mentioned in three contexts: as a way to acquire skills that might be useful in life, as a way to acquire first work experiences and as a way to develop civic activism.

### **Responsible authority**

There is no one and only responsible authority for youth volunteering. In the field of youth, the responsibility of general development is on the Ministry of Education and Research. The support for the development of civil society is the responsibility of the Ministry of Interior.

### **Revisions/Updates**

The two development plans described have not been updated or revised by the end of 2017.

## **2.4 Laws and regulations on youth volunteering**

### **Stand-alone law**

There is no stand-alone law on youth volunteering, neither is there a stand-alone law on volunteering in general. There are no national quality standards for youth volunteering. Youth volunteering and volunteering in general is regulated by laws and regulations which apply to respective areas of activity, including youth work.

### **Other official documents containing guidelines on youth volunteering**

There is no single strategy or an equivalent document in Estonia, nor has there been official guidelines on youth volunteering issued. Youth volunteering is addressed in the [Civil Society Development Plan 2015-2020](#), important policy in relation to the volunteering is also defined in the area of youth work in the Youth Field Development Plan 2014-2020.

### **Regulations on standards of quality**

There are no regulations on standards of quality in youth volunteering. The [European Voluntary Service](#) (EVS) is regulated in Estonia, organized by the [Foundation Archimedes Youth Agency](#). The EVS volunteers have to meet the requirements set internationally.

### **Target groups**

As there are no regulations on youth volunteering, the target group for it is also not regulated or set. In the youth field, the target group is young people aged 7-26.

## **2.5 Youth volunteering at national level**

### **National Programme for Youth Volunteering**

There is no national programme for Youth Volunteering.

### **Funding**

As there is no national programme for Youth Volunteering, there is also no funding description available.

### **Characteristics of youth volunteering**

Statistical overview of volunteering in general and youth volunteering in particular is poor as young people constitute only a part of all volunteers.

Overall volunteering activism of young people is high, in the age group 15-24 year olds, the highest percentage of young people report volunteering. According to a nationwide representative survey conducted in October 2013, young people aged 15-24 years old constitute 22% of all volunteers in the country. Because this age group is relatively small, compared to other age groups, this means that the rate of volunteering was the highest exactly in this age group.

	Volunteer, aware of volunteering	Volunteer, but not aware of volunteering	Not a volunteer
15-24 years old	32%	10%	58%
25-34 years old	22%	5%	73%
35-49 years old	28%	7%	65%
50-64 years old	19%	4%	77%
65-74 years old	20%	8%	72%

Volunteering in youth work and volunteering with/for children ranked third in the overall list of popularity of volunteering areas with 23% of respondents checking this response option. In 2009, the respective percentage was 29%.

## Support to young volunteers

The Network of Estonian Non-profit Organizations in cooperation with Estonian Youth Work Centre and the Ministry of Education and Research launched a programme “Kogukonnapraktika” (Eng. *Community practice*) in 2015. Supported by ESF and state budget the programme aims to introduce a practical community work as part of the curricula of civic education for upper secondary level. The cooperation programme provides students with the opportunity to experience short-term practical voluntary work period.

## Quality Assurance (QA)

There is no single system of quality assurance/quality guidelines specific to youth volunteering. There is a support for youth work quality initiated by Estonian Youth Work Centre and there is a mechanism to monitor policy implementation ([see chapter 5.5](#)), however the quality of voluntary activities of young people in youth work are not specifically covered.

## 2.6 Cross-border mobility programmes

### EU programmes

Several organizations are involved in cross-border volunteering networks and provide Estonian young people opportunities to volunteer abroad and foreign young people to volunteer in Estonia.

[Erasmus+ Youth in Action National Agency](#) implements the [European Voluntary Service](#) (EVS). [Archimedes Foundation](#) is the implementing body of Erasmus+ (Estonian National Agency). In 2013, the Estonian National Agency sent 93 Estonian volunteers abroad and helped to host 109 volunteers from abroad. In 2014, the Agency funded 33 volunteering projects.

EVS is also implemented by NGOs [Continuous Action](#) and [EstYES](#).

In addition to sending Estonian volunteers abroad, EstYES also organizes volunteering based youth camps in Estonia where volunteers from abroad are welcome.

### Other Programmes

Global Education Network of Young Europeans ([GLEN](#)) sends young volunteers to some African, Asian or Eastern-European countries for a three-month-long period. The programme has been running since 2003 and during this time, more than 50 volunteers have been supported. The programme is financed by the [Ministry of Foreign Affairs](#).

Since 2010, NGO [Mondo](#) has been involved in sending Estonian volunteers to African countries Ghana, Kenya and Uganda. Since 2014 also to Burma in Asia. By 2017, more than 40 volunteers have been to a mission in these countries.

## Legal framework applying to foreign volunteers

There is a specific regulation covering conditions to enter Estonia and apply for temporary residence permit in Estonia for youth volunteering. In general, volunteering is recognized as studies and therefore conditions that allow temporary residence permit for studying also apply in case of youth volunteering.

The [Aliens Act](#) defines specific regulation to volunteers coming to Estonia. There is an opportunity to get a residence permit on conditions similar to studies, when a person is applying for the permit and has come to Estonia as a volunteer. The Act defines that a temporary residence permit for study or volunteering may be issued to an alien “for voluntary service within the framework of a youth project or program recognised by the Ministry of Education and Research”. Specific requirements in the Act for voluntary service define, that a temporary residence permit for study may be granted for voluntary service under the following conditions:

- the activity of an alien in the framework of a youth project or program shall not be employment for the purposes of this Act, including that an alien shall not get remuneration for the activity;
- a youth association for voluntary service in the framework of whose youth project or program an alien is applying for residence permit shall bear the subsistence costs of an alien during his or her residence in Estonia;
- a youth association for voluntary service in the framework of whose youth project or program an alien is applying for residence permit, has entered into an insurance contract which would cover all medical costs caused by illness or injuries of an alien and;
- a contract of voluntary service has been concluded between an alien and the youth association for voluntary work within the framework of whose youth project or program an alien is applying for residence permit.

The contract of voluntary service entered into between an alien and the youth association for voluntary service in the framework of whose youth project or program an alien is applying for residence permit, has to describe:

- the duties of an alien;
- the tutoring conditions related to performance of the duties;
- working time of an alien;
- means for covering travelling, subsistence and accommodation costs and for allowances during the whole stay in Estonia and;
- the training provided to an alien for better performance of voluntary service if necessary.

## **2.7 Raising awareness about youth volunteering opportunities**

### **Information providers**

Foundation Archimedes Youth Agency has been most prominent promoter of voluntarism among young people through promoting European Voluntary Service for years covering different information channels and forms.

Information about youth volunteering opportunities is distributed via specific information channels accessed by young people interested in volunteering or other similar activities.

There is a specific portal to advertise voluntary work opportunities [www.vabatahtlikud.ee](http://www.vabatahtlikud.ee). The portal is supported by public funding and is coordinated by Eesti Külaliikumine Kodukant.

Voluntary placements are also a part of a private portal providing information about available jobs ([www.cv.ee](http://www.cv.ee)).

### **Key initiatives**

In 2016, the European Voluntary Service (EVS) turned 20 years old and there were [specific campaigns](#) regarding that coordinated by the [Foundation Archimedes Youth Agency](#).

## **2.8 Skills recognition**

### **Policy Framework**

There is no existing policy framework for skills recognition specially for volunteering activities. However, the recognition and validation of the learning and work experience, including in non-formal and informal learning environments, is been long actual in education and youth policies. There is a legal framework allowing prior learning and work experience to be recognised and validated in the formal education system (see also [chapter 3.6.](#)). Also, for example youth workers can obtain a qualification through a procedure of validating prior learning and work experience, including voluntary work.

The Youth Field Development Plan 2014-2020 highlights the continuous importance of developing the awareness about the learning that takes place in non-formal environment.

### Existing arrangements

There are different tools for skills recognition in youth volunteering. Below are listed a few of the existing arrangements:

The Volunteer Pass is a document that presents skills acquired through volunteering activities. The Pass has been developed after the examples of Youthpass and Europass. It uses the lifelong learning 8 key competences framework for presenting and analyzing of competences acquired in voluntary activities. In general, the list of skills is written up by the volunteer him- or herself; it is a self-assessment exercise. The Pass is primarily used as a tool which aids the volunteer to analyse and understand what competences he or she has acquired during a volunteering activity. Also, educational institutions, firms and NGOs may take the information presented in a person's pass into account when selecting students or recruiting employees.

The Launchpad or [Stardiplats](#) is a tool for young people to describe their experiences obtained from formal, non-formal and informal learning. It helps the young people to compile a CV containing all relevant experiences for applying for a job.

However, taking the information presented in the pass is up to the organizations. There is no official system of recognition of the pass which would define the status and value of the information presented there.

## 2.9 Current debates and reforms

During the development of Youth Guarantee scheme in Estonia in 2014, a question of providing more opportunities for young people to acquire first work experience through voluntary work was raised. The debate of recognising the voluntary work done by young people in the context of youth work as a valuable experience by employers and also formal education is continuously going on in Estonia also currently.

## 3. Employment & Entrepreneurship

There is no single body responsible for youth employment and entrepreneurship as the domain covers several policy areas – most importantly education, youth, labour market, economic affairs - which have established different division of tasks between different ministries responsible for policy areas and between local and central level. The main Governmental authorities relevant to youth employment and entrepreneurship:

- the [Ministry of Economic Affairs and Communications](#): responsible for developing entrepreneurship and economic affairs;
- the [Ministry of Education and Research](#).: responsible for youth policy and education policy;
- the [Ministry of Social Affairs](#): responsible for labour market policy, but also for social protection and services including child and family policy.

See more in [Chapter 3.2](#).

The guidance services are currently financed with the support of EU structural assistance, specifically ESF. The services in the education sector (which are more directly targeted to youth and which also include pedagogical counselling and other support for learning) have a dedicated budget 34 927 542 euros for the years 2014-2020. The services provided as the active labour market measures (where young people are one of the target groups among other population) have a dedicated budget 5 200 004 euros for the years 2015-2020. See more in [Chapter 3.4](#). Currently in Estonia, apprenticeship studies

are less common than traditional school-based programmes. Workplace-based study-schemes are not used widely. See more in [Chapter 3.5](#).

### **3.1 General context**

#### **Labour market situation in the country**

The National Reform Programme “Estonia 2020” ([Konkurentsivõime kava „Eesti 2020”](#)) provides the following analyses of the main trends over the years.

Since regaining of independence in 1992, the Estonian economy has grown nearly tenfold. Estonia saw extraordinary economic growth from 2001-2007. A correction began already in 2007, when the growth rate began gradually decreasing. After the 2008-2009 crisis, the economy has grown slowly. In 2015 the real growth was slower than its potential and reached 1,1% by first estimation. According to the evaluation of different institutions, the growth potential in Estonia is 2-3% per year. Estonia’s GDP growth up to 2007 was impacted above all by changes in the number of employed people and the productivity of the workforce.

Estonia’s future demographic trends are similar to the general trends in Europe. The population decrease in the 1990s has not yet impacted the percentage of the working-age population but a noteworthy impact will become evident in the coming years. The decrease in population will take place primarily in the working-age population (15-64-year-olds); and in 20 years, according to Eurostat estimates, Estonia will have more than 100,000 fewer working-age people. To maintain the economy at the current volume, there will be an increasing need for employees each year. Current rising employment and, in the long term, the readiness of those 65 years of age and older to work should help soften the decrease in the working-age population.

Labour market policy in Estonia is formulated by the Ministry of Social Affairs and delivered by the National Unemployment Insurance Fund. These institutions are also responsible for evaluating labour market policies and programs. Estonia introduced the active labour market measures in 1993. A significant change in labour market protection took place in July 2009 when the new [Employment Contracts Act](#) came into force. One of the principal goals of the employment law reform was to increase labour market flexibility and improve labour mobility, most important change was the reduction in the cost of terminating an employment relationship i.e. a reduction of the notice period and the amount paid in severance payments. After the reform in labour market protection induced by the economic recession 2008, it can be said that labour in Estonia does not enjoy a high level of protection. On the contrary, traditional institutions of protection against labour market risks (trade unions, employment contracts law, social security transfers) are weak.

In the Welfare Development Plan ([Heaolu arengukava 2016-2023](#)) lists the following challenges in achieving and maintaining a high level of employment the compliance between the supply and demand of the workforce, and the quality of working life, which ensures sustainability and a growth of competitiveness:

- insufficient qualifications, as well as limited occupational and geographical mobility;
- lack of awareness about the different aspects of working life and unequal treatment in hiring and in an employment relationship;
- wage poverty and traps of unemployment and inactivity;
- working conditions that do not consider the changes in the labour market, as well as economic changes do not support the establishment of smart jobs and the safe movement between various forms of employment;
- changed employment relationships and the formal involvement of employees does not motivate participating in the collective shaping of working conditions.

Target groups defined in the document as groups obstacles of which in participating in the labour market need special attention are young people 15-24, elderly, residents



whose native language is not Estonian (mostly Russian-speaking population), new immigrants (including beneficiaries of international protection), people, who have been looking for a job for a long time or who have been away from the labour market for a long time, people with decreased work ability.

### *Youth employment*

In Estonia, after reaching one of the highest levels of youth unemployment rate in Europe during the financial crisis (32.9% in Estonia vs 21% in EU-28 in 2010), the situation stabilized fast and the share of youth searching for a job is lower in comparison with most other European countries (13,1% in Estonia and 20,4% in EU in 2015) The level of youth unemployment in Estonia still remains higher compared to the prime-age population, indicating the presence of barriers for youth in entry to the labour market.

Similarly, to other European Union countries, there is a high risk of unemployment in Estonia among young people who have a lower level of education and do not have a professional education. The proportion of young people who are neither in employment nor in education (the so-called NEET youngsters) is also high (in 2014, 11.7% of all young people). The fact that they do not have any or have insufficient experience in employment or practical work means that they are not as competitive in the labour market. The obstacles for young people entering the labour market include the restrictions of the labour and tax regulation, and the fact that young people are at a higher risk of suffering from work accidents.

Also youth tend to turn less to the local employment office for support in case of unemployment, for example, in 2015 only 34% of the unemployed youth (age 15-24) turned to the Estonian Unemployment Insurance Fund, while out of the prime-age group 47% turned to the Fund.

During economic recession 2008-2010 young people, compared older age groups, experienced a higher increase in unemployment, decrease in working hours and decrease in wages. National Reform Programme "Estonian 2020" ([Konkurentsivõime kava „Eesti 2020“](#)) defines young people, in transition from education to labour market and NEET-youth as risk groups at the labour market.

### **Main concepts**

The Welfare Development Plan ([Heaolu arengukava 2016-2023](#)) states, that employment gives people an opportunity for self-realisation and financial security and is, therefore, one of the main prerequisites for socio-economic development, and a basis for a high-quality life. The approaches and recurrent principles of the plan arise from the principles of a social and welfare state, the framework of fundamental and social rights, and social protection principles. On the one hand, the principle of a social state is ensuring that the strengthening of the state's economic development and competitive ability takes into account the needs of different social groups. On the other hand, the adherence to the principle of a social state is a premise for the state's economic development and competitive ability, as it prevents and reduces the exclusion of parts of the population from the social and economic life. The document points out, that it is necessary to find solutions in accordance with the general shift of welfare state policies: transferring from the policy that compensates social risks and repairs their consequences, to the policy that empowers and prepares people to cope with the risks. In addition to traditional social protection, increasing people's self-sufficiency and their social and professional activity has become more and more important.

In economic affairs and entrepreneurship, the Government considers important to focus both on raising the ambition of entrepreneurs as well as on enhancing research and development activities, innovation and investments and export. In terms of employment, focus is on bringing about the structural changes in the labour market by increasing the share of jobs creating higher added value.

*Definitions in use*

- Economically active population / labour force – persons who wish and are able to work (total of employed and unemployed persons).
- Economically passive / inactive population – persons who do not wish or are not able to work.
- Employed – a person who during the reference period worked and was paid as a wage earner, entrepreneur or a free-lancer; worked without direct payment in a family enterprise or on his / her own farm; was temporarily absent from work.
- Unemployed – a person who fulfils the following three conditions: he or she is without work (does not work anywhere at the moment and is not temporarily absent from work); he or she is currently (in the course of two weeks) available for work if there should be work; he or she is actively seeking work.
- Entrepreneurship – attitude based on personality, characterised by creative and innovative thinking, need for accomplishment and capability to implement thoughts and ideas
- Entrepreneurship education – education developing entrepreneurship and preparing to be entrepreneur, that deals with complexity of creating and developing an enterprise

## **3.2 Administration and Governance**

### **Governance**

The legislation is liberal and offers a lot of flexibility in agreeing on terms and conditions of employment. Regulations regarding employment and labour contracts are regulated by the [Employment Contracts Act](#). According to [Human Capital Report](#) Estonia is a success story with regard to successful human capital potential maximization, ranking 15th globally. The Estonian labour market can be described by:

- highly skilled workforce
- 86% of adults speaking at least one foreign language
- low unionisation
- simple and straightforward labour legislation
- easy hiring and job contract termination processes

The employment market policy is developed in tripartite social dialogue representing employees, employers and the Government.

There is no single body responsible for youth employment and entrepreneurship as the domain covers several policy areas – most importantly education, youth, labour market, economic affairs - which have established different division of tasks between different ministries responsible for policy areas and between local and central level.

There is a mechanism established to ensure harmonised policy-making and implementation. There is a mechanism established to ensure harmonized policy-making and implementation that also covers youth social inclusion. The central position in this mechanism - approving the propositions to develop a policy document or to change the existing one, monitoring the implementation through approving the action plans and their reports and also monitoring the cooperation and in case of need initiating the cooperation - is granted to the [Government](#) and the [Government Office](#). The [Ministry of Finance](#) also plays a coordinating role in planning, monitoring and ensuring division of resources of different financial instruments including state budget, among all the policy fields.

The main Governmental authorities relevant to youth employment and entrepreneurship:

- the [Ministry of Economic Affairs and Communications](#): responsible for developing entrepreneurship and economic affairs
- the [Ministry of Education and Research](#).: responsible for youth policy and education policy



- the [Ministry of Social Affairs](#): responsible for labour market policy, but also for social protection and services including child and family policy

Main public actors and foundations of policy fields relevant to youth employment and entrepreneurship:

- [Social Insurance Board](#), an agency of the Ministry of Social Affairs, responsible for social insurance benefits and child protection services;
- Estonian Unemployment Insurance Fund, a public legal entity acting in the area of the Ministry of Social Affairs and responsible for provision of labour market services, governed by the tripartite Supervisory Board composed of the representatives of the Government, employees (the Confederation of Estonian Trade Unions, the Estonian Employees' Unions' Confederation) and employers (the Estonian Employers' Confederation);
- [Estonian Youth Work Centre](#), an agency of the Ministry of Education and research responsible for implementation of youth policy;
- [Foundation Enterprise Estonia](#), an independent body established by the government under the Ministry of Economic Affairs and Communications, which helps to carry out innovation and enterprise policy through different support schemes, counselling and training;
- [Foundation Innove](#) an independent body established by the government under the Ministry of Education and Research; coordinates the development of career guidance system, supports development of vocational education;
- [Foundation Archimedes](#), an independent body established by the government under the Ministry of Education and Research, responsible for implementing youth policy, National Agency for Erasmus+ education institutions of Estonia.

The main non-public actors:

- [Estonian Chamber of Commerce and Industry](#), representative of the Estonian business community, which mission is to develop entrepreneurship in Estonia;
- [Estonian Employers' Confederation](#), includes all the main industrial associations and many large businesses in Estonia;
- [Confederation of Estonian Trade Unions](#), umbrella organisation for trade unions;
- [Estonian Employees' Unions' Confederation](#), an organisation uniting different professional unions;
- [Estonian Association of Youth Centres](#), implementing youth work including activities for NEET;
- [National Youth Council](#), the umbrella organization of youth associations and youth organizations.

## Cross-sectorial cooperation

There is no single body responsible for youth employment and entrepreneurship as the domain covers several policy areas – most importantly education, youth, labour market, economic affairs - which have established different division of tasks between different ministries responsible for policy areas and between local and central level.

There is a mechanism established to ensure harmonised policy-making and implementation. The central position in this mechanism - approving the propositions to develop a policy document or to change the existing one, monitoring the implementation through approving the action plans and their reports and also monitoring the cooperation and in case of need initiating the cooperation - is granted to the Government and the Government Office. The Ministry of Finance also plays coordinating role planning, monitoring and ensuring division of resources of different financial instruments including state budget, among all the policy fields.

### 3.3 Skills Forecasting

#### Forecasting system(s)

##### *System of labour market monitoring and future skills forecasting OSKA*

There is an ongoing initiative by the Government to develop OSKA - a system of labour market monitoring and future skills forecasting. The initiative is under the responsibility of the Ministry of Education and Research and the implementing agency is Estonian Qualifications Authority.

OSKA provides accurate and clear information on society's labour market opportunities and needs as well as on the existing skills at the level of individuals for developing educational choices and policies in the key sectors of Estonian society. OSKA analyses the needs for labour and skills necessary for Estonia's economic development over the next 10 years. The aim of the action is to build platforms of cooperation between employers and education providers; to analyse the development opportunities and needs of different sectors of the Estonian economy; to prepare labour market training requirements based on various activities or professions to facilitate the planning of education provision at different levels of education and by types of school as well as in the fields of retraining and in-service training.

The implementation of OSKA is overseen by the OSKA Coordination Council, which consists of the representatives of the Ministry of Education and Research, Ministry of Economic Affairs and Communications, Ministry of Social Affairs, Ministry of Finance, the Estonian Employers' Confederation, the Estonian Chamber of Commerce and Industry, the Estonian Service Unions' Confederation, the Estonian Trade Union Confederation and the Estonian Unemployment Insurance Fund. The implementation of OSKA is funded from the European Social Fund. The web-page of the initiative is <http://oska.kutsekoda.ee/en/>.

##### *Occupational barometer*

In addition, the Estonian Unemployment Insurance Fund launched in 16.12.2016 an initiative "[Occupational barometer](#)". The occupational barometer is a qualitative method of forecasting short-term labour demand by occupation. The estimates are compiled by the regional departments of the Estonian Unemployment Insurance Fund, which involve external experts wherever possible. Labour demand forecasts look at two indicators. Firstly, an evaluation is made of how employers' demand for labour force will change in the next 12 months, and especially how employers' demand for specific occupations will change. Secondly, the balance between labour supply and demand after the next 12 months is evaluated.

#### Skills development

Bringing labour qualification into conformity with the needs of the contemporary labour market and increasing the share of people with professional education at the vocational or higher educational level, is one of the aims of the National Reform Programme "Estonian 2020" ([Konkurentsivõime kava „Eesti 2020“](#)).

In order to cater this need and to ensure that the education system has relevant input to develop the offer and content of the formal and adult education, the coordination system OSKA was created. The implementation of the coordination system of monitoring labour needs and developing skills will facilitate the planning of the structure, volume and content of formal education, adult education system and in-service training, the development of curricula and career planning and will help employers in their efforts to develop the skills of their employees.

In addition, the described barometer launched in December 2016 by the Estonian Unemployment Insurance Fund helps to raise awareness about the real links of the labour market demand and skills.

## **3.4 Career Guidance and Counselling**

### **Career guidance and counselling services**

Young person in Estonia can use the offer of guidance and counselling services as part of education system and as part of active labour market services.

#### Education system service

Lifelong guidance has been practiced in Estonia for years. The service has been called in different ways – the latest version being "*career services and counselling services for special educational needs*".

The national basic school (the basic compulsory education is the nine-year comprehensive school) curriculum and national upper secondary school curriculum include eight compulsory central topics (cross-curricular topic), one of them is the topic which supports pupils' career planning: "Lifelong learning and career planning". In addition, the curricula are accompanied by the syllabi of the elective subject and elective course in careers education, which enhance the use of this possibility in the school curriculum.

In addition to the guidance opportunities provided in the framework of the curriculum, there are centres to provide the service outside the school for young people. There are 16 centralised public centres in all counties. The regional youth guidance centres, called Pathfinder centres (Rajaleidja), provide career information, career counselling, psychological, socio-pedagogical, special education counselling and speech therapy. Career guidance is provided for young people up to 26 years. The other 4 services are focused on the need of children and youth (aged 1,5 – 18) with special educational needs and practitioners main direct target group is school personnel and parents.

Foundation Innove hosts also a career planning portal [Rajaleidja](#) (Pathfinder). The portal aims to support youth, adults and practitioners, providing information on career planning, work and education possibilities in Estonia and abroad. Rajaleidja network also has [Facebook site](#) and every regional centre has an open group there.

Education-oriented [tudengiveeb.ee](http://tudengiveeb.ee) (Studentweb) provides the opportunity to apply for the jobs and internships, to order delivery to your e-mail of job and internship offers in your preferred field, receive information and direct references to living, studying and working in Estonia

Guidance services in the education system are independent from Youth Guarantee's scheme.

#### Labour market service

The provision of national labour market services including career information service and career counselling and the payment of labour market benefits in Estonia is organised by the Estonian Unemployment Insurance Fund through its regional departments, which are located in every county. The legal basis of the activities of Estonian Unemployment Insurance Fund is the [Unemployment Insurance Act](#), which describes the unemployment insurance system and the organization of Unemployment Insurance Fund, and the [Labour Market Services and Benefits Act](#), which contains the provisions concerning job mediation and related services. Career information is accessible through Unemployment Insurance Fund web portal and public career information rooms in the offices of Unemployment Insurance Fund are open to all, including the opportunity to take part in the workshops and receive help finding career information. Starting from 2015 career counselling in Unemployment Insurance Fund is open to all people (being previously limited to groups of population already having problems at the labour market ie unemployed).

Unemployment Insurance Fund (Estonian PES) at [www.tootukassa.ee](http://www.tootukassa.ee) has a self-service portal for job-seekers and employers. Job Seekers can do following: draw up a CV, look/apply for a job, receive automatic job offers, fill in job-search diary, follow-up

decisions regarding registration and benefits, follow up the activities in the individual action plan, search and register for a training course, notify of getting a job, submit registration application, submit unemployment benefits applications, apply for a business start-up subsidy and follow up services and upload business reports.

In addition, there are several job search portals available for job-seekers by private providers.

There are services available through helpline by phone – one central service in labour sector is available for all introducing services and disseminating contact information; regional services within education sector – every regional centre has publicly announced phone. Pathfinder ([rajaleidja.ee](http://rajaleidja.ee)) has central e-mail service. When client identifies the region of origin, relevant regional centre is responsible for the response. Unemployment insurance fund has opened services through Skype, job seeker can contact and get career information on skype: [karjaari.info](http://karjaari.info).

Guidance services in the education system are independent from Youth Guarantee's scheme.

#### Main actors

Lifelong guidance services are provided both in public and private sector. At national policy level, the responsibility is divided by two authorities – Ministry of Education and Research and Ministry of Social Affairs (labour affairs). The two main public service providers in the field of lifelong guidance are Foundation Innove in education sector and Unemployment Insurance Fund (Estonian PES) in employment sector. Foundation Innove provides services in and its' guidance centres in counties (16 centres, Rajaleidja keskused, Pathfinder centres) and Unemployment Insurance Fund has labour offices in all counties. Educational institutions are there for learners in formal education.

#### Lifelong guidance forums.

Co-operation, co-ordination and exchange of information within the institutional network in the fields of education, guidance, youth work and employment is essential to efficient and coherent guidance systems. Lifelong guidance forums are an important feature to bring together actors and stakeholders in partnerships. Estonian career guidance forum was established in 2008, when involved stakeholders agreed that there is a need for a common understanding and leadership, strategic thinking at national level. The membership includes representatives from the ministries of education, labour and economy, public employment service, training institutions, employer, client and practitioner organizations. Since 2012 the scope of the forum enlarged – special focus is on children and youth with special educational needs.

Guidance services are independent from Youth Guarantee's scheme.

### **Funding**

The guidance services are currently financed with the support of EU structural assistance, specifically ESF. The services in the education sector (which are more directly targeted to youth and which also include pedagogical counselling and other support for learning) have a dedicated budget 34, 9 million euros for the years 2014-2020. The services provided as the active labour market measures (where young people are one of the target groups among other population) have a dedicated budget 5,2 million euros for the years 2015-2020.

### **Quality assurance**

The quality of guidance services is supported for both sectors (i.e. education and labour market) through activities of the Foundation Innove, which coordinates the guidance service for education sector. The Foundation Innove coordinates cooperation, networking, research and methodological support for guidance services.

Guidance research in Estonia is procurement based i.e. there is no dedicated funding allocated for any national research units and there are several organizations including universities and private companies, which have experience in the field.

In 2006 and 2011, two major national studies were undertaken by Foundation Innove to build the evidence-base for career guidance. The aim of the study was to evaluate the citizens' awareness of career services and their career planning skills, analyse the availability of career services and cooperation between different stakeholders at providing career services in Estonia. Latest research in 2014 focused on the practical aspects of career specialists' trainings, methodical materials, and the productivity of Estonian national and regional forums and impact of career education. (See <http://www.innove.ee/en/lifelong-guidance/surveys>).

There are specific indicators set to measure the results of the activities in the period 2014-2020:

- Share of students who have newly benefitted from individual career information and/or individual counselling in the third level of basic education and who are pursuing studies at the next educational level on 10 November of the calendar year following the completion of lower secondary education
- Share of small (less than 150 students) general educational schools which use ESF supported counselling services provided by regional guidance centres
- Number of children, learners and young people who have received individual educational guidance and career services
- Number of students who have received individual career information and/or counselling in the third level of basic education

The outcomes of the quality assurance activities implemented in Estonia support further development of the services and design of policy measures. As the services are currently financed by ESF, the conditions apply set for EU structural assistance.

### **3.5 Traineeships and Apprenticeships**

#### **Official guidelines on traineeships and apprenticeships**

The Lifelong Learning Strategy 2020 (EÕS) foresees development of both apprenticeships and the placement system (traineeship). The strategy foresees also an analysis of share of traineeships in curricula on both the higher and vocational education level, according to the needs of the labour market, and respective amendments will be proposed.

Currently in Estonia, studies based largely on apprenticeship are less common than traditional programmes. Workplace-based study-schemes are not used widely. Most relevant is the issue in vocational education, where every year, some 500-600 students study in vocational education institutions under workplace study arrangements. Expanding workplace based study form in Estonia is one of main goals for vocational education training system till 2020.

There is a legal definition of workplace based studies (used as a synonym for apprenticeships) in vocational education. According to the regulation by the Minister of Education and Research about the conditions and procedure for the organization of workplace based studies, workplace based studies constitute a specialised form of vocational education where the ratio of practical assignments undertaken in companies or institutions encompasses at least two thirds of the curriculum („[Töökohapõhise õppe rakendamise kord](#)"). There have been no legislative changes following the adoption of the Quality Framework for Traineeships in 2014. The student achieves the learning outcomes described in the curriculum by fulfilling working tasks at the company. The remainder of the studies will be undertaken at school. Workplace based studies are conducted upon signing an intern contract between the school, student and employer, which stipulates the rights and obligations of parties as well as the exact details of the learning process. The employer has to recompense the student for tasks performed to the amount agreed

upon in the intern contract. The agreed wages must not be less than the statutory minimum wage established by the government. In cases where the student and employee are already bound by a valid employment contract, no extra wages are paid.

Open market traineeships ie practical experience offered by the companies - which are most often offered to students, but are outside the formal education curricula and therefore not controlled by the educational institution – are not regulated in Estonia. Since 1 July 2014 it is required to register any person working (or doing any activities, including as a trainee) in the premises of the employer at the Tax and Customs Board. This also includes the case where there is no salary/wage provided – in this case work has to be registered as volunteering. Conditions for active labour market policy (ALMP) measures are regulated by Labour Market Services and Benefits Act. The regulations for ALMP type traineeships largely comply with the Quality Framework for Traineeships recommendations, with the exception of the proper recognition of the traineeship and transparency regarding hiring chances.

The activities to support traineeships and apprenticeships are independent from Youth Guarantee's scheme.

### Promoting traineeships and apprenticeships

Currently the Ministry of Education and Research launched a programme PRÕM for the years 2015-2020 to support the development and the quality of traineeships and apprenticeships in formal education (legal base of the initiative: Regulation by the Minister of Education and Research „[Tegevuste „Praktikasüsteemi arendamine kutse- ja kõrghariduses sh õpetajakoolituse koolituspraktika” ja „Kutsehariduse maine tõstmine, töökohapõhise õppe laiendamise” \(PRÕM\) toetuse andmise tingimused](#)”, 2015). It is planned that 8 000 apprenticeship study places will be created and 6 000 apprentices will acquire qualification in the period 2015-2020. This measure will help in reducing the share of people without professional qualification or vocational training; and a workplace-based study form will also be more widely used in Estonia. Under the programme the following activities will be supported relevant to the issue:

- development of systems for traineeships and apprenticeships in vocational and higher education including, trainings, guidelines, best practice etc.;
- raising awareness about importance of practical studies incl. information dissemination materials, events etc. in cooperation with the organization representing employers;
- monitoring and research for better traineeships and apprenticeships;
- support to cover transportation and accommodation costs for students;
- development of traineeships in teacher training;
- support to create apprenticeship study places;
- promotion of vocational education.

The implementation agency is the Foundation Innove.

There are also initiatives to highlight importance of the traineeships and apprenticeships in education both for young people and for employers such as the special issue on [national newspaper](#) in 2016. The Ministry of Education and Research is promoting the importance of [practical studies, especially in vocational education](#).

### Recognition of learning outcomes

In Estonia, the qualifications acquired in general, vocational and higher education are described on the basis of learning outcomes (competences). The principles of the recognition of non-formal and informal learning (recognition of prior learning and work experience; in Estonian: *varasema õpi ja töökogemuse arvestamine* (VÕTA)) have been defined by legislation.

Qualification awarding bodies, including educational institutions and awarding bodies of vocational qualifications, prepare their procedures for the recognition of prior learning and work experience (VÕTA procedures) following these principles.



Currently a person can have his or her prior learning and work experience (including apprenticeship and traineeship) evaluated and recognised by the designated body (VÕTA commission) of the educational institution. Educational institutions may recognise prior learning and work experience both on the completion of the curriculum and when awarding qualifications recognising the prior learning and work experience as a ECTS and ECVET ie it is possible to obtain credits on the bases of priori learning, traineeships and apprenticeships. Educational institutions must inform students about the conditions of and procedure for the recognition of prior learning and work experience, including the terms and cost of assessment as well as the conditions of contesting the results, and ensure that all applicants have access to the necessary information, guidance and counselling.

The learning gained through work-related, hobby or other daily life activities is proved by reference to or presentation of completed works, a portfolio of samples, a copy of a professional certificate, employment contract, certificate of appointment or any other documentary evidence. Similar approach is used both in vocational and higher education. In the period 2009-2013, different universities fully accepted more than 35,000 applications for the recognition of prior learning and work experience, non-formal learning (including continuous education and training), informal learning (including work experience), multi-component recognition (a combination of formal, non-formal and informal learning recognition). Students have the right to apply for prior learning and work experience to be recognised as the completion of the entire study programme, except for the final thesis. The recognition of prior learning and work experience is not used on university enrolment.

In general, VÕTA in Estonia is widely used. VÕTA has made (re)entering education more flexible, enabling to take into account the knowledge and skills acquired outside formal education and providing adult learners the opportunity to combine work and studies. VÕTA enables learners to complete their studies within a shorter timeframe.

The [Vocational Educational Institutions Act](#), which entered into force in 2013, provided that persons aged 22 and above who have not completed basic education may enrol in a vocational educational institution to commence studies on the basis of a curriculum enabling the acquisition of vocational secondary education, provided that the school finds that their knowledge and skills are adequate for further studies.

In general education, the recognition of prior learning and work experience is a new phenomenon and there is no established practice.

Young people can also describe their knowledge, skills and practical experience acquired through youth work using a designated online tool [Stardiplats](#). There is a growing number of registered users of the portal, which was launched in 2010 by Estonian Youth Work Centre in order to facilitate the recognition of knowledge and skills acquired through youth work. The tool is based on self-assessment and provides young people opportunity to generate CV based on the descriptions.

## **Funding**

The provision of education in Estonia is generally funded by public funding (though there are private education institutions as well).

Public funding specifically targeted to support traineeships and apprenticeships is available since the launch of the programme PRÕM (described above) financed with the support from ESF. The budget of the programme for the years 2015-2020 is 18 500 355 euros, of which the support for placements is 12 132 900 euros.

## **Quality assurance**

All the services initiated, developed and supported by the Government are part of the strategic planning of the relevant policy area.

The quality of traineeships and apprenticeships is supported through activities of the Foundation Innove, which coordinates the implementation of the programme PRÕM (described above). The indicators set in the PRÕM programme are as following:

- Number of apprenticeship placements
- Percentage of successful graduation of those participating in workplace-based studies.
- Percentage of vocational and higher education institution participating in the activities to develop traineeships and apprenticeships.
- Number of enterprises accepting placements
- Number of employers recognised for achievement in development of traineeships and apprenticeships.

Under the programme also activities supporting monitoring and research are planned.

The outcomes of the quality assurance activities implemented in Estonia support further development of the services and design of policy measures.

### **3.6 Integration of Young People in the Labour Market**

#### **Youth employment measures**

Estonia does not currently have comprehensive labour market policy targeted only at youth; rather young people can apply for all available benefits and services.

Young people (starting from the age of 16) can benefit from all other public employment services provided to the registered unemployed by the Unemployment Insurance Fund. The specific needs of each unemployed person are identified by the Unemployment Insurance Fund as part of an Individual Action Plan. Unemployed young people are offered personalized labour market services to support their job search.

As part of Youth Guarantee scheme several initiatives were created, specifically targeting youth: career workshops, “My First Job” and the Tugila (Youth Prop Up) programme.

[My First Job](#) is designed to encourage the recruitment of young people, and thereby reducing youth unemployment. The service supports employers who employ young people aged 17-29,

- who have been registered as unemployed for at least four months and have not found a job and
- who have no professional qualification (they have either primary or secondary education), and
- who do not have work experience, or is it a short-term (in the last three years worked for less than a year, or have worked in total of less than two years).

The employer can receive up to 50% of the salary of the young person for 12 months. In addition, the training costs for the employer can be reimbursed for up to 2500 euros (per young person of the YG program) during the first two years from the commencement of employment, to promote the development of the skills of the young person and increase his/her competitiveness in the labour market. An employment contract with the young person must be signed for minimum two years. The target outcome is that 70% of the participants are employed 6 months after having participated in the measure. The responsible body for the provision is the Unemployment Insurance Fund.

[Youth Tugila](#) (Youth Prop Up) programme started at the end of 2015 under the Youth Guarantee. The aim is to support young people through youth work in order to facilitate the transition to work or back to school. The target group is 15-26-year-old NEET youth. Youth centres participating in the programme are responsible for finding NEET youth and carrying out different activities, which may last up to 6 months – during this period young people are helped to decide whether to continue studying or work. Centres help to create contacts with schools, the Unemployment Insurance Fund, career centres and employers. After participating in the programme, the contact with the young person is



preserved for another 6 months to give extra help if needed. The responsible party for the provision of the programme is Estonian Association of Youth Centres.

Since 2012, the Unemployment Insurance Fund has signed 14 partnership agreements with large companies in different economic sectors. These companies in line with other cooperation activities are also willing to give young people a chance to learn skills on the job and gain (first) work experience by providing on-the-job training and organizing work-trials.

### **Flexicurity measures focusing on young people**

There are currently no specific policies for young people to improve their flexibility of working arrangements and their social security net.

The only specific active labour market measure addressing the issue of flexicurity of young people is the initiative “My First Job” – a service is to reduce youth unemployment by helping young people with little or no experience and without specialized education to find work. The measure includes paying wage support to the employer (50% of the employee’s wage, but not more than twice the national minimum wage, for 12 months) and remunerating the costs of training (up to 2500 euros during two years).

However, there is an ongoing initiative by the Government to change the [Employment Contracts Act](#) with the specific aim to support employment opportunities for young people under 18 (see [chapter 3.11 Current Debates and Reforms](#)).

### **Reconciliation of private and working life for young people**

There are no youth-specific policy measures to support flexibility in working time arrangements. Also there are no youth-specific policy measures to promote gender equality in the labour market.

### **Funding of existing schemes/initiatives**

Young people (starting from the age of 16) can benefit from all public employment services provided to the registered unemployed by the Unemployment Insurance Fund, which mostly are financed by state budget.

There are active labour market measures provided as part of different ESF programmes (including for young people), where mostly budget consist of 85% of ESF funds and 15% of state budget. A youth-specific example - “My First Job” - service is funded 85% by ESF and 15% by state budget. “My First Job” includes paying wage support directly to the employer (50% of the employee’s wage, but not more than twice the national minimum wage, for 12 months) and remunerating the costs of training (up to 2500 euros during two years).

- The dedicated budget for the “My First Job” for the years 2015-2020 is 18,9 million euros, the yearly budgets depend on the demand.
- Youth Tugila (Youth Prop Up) programme budget for the year 2016: 818 771 euros.

### **Quality assurance**

There is no single system of evaluating all policy measures and initiatives to support youth employment. All the services initiated, developed and supported by the Government are part of the strategic planning of the relevant policy area i.e. the mechanisms for monitoring and evaluating the policies described in the [chapter 3.2](#).

All the programmes and activities implemented with the support of ESF are part of the monitoring and evaluation framework: a system of evaluation (ex-ante, mid-term and final evaluation). No evaluations relating to the activities specifically supporting young people and described above have been conducted by the end of 2016.

There is an evaluation commissioned by the Ministry of Social Affairs in 2016 concerning the active employment policy measure “My First Job” to find out main reasons, why it is not so actively used by youth, what are the main obstacles for youth to enter the programme; the evaluation is not finished by the end of 2016.

The indicators used to assess the quality of employment measures under the Youth Guarantee scheme:

- Service “My First Job” - 70% of participants are in employment 6 months after the service.
- Beginning supportive measures for the NEET youth, supporting the return of these young people to education and/or successful entry to the labour market - 55% of NEET youth (aged 15-26) who participated at the supportive measures are, in 6 months following the activities, no longer in the NEET youth status.
- Workshops introducing the labour market for young people offered by EUIF - 70% of participants (aged 15-26) in services have acquired knowledge and skills raising their employment-readiness.

### **3.7 Cross-Border Mobility in Employment, Entrepreneurship and Vocational Opportunities**

#### **Programmes and schemes for cross-border mobility**

The activities to support young people work, training and entrepreneurial experience abroad is offered by the Unemployment Insurance Fund as part of [Your first EURES job](#), which is a European Union job mobility scheme to help young people find a job, traineeship or apprenticeship opportunity in another EU country, Norway or Iceland and to help employers find qualified workforce. It aims to match hard to fill vacancies with young jobseekers and people looking for job based trainings across Europe. Through Your first EURES job young people can get financial support for an interview trip abroad, as well as for training (e.g. language courses), recognition of qualifications and relocation expenses. Your first EURES job is opened to candidates with different levels of education and/or work experience. The budget of the Estonian input to the EU Your first EURES scheme is not available.

The Unemployment Insurance Fund is also a contact point for the EU EURES project [Drop'pin](#), that aims to help young people boost their employability and skills by connecting them with a range of opportunities across Europe. Drop'pin opportunities range from onsite, on-the-job learning to online training courses. The budget of the Estonian input to this EU Project is not available.

#### **Legal framework**

The [Employment Contracts Act](#) regulates working conditions of young people under 18, but no specific legal framework exists for cross-border mobility of young workers, trainees/apprentices and young professionals/entrepreneurs.

International students in Estonia do not need additional work permits to work while studying. Students who are third country nationals (non-EU citizens) have to apply for a temporary residence permit for study at the Estonian Embassy or Consul in their home country or country of residence. Non-EU students who have been issued a residence permit for studies are also allowed to work without work permit when it does not interfere with their studies. All non-EU students can also stay in Estonia for an additional 6 months after their graduation to look for a job in Estonia and to apply for the temporary residence permit for work.

### **3.8 Development of Entrepreneurship Competence**

#### **Policy Framework**

There are several policy documents combining the policy framework for the entrepreneurship competence and its development:

- The “Estonian Entrepreneurship Growth Strategy 2014-2020” ([Eesti Ettevõtluse kasvustrateegia 2014-2020](#)) for developing entrepreneurship and achieving growth.

The general goal of the Estonian Entrepreneurship Growth Strategy 2014–2020 is to facilitate the achievement of the umbrella objectives within the competitiveness plan "Estonia 2020" to enhance productivity and employment. The plan seeks to reach the goal where Estonian entrepreneurs earn greater income through products and services with higher value added. To that end, entrepreneurial and innovation policy should be dealt within a single strategic framework that ensures the coherence between the policies that have, so far, stood apart at the strategic planning level, and by that ensure better performance. The strategy is being implemented by the Ministry of Economics and Communication and Enterprise Estonia and partner institutions (Ministry of Education and Research, etc.), the process of implementation includes the establishment of the implementation plan and annual reporting. The target groups are: potential entrepreneurs, beginning entrepreneurs and existing entrepreneurs (who are already active on the market and are searching for growth).

- The Estonian Lifelong Learning Strategy 2020 ([Eesti elukestva õppe strateegia](#)) includes five strategic goals, of which two are related to entrepreneurship education: change in the approach to learning (the goal is to implement an approach towards learning that supports each learner's individual and social development, learning skills, creativity and entrepreneurship in the work at all levels and in all types of education); consistency between lifelong learning opportunities and the needs of labour market. The authority responsible for the implementation is the Ministry of Education and Research, the process of implementation includes the establishment of the implementation plan and annual reporting. The target group of the strategy includes the whole population as potential students, educational institutions and organisers of education provision.
- The Youth Field Development Plan 2014-2020 ([Noortevaldkonna arengukava 2014-2020](#)), which states the need to support young people's employability by providing opportunities to obtain work experience (including voluntary work) and better understand the world of work, paying particular attention to risk groups. Also the ability of young people to act as a creator of the labour market needs support including support for youth initiative and implementation a variety of youth work provision for entrepreneurship and entrepreneurial spirit. The authority responsible for the implementation is the Ministry of Education and Research, the process of implementation includes the establishment of the implementation plan and annual reporting. The target group of the plan is young people in the age group 7-26, youth workers and organisers of youth work provision.
- The 'Entrepreneurship Education Development Plan: Be Enterprising!' ([Ettevõtlusõppe Edendamise Kava](#), a cooperation agreement signed by multiple parties 7.10.2010); is a specific strategy for entrepreneurship education signed at the Estonian Chamber of Commerce and Industry in 2010, which addressed ISCED 1-3 including school-based IVET. Its main objectives include awareness-raising of entrepreneurship education, teacher training, teaching materials, and allocation of resources. It includes a map of entrepreneurial learning outcomes across the educational levels, with a strong focus on integrating these into curricula. The target group of the plan includes educational institutions and students.

## Formal learning

Entrepreneurship education is explicitly referred to in the [curricula](#) as follows:

- In ISCED 1-3, new national curricula explicitly recognise EE as a general competence and a cross-curricular objective. It is also included as the cross-curricular topic 'Civic Initiative and Entrepreneurship'
- In ISCED 2-3, it is taught in the optional separate subjects 'Entrepreneurial Studies' (ISCED 2) and 'Economic and Entrepreneurship Studies' (ISCED 3), and in the compulsory subject 'Civics and Citizenship Education' (ISCED 2-3).

Central level recommendations for teaching methods are available through the new curricula for basic schools and upper secondary schools.

Learning outcomes for EE are defined in the general part of the National Curricula for Basic Schools and Upper Secondary Schools as well in subject syllabi. Some examples are:

- in ISCED 1, students are expected, for example, to understand that money pays for things and is earned by working, and to know how to cooperate with others;
- in ISCED 2, students are expected, for example, to have an understanding of labour market opportunities for those with different educational levels, as well as know what it means to be an owner, entrepreneur, employer, employee or unemployed person;
- in ISCED 3, students are expected, for example, to understand entrepreneurship as a career choice and understand that it is possible for them to become entrepreneurs.

There is an ongoing initiative by the Government to develop OSKA - a system of labour market monitoring and future skills forecasting (OSS). The measure is design also to include tight networking of education and labour market stakeholders. For example, the implementation of OSKA is overseen by the OSKA Coordination Council, which consists of the representatives of the Ministry of Education and Research, Ministry of Economic Affairs and Communications, Ministry of Social Affairs, Ministry of Finance, the Estonian Employers' Confederation, the Estonian Chamber of Commerce and Industry, the Estonian Service Unions' Confederation, the Estonian Trade Union Confederation and the Estonian Unemployment Insurance Fund.

"Enterprising School" is an education programme, which was launched in Ida-Viru County in 2006 and focuses on the integration of business studies into the school system in order to enhance the quality of education and hence the success of young people in life. The network of "Enterprising School" has expanded into ten counties, where the programme is co-ordinated by the county development centres (CDCs). Application of the model "Enterprising School" helps the educational institutions:

- to integrate the learned things with the real life, with no games but real things and activities;
- to do successful co-operation with parents and partners;
- to make studies more interesting;
- to make both the students and the teachers enthusiastic;
- to contribute to the local community, when completing something in reality.

The network of "Enterprising School" includes the educational establishments, who in their establishments have set the aim of education to form enterprising attitude through study assignment counting on the national curriculum.

### **Non-formal and informal learning**

The aims and objectives of the Youth Field Development Plan 2014-2020 ([Noortevaldkonna arengukava 2014-2020](#)) include the need to support young people's employability, creativity and entrepreneurial spirit. The activities envisaged in the plan include:

- the opportunities for youth to obtain work experience (including voluntary work)
- support for young people to better understand the world of work, paying particular attention to risk groups;
- support for youth self-initiative
- implementation a variety of youth work services to support entrepreneurship and entrepreneurial spirit of young people.

In order to implement the aims, the Estonian Youth Work Centre is coordinating the activities to create work-shops (occupational labs), which give young people more opportunities to acquaint themselves for future occupations, supporting the provision of youth work camps, to give young people practical work experience etc. The Youth Agency of the Foundation Archimedes is currently analysing the opportunities how youth work can better support the entrepreneurship competencies of youth.

The mini-company programme carried out by [Junior Achievement Estonia](#) is a non-formal education activity supporting the development of entrepreneurship competences.

The recognition and validation of the learning, including entrepreneurial learning, in non-formal and informal learning environments is been the important topic in education and youth policies for a long time. There is a legal framework allowing prior learning and work experience to be recognised and validated in the formal education system (see also [chapter 3.6.](#)) The Youth Field Development Plan 2014-2020 highlights the non-formal environment, including the awareness about the possibilities to support entrepreneurial mind-set through youth work. There are several projects and initiatives implemented in youth field to support the awareness. One of the initiatives implemented by Estonian Youth Work Centre to support the recognition of non-formal and informal learning by providing an instrument for young people is the project [Stardiplats](#). Stardiplats is a web-based instrument for young people and youth workers to develop skills of describing learning in non-formal and informal environment.

### **Educators support in entrepreneurship education**

The Ministry of Education and Research launched [a programme for the years 2016-2018](#) to support the development of tools for entrepreneurship education across all the levels of formal education.

The main activities of the programme are:

- Development of the methodologies and study-instruments for entrepreneurship education including mapping the need for support, development of methods for teacher training and modules to use in schools under several subjects;
- Development of training opportunities for providers of the entrepreneurship education;
- Support for entrepreneurship education in general education and vocational schools and higher education institutions and for the increased cooperation with the partners outside of schools.
- Development of competencies with regard to the entrepreneurship education, including support for research and development activities on the subject and support for self-assessment models to include the assessment of the entrepreneurship education.

Entrepreneurship education is included in all initial teacher education curricula in Estonia. The universities and other providers – Foundation Innove, NGO Junior Achievement (JA) Estonia and Association of Teachers of Economics – have provided programmes for all teachers in primary education, but only for teachers of social studies, economics and mathematics in general secondary education. JA Estonia and Association of Teachers of Economics have also organised Job Shadow Days for teachers.

The Ministry of Education and Research has financially supported the development of the assessment tool for the cross-curricular topic 'Civic Initiative and Entrepreneurship' at lower secondary education level, as well as workshops, summer and winter schools organised by the Association of Teachers of Social Studies and Association of Teachers of Economics. The Chamber of Commerce organises twice yearly entrepreneurial think tank meetings to support the collaboration between schools and stakeholders. The networking initiative, '[Dreams Become Reality](#),' encompasses organizations that contribute to the promotion of an entrepreneurial mind-set, supporting different school level activities. A network of teachers from primary and secondary education has been organised by JA Estonia. They meet once a year to discuss problems and improve their skills and knowledge. In addition, Association of Teachers of Economics, which involves mainly upper secondary teachers, as well as some lower secondary teachers, works closely with JA Estonia on issues linked to entrepreneurship education.

## **3.9 Start-up Funding for Young Entrepreneurs**

### **Access to information**

The county development centres are public development organizations which are located in all the counties and offer free advisory services to starting and operating enterprises, local governments, starting and operating non-profit associations and foundations. Young people have been specific target-group for these [services](#).

The information and counselling on entrepreneurship, including funding opportunities, programmes, and services devoted to the funding of start-ups is part of the guidance and counselling system for youth. Please see [chapter 3.4](#) for more detailed information.

### **Access to capital**

Young people have access to the following capital as entrepreneurs:

- Loans meant for entrepreneurs whose business plan is not financed by a bank or who lack the self-financing required by banks in order to get a bank loan.
- State guarantee that helps, in the eyes of the bank, compensate for insufficient securities of the entrepreneur and improve the creditworthiness of the entrepreneur.
- Credit insurance that helps Estonian exporters offer long-term financing solutions to foreign purchasers. This helps entrepreneurs reduce the risks associated with foreign purchasers and their potential insolvency, as well as the political risks associated with the place of stay of purchasers.
- Venture capital (or equity investment) that is meant for entrepreneurs with high growth potential who have a novel but risky business idea that requires also experience and a network of contacts in addition to capital in order to implement it.
- **Start-up grant** – The purpose of the support is to help people with little experience in entrepreneurship to establish an enterprise that has high growth potential and capacity to internationalize.
- **Baltic Innovation fund** - Baltic Innovation Fund (BIF) is a fund of funds established by Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania and the European Investment Fund (EIF) with the aim of providing entrepreneurs of Baltic States with other financing options besides bank loans thus improving access to capital.
- **Innovation voucher** - The current support measure for vouchers allows entrepreneurs in cooperation with a partner providing innovation or development services to:
  - Seek solutions to development problems enterprises are facing
  - Develop and test innovative solutions
  - Build knowledge of new technologies
  - Study issues concerning intellectual property

## **3.10 Promotion of Entrepreneurship Culture**

### **Special events and activities**

The main government-level programmes to raise awareness about entrepreneurship are Entrepreneurship Awareness programme and Start-up Estonia.

#### **Entrepreneurship Awareness programme**

The purpose of the support scheme is to raise awareness on entrepreneurship in the society, among specific target groups and support the development of established entrepreneurs. The following activities are carried out within the framework of the program:

- Advice and information is given in regional development centres
- Trainings in various sectors essential to entrepreneurship, e.g. management, marketing, etc.



- Events to raise awareness on entrepreneurship, e.g. entrepreneurship week and entrepreneurship days, entrepreneurship competition
- Activities aimed at increasing export capacity of entrepreneurs, e.g. fair visits, export consultants and creation of a contact network in foreign markets
- Activities aimed at building Estonia's reputation

Funding of this program - European Regional Development Fund.

Target group of the program:

- People who might be interested in entrepreneurship today or in the distant future and who wish to start a business
- Entrepreneurs (incl. managers of enterprises, employees and owners).
- Organizations related to entrepreneurship.
- Present and future investors.
- Other legal or natural persons who promote entrepreneurship and contribute to the development of entrepreneurship.

### Start-up Estonia program

Start-up Estonia is a program for developing an ecosystem of start-ups aimed at increasing the potential for entrepreneurship in people. The program contributes to developing a financing model for start-ups that would help them become successful. The initial Start-up Estonia program was launched by the Ministry of Economic Affairs and Communications in 2011. The aim of the program is to improve the business environment for start-ups and increase the development of innovative products and services. Two types of activities are supported within the framework of the program:

- Training and development programs introduced in pre-start-up stages:
  - Programs for developing start-up skills and knowledge
  - Programs for establishing start-ups and achieving investor readiness
- Support of accelerators in start-up stages

The program took effect in July 2015 and has been implemented since autumn 2015.

Annually the entrepreneurship week is organized all over Estonia by the initiative of the Ministry of Economic Affairs and Communications. During the week different conferences, work-groups and trades are organized in Estonian counties. Every spring national "Entrepreneur of the year" gala is held, where entrepreneurs are awarded in various categories.

In addition, there are TV-shows created supported by public funding such as [Kapital](#), [Ajujaht](#), [Kapist Välja](#), etc. to raise awareness about entrepreneurship through showing different steps and phases of entrepreneurship.

Moreover, recently Estonia started celebrating Entrepreneur Day as an official flag day.

### **Networks and partnerships**

There is a long tradition of cooperation between major governmental and non-governmental (especially organizations representing employers) stakeholders to support the entrepreneurship in Estonia. However, few of them are specifically targeting entrepreneurship of young people and those have been named in the [chapter 3.9](#).

One of the most prominent promoters of entrepreneurship culture among young people has been the Foundation [Junior Achievement Estonia](#), established in 1994, which aims to develop the entrepreneurial spirit in young people by giving them the ability to think economically, but also ethically. JA Estonia main activities include:

- Preparation of training materials
- Training of economics and business teachers.
- Organizing student activities.
- Sending students and teachers to competitions, conferences and other educational events.



- Raising public awareness of the need for entrepreneurship education.

There are currently no specific initiatives to support partnerships focusing on young people.

### **3.11 Current Debates and Reforms**

There are two ongoing Government initiatives at the labour market policy that concern also the situation of young people:

- Working ability reform

To reduce people's health problems and increase the participation of those with a partial loss of health in employment, a reform of the working ability assessment and benefit scheme is carried out. As a result of the reform it is expected that a comprehensive system will be created within which people will be offered assistance and support at the earliest opportunity, so as for them to be able to remain in or return to employment. The aim of the reform is to transfer from an assessment of incapacity for work to an assessment of remaining ability to work. The assessment should determine a person's working ability in terms of whether they could do suitable work under suitable working conditions and in a suitable working environment, and they would be offered the necessary rehabilitation measures supporting their ability to work. The assessment of working ability will include recommendations on what kind of job-related functions a person can perform and to what extent, what the suitable working conditions are and whether there is a need for assistive devices, rehabilitation or adaptation of premises and tools.

- Change of the Employment Contracts Act

In 15 December 2016 the Government approved an initiative of the Minister for social affairs to change the Act in order to create more opportunities for employers to hire young people under 18 at the same time ensuring the security and protection for young people in employment. The legislation proposal will be negotiated in the Parliament in 2017.

## **4. Social Inclusion**

The approaches and principles concerned with social inclusion and welfare in 2016 defined at the Government level in the document [Welfare Development Plan 2016-2023](#) arise from the principles of a social and welfare state, the framework of fundamental and social rights, and social protection principles. There is no single body responsible for social inclusion of young people as the domain covers several policy areas, which have established different division of tasks between different ministries and between local and central level. Most notably the responsibilities in the youth field and in the field of child protection use similar division of tasks between local level and central level, where the provision of services is generally the responsibility of local governments. See more in [Chapter 4.2](#).

There is no single document targeted to deal with social exclusion, but a set of official documents integrating major directions to be followed in the organisation of policy making and implementation in relation to social inclusion of young people at national level. There is a set of documents that support the development of social inclusion targeting specifically or generally also young people. There are two strategies that consider children and young people as the most relevant target group:

- the [Development Plan for Children and Families for 2012–2020](#);
- the [Youth Field Development Plan 2014-2020](#).

See more in [Chapter 4.3](#). There are special inclusive programmes for young people, e.g. „Children and youth at risk“, which is the most wide-reaching initiative in Estonia. See more in [Chapter 4.4](#).

## **4.1 General context**

### **Main challenges to social inclusion**

In 2016 the Government of Estonia approved the document [Welfare Development Plan 2016-2023](#) containing analyzes of the situation and challenges in the social inclusion area. The document was prepared by the [Ministry of Social Affairs](#). The following description presents the challenges that are brought to attention as the most important areas that need development and support, and that have defined the situation of young people needing special attention divided by the field of policy objectives in the document. The statistics used are refreshed and based on most recently published sources.

#### Participation in working life

Target groups that require separate attention for the achievement of a higher employment rate include the young, the elderly, residents with other native languages, people who have been away from the labour market for a long time, and people with reduced work ability. In Estonia, after reaching one of the highest levels of youth unemployment rates in Europe during the financial crisis (32.9% in Estonia vs 21% in EU-28 in 2010), the situation stabilized fast, and the share of youth searching for a job is lower in comparison with most other European countries (13,1% in Estonia and 20,4% in EU in 2015). The level of youth unemployment in Estonia still remains higher compared to the prime-age population.

The unemployment risk is increased for the young people with a low level of education. The share of people aged 25+ with basic or lower education is decreasing a little year by year - in 2015, 14.1% of the population had a low level of education, which is 2.5 percentage points less than in 2010. 11% of young people aged 18-24 are not in education and have basic or lower education, this has not changed in the last 5-6 years significantly. The obstacles for young people entering the labour market include the restrictions of the labour and tax regulation, and the fact that young people are at a higher risk of suffering from work accidents. There were 4,774 accidents at work (incl. 16 fatal accidents) registered in 2015 – 3% more than in 2014. Accidents at work happened the most often to males aged 23–34 and to females aged 55–64.

One of the challenges is the activation of young people who do not study or work. Special attention is on the smooth movement of young people with special needs from the general education system to the next level of education (vocational training and/or higher education) and to the labour market.

#### Economic coping of people

In Estonia, economic coping difficulties and poverty threatens the most women, the elderly, the disabled people, and the unemployed. In 2014, 21.6% of Estonia's population lived in relative poverty and 6.3% in absolute poverty. 4.5% of the population lived in severe material deprivation in 2015. In 2014, the relative poverty of families with many children and single-parent families increased. Children who live with one parent or in families with many children are at a much higher risk of poverty than children who have two parents and/or not many siblings. The at-risk-of-poverty rate of couples with at least three dependent children grew 3 percentage points year over year and 26.2% of these couples lived in relative poverty in 2014. The absolute poverty rate of families with many children also increased 3 percentage points year over year and stood at 15.0% in 2014. The at-risk-of-poverty rate of single-parent families rose from 37.2% to 38.8% year over year.

### Social services and protection

The financial sustainability of the social security scheme is significantly affected by the population's structure and the growth of economy. The population of Estonia in 2016 is 1 315 944. The number has dropped 16% since 1991. During these years, the age group of 75 years old or older has increased and the size of younger age groups has decreased. In 2014, there were four working-age people for one person of retirement age, but by 2040, for example, this ratio is projected to have reduced to two. Children without parental care or in need of assistance numbered 7,623 at the beginning of 2015. In 2006, there were 822 such children. However, the number of children in need of assistance has grown fast mostly because the registration of such children at local governments has improved.

### Equality

The efficiency of legal protection depends significantly on the awareness of people about their rights and possibilities for their protection. The options of minorities for self-representation are limited. The UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, which was ratified in Estonia in 2012, requires establishing an independent supervision mechanism for the implementation of the convention. This, however, has not yet been established in Estonia.

### Health

According to the [Performance Report for 2013–2014](#) of the „[National Health Plan 2009–2020](#)“, the percentage of children reporting very good self-perceived health is growing. According to a health behavior study of school students, the percentage of students reporting very good self-perceived health did decrease in 2009/2010; however, in 2013/2014 the number of students reporting very good self-perceived health was higher than ever. Based on home language, children from families with other home language compared to Estonian home language reported a very good self-perceived health more often (the respective indicators were 34.8% and 32.7%). However, there is a link of positive assessment of health by children and economic situation of families. In 2014, children from families with a good economic situation reported their health as very good 1.3 times as often as children from families in average and 1.1 times as often as the children from families in a bad economic situation.

### **Main concepts**

The approaches and principles concerned with social inclusion and welfare are most recently (in 2016) defined at the Government level in the document the [Welfare Development Plan 2016-2023](#) arise from the principles of a social and welfare state, the framework of fundamental and social rights, and social protection principles. On the one hand, the principle of a social state is ensuring that the strengthening of the state's economic development and competitive ability takes into account the needs of different social groups. For that purpose, equal opportunities must be supported and created for the population groups that would not be able to secure their livelihood and welfare in the conditions of the competition of market economy. On the other hand, the adherence to the principle of a social state is a premise for the state's economic development and competitive ability, as it prevents and reduces the exclusion of parts of the population from the social and economic life. The broader view of the welfare of people and society is understood as affected by all aspects of life and the policies that concern them. The solutions are visioned in accordance with the general shift of welfare state policies: transferring from the policy that compensates social risks and repairs their consequences to the policy that empowers and prepares people to cope with the risks. In addition to traditional social protection, increasing people's self-sufficiency and their social and professional activity has become more and more important. Therefore, the social and labour market policies are treated in the welfare policy as investments that support people's participation in society and economy, and thus, provide an important contribution to the development of society and economy.

Some of the most important concepts are defined as following:

- **Prevention** refers to the need to primarily focus on the prevention of social risks and the realisation of their consequences, which will prevent the progression and accumulation of the problems, and overall, make solving them more time- and resource-efficient.
- **Shared responsibility** means that the person themselves and their family bear primary responsibility for securing their welfare, coping, and a decent life. State and local authorities provide support in situations where a person or a family is not able to secure their livelihood on their own. The provision of help is also based on the shared responsibility principle, as it encourages people's self-responsibility and prevents learned helplessness and dependency on help.
- **Ensuring human dignity** is the central objective for the protection of social rights. Thereby, human dignity means both a decent treatment and a decent life.
- **A comprehensive approach to human needs** means that a person's needs are assessed as comprehensively as possible and the assessment is used in designing and implementing the measures by combining and connecting, if necessary, benefits, grants, and services.
- **Equal treatment** is based on the idea of equality among people and the prohibition of discrimination as the central principle of a social state, which must be taken into account in granting rights, their implementation, and in the creation of equal opportunities. The principle of equal treatment means considering the needs of all people, not the uniform treatment of all people.

## **4.2 Administration and Governance**

### **Governance**

The approaches and principles concerned with social inclusion and welfare are defined at the Government level in the document [Welfare Development Plan 2016-2023](#) (Heaolu arengukava 2016-2023) arise from the principles of a social and welfare state, the framework of fundamental and social rights, and social protection principles. ([See more detailed description in chapter 4.1.](#)).

There is no single body responsible for social inclusion of young people as the domain covers several policy areas, which have established different division of tasks between different Ministries and between local and central level.

Two most relevant policy areas – youth field and social protection are under the responsibility of the Ministry of Education and Research (youth field), the Youth Affairs Department and the Ministry of Social Affairs (child protection), Department of Children and Families

The main other Governmental authorities and their responsibility according to the [Government of the Republic Act](#) relevant to social inclusion:

- the [Ministry of Education and Research](#): responsible for youth policy and education policy;
- the [Ministry of Social Affairs](#): responsible for child and family policy, labour market, social protection, gender equality and equal treatment policies;
- the [Ministry of Culture](#): responsible for integration policy;
- the [Ministry of Interior](#): responsible for crime prevention;
- the [Ministry of Justice](#) responsible for justice system;
- the [Ministry of Finance](#): responsible development of local governments, planning and co-ordination of regional development;
- the [Ministry of Economic Affairs and Communications](#): responsible for developing E-governance and e-services.

Main public actors and foundations of policy fields relevant to social inclusion:

1. [Chancellor of Justice](#), independent official institution responsible for ensuring the rights of children would be protected;
2. [Gender Equality and Equal Treatment Commissioner](#), independent official responsible for protection of equal rights;
3. [Social Insurance Board](#), an agency of the Ministry of Social Affairs, responsible for social insurance benefits and child protection services;
4. [Töötukassa](#) (Estonian Unemployment Insurance Fund), a public legal entity acting in the area of the Ministry of Social Affairs and responsible for provision of labor market services;
5. [Estonian Youth Work Centre](#), an agency of the Ministry of Education and research responsible for implementation of Youth policy;
6. [Foundation Innove](#) an independent body established by the government under the Ministry of Education and Research, responsible for the provision of pedagogical and career counselling;
7. [Foundation Archimedes](#), an independent body established by the government under the Ministry of Education and Research, responsible for implementing youth policy, National Agency for Erasmus+;
8. [Integration and Migration Foundation Our People](#), an independent body established by the government under the Ministry of Culture, responsible for supporting integration of national minorities in Estonia.
9. [The National Institute for Health Development](#), a governmental institution under the Ministry of Social Affairs responsible for health promotion.

The main non-public actors:

- the [Eesti Noorsootöötajate Kogu](#) (Association of Estonian Youth Workers)
- the [Estonian National Youth Council](#)

## Cross-sectorial cooperation

There is no single body responsible for social inclusion of young people as the domain covers several policy areas, which have established different division of tasks between different ministries and between local and central level.

Two most relevant policy areas – youth field and social protection are under the responsibility of the Ministry of Education and Research (youth field) and the Ministry of Social Affairs (child protection). The responsibilities in the youth field and in the field of child protection use similar division of tasks between local level and central level, where the provision of services is generally the responsibility of local governments and the central level is responsible for policy, legislation and state budgeting.

There is a mechanism established to ensure harmonized policy-making and implementation that also covers youth social inclusion. The central position in this mechanism - approving the propositions to develop a policy document or to change the existing one, monitoring the implementation through approving the action plans and their reports and also monitoring the cooperation and in case of need initiating the cooperation - is granted to the [Government](#) and the [Government Office](#). The [Ministry of Finance](#) also plays a coordinating role in planning, monitoring and ensuring division of resources of different financial instruments including state budget, among all the policy fields.

## 4.3 Strategy for the Social Inclusion of Young People

### Existence of a National Strategy on social inclusion

There is no single document targeted to deal with social exclusion of young people, but a set of official documents integrating major directions to be followed in the organisation of policy making and implementation in relation to social inclusion of young people at national level.

There is a set of documents that support the development of social inclusion targeting specifically or generally also young people. Two main strategies that consider social exclusion of children and young people are:

- the [Development Plan for Children and Families for 2012–2020](#), approved by the Government in 2011, renewed 24 October 2013;
- the [Youth Field Development Plan 2014-2020](#) (approved by the Government 19. December 2013).

### Scope and contents

Most importantly two documents set young people and their social inclusion as main objectives:

#### ***The Youth Field Development Plan 2014-2020 ([Noortevaldkonna arengukava 2014-2020](#))***

The general objective of the plan is to establish a coherent and creative society through development and self-realization possibilities provided for young people. The sub-objectives of the Development Plan are:

1. Young people have more choices to discover their own creative and developmental potential. The planned policy measures under this objective are aimed to increase opportunities for young people to develop their creativity, show initiative and act together.
2. Young people are at lower risk to be excluded. The planned policy measures under this objective are aimed to increase the inclusion of young people and improve their employability.
3. There is more support for participation of young people in decision-making. The planned policy measures under this objective are aimed to support the active participation of young people in the community life and in decision-making.
4. The youth field operates more efficiently. The policy measures aim to ensure the development of high-quality youth policy and youth work.

The plan is aimed at all young people from 7 to 26 years old.

#### ***The [Development Plan for Children and Families for 2012–2020](#).***

The development plan sets strategic objectives aimed at guaranteeing an improvement in the well-being of children and families and in their quality of living. This plan is the basis for improving the lives of children and families and achieving an increase in population. There are 5 strategic objectives in the plan:

1. The Estonian child and family policy is knowledge-based and uniform and supports the sustainability of society. Under this objective 1 policy measure is planned:
  - Uniform, sustainable and need-based development of the area of children and families.
2. Estonia is a country that supports positive parenting and offers the necessary support to raising children and being a parent in order to improve the quality of living and future of children. Under this objective 2 policy measures are planned:
  - Promotion of attitudes that support parenting and improvement of knowledge;
  - Development and offer of efficient services to improve parenting skills.
3. The rights of children are guaranteed and a functional child protection system is created in order to value each child and the kind of safe environment that supports the development and welfare of children. Under this objective 3 policy measures are planned:
  - Promotion of the rights of the child.
  - Increasing the efficiency of early intervention and the child protection system.
  - Provision and development of efficient interventions proceeding from the needs of people.



4. Estonia has a system of combined benefits and services that supports the adequate economic coping of families and offers them permanent security. Under this objective 2 policy measures are planned:
  - Development of a functional social protection system.
  - Development of services to promote the independent economic coping of families.
5. Men and women have equal opportunities for reconciliation of work, family and private life in order to promote a quality everyday life that meets the needs of each family member. Under this objective 2 policy measures are planned:
  - Creation of more equal opportunities for women and men for work, family and private life.
  - Development of child day care.

The Development Plan for Children and Families defines the target group as children (i.e. persons up to 18 years old) in general, paying specific attention to disabled children, children in foster care and children as victims.

There is a set of other policy plans that are concerned with and vital for social inclusion of young people in particular, but also with the issue of social inclusion and welfare, the needs, obstacles and opportunities for it in Estonia in general: the [Welfare Development Plan 2016-2023 \(Heaolu arengukava 2016-2023\)](#); the National Health Plan 2009–2020 ([Rahvatervise arengukava 2009-2020](#)); the development plan "Integrating Estonia 2020" ("[Lõimuv Eesti 2020](#)").

### Responsible authority

The responsibility for the policy documents is defined as following:

- Youth Field Development Plan 2014- Ministry of Education and Research
- Development Plan for Children and Families for 2012–2020 – Ministry of Social Affairs
- Welfare Development Plan 2016-2023 – Ministry of Social Affairs
- National Health Plan 2009–2020 – Ministry of Social Affairs
- "Integrating Estonia 2020" – Ministry of Culture

There is a mechanism established to ensure harmonized policy-making and implementation. The central position in this mechanism approving the propositions to develop a policy document or to change the existing one, monitoring the implementation through approving the action plans and their reports and also monitoring the cooperation and in case of need initiating the cooperation is put on the Government and the Government Office. The mechanism established to monitor the implementation and the results in different policy areas (see the description in the [chapter 4.3.](#)) includes yearly reports of every policy document approved by the Government. The following provides the most recently published information on the results of the implementation of the main policy documents relevant to social inclusion of young people.

### Youth Field Development Plan 2014-2020

The Ministry of Education and Research has analyzed the towards the objectives set in the development plan in December 2016 and has concluded, that the trend of indicators established to measure the results is positive. Young people are more actively participating in the opportunities offered in youth work. The availability of youth work services in regions has risen significantly. In 2015, the satisfaction of young people with youth work services was studied the first time and in average 86% of young people participating in different youth work services are very satisfied or satisfied with youth work services. The challenge is to achieve the results set in the youth field development plan as the increase of different opportunities for participation has not been fast enough.

### Development Plan for Children and Families for 2012–2020

In the most recent report covering the year 2014 the Ministry of Social Affairs has reported that one of the most important achievements has been the adoption of the new



Child Protection Act in 2014 that is enforced in 1.01.2016. The report states that in 2014 in addition several important documents were developed to support future policy measures and their implementation (such as for example “The Concept for Improving the Support System for Children and Youth at Risk”). Important results have been in introducing and launching of the positive parenting programme “Incredible Years”. The report states that the implementation of all actions is in process as planned.

### Revisions/Updates

As there is no single document in Estonia addressing the issue of social inclusion of young people but a set of documents covering different areas, scope and timeframes, the information about revisions and updates is provided about two most relevant documents to social inclusion of young people:

#### Youth Field Development Plan 2014-2020

At the state level, development of the youth field is being planned for the third time. The “Estonian Youth Work Concept” and the “Estonian Youth Work Development Plan 2001-2004” were drafted in 2001, these were followed by the ‘Youth Work Strategy 2006-2013’ which was approved in 2006. What differentiates the current development plan from the previous documents is its approach to focus on goals and measures that will help to achieve positive change in the most significant challenges – the plan does not describe measures in all areas of youth work and youth policy. Also the aims and objectives based on and formulated in accordance with youth perspective as opposed to a perspective of the sector or services used in earlier documents – the analyses and the policy objectives were about young people not about the system and services of youth work or youth policy.

#### Development Plan for Children and Families for 2012–2020

The first strategic plan in the area of children right and the protection of these rights was introduced for the period 2004-2008: “The strategy to ensure children rights”. The area of family policy did not have a specific policy document. The Government initiated the development of strategic document that targets policy measures directed at supporting families. However, in 2009 the decision was made to merge two policy areas into one holistic approach to children and family policy. Also the changes were made in the structure of the Ministry of Social Affairs, where a specific Department of Child and Family Policy was created. The need to unite two policy areas was also highlighted in the final report of the “Strategy to ensure children rights”. Besides the merge of two policy areas the current development plan is more instrumental because of the actual planning of financing the activities (the previous strategy did not have specific linkages to budgeting), more focused on formulation of implementation activities and more directed to integrating policy measures.

## 4.4 Inclusive Programmes for Young People

### Programmes specific for vulnerable young people

There are several programmes initiated by the ministries responsible for the areas of work on the youth social inclusion domain.

#### Programme “Children and youth at risk”

The most wide-reaching initiative in Estonia developed to support specifically young people at risk in the recent years has been the programme “[Children and Youth at Risk](#)” (Riskilapsed- ja noored), that was developed in 2009 covering the period 2009-2014, extended until April 2017. Official legal bases for the programme is the programme agreement between the Financial Mechanism Committee established by Iceland, Liechtenstein and Norway and the Estonian Ministry of Finance. Programme operator i.e. the main responsible body for the programme is the Estonian Ministry of Education and Research in cooperation with the Ministry of Justice and the Ministry of Social Affairs, the

implementation agency of the programme is the Estonian Youth Work Centre. Main activities of the programme include:

- Developing an integrated system for supporting children and youth;
- Assessing the capability and readiness to support the children and youth at risk on local level; Implementing the parenting programme;
- Implementing a family-based programme for juvenile offenders;
- Support for the increased capability of youth organizations and youth work organizations to involve children and youth at risk;
- Social inclusion of excluded young people and prevention of re-offending behavior;
- Development and application of inclusive educational organization model and appropriate intervention strategies in formal education system to improve the welfare of vulnerable groups of children and Youth;
- Community-based crime prevention measures;
- Aftercare for incarcerated youth.

The range of target groups of the programme vary depending on the activity, mostly covering 7-18 years old in education, 7-26 years old in youth work, 0-18 in child protection, 7-18 in crime prevention and justice system.

The targets set in the programme compile a list of output indicators: number of regional level coordination mechanisms created, number of regional support units established, number of local governments using community based crime prevention measures, drop-out rate of students of forms 7-9 in basic school, number of youth work organizations and youth associations which apply measures for involving the children and youth belonging to vulnerable groups, number of youth work institutions which apply measures to involve the young people having committed offences and to prevent the repeated offences, number of young people that receive aftercare. Under the framework the body responsible for implementation is also responsible for the collection of the data on indicators. There is a specific collection of data about the local Governments involved in the implementation, but there is no specific additional system of gathering information and data about national organisations involved in the activities.

The levels of participation in the programme are described in the yearly reports of the programme and the following states most important numbers indicating the results in 2016:

- Under the Incredible Years 48 training groups for Russian (22) and Estonian (26) speaking parents were carried out.
- 5 teams under the multi-dimensional family therapy (MDFT) programme are currently working with young people and their families across Estonia. Close to 100 families and youngsters were engaged in MDFT in 2016.
- The regional level coordination mechanism has been created together with the Social Insurance Board (SIB) to provide support and services for children and families at local level. 8 local governments with different size and capacity participating in the pilot project were selected.
- The number of local governments using community-based crime prevention measures is 12 and was expected to increase to 62 during the implementation of the programme. Altogether 66 LG-s have used community-based crime prevention measures during implementation period.
- The number of youth work organizations and youth associations that apply measures to involve children and youths belonging to vulnerable groups is expected to increase from 36 to 90. During the reporting period, 120 youth work organizations and youth associations have applied measures to involve children and youth at risk.
- Number of youth work institutions that apply measures to involve young people who have committed offences and to prevent repeat offences is expected to increase from 0 to 18. During reporting period 20 youth work institutions have applied special youth-work-based programmes, which help young people.
- 8 youth associations improved their capacity do offer activities to young people at risk.

- The number of young people that receive aftercare during the projects implementation period is 329.

### Estonian Operational Programme

In the framework of the Estonian Operational Programme for EU Cohesion Policy Funds 2014-2020 a special investment priority “Active inclusion, including with a view to promoting equal opportunities and active participation, and improving employability” and under this priority a specific objective “Inclusion and improvement of the employability of young people, incl. those at risk of exclusion” was defined in December 2014. 4 specific sets of activities have been launched by the Government to achieve the objective:

1. Activities to support the decrease of the influence of unequal conditions, the prevention of exclusion and the employability of young people, including special support for NEET-young people: “Tõrjutusriskis noorte kaasamine ja noorte tööhõivevalmiduse parandamine”, reviewed legal base from July 2016; the responsible authority is the Ministry of Education and Research, responsible for the implementation is the Estonian Youth Work Centre.
2. Inclusion of young people with offending background into the labour-market: “Toetuse andmise tingimused õigusrikkumise taustaga noorte tööturule kaasamiseks”, legal base from January 2016; the responsible authority for the implementation and coordination is the Ministry of Interior.
3. Providing opportunities for youth at risk via the programme SPIN: “Toetuse andmise tingimused noortele arenguvõimaluste pakkumiseks programme SPIN abil”, legal base from July 2015; the responsible authority for the implementation and coordination is the Ministry of Internal Affairs.
4. Activities to prevent risk behaviour and to develop better understanding of and suitable interventions for the problems of families at risk through networking and a secure living environment at the local level: „Toetuse andmise tingimused riskikäitumise ennetamiseks, riskis olevate perede toetamiseks ning turvalise elukeskkonna arendamiseks”, legal base from September 2015; the responsible authority for the implementation and coordination is the Ministry of Internal Affairs.

The interventions include: youth work services made available to young people at risk of poverty and exclusion and support for participation in programmes that help to acquire the knowledge and skills needed for life and personal development; support measures for reintegration of NEETs in education and/or their successful entry to the labour market, outreach youth work and other interventions of local networks so as to encourage such young people to acquire knowledge and skills or enter the labour market. In order to better understand the problems of young people and design systematic interventions, it is intended to identify and resolve, through networking, the problems of the target group, including minors and families, and to promote healthy lifestyles and a secure living environment at the local level. To support the activities described above, the competence of youth workers, youth leaders and hobby school workers for working with young people is supported. Support is provided for consistent evaluation of methodologies and monitoring of the situation of young people. The interventions have been designed taking into account the combined effect of the activities to be carried out in the spheres of education, youth and employment.

There are specific indicators set to measure the output of the activities by 2023 such as the total number or participants in youth work services, number of NEETs (aged 15–26) who have received services, number of young people at risk who have received services and number of people benefitting from networking services. Under the framework the body responsible for implementation (see above) is also responsible for the collection of the data on indicators. There is no specific additional system of gathering information and data about national organizations involved in the activities established under the framework of the Operational Programme.

The levels of participation in the programme are described in the yearly reports of the programme and the following states most important numbers indicating the results in 2015:

Activities under the Operational Programme (described above)		Reported number of youth participating in 2015
Activity 1 (see above)	Tõrjutusriskis noorte kaasamine ja noorte tööhõivevalmiduse parandamine	751 young people, including 333 NEET young people
Activity 2	“Toetuse andmise tingimused õigusrikkumise taustaga noorte tööturule kaasamiseks	0
Activity 3	Toetuse andmise tingimused noortele arenguvõimaluste pakkumiseks programme SPIN abil	365 of which 84 finished the activities
Activity 4	Toetuse andmise tingimused riskikäitumise ennetamiseks, riskis olevate perede toetamiseks ning turvalise elukeskkonna arendamiseks	935

Source: monitoring reports of the relevant activities 2015.

### Funding

There is a dedicated funding allocated by the Government for the programmes supporting inclusion of young people. The programmes are in line with prioritised goals in strategies related to fighting social exclusion of youth.

The funding of the programmes in euros:

Programme and activity		2015	2016	Connection with EU funds
Programme Children And Youth at Risk		703 783 €	871 449 €	No
Activities under the Operational Programme (described above)				
Activity 1 (see above)	Tõrjutusriskis noorte kaasamine ja noorte tööhõivevalmiduse parandamine	2 352 941 €	2 470 588 €	ESF (85%)
Activity 2	“Toetuse andmise tingimused õigusrikkumise taustaga noorte tööturule kaasamiseks	37 154,50 €	164 458,50 €	ESF (85%)
Activity 3	Toetuse andmise tingimused noortele arenguvõimaluste pakkumiseks programme SPIN abil	188 520 €	199 362,50 €	ESF (85%)
Activity 4	Toetuse andmise tingimused riskikäitumise ennetamiseks, riskis olevate perede toetamiseks ning turvalise elukeskkonna arendamiseks	99 767,00 €	451 923,80 €	ESF (85%)

The variations in the budgets of programmes are planned i.e. are based on annual activity plans that are approved by the responsible Ministry and amended yearly.

## Quality assurance

All the programmes described are subject to the detailed multi-layered quality assurance mechanism established by the financial instrument these programmes are financed by i.e.

### 1. Programme "Children and youth at risk"

The Ministry of Education and Research as the Programme Operator provides financial reports, annual programme reports and a final programme report. There is a set of Expected Outcomes & Indicators for Outputs established in the Addendum to the Programme Agreement for the financing of the Programme "Children and Youth at Risk" monitored on yearly bases. Please consult the description of the programmes above for overview of the indicators and outputs.

### 2. Activities under the Operational Programme

There is a Performance framework of the Operational Programme established in the programme, which involves a set of indicators to be monitored, EU structural assistance is also subject to the [2014-2020 Structural Assistance Act](#), which specifies conditions for monitoring and appraisal of the Operational Programme. There is a system of evaluation planned (ex-ante, mid-term and final evaluation); no evaluations specifically relating to the activities supporting inclusion of young people and described above have been conducted by the end of 2016. Please consult the description of the programmes above for overview of the indicators and outputs.

## 4.5 Initiatives promoting social inclusion and raising awareness

### Intercultural awareness

The Ministry of Culture, particularly the Department of Cultural Diversity, is responsible for the integration process within Estonian society and for the support of the cultural life and societies of the Estonian minorities to preserve their cultures and languages in Estonia. The ministry is in charge of the coordination of the strategy of integration and social cohesion in Estonia "[Integrating Estonia 2020](#)".

The youth-specific objective of the strategy is "Students with a native language different from Estonian actively participate in youth work and have close contacts with Estonian-speaking peers." The objective is achieved through increasing opportunities for initiatives, joint activities and increasing the involvement of young people in youth work: such as youth meetings, summer camps, local youth initiatives etc. The measure is based on the activities under the [Youth Field Development Plan 2014-2020](#). The aim is to increase the capability of the youth work field to create and develop a socialising environment suitable for young people and support young people's own initiatives and the organizing of youth projects. It supports the self-initiative of young people and common activities through youth work; various forms of participation are created and developed and youth workers are trained for work with different youth groups. Particular attention is paid to including young people at risk of social exclusion. As a result of the measure, young people have wider opportunities for development and self-fulfilment and young people with a native language different from Estonian have the opportunity of participating in youth work, which supports the creation of a cohesive and creative society. The main target groups of these activities are young people from 7-26 living in Estonia. The outcomes under this objective are measured by the indicator "Inclusion of young people in youth work in local governments, the population of which mainly consists of individuals with a native language different from Estonian, compared to the Estonian average". The base level of the indicator is 30.9% compared to the 49.1% Estonian average; the goal for 2017 is accordingly 35% and 53% and by 2020 45% and 60% accordingly.

## Young people's rights

The general framework for the government-level initiatives in the area of youth rights is regulated mainly by the [Child Protection Act](#). The Act also defines (§5) principles of ensuring rights and well-being of children, such as every child has the inherent right to life, survival and development; every child has the right to equal treatment without any discrimination; every child has the right to independent opinion in all matters affecting the child and the right to express his or her views.

The Government has approved [the Development Plan for Children and Families](#) for 2012–2020, the responsibility for the implementation lies with the Ministry of Social Affairs. Under the strategic objective 3 aimed at guaranteeing the child rights, the following measures are currently being implemented:

1. Increasing public awareness of the rights of the child
  - Preparation and carrying out a training programme about the rights of the child for trainers in the area of human rights, teachers of preschool childcare institutions and general education schools, members of juvenile committees, representatives of law enforcement authorities, parents, etc.
  - Development of a programme about the rights of the child in the study programmes of general education schools
  - Giving information about the rights of the child in cooperation with non-profit organizations.
2. Increasing the participation of children at the level of individuals and society
  - Mapping the participation opportunities of children against the background of national and international experience
  - Sharing best practice and positive experience in child participation and inclusion
  - Improving the opportunities of children to participate in social life, incl. media
  - Preparation of guidelines and organization of training to increase the participation and inclusion of children
3. Raising the media awareness of children and development of a safer media environment
  - Explaining the role and image of children, both girls and boys, and monitoring trends in media
  - Analysis and streamlining of the legislation that regulates the safety of children in media
  - Analysis and implementation of age-specific warning systems regarding audiovisual media and computer and video games
  - Promotion of media education and development of methodological material
  - Raising awareness of internet safety via training, media campaigns and distribution of information
  - Development of a tip hotline for internet security counselling and combating illicit content and activities
4. Supervision for guaranteeing the rights of the child
  - Monitoring and regular analysis of the rights stipulated in the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child
  - Increasing the efficiency of the cooperation between the various institutions (local authorities, county government, ministry, Chancellor of Justice) that exercise supervision in guaranteeing the rights of the child.

There is a set of indicators defined to measure the achievement of this specific objective (nr 3): the number of children aged 0-17 per child protection specialist, the number of children separated from families and % of children aged 0-17, changes in the attitude that a child may be given the chance to express their views, but they must not be taken into consideration, percentage of children placed in non-institutional substitute care among all children placed in substitute care. According to [the report about the implementation in 2014](#), the levels of all four indicators have changed in the expected



direction in order to achieve the objectives set in the strategy. There is no report from 2015 available.

### **Key initiatives to safeguard democracy and prevent radicalisation leading to violent extremism**

There is no specific programme or activity initiated on the governmental level to address specifically the issue of prevention of radicalization and violent extremism of young people, however the violent extremism and radicalisation in Estonia is at policy level dealt with under the internal security policy, which is the area of responsibility of [the Ministry of the Interior](#). In the framework of combating terrorism, it is stated, that activities in Estonia and international cooperation should aim to stop radicalisation, the financing of terrorism and the smuggling of strategic goods. The government sets the policies for combating terrorism in the framework document on combat against terrorism approved in November 2013. In this Document the prevention of terrorism and radicalization, and prevention of recruitment to terrorist organizations is highlighted as an issue of importance. It is drawn out, that Estonia is paying particular attention in order to prevent the activities of movements and people who spread racial, cultural, religious or affiliation hate in Estonia. The earliest signs of radicalism must be prevented, because – as shown by international experience – the growth of radicalism into extremism and then into terrorism is probable and therefore also an undisputed threat to the security of the state ([Fundamentals of Counter-Terrorism in Estonia](#)).

## **4.6 Access to Quality Services**

### **Housing**

The main initiatives by the Government to support issues concerning housing of young people are:

1. housing loan guarantees,
2. home grants for families with many children,
3. state funded housing during the studies
4. substitute home service

There is also a provision of dwelling available as a social service. [Social Welfare Act](#) (§41) defines provision of dwelling as a social service organized by a local authority with the objective to ensure the possibility to use a dwelling to a person who due to socio-economic situation is unable to provide a dwelling which corresponds to the needs of the person and his or her family. The provision of dwelling is however not specifically targeted for young people.

#### *Housing loan guarantees under the housing policy*

The long-term objectives of Estonian housing policy defined by the [Ministry of Economic Affairs and Communications](#) are the availability of housing to the Estonian population, quality and sustainability of the housing stock, diversity and balanced sustainable development of residential areas. The initiative of the Government in the framework of the housing policy directed at access to housing and identifying young people as specific target group, is a housing loan guarantee executed by [the Foundation KredEx](#) (founded by the Ministry of Economic Affairs and Communications). Housing loan guarantee is designed for people wishing to take a loan for the purchase of new living premises or renovation of the existing ones, and decrease the downpayment obligation. Under the housing loan guarantee scheme there are two specific youth target groups defined:

- **Target group of young family** i.e. a parent or parents raising a child of up to 15 years (included);
- **Target group of young specialist**, i.e. an up to 35-year-old (included) person, who has acquired secondary or vocational secondary education (based on basic or secondary education) or vocational education based on basic or secondary education, and meets one of the following conditions below:



1. an employment contract, service contract or board member contract has been concluded with the person, whereas the probation period (if applicable) shall be over;
2. who is assigned to a post according to the Public Service Act, whereas the probation period (if applicable) shall be over;
3. the person is registered in the business register or tax board as a self-employed entrepreneur, whereas he/she shall have operated as an entrepreneur for at least a year.

The amount of housing loan guarantees issued in 2015 was EUR 17.5 million. A total of 2191 households purchased or renovated their homes in 2015, including 971 young families in the amount of EUR 7.9 million; 1212 young specialists in the amount of EUR 9.5 million.

#### Home grants for families with many children

Within the “Strategy of Children and Families 2012–2020” KredEx is implementing a measure to improve the living conditions of families with many children. The target group of the grant scheme is households with low income, with at least four children under 19 years of age. Eligible activities include decreasing the repayment of the principal part of the current housing loan, purchasing, building, reconstructing, renovating, or expanding housing, the construction, replacement, or updating of technical systems or networks. In 2015 the applications of 242 families were funded. The average grant amount per family was EUR 7413. There are 1178 children growing in the families that received funding; an average of 5 children per family.

#### State funded housing during the studies

The state finances the accommodation of 700 basic school students in boarding school facilities of municipal or private schools to support the fulfilment of their duty to attend school. A head of school can admit students who are acquiring basic education and come from families with financial difficulties to the state-funded place of the boarding school. The support for boarding school facilities is allocated for students who need the services of the boarding school throughout the school year, not periodically.

#### Substitute Home Service

According to the [Social Welfare Act](#) (§116) substitute home service means ensuring family-like living conditions to a child for meeting his or her basic needs, the creation of a secure physical and social environment promoting his or her development and preparation of the child for coping in accordance with his or her abilities as an adult. The target group for the substitute home service are young people under 18 years who has been left without a parent with right of custody. The substitute home service can also be provided to unaccompanied minor aliens, minor victims of human trafficking and sexually abused minors. The substitute home service is financed from the state budget.

### **Social services**

Social services in Estonia as part of social welfare system are regulated in the [Social Welfare Act](#). The social services in Estonia are generally directed to target groups based on needs and the type of challenges a person has (for example disabled people, people with economic difficulties etc.).

The [Welfare Development Plan 2016-2023](#) defines improving the accessibility and quality of social services, the development of services that include people in society as an important focus area of welfare setting it as one of the four areas of development. The Document also states, that the introduction of social innovations and the emergence of social enterprises in the social system will be encouraged. Specific policies aimed at social services for children and their families are set in the Development Plan for Children and Families for 2012–2020.

Both development plans have established specific implementation plans that list all the activities, responsible bodies and budgets for these activities.

In addition to social services defined through the welfare system, there are initiatives in other policy areas developed in order to support young people.

In education policy there are several policy measures that support acquisition of education: student loan, state education allowance, various scholarships; support for commuting and transportation allowance; support for provision of lunches in general education schools and vocational schools; municipal support (not universal in all municipalities) for lunches in kindergarten, grants for pupils starting in the first grade, yearly grants for the start of the schoolyear). There is also a system of pedagogical counselling and career guidance (see [chapter 3.5](#)) established for young people in the education policy area.

In youth policy there are support schemes established for supporting for participation in summer camps for children from families with fewer opportunities, several municipalities provide financial support for participating in hobby education (see [chapter 4.8](#)).

### Health care

Health care is provided and general health care provision is available for youth. According to the Health Insurance Act state considers insured permanent residents of Estonia under 19 and persons acquiring basic, general secondary, formal vocational or higher education i.e. their costs of health insurance are covered by [Estonian Health Insurance Fund](#).

Most important health service available in addition to young people, is a system of health care services provided in general education schools. The students are provided with health services at school, including activities carried out by nurses financed by the school owner.

The priorities of health policy and health care in relation to youth are defined in the [National Health Plan 2009–2020](#). Safe and healthy development of children and adolescents is defined as one of the four main fields of development in the plan. Main objective of this field is to decrease mortality and primary mental and behaviour disorders of children and youth and to increase of young people's positive evaluation of their health. The measures under this objective are targeted at promotion of reproductive and infant health, health promotion of pre-school children and school-aged children.

To support the implementation of the objectives of the National Health Plan 2009-2020, the Ministry of Social Affairs has, among other activities, supported with the financing from the Norway Grants 2009-2014:

- the establishment of 4 children's and youth mental health centres covering all of the country with [Children's Mental Health Centre](#) of Tallinn Children's Hospital acting as a coordinating, training and supervising body for the network of mental health centres;
- Estonian National Social Insurance Board in [Developing and providing/piloting the rehabilitation services for children and youth with severe mental health problems in community residential setting](#) in order to design innovative services for children with mental health and behavioural problems, what will provide integrated social, educational and health services to support children and youth suitable life and education environment;
- Web-based information sources and counselling services on mental and reproductive health such as project "[Peaasi.ee - mental health e-counseling, web platform and online solutions for young people in Estonia](#)";
- Estonian Sexual Health Association Project „Reorganization of web-based sexual health counseling service and developing the quality framework of web-based services in the field of mental- and sexual and reproductive health" with an aim to ensure the access to good quality sexual health internet-counseling service for young people (14-24 years) living in Estonia, to ensure the good quality sexual health information and counselling web environments ([www.amor.ee](#) and [www.estl.ee](#)) and to develop the quality framework of web-based counselling services in the field of

mental- and sexual and reproductive health in cooperation with public sector and specialists in the field.

The Government has established a [National Institute for Health Development](#) with a task (among other) to support health promotion i.e. the development of a way of life and behaviour which promotes and values people's health, as well as a systematic improvement of health-supporting physical and social environment. One of the areas of activities to support health promotion implemented by the Institute, is targeted at children and youth health. The Institute provides research and analyses related to the health of children and youth, supports local level networking, develops methodical materials and publications, provides trainings for specialists working with children and youth (Tervise..., 2016). The Institute also supports people active in health promotion providing the database of best practices and other relevant information in the dedicated web-portal [www.terviseinfo.ee](http://www.terviseinfo.ee).

Training Centre of [the National Institute for Health Development](#) offers professional development courses to specialists working to support health, such as kindergarten and school employees, youth workers, child adopters, foster care families, employees of social welfare services and rehabilitation centres, county and local municipality employees, counsellors, psychologists, health care workers and health promoters, social workers, NGOs etc. Main areas of training include HIV/AIDS and substance abuse, health promotion and health counselling. In addition, the centre also carries out analysis of training needs, and provides support to trainers in training methodology.

### Financial services

The two main measures to support accessibility to financial services for young people specifically are

1. study loan scheme;
2. housing loan guarantee scheme (described under housing services in this chapter).

Study loan is a state-guaranteed long-term loan for funding studies. The right to receive a study loan is held by a full-time student who is an Estonian citizen or resides in Estonia on the basis of a long-term residence permit or permanent residency. Study loans are provided by banks.

There is a debt counselling service available as a social service and organized by a local authority in order to assist a person through enhancing the ability to cope and resolve other problems related to debt. However, the service is not targeted specifically for young people.

There is no top level scheme to provide allowances and credit for vulnerable young people nor are the specific measures against their financial exclusion.

### Quality assurance

There is no single system of evaluating all services to support social inclusion of young people. The services listed above are under the quality assurance mechanism defined by the area such as health, social and financial affairs.

All the services initiated, developed and supported by the Government are part of the strategic planning of the relevant policy area i.e. the mechanisms for monitoring and evaluating the policies described in this [chapter 4.2](#). apply, including the indicators set in the documents. However, different policy areas apply different measures to evaluate and support the quality of services. These measures and the outcomes of these measures largely depend on the service, the level of regulation of the service (i.e. how detailed the regulation of the services is) and on the type of the bodies responsible for service provision. The measures can include studies (incl studies of user satisfaction), guidelines, support for self-evaluation, trainings etc.

## **4.7 Youth Work to Foster Social Inclusion**

### **Policy/legal framework**

[Youth Work Act](#) provides the legal basis for the organization and financing of youth work, including to the youth work with a view to foster social inclusion. The Act defines the main terms used in the youth field, main institutions, organizations and forms of youth work, the principles of youth work, financing of youth work, etc. The Act describes the division of tasks regarding youth work of the Ministry of Education and Research and local municipality. The Act defines municipal and local youth councils.

The policy goals of youth work is described in [the Youth Field Development Plan 2014-2020](#). The document outlines strategic goals in the field of youth. The main goal introduced in the development plan is to provide young people with opportunities of development and self-realization which support socially coherent and creative society in general.

See [chapter 1.3](#) for description of the scope, content and implementation mechanism of the development plan.

### **Main inclusive Youth-Work programmes and target groups**

The programmes described in the [chapter 4.4](#) include the most prominent initiatives in youth work targeting specifically vulnerable young people. The [chapter 4.4](#) provides information on the content, target groups and funding of these programmes. Youth organizations have been consulted in designing the programmes.

#### **HUKK-AP project**

The HUKK-AP project was part of the Children and Youth at Risk programme described in [chapter 4.5](#). The project was carried out from 1 January 2014–30 April 2016 by the Foundation Archimedes Youth Agency. The HUKK-AP project offered the organizers of hobby activities a chance to develop solutions that support the inclusion of young people with fewer opportunities in hobby activities more than the current methods. In cooperation with the Archimedes Foundation's Youth Agency, the city governments of Pärnu and Tartu, VitaTiim and Urban Style non-governmental organizations, 59 of their local partners and 16 hobby activity teams that participated in the development programme, created new forms of activities and approaches for including young people as part of the project. Hobby activity instructors and youth work organizers were also trained. An important part of the project's activities was aimed at young people aged 7-17, who, for many reasons (health, disability, special educational needs, geographical or socio-economic restrictions) had not participated in hobby activities thus far. A tool for measuring the impact of the project and hobby activities was also created. See the publication about results ["Anything is possible! The Summary of the HUKK-AP Project – the Programme of Involving and Developing Hobby Schools. Experiences, activities and results"](#) published by the Foundation Archimedes Youth Agency.

### **Youth work providers in the field of social inclusion for young people**

Youth work in general is provided in Estonia by the local governments. The most important organizations and institutions involved in actual offer of youth work services are:

- Youth and youth work NGOs;
- Youth centres;
- Hobby schools;
- Youth camps;

The conducting, managing and evaluating youth work contains the following main parts in Estonia:

- Policy goals are set at the level of Government of the Republic together with the budget allocation to the youth work, including resources from financial instruments, which the Government has the right to decide the allocation of.
- [The Ministry of Education and Research](#) together with the Estonian Youth Work Centre as a national youth work agency is responsible for proposal of changes, monitoring and coordination of the implementation of the policy in cooperation with other ministries and public institutions, including county Governments. The Ministry and/or [Estonian Youth Work Centre](#) can contract local governments and other youth work providers or their umbrella organizations, universities etc to finance the services that are defined in the policy plans.
- Local governments are responsible for provision, planning and implementing of youth work. Local Governments can establish municipal institutions for provision of services or contract private institutions, including non-profit organisations such as youth organizations etc.
- Universities provide professional formal education for youth workers based on national occupational standards for youth workers.
- [Youth Agency of the Foundation Archimedes](#) is responsible for provision of trainings for youth workers. It is also the National Agency for the Erasmus+ programme.
- The evaluation is done at the national level based on [the Youth Field Development Plan 2014-2020](#) by the Ministry of Education and Research, and reported to the Government yearly. The local governments are responsible for the evaluation of the provision of youth work services; there are supporting mechanisms created by the Estonian Youth Work Centre to support the evaluation. Youth organizations, youth clubs etc. that are private NGOs are responsible for their internal evaluation mechanisms.

The public funding is available, however it is difficult to show the number allocated to youth work providers to support their capacity in the field of social inclusion of young people as it can be considered as a general aim of all youth work in Estonia.

### **Training and support for youth workers engaged in social inclusion programmes**

Professional formal education (BA or equivalent and MA level) is available for youth workers at two universities: Tallinn University and Tartu University, which is providing opportunities to study in Narva College and in Viljandi Cultural Academy.

To support capacities of youth work sector to work towards social inclusion of young people, there is a programme “Development of youth worker training” established by the Ministry of Education and Research with the funding from ESF and state budget for the years 2014-2020. [Youth Agency in the Foundation Archimedes](#) is responsible for implementing the programme. The programme provides trainings for youth workers, trainings for trainers, supports development of training materials and development of trainings quality.

Estonian Youth Work Centre, an agency under the administration of the Ministry of Education and Research, has a wide range of tasks for the implementation of youth policy and the development of youth work, including the implementation different programmes supporting the capacity building of youth work providers, development of youth work quality and instruments etc.

### **Financial support**

The public funding in addition to the programmes initiated by the Government and described in this chapter, is available, however it is difficult to show the number allocated to youth work providers to support their capacity in the field of social inclusion of young people as it can be considered as a general aim of all youth work in Estonia.

The funding of youth policy including youth work is described in [chapter 1.8](#). The main sources of funding include state budget, local budgets, EU support.

## Quality assurance

The mechanisms to monitor and ensure the quality of measures in youth work are subject to the overall mechanism of policy monitoring and evaluation, and the outcomes of it, described in [chapter 4.2](#), the programmes described are in addition subject to the mechanisms derived from the financial instrument they are financed from (see [chapter 4.5](#)).

There are following indicators defined in the Youth Field Development plan 2014-2020 and these indicators are relevant to all activities aimed at and financed for achieving the objectives of the plan:

- proportion of young people (aged 18-24) with basic or lower level of education who do not continue in education
- youth unemployment rate for the age group 15-24
- involvement of young people in youth work (% of total number of young people)
- regional availability of youth work provision
- number of opportunities for organized participation (youth councils and other participation structures)
- satisfaction of young people with youth work
- proportion of youth workers taking part in training per year

## 4.8 Current Debates and Reforms

Main discussions and developments in the area of social exclusion are:

- decentralisation and de-institutionalisation of social services, including the aim to see more services provided at the local level by the NGO sector;
- development of e-services;
- effectiveness and impact of services including youth work services;
- sustainability of the social protection system and social services provision in the light of aging population.

## 5. Participation

Youth participation has been a starting principle in the youth sector in Estonia. [The Youth Work Act](#) outlines the principles of youth work in Estonia, whereby one of the main principles says: “youth work is done for youth and with youth, involving them in the decision-making process”. See more in [Chapter 5.1](#). Most political parties in Estonia have a dedicated form for young people to participate – whether it is a substructure Under the organization or a separate organization. See more in [Chapter 5.2](#). In Estonia the term “youth parliament” is not defined legally.

There are local and county level youth participation councils in Estonia. The Estonian National Youth Council coordinates and supports the development and activities of youth councils in Estonia. There are also higher education student unions, school student unions, which represent young people. See more in [Chapter 5.3](#). Participation of young people in decision making is defined as one of four strategic objectives in the Youth Field Development Plan 2014-2020. See more in [Chapter 5.5](#).

### 5.1 General context

#### Definitions and concepts

Youth participation has been one of the most important principles and goals in youth work in Estonia. [The Youth Work Act](#) outlines the principles of youth work in Estonia, whereby one of the main principles says that youth work is done for youth and with youth, involving them in the decision-making process.



The Youth Field Development Plan 2014-2020 ([Noortevaldkonna arengukava 2014-2020](#)) describes the underlying concept as following:

"Becoming involved in arranging one's own life and the life of the community is what the life changes of young people and the development of a strong civil society at large are based on. Young people's sense of belonging and perception of being involved are determined by whether they have their say at home, at school and in the community, whether there is a feeling of togetherness among peers and whether by doing things together they accomplish something meaningful within the community. This helps prevent young people from becoming socially apathetic and excluded and from having the need or desire to express themselves in a radical way or leave the country."

The concept of youth participation in Estonia is/was heavily shaped by the youth sector (i.e. youth work). The fact that youth should be a part of the decision-making process is already widely recognized, youth participation is guaranteed by the main documents in the youth field. The society's attitude towards the involvement of children and young people has become more supportive.

### **Institutions of representative democracy**

Estonia is a centralised state governed by the parliamentary democracy. The Constitution of Estonia came into force in 1992 and has continued the democratic spirit of the 1920 Constitution, with some added mechanisms to maintain the balance of power of the state.

Head of the State is the President, who is elected by the parliament or an electoral body. For 5 years. The President has mainly representative functions. National legislature is the *Riigikogu*: a unicameral parliament of 101 members. Parliament is elected for the term 4 years. The Government headed by the Prime Minister exercises the executive power. The Constitution provides a large degree of autonomy to local governments (towns and rural municipalities) elected for 4 years term.

Electoral system in Estonia is proportional representation. Voting is not compulsory. Available options for voting are voting with ballot paper in the polling place, advanced voting, electronic voting, home voting and voting by post (in foreign state

The legal acts regulating the elections in Estonia are:

- [Riigikogu Election Act](#) (2002);
- [Local Government Council Election Act](#) (2002);
- [European Parliament Election Act](#) (2002);
- [Referendum Act](#) (2002);
- [President of the Republic Election Act](#) (1996).

## **5.2 Youth participation in representative democracy**

### **Young people as voters**

The official statistics of the Estonian National Electoral Committee about turnout and results of the voting in Estonia are not available by age-group, except for the statistics on e-voting.

The turnout of young people is described based on surveys.

- According to the study by Deželan in 2015 [„Young people and democratic life in Europe: what next after the 2014 European elections?“](#), voter absenteeism (i.e. those who did not vote) in EU 2014 parliamentary elections for Estonia among 18-24 years old was 87,5% compared to average 60% in Estonia and 56,9% in EU. Voter absenteeism in national parliamentary elections among 18-24 years old was 62,5% compared to average 32,8% in Estonia and 33,6% in EU. Deželan argues, also concerning Estonia, that several studies show corroborative results that validate the



widely accepted argument that the gap between young and older voters has widened considerably across the democratic world.

- Flash Eurobarometer 375 “European Youth: Participation in Democratic Life” studied young EU citizens’ participation in society. Young people (15-30) were asked whether or not they have voted in a political election in the last three years. In Estonia 44% of respondents voted, which was lower than EU average 56%. When comparing the findings with those from 2011, Estonia showed a decrease of 18 percentage points to 44%.
- According to Toomla (2011), who compared survey data from three consecutive parliament elections in Estonia: 2003., 2007., 2011., from all the age-groups young people between 18-30 years old, were the most passive group to participate in the voting. Even though passive position of young people has decreased approximately 10 percentage points over the years observed, nearly one third of young people did not go to vote in 2011. Among the older groups Under observation (31-45 and 46-60) the level is approximately two times lower. Toomla also argued that the passive position of young people is not related to the fact how many young candidates there are.

### e-voting and young people

Since the restoration of independence in August 1991, Estonia has held 17 elections at either local, national or European level. As of 2016, Estonia has held 8 elections over ten years, where people could cast legally binding votes over the internet i.e. e-vote. The share of people using e-voting has increased over the elections: the share of e-voters in the first e-enabled elections in 2005 was 1,9%, in parliamentary elections in 2015 30,5% of votes were cast online. In 2017 local elections, 31,7% of all votes were e-votes.

The amount of young voters of all e-voter has been as following:

	2005 Local	2007 Parl.	2009 EP	2009 Local	2011 Parl.	2013 Local	2014 EP	2015 Parl.	2017 Local
% of e-voters from all voters	1,9	5,5	14,7	15,8	24,3	21,2	31,3	30,5	31,7
% of 16-17 year olds among e-voters	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	0,9
% of 18-24 year olds among e-voters	10	11	9	11	9	9	6	7	6,5
% of 25-34 year olds among e-voters	33	33	28	28	27	26	23	25	21,8

Source: Estonian National Electoral Committee

For the last four consecutive elections, the 2013 local, 2014 European Parliamentary, 2015 national, and the 2017 local elections, e-voting is mostly used by middle-aged people, between 35–45 years old. The share of the youngest voting eligible age segment, people between 16 to 24 years old is very small i.e. e-voters comprise a clearly smaller share out of voters within the 16–24 age group than they do among the 35–45 age group. The distribution of age among active e-voters mirrors the finding that voting online in Estonia is not the most popular option among the youngest and presumably most tech savvy citizens.

The voting age limit for national parliament, European parliament and for the referendum is 18.

In 2015, the decision was made by two consecutive compositions of the Parliament to change the Constitution in order to lower the voting age for the local government election to 16 years old. The 16 and 17-years-old young people had the first possibility to vote at local elections that took place in October 2017. The percentage of e-voters from all voters at the age-group was 0,9%. There were 1794 young people who gave their vote via e-voting, which is 7,4% of all the young people aged 16-17 and 0,6% of all young people in Estonia aged 7-26.

Persons, who have been convicted by a court and are imprisoned, cannot vote.

### Young people as political representatives

Most political parties in Estonia have a dedicated form for young people to participate – whether it is a substructure under the organization or a separate organization – a youth wing of the party. Youth wings have limited autonomy as budgetary and policy issues are largely relying on the party. Political parties in Estonia are registered as non-for-profit organizations. The [Non-profit Associations Act](#) defines that „if a minor of at least 15 years of age becomes a member of such youth association which complies with the provisions of the Youth Work Act, the consent of the guardian need not be submitted to the non-profit association unless otherwise provided by the articles of association.

The age limit of standing as a candidate is regulated as following:

- National parliament: 21
- Local Government Council: 18
- European parliament: 21

To candidate for the position of the President, the age limit is 40 ([President of the Republic Election Act](#)). There is no age limit to serve in civil service in Estonia.

There is no quota concerning the seats reserved for young people, nor is there special provisions aiming at facilitating young people standing as political candidates.

In the legal acts regulating the elections in Estonia there is a special regulation concerning the regular member of the Defence Force, but the regulation only concerns standing as a candidate (he or she cannot stand as a candidate). There is also a regulation concerning the persons, who have been convicted by a court and is imprisoned, cannot vote and stand as a candidate.

In the last elections in 2015 of the current Riigikogu (Parliament) the youngest elected member of parliament was 23, the average age of elected members of the parliament was 47,3. Toomla has analysed the candidate lists for parliamentary elections of major parties in Estonia and has concluded that in 2003 there were 19% of candidates under 30 in top 20 positions of the lists, in 2007 and in 2011, 7 % both years.

There are no specific functions within the parliament reserved for young members.

## 5.3 Youth representation bodies

### Youth parliament

In Estonia, the term “youth parliament” is not defined legally. Therefore, the term has been used as a project name (for example a cooperation project to support youth participation in Estonia, e.g. see [www.noorteparlament.lastekaitseliit.ee](http://www.noorteparlament.lastekaitseliit.ee); or session of European youth parliament in Estonia see [www.ten.ee](http://www.ten.ee)) and also as a name for some local youth councils (for example Narva Noorteparlament, see [www.parlament.noortek.ee](http://www.parlament.noortek.ee)).

### Youth councils and/or youth advisory boards

*Estonian National Youth Council (Eesti Noorteühenduste Liit - ENL)*

*Structure and composition*

[Estonian National Youth Council](#) is an umbrella organization established in 2002 and unites 43 youth organizations, 83 youth councils throughout Estonia.

ENL is governed by the general assembly – representative body for all the member organisations, which elects the council (5-9 members) and the board (3-5 members).

There is no overseeing body of the students union in Estonia.

*Roles and responsibilities*

ENL promotes cooperation between youth associations and active participation of young people in society. ENL is working for recognition and participation of young people. ENL represents, includes and supports youth organizations through creating opportunities for cooperation and development. ENL mission is to be an organization with a large, active and strong membership, an opinion leader on youth matters and a reliable partner in a society, where the ideas and activities of the Youth are valued and decisions are made in cooperation with the Youth.

ENL is also coordinating and supporting the development and activities of youth councils. In order to support the youth council, ENL provides trainings and guidelines for new and already active youth council (for example [a manual to support youth councils](#)), and financial support for youth councils. Public funding is available for youth councils via ENL in order to start a new youth council and in order to support projects of youth councils.

*Funding*

ENL itself is also receiving yearly public funding as a union of youth associations from the grant scheme dedicated for youth associations administered by Ministry of Education and Research and Estonian Youth Work Centre.

*Local and regional youth councils*

There are local and county level [youth participation councils](#) (*osaluskogu*) in Estonia. Estonia National Youth Council, who is coordinating and supporting the development and activities of youth councils defines the terms as following:

- By "[youth participation council](#)" we mean different institutions where young persons can take part in decision-making.
- County youth councils communicate the opinions of young persons from the respective county to the county's decision-makers, i.e. enable young persons to take part in decision-making processes and protect their interests in the fields concerning them at county level.
- Local youth councils are youth participation councils attached to local government councils. The objective of local youth councils is to take part in local governments' decision-making.

The legal framework exists for the youth councils at municipal level only. The [Youth Work Act](#) amendments in 2010 established the regulations for the youth councils as following:

- A youth council is an advisory participation council consisting of young people which operates at rural municipality or city council;
- Youth council can be established at a rural municipality or city council.
- The objective of youth council shall be the discussion of issues concerning young people which are in the competence of the rural municipality or city and the making of proposals to the rural municipality or city council and rural municipality or city government in connection therewith proceeding from the needs and interests of young people.
- Youth council shall be elected democratically by the young people of the rural municipality or city pursuant to the procedure established by the rural municipality or city council.
- The bases for the activities of youth council shall be established by the rural municipality or city council.
- The rural municipality or city shall support the sustainable activities of the youth council in their administrative territory pursuant to the procedure established by the rural municipality or city council.
- Upon the request of the youth council the rural municipality or city council shall forward the drafts of their hearing agendas and draft legislations regarding young people to the youth council and before the taking place of the rural municipality or city council hearings.

The Act does not imply an obligation to establish a youth council, but an obligation to support the proceedings, activities and consult the existing council.

There is no parliamentary legislation in Estonia concerning the number of council or board members, the age range (apart from the general definition of youth in Estonia i.e. persons between 7-26 years old), the election process, the duration of the mandate, the frequency of the council/board.

There were 83 youth councils in 2016.

### Higher education student union(s)

#### *Structure*

Eesti Üliõpilaskondade Liit ([EÜL](#)) - Federation of Estonian student unions - was founded on 23. November 1991, shortly after Estonia regained independence. EÜL currently represents over 95% (64 460) of Estonian students.

EÜL's main decision body is the EÜL council where all of our member student bodies are represented. The council decides main future plans and policies, is in charge of the budget and elects the board and different committees. The council is elected by the local unions, all students of all members are eligible to be elected as member of the council or the board. The board currently consists of 3 persons – the chair person and two vice-chairs. They are responsible for following fields: social policy, educational policy, democracy and financing of higher education. The current board has a mandate of 24 months. The board is helped by a staff of about 15 employees who work in the office every day and 2 committees who gather a couple of times a year.

There is no overseeing body of the students union in Estonia.

#### *Composition*

Currently EÜL has 23 members and two candidate members. There are 28 student bodies in Estonia. Membership to EÜL is voluntary for a student body but all Estonian students are automatically members of their HEI student body. There are no membership fees or special obligations for the students.

The age range of students is mostly 19-30 years old.

#### *Role and responsibilities*

In Estonia the Acts concerning higher and vocational education, define the legal framework for student bodies and student councils in the education institutions:

- the [Universities Act](#) (1995)
- the [Institutions of Professional Higher Education Act](#) (1998)
- the [Vocational Educational Institutions Act](#) (2013)

Generally, the definition of a Student Body defines the body as an institution which exercises the right of the students to self-government – to decide on and manage independently, be active on the issues of student life based on the interests, needs, rights and obligations of students, also to establish a student council.

EÜL's main goal is to represent students' interests on national level. The main issues are student rights, educational and social issues. EÜL works closely together with the parliament, the government, different ministries, higher education institutions and other partners. EÜL is also a leading NGO in Estonia and sometimes also represents students in schools, youth in general or just NGOs in different committees. EÜL is recognised as a partner for policy-making by the Ministry of Education and Research and the government.

EÜL also distributes the ISIC card which is an identity card [for students](#), teachers and youth in general ([www.isic.ee](http://www.isic.ee)). The ISIC card is the main source of revenue for EÜL.

EÜL also finances and publishes the national student newspaper [Üliõpilasleht](#) ([www.yliopilasleht.ee](http://www.yliopilasleht.ee)) and organises student days in Tallinn ([www.tudengipaevad.ee](http://www.tudengipaevad.ee)).

EÜL is a member of NOM (<http://www.syl.fi/english/nom/>), European Students' Union ([www.esu-online.org](http://www.esu-online.org)) and Network of Estonian Non-profit Organizations ([www.ngo.ee](http://www.ngo.ee)).

#### *Funding*

EÜL is receiving yearly public funding as a union of youth associations from the grant scheme dedicated for youth associations administered by Ministry of Education and Research and Estonian Youth Work Centre.

### **School student union(s)**

#### *Structure*

The main union for school student councils is Estonian School Student Council Union ([Eesti Õpilasesinduste Liit](http://www.eoel.ee) – EÕEL). EÕEL, founded in 1998, is a non-governmental politically independent organization, which represents through the member councils approximately 90 000 school students in Estonia.

The Union is governed by the board that is selected on yearly bases at the general assembly of the union. There are voluntary and paid workers supporting the activities of the EÕEL.

There is no overseeing body of the students union in Estonia.

#### *Composition*

The school student council union members are school councils.

The age range of school students is 7-18 in Estonia.

#### *Role and responsibilities*

In Estonia the [Basic Schools and Upper Secondary Schools Act](#) (2010) defines the legal framework for student bodies and student councils in basic and upper secondary schools. The Act defines, that the student body of a school has the right to decide and independently organise the matters of student life in accordance with acts and legislation adopted based on acts. A student body has the right to:

- form unions and organizations with other student bodies
- become a member of Estonian and international organizations or pursue cooperation with them through a student council
- decide and organise all the other matters of student life, which fall within the competence of student bodies.
- elect a student council who represents the student body within the competence of the student council

The main aims of the EÕEL are to:

- represent school students and their councils interest
- support the work of councils in the schools;
- protect the rights of school students and their councils;
- support the quality of education and the school environment, raise the motivation to study
- support leisure time of school students and their cooperation
- inform school students
- increase youth participation and support development of the civic society.

EÕEL is a recognised partner for policy-making for the parliament, Ministry of Education and Research, Ministry of Social Affairs etc.

#### *Funding*

EÕEL is receiving yearly public funding as a union of youth associations from the grant scheme dedicated for youth associations administered by Ministry of Education and Research and Estonian Youth Work Centre.

## Other bodies

There are no other important top-level or lower level bodies for youth representation that are particularly prominent or important for youth participation.

## 5.4 Young people's participation in policy-making

### Formal Mechanisms of Consultation

Participation of young people in decision making is defined as one of four strategic objectives in the Youth Field Development Plan 2014-2020 ([Noortevaldkonna arengukava 2014-2020](#)).

#### Legal provisions

There are regulations on youth involvement. Involvement of young people in general and of youth councils is defined in the [Youth Work Act](#). The involvement of pupils and students is defined in education institutions acts, and the participation of the children in the [Child Protection Act](#).

#### Forms and levels of consultations

There are plenty of mechanisms for involvement of young people in the public policy processes. In general, youth participation in public policy takes place within the general framework and practice of participatory governance in Estonia. In the consultation processes, the young people are addressed as a group of stakeholders, which means that generally young people are invited to the consultation as one of the consulted parties.

The collective consultation remains an important principle underlying the interaction between the young people and state or municipality. This means that youth consultation and involvement occurs predominantly between a youth council, organization or association on the one hand and a state, municipal, third sector or business organization on the other hand. Consultation of unorganized young people is organized through opinion markets and other forms of participation.

At the municipal level, local youth councils are consulted on topics that are relevant for youth. In 2015, the municipal youth councils were active in 70 local governments. In addition, 15 county youth councils were active, one in each county of Estonia. Most often the consultation is arranged with:

- local and regional youth councils – consulted at local or regional level
- youth organizations – consulted at local and/or national level
- student and pupils councils – consulted partner at local and national level
- participation café – form of consultation at local level
- umbrella organizations of youth councils and youth organizations – consulted at national level.

#### Consultation methods

The youth consultation in the public policy processes occurs mainly in 3 contexts:

- drafting sectorial strategies and development plans;
- implementing sectorial strategies and development plans;
- design of the youth work services.

The main methods of involving young people in drafting strategies is the participation of the representatives of youth organizations or umbrella organizations in different working groups. In these settings the young people are informed of the developments and they can express their opinion on particular themes and partake in discussions leading to final formulations. Technically speaking, this involves the formulation of positions regarding concrete questions, participation in meetings, involvement in communication, reacting to other participants' opinions and proposals, input to official document drafts and other activities to be carried out during the process.

### Regularity of consultations

The consultations take place regularly at national level policy. As the responsible ministries for policy areas are obliged to report annually on the implementation of the policy measures, the youth representatives are also mostly consulted annually on these policy document implementation reports.

Consultations take also place case-by-case depending on the emergence of new legislation or policy proposals.

### **Actors**

#### Youth actors

In general, the main umbrella organizations are involved in drafting policy programs and legislative acts as representatives of young people in Estonia:

- [National Youth Council](#) (the umbrella organization of youth associations and youth organizations);
- [Estonian School Student Councils Union](#) (the umbrella organization of school student councils);
- [Federation of Estonian Student Unions](#) (the umbrella organization of college student councils).

In the implementation phase, local youth organizations, youth councils, and youth work organizations are involved in carrying out activities of a concrete policy program.

There are no specific target groups in general consultation mechanisms defined.

#### Main public authorities

- the [Ministry of Education and Research](#).: responsible for youth policy and education policy
- the [Ministry of Social Affairs](#): responsible for labour market policy, but also for social protection and services including child and family policy
- [Estonian Youth Work Centre](#), an agency of the Ministry of Education and research responsible for implementation of youth policy;

#### Additional stakeholders

- [Estonian Association of Youth Centres](#), implementing youth work in youth centres;
- [Youth Agency of the Foundation Archimedes](#), an independent body established by the government under the Ministry of Education and Research, responsible for implementing youth policy, National Agency for Erasmus+.

### **Information on the extent of youth participation**

There are some specific mechanisms of data collection and monitoring of youth consultation, e.g. Structural Dialogue, Ombudsman for Children reviews the youth rights, youth monitor, etc. However there is no specific data collection system on the level of youth participation.

### **Outcomes**

Participation of young people in decision-making has two main outcomes:

1. quality of the decision;
2. development of active citizenship.

Generally, based on the consultation, a draft law or policy document is revised. There is an obligation for the government authorities to provide information on every proposal whether it has been accepted and also the reasons, if not. Policy documents progress report is generally required from the ministry appointed as a responsible body for the policy document. Usually it is necessary to report to the Government every year the implemented activities, achieved outcomes and results. The yearly reports are a bases



for the Government to renew or to terminate the implementation of the policy document. The inclusion of interested parties to the reporting procedure is advised.

### **Large-scale initiatives for dialogue or debate between public institutions and young people**

Most important government initiative to promote youth participation has been the introduction of annual funding scheme for youth councils and youth organisations.

Estonian National Youth Council initiated a project "[Osaluskohvikud](#)" (Eng. *youth participation cafes*) to provide platform for local politicians, civil servants, professionals working with young people, parents etc. to meet and discuss different relevant issues with local young people from schools, youth organizations, non-organised youth interested to take part at the event, etc. The cafes have been taking place in November every year in different communities all over the country and have involved more than 1500 participants yearly.

## **5.5 National strategy to increase youth participation**

### **Existence of a national strategy to increase young people's political and civil society participation**

A specific National Strategy on Youth participation doesn't exist but Youth participation is a pillar of the Youth Field Development Plan 2014-2020 ([Noortevaldkonna arengukava 2014-2020](#)).

One of the planned policy measures is targeted to "Support for the active participation of young people in the community life and decision-making" The key activities that will be implemented as part of the measure are as follows:

- sustainable development of traditional forms of participation (primarily such as youth councils and associations) is supported;
- system that ensures annual budgetary support for youth associations and councils is further developed;
- increase in the membership of youth associations is supported by improving youth leaders' competence for inclusion;
- new forms of youth participation are developed and supported so as to devise a great many methods used in youth work institutions and organizations that support participation and the ones for learning to participate, focusing, among other things, on developing youth leaders', youth workers' and civil servants' competence;
- awareness of young people as a basis for quality participation is raised by supporting the national youth information system and enabling it to operate effectively in cooperation with various parties.

There is an indicator set to monitor the results: number of opportunities for organised participation (youth councils and other participation structures).

### **Scope and contents**

The Youth Field Development Plan 2014-2020 addresses the youth participation at all levels, however particular attention is paid to participation at the local level. The Development Plan states "Aspirations and opportunities of young people to participate in decision-making processes on matters that concern them and society as a whole are the basis for the development of a cohesive society in Estonia. Participation in arranging your own life and the life of the surrounding community as well as in voluntary activities forms a basis for the development of a strong civil society – one in which young people are the active actors driving social change. Such participation largely determines people's sense of belonging and perception of being involved, which helps prevent them from falling into social apathy and from seeking to express themselves in a radical way or leave the country." In order to increase participation, there is an increasing need in the youth field for finding new forms of participation, develop the habit of having a say and recognise

learning experience gained through participation. The opinions of non-participants must also be found out and taken into account.

The development plan has a strategic goal (one of four goals) defined as “Greater support for the participation of young people in decision-making”. Under the goal a policy measure “Support for the active participation of young people in the community life and decision-making” is planned. The key activities that will be implemented as part of the measure are:

- sustainable development of traditional forms of participation (primarily such as youth councils and associations) is supported;
- system that ensures annual budgetary support for youth associations and councils is further developed;
- increase in the membership of youth associations is supported by improving youth leaders’ competence for inclusion;
- new forms of youth participation are developed and supported so as to devise a great many methods used in youth work institutions and organisations that support participation and the ones for learning to participate, focusing, among other things, on developing youth leaders’, youth workers’ and civil servants’ competence;
- awareness of young people as a basis for quality participation is raised by supporting the national youth information system and enabling it to operate effectively in cooperation with various parties.

The overall target group of the development plan is young people (i.e. 7-26 years’ old), there is no specific target groups identified in relation to the participation goal.

### **Responsible authority for the implementation of the strategy**

Estonian Ministry of Education and Research is responsible for the coordination of the implementation of the development plan. The Ministry has provided yearly reports about implementation to the Government, however no specific evaluation of the implementation has been conducted by the end of 2016.

### **Monitoring and evaluation**

The monitoring and evaluation of the Youth Field Development Plan 2014-2020 is part of the general mechanism established for all policy fields in Estonia. In general, it is required from the ministry appointed as a responsible body for the policy document, to report to the Government every year the implemented activities, achieved outcomes and results. The yearly reports are a base for the Government to renew or to terminate the implementation of the policy document. In 6 months after the end of the defined period of the policy document, it is required to present the final report which has been consulted with relevant ministries and other interested parties. The Government may also request an additional evaluation by experts to evaluate the results. The consultation of interested parties is required to be reported in the drafting process and reporting process.

### **Revisions/Updates**

The Youth Field Development Plan 2014-2020 has not been revised.

At the state level, development of the youth field is being planned for the third time. The “Estonian Youth Work Concept” and the “Estonian Youth Work Development Plan 2001-2004” were drafted in 2001, these were followed by the ‘Youth Work Strategy 2006-2013’ which was approved in 2006. What differentiates the current development plan from the previous documents is its approach to focus on goals and measures that will help to achieve positive change in the most significant challenges – the plan does not describe measures in all areas of youth work and youth policy. Also the aims and objectives based on and formulated in accordance with youth perspective as opposed to a perspective of the sector or services used in earlier documents – the analyses and the policy objectives were about young people not about the system and services of youth work or youth policy.

## **5.6 Supporting youth organisations**

### **Legal/policy framework for the functioning and development of youth organisations**

Youth organisations in Estonia are registered as not-for-profit organisations and defined in the [Youth Work Act](#) as following: “a non-profit association at least two thirds of the members of which are young people and the objective of which is the organisation and performance of youth work”. The Act also defines the umbrella youth organizations as “a union of youth associations is a non-profit association the members of which are youth associations”.

The policy to support youth organisations is part of the [Youth Field Development Plan 2014-2020](#), where 3 specific activities are planned:

1. sustainable development of traditional forms of participation (primarily such as youth councils and associations) is supported;
2. system that ensures annual budgetary support for youth associations and councils is further developed;
3. increase in the membership of youth associations is supported by improving youth leaders' competence for inclusion.

### **Public financial support**

There is a public funding available for youth organisations in Estonia. The Youth Work Act already in 1999, when it was first adopted, established an annual grant scheme from state budget to support youth organisations. The Act defines, that the objective of annual grant scheme for youth associations is „the increase of the capability of youth associations and the achievement of national objectives of youth policy.” Eligible to apply are:

- the youth associations the membership of which includes at least 500 young persons and the local units of which operate in the territory of at least one third of the counties;
- union of youth associations the members of which include at least 30 youth associations;
- school student councils' union if it aggregates at least one third of Estonian basic school, upper secondary school or vocational educational institution students through its members;
- federation of student unions the members of which include at least one half of all student unions of educational institutions implementing higher education level studies.

The allocation of annual grants to youth associations is decided by the minister of Education and Research, taking into account:

- the national priorities of youth work and youth policy;
- the youth association development plan, activities and former achievements in the field;
- the scope of activities of youth association, target group, membership and capability including the performance of former duties;
- the compliance of the applicant and application with the established requirements.

The annual grant scheme does not specify the types of expenditure that is eligible for funding.

### **Initiatives to increase the diversity of participants**

In 2015, Estonian National Youth Council started with a collaboration project „[Common Youth](#)”, which aimed to involve young people at risk in the network of youth associations,

as well as to prevent social exclusion and offences committed by young people. The project was implemented by April 2016.

Project activities involved different parties: eight youth associations, children and youth who live at risk condition and institutions and organizations who deal with youth at risk. Within the project, the members of youth associations were trained to involve the target group into their activities. There were also different opportunities introduced that help youth associations and organizations who deal with youth at risk to collaborate with each other. As a result of the project guidance materials were prepared in collaboration with partners and experts. Youth associations all over Estonia will be able to use the materials in the future with the aim of involving and helping youth at risk better. Project „Common Youth” was funded through the EEA grants programme „Children and Youth at Risk”.

## **5.7 “Learning to participate” through formal, non-formal and informal learning**

### **Policy Framework**

There are two most relevant policy documents in relation to social and civic competencies and participation of youth in Estonia:

In 2002 the Parliament adopted [The Estonian Civil Society Development Concept](#), that forms a basis for strategic development of civil society in Estonia. The document defines principles and values that are important both for public and non-profit sector. Under this document the Government adopted the Civil Society Development Plan 2015–2020 ([Kodanikuühiskonna arengukava](#)) prepared under the leadership of the Ministry of the Interior, which aims at the promotion of civil society in 2015–2020. The plan focuses on two priorities: socially active residents and acting capabilities of citizens’ associations, i.e. ensuring that citizens’ associations have sufficient possibilities for achievement of their goals. The development plan establishes the goal of participation of citizens’ associations in the formation of policy as a natural and valued cooperation. It is also important to increase the influence of citizens’ associations in the process of dealing with social problems and improvement of well-being of people through social innovation, social entrepreneurship and provision of public services.

The Document is implemented under the responsibility of the Ministry of the Interior, who allocates the funds and contracts partners in order to ensure the implementation.

The framework of reference for the civic and social competences used in the development plan is not defined.

There are no specific youth target groups defined in the Document.

The national strategy to increase youth participation is part of the Youth Field Development Plan 2014-2020 ([Noortevaldkonna arengukava 2014-2020](#); [see chapter 5.5](#)). Please see [chapter 5.5](#) for information on the implementation and target groups of the plan. The framework of reference for the civic and social competences used in the development plan is not defined.

### **Formal learning**

Citizenship education “Civics and citizenship education” exists as a compulsory separate subject both in basic and secondary general education. In basic school, the obligatory time taught in 2nd stage of study is 1 lesson per week and 3rd stage of study 2 lessons per week. The National curriculum for upper secondary schools defines that two courses are obligatory to be taught in Civics and citizenship education. The national curricula introduced in 2011 established several competences related to citizenship education (values, social skills, communication skills and entrepreneurship skills) for which the specific knowledge, skills and attitudes to be mastered by the end of each ISCED level are defined.

According to the national curriculums the following learning objectives are defined for Basic and upper secondary school in the area of social studies and in particular Civics and citizenship education.

National curriculum for upper secondary schools: the objective of teaching social subjects in upper secondary school is to develop students' social competence; it refers to the ability to understand the causes and effects of the social changes taking place in the history of humankind and in modern-day society; recognize basic social scientific research methods and use some of them in studying and in everyday life; create future scenarios and visions in an area that is important socially or personally; know about and respect human rights and democracy, be informed about civil rights and duties, and be familiar with the skills and behaviour that are in accordance with them; recognize cultural specificities and follow generally accepted etiquette; and continuously show an interest in the development of one's nation, community and the world, shape one's own opinions and be an active and responsible citizen. In Civics and citizenship education students acquire social writing skills: knowledge, skills, values and attitudes necessary for functioning in society and making responsible decisions. The aim of the subject is to create the preconditions for the strengthening of the identity of a citizen and social cohesion, shaping active citizens, supporting the formation of readiness for dialogue and respect towards people who understand the world differently, as well as the self-awareness of students in questions regarding worldviews.

### **Non-formal and informal learning**

#### **Participative structures within formal education settings (e.g. pupils' participation in school councils)**

In Estonia the Basic Schools and Upper Secondary Schools Act defines the legal framework for student bodies and student councils in basic and upper secondary schools. The Act defines, that the student body of a school has the right to decide and independently organise the matters of student life in accordance with acts and legislation adopted based on acts. A student body has the right to:

- form unions and organisations with other student bodies
- become a member of Estonian and international organisations or pursue cooperation with them through a student council
- decide and organise all the other matters of student life, which fall within the competence of student bodies.
- elect a student council who represents the student body within the competence of the student council

The Acts concerning higher and vocational education, define the legal framework for student bodies and student councils in the education institutions:

- the Universities Act (1995);
- the Institutions of Professional Higher Education Act (1998);
- the Vocational Educational Institutions Act (2013).

Generally, the definition of a Student Body defines the body as an institution, which exercises the right of the students to self-government – to decide on and manage independently, be active on the issues of student life based on the interests, needs, rights and obligations of students, also to establish a student council.

#### **Measures to encourage student participation in the local community and wider society**

The Network of Estonian Non-profit Organizations in cooperation with Estonian Youth Work Centre and the Ministry of education and research launched a programme Community practice (*kogukonnapraktika*) in 2015. Supported by European Social Fund and state budget the programme aims to introduce a practical community work as part of the curricula of civic education for upper secondary level. The cooperation programme provides students with the opportunity to experience short-term practical work period.

### **Partnerships between formal education providers, youth organisations and youth work providers**

The [Youth Field Development Plan 2014-2020](#) defines the following policy goals in relation to partnerships between formal education providers, youth organisations and youth work providers:

- measures are devised and implemented for systematic cross-sectoral and inter-agency communication and collaboration;
- youth work in schools is enhanced;
- the use of youth work tools and training resources are supported in formal education.

The financial support for these policy measures is not specified, but is part of larger programmes supporting youth work and the implementation of the Development plan in general.

### **Supporting non-formal learning initiatives focusing on social and civic competences**

In Estonia, the youth participation and initiatives to support the capability to participate through non-formal learning are generally supported via youth work provision as the participation is defined in Estonia both as a goal and as a method in youth work. There are specific policy goals defined in the [Youth Field Development Plan 2014-2020](#) and there is a systematic public financing available. In general, the youth work programmes supporting the participation include support scheme for youth organisations and youth councils, there are training programmes available for youth workers both as a higher education and as trainings (see [chapter 1](#) for additional information). In the plan, the specific attention is given to the target group of youth at risk of exclusion due to several reasons. Please see [chapter 5.5.](#) for further information.

### **Quality assurance/quality guidelines for non-formal learning**

There is no single system of quality assurance/quality guidelines specific to non-formal learning activities/projects in general. There is a support for youth work quality initiated by Estonian Youth Work Centre and there is a mechanism to monitor policy implementation (see [chapter 5.5.](#)), however the participation of young people is considered as a part of youth work and youth policy goals.

### **Educators' support**

There is no specific certification in the area of civic educators established in Estonia. There is a possibility to gain professional education as teacher and youth worker, both professions include competencies in relation to civic education and participation as part of the occupational standard.

There is a [regular offer of trainings and materials](#) available for people working in formal and non-formal settings with young people systematically provided [by Youth Agency of the Archimedes Foundation](#).

There is an [initiative to create a network of stakeholders](#) active in the civic education field in order to support the development of cooperation inside and between formal and non-formal education.

## **5.8 Raising political awareness among young people**

### **Information providers / counselling structures**

#### *Public authorities*

Youth information belongs to the area of responsibility of the Ministry of Education and Research, central organisation responsible for the system of Rajaleidja centres is [Foundation Innove](#). [Estonian Youth Work Centre](#) as an implementing agency for youth policy is also concerned with developing the provision of youth information in Estonia.



*Contact points for youth and youth information and counselling structures*

Youth information has been recognized as a specific field in youth work since 2001. There was a separate system of youth information centres, which in 2014 were merged with career guidance centres. In 2016, there were 16 centralised publicly financed centres in all counties. The regional youth guidance centres, called [Pathfinder centres](#) (Rajaleidja), provide information and counselling for young people up to 26 years.

There are also dedicated websites available for provision of youth information:

- National portal [www.eesti.ee](http://www.eesti.ee)
- Web-sites providing information for youth [www.rajaleidja.ee](http://www.rajaleidja.ee); [www.stardiplats.ee](http://www.stardiplats.ee);
- Regional youth information portals such as [www.noor.laanemaa.ee](http://www.noor.laanemaa.ee); [www.polvanoored.ee](http://www.polvanoored.ee); [www.tni.ee](http://www.tni.ee); [www.noorteinfo.ee](http://www.noorteinfo.ee);

The centres and youth information activities are receiving annual public funding.

### **Youth-targeted information campaigns about democratic rights and democratic values**

There was [an initiative in 2016](#) supported by public funding from the Ministry of Education and Research of the Estonian National Youth Council connected with the change in the voting system, that allowed 16 and 17 years old to vote first time in the 2017 local elections. The initiative offered schools opportunity to invite young people from the National Youth Council to give a lesson or a simulation exercise for pupils.

The National Youth Council also promotes the visibility of youth participation through photo-project [#noorednähtaval](#).

### **Promoting the intercultural dialogue among young people**

In Estonia, the issue of cultural diversity is among the most important policy areas considering there are representatives of around 190 nationalities living in Estonia. The area of integration responsibility area of the [Ministry of Culture](#), where there is also the position of the Undersecretary of Cultural diversity. The ministry is in charge of the coordination of the strategy of integration and social cohesion in Estonia "Integrating Estonia 2020 ([Lõimuv Eesti 2020](#))". The general objective of the strategy is that Estonian society is integrated and socially cohesive; people with different linguistic and cultural backgrounds actively participate in society and share democratic values. In the framework of the strategy, several objectives are defined relevant to social inclusion of young people and intercultural awareness:

- Supporting the awareness of a common information space and of cultural diversity
- Supporting everyday contacts, communication and involvement in society
- Supporting the native language and culture of ethnic minorities
- Creating opportunities for less integrated Estonian permanent residents with a foreign background for increasing their social activity and supporting their integration.
- Promotion of equal treatment on the labour market
- Offering adaptation training programmes and developing support services and adaptation training targeted at new arrivals
- Ensuring competitive education opportunities for individuals and improving the knowledge of the official language of individuals with a native language different from Estonian

The youth-specific objective of the strategy is "Students with a native language different from Estonian actively participate in youth work and have close contacts with Estonian-speaking peers." The objective shall be achieved through increasing opportunities for initiatives, joint activities and increasing the involvement of young people in youth work. The measure is based on the activities under the [Youth Field Development Plan 2014-2020](#). The aim is to increase the capability of the youth work field to create and develop a socialising environment suitable for young people and support young people's own initiatives and the organising of youth projects. It supports the self-initiative of young



people and common activities through youth work; various forms of participation are created and developed and youth workers are trained for work with different youth groups.

### **Promoting transparent and youth-tailored public communication**

Currently in Estonia there is no policy frameworks, guidelines or initiatives on transparent public communication targeting specifically young people.

## **5.9 E-participation**

Most important e-participation tool in Estonia is e-voting. As of 2017, Estonia has held 9 elections over ten years, where people could cast legally binding votes over the internet i.e. e-vote. The share of people using e-voting has increased over the elections: the share of e-voters in the first e-enabled elections in 2005 was 1,9%, in local elections in 2017 31,7% of votes were cast online. For four consecutive elections, the 2013 local, 2014 European Parliamentary, 2015 national, and 2017 local elections, e-voting is mostly used by middle-aged people, between 35–45 years old. The share of the youngest voting eligible age segment, people between 16 to 24 years old is very small i.e. e-voters comprise a clearly smaller share out of voters within the 16–24 age group than they do among the 35–45 age group. The distribution of age among active e-voters mirrors the finding that voting online in Estonia is not the most popular option among the youngest and presumably most tech savvy citizens.

The 16 and 17-years-old young people had the first possibility to vote at local elections that took place in October 2017. The percentage of e-voters from all voters at the age-group was 0,9%. There were 1794 young people who gave their vote via e-voting, which is 7,4% of all the young people aged 16-17 and 0,6% of all young people in Estonia aged 7-26.

There are several e-services and online opportunities created to express opinions, however these are open to general public, not only to young people. On the local level, there have been initiatives of online participation such as inclusive budgeting, however these are not youth specific.

## **5.10 Current debates and reforms**

In Estonia currently innovative forms of youth participation are sought including supported by e-services and technologies.

*Smart youth work* including youth work using the developments of the technology is a subject of high-priority in the youth policy 2016.

## **6. Education and Training**

According to the [annual analyses of the Ministry of Education and Research in 2016](#), Estonia's demographic trends are having a deep impact on education. The number of children in pre-school education was on the rise until 2015 and is falling in the following years as children born in the years with the highest birth rates are reaching school age. In the academic year 2016/17 just over 143,000 children and young people were studying in general education schools. Tertiary educational attainment is one of the highest in the EU. The employment rate of recent graduates has recovered after the economic crisis. The number of adult learners is increasing. For example, 17.6% of the Estonian population aged between 25 and 64 participated in formal education or in non-formal training in the second quarter of 2016.

The main governmental authority responsible for education and training is [the Ministry of Education and Research](#). The main function of the Ministry of Education and Research is

to ensure targeted and effective development of education, research, youth and language policy, and a high level and competitiveness of research and development. For detailed information on the tasks of the Ministry, please consult the section [“Administration and Governance at Central and/or Regional Level of Estonian education system”](#) in Eurydice.

## **6.1 General context**

### **Main trends in young people's participation in education and training**

#### *Participation in formal education*

According to the [annual analyses of the Ministry of Education and Research in 2016](#), Estonia's demographic trends are having a deep impact on education. The number of children in pre-school education was on the rise until 2015 and is falling in the following years as children born in the years with the highest birth rates are reaching school age. The last time the number of first-grade students exceeded 15 000 was in 2000. At the same time, the number of gymnasium students (general upper secondary) fell and that of basic school students (lower secondary) grew.

In the academic year 2016/17 just over 143,000 children and young people were studying in general education schools. Initial estimates suggest that this is about three thousand more than the last academic year, yet more than 20,000 fewer than ten years ago. The increase in the number of students concerns primarily larger towns and the suburbs of Tallinn. In most of the remaining local government units, the number of children continues to decrease or is stabilising.

The decreasing number of schoolchildren in the past 15 years has also affected higher education institutions – the number of university students continues to fall.

While the number of vocational students remains stable, the average age of learners is increasing, i.e. vocational schools attract an increasing number of people who have completed their education and wish to improve their professional skills or retrain.

Tertiary educational attainment is one of the highest in the EU. The employment rate of recent graduates has recovered after the economic crisis.

The number of adult learners is increasing. For example, 17.6% of the Estonian population aged between 25 and 64 participated in formal education or in non-formal training in the second quarter of 2016.

#### *Achievers and under achievers in formal education*

Estonia continues to have a well-performing education system combining a low proportion of under achievers with a low impact of socio economic status on education outcomes.

Estonia ranks very high among the EU countries participating in PISA. The proportion of low achievers in reading, maths and science is small and the impact of socioeconomic background on results is low. However, there are performance differences between Russian-speaking and Estonian-speaking students, and between rural and urban schools. The average performance of Russian-speaking students is lower, although the skills gap has decreased.

Early in 2016 [OECD published a report on low-performing students](#) and the reasons for poor performance, based on PISA 2012. In Estonia, the share of low-performing students (below the baseline level) aged 15 is the smallest in both Europe and the world. The proof of the uniform strength of Estonian schools lies in the fact that the difference in the shares of low-performing lower secondary students in rural and city schools is the smallest compared with other PISA countries

*Early school leaving and drop-out rates*

Reducing early school leaving remains a challenge in the context of the increasing demand for high-skilled workers. The share of early school leavers was 11.2 % in 2015 and is around the EU average, but above Estonia's 2020 target (9.5 %). The figure masks significant differences between rural and urban areas and remains significantly higher for men than for women (13.2 % vs 9 % in 2015).

The share of early leavers from education and training is approximately 11% (according to Eurostat, based on the Estonian Labour Force Survey). The target of the Lifelong Learning Strategy is to have less than 9% of such youth by 2020. According to the Estonian Education Information System (EHIS), however, about 20% of young people fail to complete secondary education within 7 years of finishing basic school and Estonia is the only OECD country where the share of secondary education graduates is decreasing in younger age groups.

The share of adults (aged 25–64) with no professional or vocational training was under 30% in 2015, which is one of the goals of the National Reform Plan "Estonia 2020". A more ambitious 2020 goal of 25% in the Lifelong Learning Strategy has been set and further efforts are needed to achieve it.

The drop-out rates from mainstream basic schools have stabilised (in 2008–2012 the dropout rates were 0.9%–0.6%–0.5%–0.5%–0.6% respectively). This indicates that support measures (establishment of counselling centres, implementation of the principles of inclusive education, including support measures implemented under the Basic Schools and Upper Secondary Schools Act, teacher training, etc.) have served their purpose. Drop-out rates from the 1st years of upper secondary schools have stabilised at around 1%: in 2008–2012, the drop-out rates were 0.9%–1%–1.1%–1.4%–1.1% respectively).

Students' dropout rates from VET and higher education are still very high. Drop-outs are particularly a problem in the first year of upper secondary vocational educational training (VET) (22.4 % in 2016), but it is on a decreasing trend. In secondary VET, the dropout rate (during the first year of studies) has decreased from 26.2 in 2012 to 24.7 in 2015. However, it is far below the 2020 target (less than 20%).

*Mobility*

According to the Eurydice report [„Mobility Scoreboard: Higher Education Background report“](#) 8% of Estonian students took in 2012/13 a degree in a different education system. Share of tertiary students enrolled abroad in 2012/13 was 5.3%. Share of students participating in the Erasmus programme based on total enrolments in 2013/14 was 1,7%.

The attractiveness of Estonia as a target country has increased among foreign students. The number of foreign students has more than doubled over the past five years (from 1,573 in the academic year 2011/12 to 3,476 in 2015/16); now, foreign students comprise as much as 6.8% of the total student body.

**Organisation of the education and training system**

In Estonia, the obligation to attend school applies to children who have attained 7 years of age by 1 October of the current year. Children up to 7 years may attend preschool childcare institutions. The obligation to attend schools lasts until basic education is acquired or until a student attains 17 years of age.

Estonian education system is decentralised. The division of responsibility between the state, local government and school is clearly defined. The organisation of education:

- preschool education (ISCED level 0) is for children aged from 1.5 to 7 years
- basic education (ISCED levels 1 and 2) is the minimum compulsory general education. Basic school includes grades 1–9

- upper secondary education (ISCED level 3) is based on basic education and is divided into general secondary education, which is acquired in upper-secondary schools and vocational upper-secondary education, which is acquired in vocational schools. The length of general upper-secondary education is 3 years (grades 10–12).
- vocational education is
  - vocational upper-secondary education (ISCED level 3), which can be entered after basic school and where the study volume is 180 credit points (the volume of vocational education curricula is calculated in VET credit points- EKAP);
  - post-secondary non-tertiary education (ISCED 4), which may be acquired after graduation from upper secondary school. The study volume of VET after secondary education is 120–150 credit points.
  - vocational education for people with unfinished basic education, who can enter VET studies, the study volume is 15–120 credit points (ISCED 2).
- higher education (ISCED levels 6, 7 and 8) may be acquired as professional higher education in a vocational school, institution of professional higher education or in academic higher education. The general structure of academic study has three levels or cycles: Bachelor's study, Master's study, Doctoral study.
- adult education is divided into formal education and continuing education. Formal education acquired within the adult education system allows adults to acquire general lower and upper secondary education at adult upper secondary schools. In addition to formal education, VET and higher education institutions provide continuing education and retraining courses.

For further information, please consult the [Overview of Estonian education system in Euridice](#).

### Main concepts

The fundamental principles of provision of education in the Republic of Estonia are established in the Constitution of the Republic, the Child Protection Act and the [Education Act](#).

According to the [Constitution of the Republic of Estonia](#), everyone has the right to education. The point of departure of education is the recognition of basic human and national values and freedom of personality, religion and consciousness. The main purpose of education is to establish favouring conditions for the development of personality, family, the Estonian and minority nations, also the development of economic, political and cultural life in Estonia and protection of the environment in the context of the global economy and culture. It is equally important to raise people who will respect and follow laws, and to create possibilities for continuous learning for everybody.

According to the [Child Protection Act](#), every child has the right for education, which develops the child's mental and physical abilities and forms a healthy personality. Instruction must focus on the individual, take into consideration the differences between sexes and be grounded on recognition of children's progress. Instruction must not involve physical violence or mental abuse. Instruction must not be ideologically biased or promote hatred or violence. Teachers and caretakers of children with special needs (physical disabilities, sensory disorders, speech disorders and multiple disabilities, mental disabilities, nervous disorders, psychiatric disorders or behavioural disorders) must have acquired special education and be suitable for such work.

Education is compulsory for school-age children to the extent specified by law and free of charge in state and local government general education schools. The provision of education is supervised by the state. In order to make education accessible, the state and local governments must maintain the requisite number of educational institutions. Other educational institutions, including private schools, may also be established and maintained pursuant to law. The structure of the educational system and the educational standard of the state create an opportunity for everyone to proceed from one educational level to another.

Parents have the final decision in making educational choices for their children. Everyone has the right to receive instruction in Estonian.

## **6.2 Administration and governance**

### **Cross-sectorial cooperation**

There is a mechanism established to ensure harmonized policy-making and implementation, which also covers the area of education and training of youth. The central position in this mechanism - approving the propositions to develop a policy document or to change the existing one, monitoring the implementation through approving the action plans and their reports, monitoring the cooperation and in case of need initiating the cooperation - is granted to the [Government](#) and the [Government Office](#). The [Ministry of Finance](#) also plays a coordinating role in planning, monitoring and ensuring division of resources of different financial instruments including state budget, among all the policy fields.

### **Governance**

The main governmental authority responsible for education and training is [the Ministry of Education and Research](#). The main function of the Ministry of Education and Research is to ensure targeted and effective development of education, research, youth and language policy, and a high level and competitiveness of research and development. For detailed information on the tasks of the Ministry, please consult the section ["Administration and Governance at Central and/or Regional Level of Estonian education system" in Eurydice](#).

The main other Governmental authorities relevant to Education and Training:

- the [Ministry of Economic Affairs and Communications](#): responsible for developing entrepreneurship and economic affairs;
- the [Ministry of Social Affairs](#): responsible for labour market policy, but also for social protection and services including child and family policy.

Main public actors and foundations:

- [Foundation Innove](#) an independent body established by the government under the Ministry of Education and Research; promotes the sectors of general and vocational education, provides career and education counselling services through the nationwide Rajaleidja (Pathfinder) lifelong guidance network, and mediates the European Union assistance;
- [Foundation Archimedes](#), an independent body established by the government under the Ministry of Education and Research, responsible for coordinating and implementing different international and national programmes and projects in the field of youth, training, education and research;
- education institutions of Estonia;
- [Estonian Youth Work Centre](#), an agency of the Ministry of Education and research responsible for implementation of youth policy.

The main non-public actors:

- [Estonian School Students union](#), uniting student councils in general education schools;
- [Estonian Students Union](#), uniting student councils in higher education;
- [Estonian Teachers Union](#), representing pedagogical professionals;
- [Estonian Association of School Heads](#), unites and represents headmasters of general education schools;
- [The Estonian Association for Advancement of Vocational Education](#), a voluntary organisation that has as its goal the development of higher quality Vocational Education;
- [Universities Estonia](#), non-profit organisation uniting universities represented by rectors;

- [Estonian Rectors' Conference of Universities of Applied Sciences](#) is the cooperation body for Estonian universities of applied sciences;
- [Association of Estonian Adult Educators Andras](#);
- [National Youth Council](#), the umbrella organization of youth associations and youth organisations;
- [The Association of Estonian Cities](#), representing cities;
- [The Association of Municipalities of Estonia](#), representing mostly rural municipalities.

#### *The general distribution of responsibilities*

The responsibility for education and training is divided between central government and local government. The regional (county) governments will be abolished by 1.01.2018.

Local governments are vested with the primary responsibility for the accessibility of general education (from preschool to upper secondary education), fulfilment of compulsory school attendance, maintenance of preschool childcare institutions and schools. For detailed information on the tasks of the local government, please consult the section [Administration and Governance at Local and/or Institutional Level](#) in Eurydice.

## **6.3 Preventing early leaving from education and training (ELET)**

### **National strategy**

There is no comprehensive strategy for early leaving.

### **Formal education: main policy measures on ELET**

#### *Lifelong Learning Strategy 2020*

The [Estonian Lifelong Learning Strategy 2020](#) sets among key indicators the need to reduce the % of early leavers from education and training (% of the population aged 18-24 with at most lower secondary education and not in further education or training) to the level below 9% by 2020. In order to reach this goal among other key indicators, five policy aims have been set:

- CHANGE IN THE APPROACH TO LEARNING. Implementation of an approach to learning that supports each learner's individual and social development, the acquisition of learning skills, creativity and entrepreneurship at all levels and in all types of education.
- COMPETENT AND MOTIVATED TEACHERS AND SCHOOL LEADERSHIP. The assessments of teachers and headmasters including their salaries are consistent with the qualification requirements for the job and the work-related performance.
- CONCORDANCE OF LIFELONG LEARNING OPPORTUNITIES WITH THE NEEDS OF LABOUR MARKET. Lifelong learning opportunities and career services that are diverse, flexible and of good quality, resulting in an increase in the number of people with professional or vocational qualifications in different age groups, and an increase in overall participation in lifelong learning across Estonia.
- A DIGITAL FOCUS IN LIFELONG LEARNING. Modern digital technology is used for learning and teaching effectively and efficiently. An improvement in the digital skills of the total population has been achieved and access to the new generation of digital infrastructure is ensured.
- EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES AND INCREASED PARTICIPATION IN LIFELONG LEARNING. Equal opportunities for lifelong learning have been created for every individual.

In a thematic report [„Young people with low level of education“ \(2016\)](#) Ministry of Education and Research underlines, that all the measures taken under the strategy in all the areas of education – especially general and vocational education, but also measures related to teacher training and guidance provision play crucial part in addressing the issue of ELET in Estonia.



*Policy measures in general education**Guidance and counselling*

In order to support education acquisition and to prevent early leaving from education and training, the Basic Schools and Upper Secondary Schools Act guarantees educational support services to all students, enabling them to get psychological counselling, speech therapy and study counselling.

In addition to the guidance opportunities provided in the framework of the curriculum, there are centres to provide the service outside the school for young people. There are 16 centralised public centres in all counties. The regional youth guidance centres, called Pathfinder centres (Rajaleidja), provide career information, career counselling, psychological, socio-pedagogical, special education counselling and speech therapy. Career guidance is provided for young people up to 26 years. The other 4 services are focused on the need of children and youth (aged 1,5 – 18) with special educational needs and practitioners main direct target group is school personnel and parents.

Foundation Innove hosts also a career planning portal [Rajaleidja](#) (Pathfinder). The portal aims to support youth, adults and practitioners, providing information on career planning, work and education possibilities in Estonia and abroad. Rajaleidja network also has [Facebook site](#) and every regional centre has an open group there.

*Data gathering*

Estonian Education Information System analyses ELET data once a year for aggregating education statistics, but schools approve the data on a monthly basis which allows for ad hoc extractions of data. The Estonian Educational Information System (EEIS) is a national register that consolidates information on the education system, including information on educational institutions, pupils, teachers, graduation documents and curricula. Local governments can use EEIS to access information on the pupils living in their territory, and on those who have moved to a school located in the territory of another local government. Educational institutions are obliged to enter information into the EEIS and to check and amend the entered information for accuracy. Pupils and teachers can view the education-related information held on them. The register tracks each student's education career. It is also visible if the student has dropped out of school and if he/she has continued in an evening school, vocational school etc. The register does not provide data about entry into the labour market.

*Policy measures in vocational education*

In secondary VET, the dropout rate (during the first year of studies) has decreased from 26.2 in 2012 to 24.7 in 2015. However, it is far below the 2020 target (less than 20%).

ELVET rate has been set as one of the performance indicators for VET institutions related also to the level of financing, which has increased the attention in schools to the problem and has prompted schools to redesign support systems for students in VET, also to develop new initiatives and measures to reduce the ELVET rate. Each VET school has been assigned with specific ELVET level to be reached in the schools development plan. Best practice seminars are held between the schools.

The improved cooperation with regional youth guidance centre (Pathfinder centres) has supported better organisation of entrance and beginning of studies in VET, also the individual support for students.

Guidance and training for students with special educational needs has been developed and delivered for VET teachers so as to reduce high rates of ELVET.

*Specific target groups identified in the youth population*

According to thematic report [„Young people with low level of education“ \(2016\)](#), 66% of dropouts during the last five academic years (2010/2011 – 2014/2015) in basic schools are men, 86% of them have studied in Estonian as a language of instruction and 14% in Russian (compared to 89% and 11% in total). After the graduation of basic school 4,5-



5% will not continue their studies. 71% of those have low study results in their final exams. In vocational secondary education 18,2% of men drop out the school compared to 15,3 of women. The lower the study result in final exams in the basic school was for a student, the more probable is leaving the vocational education studies early.

According to the data from PISA ([OECD 2016](#)), social-economical indicators most correlated to predicted low performance in school are the parents foreign origin (both parents are born in a foreign country) and the language spoken at home. Inequality in length of studies is most related to family background, home language and gender: a boy from a family with other home language than Estonian, with two parents with basic education and few books at home studies 5 years less than a girl with highly educated parents, Estonian as a language and good learning environment at home (report [„Young people with low level of education“ \(2016\)](#)).

### **Addressing ELET through non-formal and informal learning and quality youth work**

The [Youth Field Development Plan 2014-2020](#) defines decreasing the proportion of young people (aged 18-24) with basic or lower level of education who do not continue in

Education as one of the two most important indicators to measure the success of youth field measures by 2020.

The general objective of the plan is to establish a coherent and creative society through development and self-realisation possibilities provided for young people. The sub-objectives of the Development Plan are:

1. Young people have more choices to discover their own creative and developmental potential. The planned policy measures under this objective are aimed to increase opportunities for young people to develop their creativity, show initiative and act together.
2. Young people are at lower risk to be excluded. The planned policy measures under this objective are aimed to increase the inclusion of young people and improve their employability.
3. There is more support for participation of young people in decision-making. The planned policy measures under this objective are aimed to support the active participation of young people in the community life and in decision-making.
4. The youth field operates more efficiently. The policy measures aim to ensure the development of high-quality youth policy and youth work.

All the measures taken in the framework of this development plan support young people's self-determination, motivation for and positive experiences of learning, inclusion and active participation in society hence supporting prevention of ELET, returning to and coping with formal studies.

The plan is aimed at all young people from 7 to 26 years old.

The activities in the framework of the Youth Field Development plan are financed mostly from state budget via the Ministry of Education and Research.

### **Cross-sector coordination and monitoring of ELET interventions**

There is no mechanism established that can be considered a systematic partnership amongst the public and non-public actors who play a significant role in preventing ELET and compensating for its consequences. At local level the networking mechanisms exist between the specialist from different field working with youth, however they are not specifically targeting ELET as a main task.

[Results of YG monitoring for 2015](#) show that the YG scheme in Estonia reached less than a quarter (23.3%) of NEETs aged under 25, though this represents a small improvement compared to 2014 (19.7%). Over half (55.3%) of those leaving the scheme in 2015 took up an offer within 4 months of registration, slightly less than in 2014 (58.3%). Follow-up data to look at subsequent outcomes are not yet available.

## **6.4 Validation of non-formal and informal learning**

### **Arrangements for the validation of non-formal and informal learning**

For the recognition of non-formal and informal education, VÕTA system, which takes into account earlier studies and work experience, has been developed in Estonia. Its objective is to make visible and value any knowledge and skills regardless of where these were acquired.

VÕTA allows recognising:

1. earlier formal education acquired within the adult education system;
2. knowledge obtained during further training or individually;
3. knowledge and skills obtained from working experience.

Recognising the learning and working experience requires that the educational institutions opened up to a new approach, agreed on procedures and rules and were ready to address every person individually. Please see [chapter 3.5](#) for more detailed description of VÕTA system in Estonia.

#### *Procedures for the validation*

The learning gained through work-related, hobby or other daily life activities is proved by reference to or presentation of completed works, a portfolio of samples, a copy of a professional certificate, employment contract, certificate of appointment or any other documentary evidence.

Young people can also describe their knowledge, skills and practical experience acquired through youth work using a designated online tool [Stardiplats](#). There is a growing number of registered users of the portal, which was launched in 2010 by Estonian Youth Work Centre in order to facilitate the recognition of knowledge and skills acquired through youth work. The tool is based on self-assessment and provides young people opportunity to generate CV based on the descriptions.

#### *Procedures for obtaining formal education qualifications*

In Estonia, the qualifications acquired in general, vocational and higher education are described on the basis of learning outcomes (competences). The principles of the recognition of non-formal and informal learning have been defined by legislation.

Qualification awarding bodies, including educational institutions and awarding bodies of vocational qualifications, prepare their procedures for the recognition of prior learning and work experience (VÕTA procedures) following these principles.

Currently a person can have his or her prior learning and work experience (including apprenticeship and traineeship) evaluated and recognised by the designated body (VÕTA commission) of the educational institution. Educational institutions may recognise prior learning and work experience both on the completion of the curriculum and when awarding qualifications recognising the prior learning and work experience as a ECTS and ECVET ie it is possible to obtain credits on the bases of priori learning, traineeships and apprenticeships. Educational institutions must inform students about the conditions of and procedure for the recognition of prior learning and work experience, including the terms and cost of assessment as well as the conditions of contesting the results, and ensure that all applicants have access to the necessary information, guidance and counselling.

For further information please consult section [Validation of Non-Formal and Informal learning](#), Eurydice.

There are no specific target group(s) within the youth population defined in Estonia for which the validation of competences acquired through non-formal and informal learning is specifically supported.

## Information and guidance

Educational institutions must inform students about the conditions of and procedure for the recognition of prior learning and work experience, including the terms and cost of assessment as well as the conditions of contesting the results, and ensure that all applicants have access to the necessary information, guidance and counselling

Youth Agency of Foundation Archimedes manages and develops the portal [mitteformaalne.ee](http://mitteformaalne.ee) aimed at promoting non-formal and informal learning of youth, raising awareness of its value and opportunities for recognition, including [Youthpass](#). The portal is widely known among youth workers in Estonia.

## Quality assurance

No system of quality assurance of the procedures and/or the criteria/indicators/standards used to assess for the validation of non-formal and informal competences exists in Estonia.

## 6.5 Cross-border learning mobility

### Policy framework

The more important directions and choices in Estonian education have been set out in the [Estonian Lifelong Learning Strategy 2020](#), which emphasises, inter alia, the importance of openness, tolerance and international cooperation in the development of the lifelong learning system. Additionally, the strategy highlights the relevance of internationalisation in the preparation of employees in the areas of economic growth. It is also necessary to support the introduction of international experience and competence in the institutions of higher education with a view to improving the quality and attractiveness of education. It is of importance to make an effort to participate in the global labour market, which requires an increasingly stronger focus on professional knowledge and skills, foreign language skills, cultural awareness and tolerance. Similarly, the benefits to the society from the internationalisation of education need to be explained. For more detailed information by the level of education, please consult the section [“Mobility and internationalisation” in Eurydice](#).

#### *Higher Education*

The implementation programme of the [Estonian Lifelong Learning Strategy 2020](#) in the area of higher education – the [Higher education programme 2016-2019](#) - highlights the role of the internationalisation of education in supporting the development of Estonian areas of economic growth and the quality of higher education. Providing academic and professional foreign language training in Estonia, paying attention to work practice opportunities and creating employment opportunities for graduates in the Estonian labour market are also integral to the internationalisation. The same principles are supported by the Estonia's competitiveness strategy 'Estonia 2020', which also recognises the relevance of internationalising at home – attracting talents to the areas important for Estonia and becoming more active in hiring foreign teaching staff in Estonian institutions of higher education to give the local students unable to study in a foreign institution of higher education an opportunity to have a contact with an international environment.

#### *Vocational Education*

According to [the European Commission's Mobility Scoreboard](#) on IVET, Estonia has a policy intention to integrate international learning mobility experiences in the curricula of IVET programmes. This can be seen from some paragraphs from the Act for Vocational Education Institutions, in particular:

1. Paragraph 26, which establishes that in the application of Estonian vocational education credit points, the European Credit System for Vocational Education and Training, ECVET, shall be used; and

2. Paragraph 22, which stipulates that the Vocational Education Standard sets out the principles for recognition of prior learning and professional experience that is closely connected with learning mobility.

The Estonian Lifelong Learning Strategy's Vocational Education Programme sets an overall goal for improving international cooperation in general. The goal of the programme is to support participation in the Erasmus+ Programme to increase the student and teacher mobility and school participation in international networks. The Vocational Education Programme is updated every year with regard to the upcoming four years and confirmed by the Minister of Education and Research.

In addition, most of the vocational institutions in Estonia have set qualitative and quantitative targets in its development plan to improve international cooperation between vocational institutions and increase the IVET learner's mobility. Some schools have compiled even its own internationalisation strategy with specific IVET mobility indicators (e.g. "the share of students participating in mobility" or "the number of implemented mobility projects").

However as there has no countrywide policy in this area has been set up, situation with policy issues in IVET (including setting up an action plan, defining policy targets, and putting in place coordination and evaluation processes) could be significantly improved according to the analyses in [the European Commission's Mobility Scoreboard](#).

### **Main cross-border mobility programmes for students in formal education**

The following national mobility programmes are available:

- Youth for Understanding (YFU) exchange programmes in general secondary education, in-and outgoing exchanges for several periods (year, semester and summer programmes). The programme is financed largely by private budgets of participants.
- Erasmus+ short and long term study mobility: under the cooperation projects of general education school; student mobility in higher education and vocational education, work practice of vocational educational institutions under Erasmus+ study mobility; duration varies from the 19 days to year depending from the specific action line. The Erasmus+ is financed by EU budget and in general, the allocation covers travel and living costs for young people.
- Kristjan Jaak scholarship programme: a national scholarship programme initiated in cooperation between the Ministry of Education and Research and Archimedes Foundation with a view to supporting the studies abroad of Master's and Doctoral students enrolled at Estonian institutions of higher education and academic and research related secondments abroad of the Master's and Doctoral students (and teaching staff). Duration of the mobility period varies from 30 days to the whole period of the degree studies (Master's and Doctoral studies). The allocation supports travel and living costs. The programme is financed from the public budget.
- Young scholar grant programme: a scholarship programme founded in cooperation between private companies, the Ministry of Education and Research and Archimedes Foundation, aimed at supporting talented upper secondary school graduates towards acquiring a Bachelor's degree in acknowledged foreign universities. The programme provides general grant of 4000 euros. The budget is combined from public and private sources.
- DoRa Plus. The programme supports 1-10 month outward and inward study mobility of young researchers and Master's students. Dora Plus' total budget from 1.08.2015-31.05.2023 is 22,5 million euros. The programme covers generally travel and living costs.
- Compatriots programme 2014-2020. Supporting the studies of expatriate Estonian youth at Estonian public universities, state institutions of professional higher education and vocational educational institutions. The budget covers starting sum and travel and living costs for students.

- Kindred peoples programme IV. A programme launched to support the languages and cultures of the indigenous Uralic peoples (Finno-Ugric and Samoyed) under which Doctoral or Master's studies in Estonian state universities of people of Finno-Ugric origin living in Russia are funded. The grant covers travel and living costs.
- National Scholarship Programme for International Students, Researchers and Teaching Staff. A scholarship schema, which is partially based on the foreign agreements of the Ministry of Education and Research and offers students scholarships for formal education, exchange programmes and participation in summer schools.
- Scholarships for the academic study of the Estonian language and culture by foreign students. The programme awards the scholarship Estophilus, under which funding is provided for Estonia-related studies and research carried out in Estonia by Master's and Doctoral students or researchers holding a Doctoral degree who are enrolled in foreign institutions of higher education. In addition, the participation in intermediate and advanced summer or winter courses of the Estonian language and culture is supported.
- Ministry of Foreign Affairs scholarships. The Ministry of Foreign Affairs offers Master's and Doctoral scholarships under the instruments of development cooperation to the citizens of the development cooperation states of relevance for Estonia. Scholarship applications must be submitted by universities on a project basis, i.e., students cannot apply for the scholarship directly.

### **Promoting mobility in the context of non-formal learning, and of youth work**

The cross-border mobility in non-formal learning and youth work in Estonia is in large part based on the opportunities offered through Erasmus+ programme i.e. opportunities for learning mobility for youth groups (youth exchanges) and individuals (European Voluntary Service).

Estonian Ministry of Education and Research also has established cooperation with Japan to provide mutual learning opportunity for young people under which a regular exchange of youth groups takes place. The programme is financed by public budgets of Japan and Estonia.

### **Quality assurance**

In general, the quality assurance system for cross-border mobility programmes listed above is based on the legal framework of the programme (such as the legal base for the Erasmus+ programme) and consists of the following elements:

1. programme steering group/committee in charge of allocating the grant in accordance with the legal base;
2. annual reporting.

The reporting is in general considered as an input for the national policy programme annual reporting. The annual reporting on the policy level is connected to setting the targets for the next years together with planning the future allocation.

## **6.6 Social inclusion through education and training**

### **Educational support**

*The target groups identified in official documents*

The term "student with special educational needs" refers in Estonia to a student whose

- talent,
- learning difficulties,
- health status,
- disability,
- behavioural and emotional disorders,
- longer-term absence from schooling or

- insufficient proficiency in language of instruction of a school

bring about the need to make changes or adjustments in the subject matter, process, duration, workload or environment of study (e.g., teaching materials, school rooms, language of communication, including a sign language or other alternative means of communication, support staff, teachers who have received special training), in the expected learning outcomes or in the work plan drawn up by a teacher for working with a class.

The term “higher education student with a special need” is applied for a student who has a hearing, vision or movement disability or a special psychical need or any other disability with functional impairment due to which he or she requires support services for participation in study and successful studying.

Students in threat of being excluded from education include students with:

- socio-economic difficulties,
- behavioural disorders and problems,
- students whose mother language is other than the language of instruction,
- new immigrants,
- health-related problems.

#### *Policies in the context of formal education*

According to the Constitution of the Republic of Estonia, everyone has the right to education. According to the Education Act and the Basic Schools and Upper Secondary Schools Act, Estonia has an inclusive education policy and every child has the right to attend a preschool child care institution of his or her residence area or study, according to a curriculum of an appropriate level (the national curriculum for basic schools, the national curriculum for upper secondary schools, the simplified national curriculum for basic schools), in an ordinary class of a school close to home and to receive different kinds of support to study.

The general objectives of education of students with special needs are not different from the general objectives of the corresponding educational level and do not depend on whether it is conducted in mainstream or in special schools.

According to the general concept of disability policy of the Republic of Estonia, equal rights to preschool, basic, secondary and higher education must be guaranteed for people with special needs.

Please consult the section [“Educational Support and Guidance” in Euridyce](#) for further information.

#### *Programmes/projects/initiatives in non-formal, informal learning and youth work*

[“Inclusion of youth at risk of exclusion and improvement of youth employability”](#) is a governmental programme supported through European Social Fund and implemented in 2014-2018. During this period, many different sub-programmes are implemented (the Youth Prop-Up Programme, the Youth Summer Work Programme, Community Practice, Mobile Workshops, Youth Initiatives) aimed at supporting youth participation in youth work, education and/or employment, paying special attention to youth at risk of exclusion. In addition to these programmes, support is also provided to local governments to develop and improve their youth work services in order to reach youth currently not taking part in youth work and provide young people with more opportunities to participate in youth work. For this, local governments must co-operate with each other. Together they map the situation of youth work (i.e., available youth work services, available youth workers, the number of young people, etc.) and plan activities that best meet the needs of young people and the local communities. In addition, we have planned activities to increase knowledge about young people and the effectiveness of youth work measures created for them (this includes among other things various analysis and studies). Furthermore, through the programme, youth workers are provided various training opportunities (several long-term and thematic training activities



are focused on inclusion, e.g., how to involve more young people in NEET status, how to develop awareness of intercultural learning and diversity in youth work, etc.).

[EEA grants programme "Children and Youth at Risk"](#) – a programme implemented in 2012-2017. The aim of the programme was to improve the well-being of children and young people at risk. For this, many different projects were implemented. For example, the HUKK-AP project (involving and developing hobby schools) was aimed to create more opportunities for young people to take part in youth work and to increase their competences for continuing education or for being successful in the labour market. As a result of the project, 3231 young people with fewer opportunities participated in hobby activities, 69 new regional hobby groups were established and 1647 specialists working participated in training and mentoring. All of this has helped to make hobby schools more inclusive. [The HUKK-AP Project](#) - Involvement of Organisations Working in Area of Hobby Education for Young People – was initiated by the Ministry of Education and Research and implemented by Archimedes Foundation Youth Agency. The aim of the programme was to support the variety of hobby activities, their efficiency and suitability for youngsters' needs. The objective is to create prerequisites and working solutions in order to involve disadvantaged youngsters in hobby education. It is important to support opportunities for participating, introduce new methods and increase competencies of educators that enable to increase access of disadvantaged young people to hobby education, mostly in the area of culture and art education.

The main directions of activities:

1. increasing the capability of hobby schools to involve young people with fewer opportunities systematically;
2. promoting hobby activities in new priority target groups;
3. involving young people with fewer opportunities into hobby activities;
4. monitoring and assessing the impact of the project and hobby education.

[„Developing youth workers training“](#) is a governmental programme supported through European Social Fund and implemented in 2015-2018, which aims to provide youth workers with training opportunities and develop the methodology in youth work and quality of trainings. The total budget of the programme is **1,89 million euros**.

[Youth Meetings](#) is a programme established to increase interactions between young people from a different ethnic background and thus increase their mutual understanding and development but also to enhance their cultural awareness, openness and tolerance. Through the programme, organisers promote positive contacts between young people (11 to 16 years-of-age) living in Estonia but speaking different mother tongues (mainly Estonian and Russian) by giving them an opportunity to carry out projects together. These projects detail the goals and targets they expect to achieve. "Youth Meetings" has been very popular since its creation in 2015 with approximately 1700 Estonian and Russian speaking young people participating yearly in the project. All together, "Youth Meetings" has brought together 4231 young people to cooperate in 199 youth meetings and trainings since the project started. The "Youth Meetings" programme is financed through the Ministry of Education and Research. The budget of the programme in 2017 is 205 000 euros.

Estonian Youth Agency (together with 14 other agencies for Erasmus+ youth activities) has initiated and been involved in a strategic co-operation ["Strategic Partnership on inclusion"](#) – SPI – to involve more inclusion organisations and increase the participation of young people with fewer opportunities by capacity building and their involvement in the E+ programme. The consortium of agencies has developed a strategic approach to reach out and involve three target groups: young people with disability/health problems, young people with low education attainment and young people from disadvantaged rural areas – i.e., young people that are underrepresented in Erasmus+ in different countries. In 2017, a new strand was initiated together with Latvian and Lithuanian agencies and other partners to work more strategically with young people in NEET situations. Long-term results are yet to be seen since the partnership is halfway on its first cycle.

In addition, Estonian Youth Work magazine MIHUS has focused on issues such as inclusion and solidarity among young people:

1. [Youth work with young people with fewer opportunities](#) (2010),
2. [Youth work and sensitivity towards different cultures](#) (2016).

In addition, a manual for inclusive youth work has been created and published in Estonian and Russian languages: "[Inclusive youth work](#)" (2012).

## **Social cohesion and equal opportunities**

### *Policies in formal education*

Citizenship education exists as a compulsory separate subject both in primary and secondary education in Estonia. The length of time it is taught as a compulsory subjects 5 years. Please consult [Citizenship Education in Europe. Eurydice Report](#) for detail information.

The activities in education to support social cohesion are based on the "Integrating Estonia 2020". [Integrating Estonia 2020](#) is a strategy of the Government to ensure integration and social cohesion in Estonia in the period 2014-2020. The general objective of the "Integrating Estonia 2020" is a socially cohesive society where individuals with different linguistic and cultural backgrounds actively participate in society and share democratic values. The plan serves as the basis for integration policy that is carried out during 2014-2020, and it aims at:

- increasing the cohesion of the society;
- increasing the competitiveness of the Republic of Estonia;
- ensuring security;
- preserving the Estonian language and culture;
- preserving the culture and language of the ethnic minorities;
- ensuring increasing tolerance towards different groups of society;
- ensuring a stronger civic identity.

The estimated total cost of the development plan from 2014-2020 is 73,52 million euros.

In 2017 the Ministry of Education and Research developed a "[Concept for education path without bullying](#)" – a document stating the main understanding of bullying, its prevention and interventions in Estonia. It lists main programmes available to address bullying through all levels of education. The concept does not ensure public funding for the programmes.

### *Programmes/projects/initiatives in the context of non-formal and informal learning, and youth work,*

In Estonia the main aim of activities in youth field for the years 2014-2020 is to support establishing a coherent and creative society through development and self-realisation possibilities provided for young people. Please see [chapter 4.7. Youth work to foster social inclusion](#) and [chapter 8.9 Enhancing social inclusion through culture](#) for the overview of main programmes, projects and initiatives of youth work and non-formal learning.

## **6.7 Skills for innovation**

### **Innovation in formal education**

The [national curriculum for upper secondary schools](#) includes subjects and topics supporting innovation skills of students. Entrepreneurship education is explicitly referred to in the national curricula and is described in detail in [chapter 3.8](#).

In addition, the curriculum also defines „Technology and innovation“ as cross-curricular topic. The cross-curricular topic "Technology and innovation" strives to shape the pupils into people who are open to innovation and who can expediently use modern technology

and cope in rapidly changing technological living, learning and working environments. The pupils are guided to:

1. acquire knowledge about how technology functions and what its development trends are in different spheres of life;
2. comprehend the influence of technological innovation on how people work and live, on their quality of life and the environment today and in the past;
3. understand the mutual influences and connections of technological, economic, social and cultural innovation;
4. comprehend and critically assess the positive and negative effects of technological development and develop balanced opinions on ethical issues of technological development and the corresponding applications;
5. use information and communication technology (ICT) to solve vital problems and make learning and working more efficient; and
6. develop creativity, cooperation and initiative skills when implementing innovative ideas in various projects.

Covering the cross-curricular topic on this level of study focuses on the group works and research projects in the school. The goal is to develop the positive attitudes towards technological innovation and related career possibilities, to ensure preparedness for all pupils to use ICT in everyday life, studies and work.

In vocational training [the Vocational Education Standard](#), which defines uniform requirements for vocational training, there is competence “Initiative and entrepreneurship” defined as a result, that should be achieved in the vocational training. Students are guided to:

1. think systematically and creatively, to evaluate the ideas critically and to find opportunities to implement them;
2. initiate, develop and implement ideas;
3. have initial knowledge about entrepreneurship
4. be able to draft a personal short and long-term career plan with guidance;
5. find independently opportunities for further studies and employment;
6. connect training with labour market demands.

Teachers capability of developing skills for innovation is generally supported through tools and trainings concerned with entrepreneurship education support. Please see [chapter 3.8.](#) for more information.

### **Fostering innovation through non-formal and informal learning and youth work**

Youth work in Estonia by its guiding principles defined in [the Youth Work Act](#) aims to “support initiative of young people” which includes supporting new ideas and endeavours young people are developing and also supporting competencies to develop and implement ideas. The whole youth work sector therefor in all its forms has to find ways to fulfil this aim including youth work in youth centres, hobby schools, youth organisations, summer camps etc.. To support development of innovation in youth work a “Smart Youth Work concept” was approved. Please see [chapter 6.8.](#) for more information.

## **6.8 Media literacy and safe use of new media**

### **National strategy**

The Estonian Lifelong Learning Strategy 2020 sets “A digital focus in lifelong learning” as one of five key policy aims. The vision of the strategy is that by 2020 modern digital technology is used for learning and teaching effectively and efficiently, an improvement in the digital skills of the total population has been achieved and access to the new generation of digital infrastructure is ensured. Successful implementation of the modern approach to learning and an increase in the quality of learning requires students and teachers, teaching staffs and heads of schools to be equipped with digital competence.

Use of digital learning resources helps to make learning more engaging, supports the teacher in the process of learning and broadens the opportunities in lifelong learning.

In order to implement the goal of the strategy a [Digital Focus Programme](#) was initiated by the Ministry of Education and Research in 2014. The digital focus programme concentrates on an improvement in the digital competences of learners, teachers, teaching staffs and Heads of schools and on a purposeful use of digital learning resources with a view to supporting the implementation of a modern approach to learning and an increase in the quality of study.

*Authority responsible: Ministry of Education and Research.*

*Period: 2015-2020.*

*Budget: about 47 million euros.*

Main activities and measures:

- the curricula for basic schools and upper secondary schools as well as the curricula for vocational education will be updated in view of the acquisition of digital competences;
- exploitation of ICT in all subject areas of general education will be supported, the requirements for ICT competences in professional standards will be updated; digital competences of learners will be assessed at a regular basis;
- general digital skills of teachers and the teaching staffs will be developed; a digital skills self-assessment environment for teachers will be developed;
- programmes targeted at the development of the digital skills of learners will be developed (e.g., ProgeTiiger, Robootika, Teadustiiger, Wolfram) which also attracts learners into the areas of exact and natural sciences, engineering, design and technology and ICT;
- in general education and vocational education the e-assessment methodology will be implemented; an information technology application will be developed for e-assessment (Eksamite Infosüsteem EIS (Examinations Information System)) which will be applied at all levels of education;
- from 2015, new textbooks are digitally available; quality requirements for digital learning resources will be established; an information system for digital learning resources will be developed and implemented;
- development of digital learning resources for general and vocational education will be supported through competitions, tenders and contracted specialist work;
- Schools and managers of schools will be supported in ensuring a suitable network connection in general education schools;
- a needs-based support system will be created for providing students with personal digital devices.

Expected impact and changes:

- digital competence as one of the key competences is developed in all subjects and hobby activities; it is a natural part of the process of study;
- digital competences of learners, teachers, teaching staffs and Heads of schools have improved;
- digital learning resources are of a high quality and easily accessible to everyone;
- public access to the new generation of digital infrastructure has improved;
- schools have a modern digital infrastructure; personal digital devices, e.g., smart phones, are also used for learning on a daily basis.

No evidence-based monitoring/assessment/evaluation of the implementation of the programme has been conducted as of yet.

No major revisions/updates of the programme has gone through since its introduction.

### **Media literacy and online safety through formal education**

The [National curriculum for upper secondary schools](#) defines digital competence as a general competence, that should be shaped through learning outcomes expected in all

subjects, but also through discussing cross curricular subjects at lessons, extracurricular and out-of school activities. The „digital competence“ is defined as the ability to use developing digital technology for coping in a quickly changing society for learning, acting as a citizen as well as communicating in communities; to use digital means for finding and preserving information and to evaluate the relevance and trustworthiness of the information; to participate in creating digital content; including creation and use of texts, images, multimedia; to use suitable digital tools and methods for solving problems, to communicate and cooperate in different digital environments; to be aware of the dangers of the digital environment and know how to protect one's privacy, personal information and digital identity; to follow the same moral and value principles as in everyday life.

The curriculum also defines „information environment“ and „technology and innovation“ as cross-curricular topics:

1. information environment – the aim is for the student to develop into an information-conscious person who senses and aware of the surrounding information environment, is able to analyse it critically and acts according to his or her aims and society's communications ethics;
2. technology and innovation – the aim is for the student to develop into a person who is well-disposed toward innovation and who knows how to use contemporary technologies in a goal-oriented manner, who copes with the rapidly changing technological living, learning and work environment.

In vocational training [the Vocational Education Standard](#), which defines uniform requirements for vocational training, there is an informational technology competence defined as a result, that should be achieved in the vocational training after the Basic school. The IT competence defined in the Standard states for the 3rd level students in vocational education, that student „should know main opportunities and potential risks of IT“ and „is able to use internet both for personal and professional goals“. For the 4th level students in vocational education, the outcome of the studies should in addition ensure, that a student should be able to use main applications; to assess the trustworthiness of the information available; to create, present, search and understand information.

[The Information Technology Foundation for Education \(HITSA\)](#) was established with a goal to ensure that the graduates at all levels of education obtain digital skills necessary for the development of economy and society and the possibilities offered by ICT are skilfully used in teaching and learning, which helps improve the quality of learning and teaching at all levels of education. HITSA is a non-profit association established by the Republic of Estonia, the University of Tartu, Tallinn University of Technology, Eesti Telekom and the Estonian Association of Information Technology and Telecommunications. The activities of the educational programmes are targeted at advancing and intensifying the cooperation between ICT industry, universities, other educational institutions and the state. HITSA also offers [a training portal](#) for educators, youth workers etc. in the area of digital technologies,

In 2016 [The Information Technology Foundation for Education \(HITSA\)](#) developed a guiding material to understand and develop digital competencies among students in all the level of education. The material includes a [model of digital competencies for learners](#).

### **Promoting media literacy and online safety through non-formal and informal learning**

#### *Smart Youth Work*

One of the measures planned Under the Youth Field Development Plan for 2014-2020 was to develop a concept for smart youth work in order to 1) to make greater use of information technology in working with youth, including raising youth digital literacy in offering ICT-related hobby activities; 2) developing youth work using new means and 3) raising the competencies of youth and youth workers.

The Smart Youth Work concept was approved in 2017 with an aim to describe the basic principles for smart youth work and to create preconditions for development and adoption of smart solutions in youth work. 3 main directions for activities have been set:

1. smart youth work solutions for youth;
2. digital solutions related to youth workers' competencies and work methods;
3. quality, organisation and efficiency of youth work provision and better knowledge of youth.

Under these directions, 22 activities on national level are implemented in the years 2017-2018.

Trainings on smart youth work have been offered to youth workers in 2016 and 2017 by Estonian Youth Agency.

Please also see the [chapter 8.7 Fostering the creative use of new technologies](#) for examples of initiatives to promote media literacy and online safety through non-formal and informal learning.

### **Raising awareness about the risks posed by new media**

The central initiative to raise awareness about the risks in the internet is [Safer Internet Centre in Estonia – Targalt Internetis](#). The project's mission is a smarter Internet use by children and their parents and the prevention of the online distribution of child sexual abuse material. The project is co-financed 50% by the the European Commission Connecting European Facility Programme. The project includes:

- training sessions and seminars for children, parents, teachers and social workers, and awareness-raising events for the general public;
- the drafting of training and awareness-raising materials for children, teachers and parents;
- creative competitions for students;
- assistance and counselling from the Children's Helpline 116111 ([www.lasteabi.ee](http://www.lasteabi.ee)) children and parents on safe Internet and digital mobile devices use by telephone, MSN (user [info@lasteabi.ee](mailto:info@lasteabi.ee)) and other IM solutions;
- the web-based hotline [www.vihjeliin.ee](http://www.vihjeliin.ee), which allows Internet users to provide information about web environments which contain material that violates children's right to sexual self-determination; notices about other materials that are inappropriate for children may also be sent to Vihjeliin;
- cooperation among different stakeholders in Estonia and Europe and participation in the INHOPE and INSAFE cooperation networks.

The activities of the follow-up project are being implemented by four organisations:

1. the Estonian Union for Child Welfare is a coordinator of the project and contributes to awareness raising activities, coordinates youth participation and operates Estonian Hotline [www.vihjeliin.ee](http://www.vihjeliin.ee);
2. the Information Technology Foundation for Education coordinates and carries out awareness raising activities;
3. the Estonian Advice Centre (which manages the Children's Helpline 116111) provides help and counselling for children and parents if problems emerge in the use of the Internet and digital media devices, and participates in awareness raising activities;
4. the Police and Border Guard Board is contributing its competence to all activities.



## **6.9 Awareness-raising about non-formal and informal learning and quality youth work**

### **Information providers / counselling structures**

Youth information is defined as one area of youth work in Estonia and The Youth Agency of the Archimedes Foundation is supporting access and promotion of [European youth portal](#) in Estonia.

There are 16 centralised public centres in all counties. The regional youth guidance centres, called Pathfinder centres (Rajaleidja), provide career information, career counselling, psychological, socio-pedagogical, special education counselling and speech therapy. Please see [chapter 3.4](#). for more information on guidance and counselling in Rajaleidja Centres.

Estonian Youth Work Centre organises yearly an information fair for youth [Teeviit](#) attended by thousands of young people in Estonia.

Foundation Innove hosts also a portal [Rajaleidja](#) (Pathfinder). The portal aims to support youth, adults and practitioners, providing information on career planning, work and education possibilities in Estonia and abroad. In addition, local and regional information for youth is available through local youth information portals such as

- [www.noor.laanemaa.ee](http://www.noor.laanemaa.ee)
- [www.polvanoored.ee](http://www.polvanoored.ee)
- [www.noorteinfo.ee](http://www.noorteinfo.ee)
- [www.tni.ee](http://www.tni.ee)
- <http://www.tallinn.ee/est/noorteinfo/>

### **Awareness raising initiatives**

Throughout the years different awareness raising campaigns have been implemented, especially supporting awareness about learning that takes place in youth work setting. As a result the importance of nonformal and informal learning is currently acknowledged in several policy documents such as the Estonian Lifelong Learning Strategy 2020 and the Youth Field development plan 2014-2020.

There are 3 dedicated resource portals to support development of understanding about the value of non-formal and informal education, especially in youth work:

1. [www.mitteformaalne.ee](http://www.mitteformaalne.ee) is a resource and information portal targeting mainly youth worker, young leaders, teachers and trainers with an aim to promote the value of non-formal learning and to support its development by providing access to training materials, publications, methods and training opportunities.
2. [www.stardiplats.ee](http://www.stardiplats.ee) is a resource and information portal targeting young people in the age group 7-26 as a main target group, but also youth workers. The aim is to provide opportunities and support to acknowledge and document the learning that takes place in youth work.
3. <http://noored.ee/noortepass/> is a portal to support young people to use European Youth Pass as a tool to document and recognise non-formal and informal learning.

## **6.10 Current debates and reforms**

According to Estonia's 2016 National Reform Programme, the most important reforms planned for the near future in education are optimising the network of general education schools, a clearer separation of basic and upper secondary schools and increasing the quality of vocational education and its relevance to labour market needs.

Estonia is updating its education funding model in order to increase its spending effectiveness and efficiency. For example, the principles for differentiation of the salary levels are being worked out. A new vocational education and training (VET) funding

model is under development. In higher education the new financing model based on performance-based contracts has recently been updated to provide more flexibility and better targeting of disadvantaged students.

In addition, consolidating school networks has become a policy priority and many schools have been closed down.

In the academic year 2017-2018 a national test of digital competencies is planned first time both for the final year of basic and upper secondary schools.

## **7. Health and Well-Being**

The concept of health and well-being are used together as the need of the two sectors cooperating is increasing constantly. The concept of well-being is more prevalent. The main governmental authority responsible for youth health and well-being is the [Ministry of Social Affairs](#). Their role is to plan the health care policy and organise its implementation.

Two cross-national studies provide information about young people's well-being, health behaviors and their social context:

1. [Health Behavior in School-aged Children](#) (HBSC) is conducted once every four years among 11, 13 and 15 year old students.
2. [The European School Survey Project on Alcohol and Other Drugs \(ESPAD\)](#) collects data on substance use among 15-16 year old students once every four years.

According to those studies 88% of the young people rate their health as good or very good and are satisfied with their life.

### **7.1 General context**

#### **Main trends in the health conditions of young people**

Two cross-national studies provide information about young people's well-being, health behaviors and their social context:

1. [Health Behavior in School-aged Children](#) (HBSC) is conducted once every four years among 11, 13 and 15 year old students.
2. [The European School Survey Project on Alcohol and Other Drugs \(ESPAD\)](#) collects data on substance use among 15-16 year old students once every four years.

According to the latest HBSC study, most Estonian youngsters rate their health (indicator of general health) as fair (88% rated their health is good or very good) and are satisfied with their life (88% rated life satisfaction high). During the last years mental health problems have increased among Estonian youth – students have experienced more depressive episodes and difficulties in getting to sleep. Increased screen time (TV, computer, tablet) also affects students' wellbeing. About half of the students aged 11-15 spend five or more hours using electronic devices, excessive internet use and internet addiction are growing problems in Estonia.

According to the HBSC and ESPAD surveys young people are using less tobacco and alcohol, compared to previous years. At the same time Estonian youngsters are among first three countries in Europe with tobacco and alcohol initiation and binge drinking (young people were asked at what age they first smoked a cigarette, drank alcohol or got drunk). Growing problem according to the data collected in 2014 and 2015 is the use of illegal substances, including cannabis. Cannabis use among Estonian youth is very high (every fourth student aged 15 has used it) and sets Estonia compared to other European countries taking part in HBSC study on second place.

Another serious problem in Estonia is overweight and obesity that is caused by inactive lifestyle and poor nutrition. Only one in every six children takes part in moderate-to-vigorous physical activity that lasts 60 minutes per day. Less than half of the children consume fruits and vegetables daily. Strategies and interventions are needed that focus on increasing physical activity and shaping childrens eating habits.

Sexual behavior among Estonian youth has consistently improved: the number of teenage pregnancies, abortions and sexually transmitted infections has decreased. At the same time, the last HBSC study demonstrated decrease in the use of condom at last intercourse.

### **Main concepts**

In general both “health” and “well-being”, are in use in Estonia, but as understanding of influencing factors of health and well-being and cooperation need have been increased, the use of well-being concept is more prevalent.

According to the [Child Protection Act](#) child’s well-being means “the condition supporting the development of the child in which the physical, medical, psychological, emotional, social, cognitive, educational and economic needs of the child are satisfied”.

In renewed [Public Health Act](#) the use of term health profile, will be changed to health and well-being profile and reason for this change is, that all partners in local, regional and state level feel more connected to making the communities healthier.

## **7.2 Administration and governance**

### **Governance**

The main governmental authority responsible for youth health and well-being is the [Ministry of Social Affairs](#), where the responsibility lies with the Minister of Social Protection and in two departments:

1. the Health System Development and Medicine Department;
2. the Department of Children and Families.

The role of the Ministry of Social Affairs is to plan the health care policy and organise its implementation, also to ensure people's social coping and development and support the well-being of children and families.

The main Governmental authorities and their responsibility according to the [Government of the Republic Act](#) relevant to health and wellbeing of youth:

1. the [Ministry of Education and Research](#): responsible for youth policy and education policy;
2. the [Ministry of Culture](#): responsible for sport and social cohesion and integration policy;
3. the [Ministry of Interior](#): responsible for crime prevention;
4. the [Ministry of Justice](#) responsible for justice system.

Main public actors and foundations of policy fields relevant to social inclusion:

- [Chancellor of Justice](#), independent official institution responsible for ensuring the rights of children would be protected;
- [Gender Equality and Equal Treatment Commissioner](#), independent official responsible for protection of equal rights;
- [Social Insurance Board](#), an agency of the Ministry of Social Affairs, responsible for social insurance benefits and child protection services;
- [Health Board](#), an agency of the Ministry of Social Affairs, responsible for regulating issues with medicine professions, devices etc., also for monitoring, prevention and control of communicable diseases, risk analysis in epidemiology;
- [National Institute for Health Development](#), a governmental institution under the Ministry of Social Affairs responsible for health research and promotion.

- [Health and Welfare Information Systems Centre](#), a governmental institution under the Ministry of Social Affairs responsible for data and IT systems in areas of the Ministry.
- [State Agency of Medicines](#), a governmental body under the Ministry of Social Affairs; main responsibility is the protection and promotion of public and animal health, through the supervision of medicines for human and veterinary use.
- [Estonian Youth Work Centre](#), an agency of the Ministry of Education and research responsible for implementation of youth policy;
- [Foundation of Sports Training and Information](#), a semi-governmental body Under the Ministry of Education and Research responsible for sports information and professionalization in sports.

The main non-public actors:

1. [Estonian National Olympic Committee](#)
2. [Sports For All](#), an umbrella organisation for sports and healthy lifestyle promoters;
3. [Estonian Union of School Sport](#), an umbrella organisation for local and regional school sport associations;
4. [Estonian National Youth Council](#)
5. [Estonian Sports Association Jõud](#) is the national umbrella organization for sports associations of all the 15 counties of Estonia directing its efforts at sports movement and providing better conditions for sports activities.

#### *General distribution of responsibilities*

In general, health and wellbeing responsibilities are divided between central government and local government according to the laws differently in different areas of the health and wellbeing domain. Most importantly:

1. local governments are responsible for ensuring maintenance of health and wellbeing institutions, sports infrastructure if it is under their ownership;
2. child protection services provision is the responsibility of local governments;
3. local governments are obliged to analyse public health and security situation and prepare health and well-being profile, that will be bases for strategic plan.
4. health services are regulated and financed in general from central government level;
5. the services in the area of sports are mostly provided via private and non-governmental institutions and supported via state budget.

Planning of the policy, financing and developing laws and regulations is the responsibility of the central government and its agencies.

#### **Cross-sectorial cooperation**

There is a mechanism established to ensure harmonized policy-making and implementation, which also covers the area of with the issues of health and wellbeing of youth. The central position in this mechanism - approving the propositions to develop a policy document or to change the existing one, monitoring the implementation through approving the action plans and their reports, monitoring the cooperation and in case of need initiating the cooperation - is granted to the [Government](#) and the [Government Office](#). The [Ministry of Finance](#) also plays a coordinating role in planning, monitoring and ensuring division of resources of different financial instruments including state budget, among all the policy fields.

In addition, there are several permanent cooperation bodies established:

#### [Child Protection Council](#)

The Council was formed in 2017. The tasks of the Council are to:

1. to establish the objectives of the state child protection policy and to coordinate the activities necessary for the implementation;

2. to submit proposals concerning the protection of children's rights and ensuring the well-being of children to the Government of the Republic and other relevant institutions;
3. to give relevant recommendations for cross-sectoral preventive measures of child protection.

The Council includes representatives of the Estonian Union for Child Welfare, the Association of Estonian Cities, the Association of Municipalities of Estonia, the Union of Estonian Student Councils and the Estonian National Youth Council, as well as the Minister of Education and Research, Minister of Culture, the Minister of Justice, the Minister of Internal Affairs, the Minister of Finance and the Directors of the Social Insurance Board and the National Institute for Health Development. The chairman of the Council is the Minister of Social Protection.

#### Drug Prevention Committee

The Minister of the Interior leads the permanent Committee, the goal of which is to co-ordinate prevention work and reduce the availability of narcotics. Members of the committee decided by the Government and committee is supported by experts working group.

#### Crime Prevention Committee

The Minister of Justice leads the permanent Committee, which co-ordinates the fight against crime, including crime prevention. Committee members are Minister of the Interior Affairs, Minister of the Education and Research, Minister of Finance, Minister of Social Affairs, Director General of the Police and Border Guard Board, Prosecutor General. The Committee is supported by experts working group.

### **7.3 Sport, youth fitness and physical activity**

#### **National strategy(ies)**

On 18th of February 2015 the Riigikogu (parliament) approved „[The general Principles of the Estonian sports policy until 2030](#)“ (Eesti spordipoliitika põhialused aastani 2030. Decision by the Parliament 18. February 2015),

The vision of the Estonian sports policy is, that:

1. in 2030, the mental and physical balance and welfare of the Estonian people correspond to the level of Nordic countries and Estonia has a living environment contributing physical activity together with accompanying services that support people's healthy life expectancy and self-fulfilment, as well as economic growth;
2. exercise and sport have a significant and growing role in increasing the vitality of the Estonian people, creating diverse living environment, and designing a good reputation of the Republic of Estonia.

There are four priority goals:

1. A majority of the population exercises and is engaged in sport.
2. Exercise and sport is a significant economic branch and employer with a strong organisation.
3. Exercise and sport are the carriers of spirit, coherence and positive values.
4. Estonia is represented in an effective and dignified way at international level.

The measures specifically targeting children and young people:

1. to boost exercise and sporting activities, a support system for recreational activities is developed and introduced for children and young people;
2. safe and age-appropriate sporting conditions are ensured for children and young people;
3. the priority of the development of achievement sport is regular, diverse and planned training of children and young people in sports clubs and sports schools;

4. the Government values targeted sports activities of children and young people and supports this field in a systematic way; regional and nation-wide study and training centres are created and developed.

In the preamble of the document it is noted, „sports and exercise are healthy, educational, entertaining and social activities of all demographic and social target groups, diversifying cultural and youth work“.

No specific target groups within the youth population are identified.

The connection to EU Physical Activity Guidelines is not specified in the document.

The government authority responsible for the implementation, coordination and monitoring of the strategy is Ministry of Culture.

No evidence-based monitoring/assessment/evaluation of the implementation of the strategy has been conducted yet.

The document has not been revised or updated since its introduction.

### **Promoting and supporting sport and physical activity among young people**

#### *Support for coaches and instructors of children and youth sports*

Since 2015 (ongoing), the Government has supported the salary of coaches and instructors working with children and youth with a fixed additional support sum in order to increase the variability and accessibility of sports for young people.

In 2016, approximately 1200 coaches working with more than 37 000 children and young people received the support. In 2017 the total amount of the support was 4 448 600 euros.

#### *Support for hobby education*

In 2017 the Government proposed and the Parliament [decided](#) to [finance additionally hobby education and hobby activities](#) including sports from state budget with an aim to increase access to, variety and quality of hobby education and activities for young people between 7-19 years old. The annual support is 15 million euros. It is divided to local government budgets based on the number of young people taking into account the problems young people are facing in the municipality (the formula includes the number of young people with special needs, financial capability of local government and the ratio of the number hobby opportunities and number of young people). In order to use the support, a local government (or a group of local governments together) has to draw up a plan on how to increase the access to and variety of hobby education and activities provision. The first deadline to submit the plans was 1.09.2017. A vast majority of all the municipalities (a total number of 199 from 213 in Estonia) submitted the plan, of which 53 in a group.

#### *Learning to swim*

The programme is designed to support primary school students swimming lessons. Main objectives are connected with healthy lifestyle promotion and prevention of accidents and death connected with poor swimming skills. In 2017 the programme was reformed and since 2018 the amount of the state funding is 1 230 082 euros.

#### *School Olympic Games*

School Olympic Games is an educational, encouraging and useful sports party that unites students, teachers and parents, and follows the principles of the Olympic Charter in its mentality, essence and rituals.

According to the School Olympic Games idea proposed by the Estonian Olympic Academy, it is not simply sports competitions that are held under the Olympic flag. A very important aspect of School Olympic Games is the relevance of the Olympic education period that precedes the competitions and during which, in different subject classes, children are given a different knowledge about the idea and history of the



Olympic movement and have a chance to use this knowledge in different contests. The aim of School Olympic Games is to introduce the Olympic idea and popularize sports by making sports life in schools more colourful. At the same time, School Olympic Games is not a national event in which only the best that have been selected in previous competitions can participate.

The amount of public funding is not available.

#### [TV 10 Olümpiastarti](#)

**Estonian Athletic Association organises for more than 45 years the competition for general education students** TV 10 Olümpiastarti, where yearly ca 10000 children and young people participate. As the event is connected with the Estonian National Broadcasting, the programme supports the promotion of youth sports.

There are no specific mechanisms for monitoring and evaluation established for the programmes listed.

The connection to EU Physical Activity Guidelines is not specified in the programmes listed.

### **Physical education in schools**

National curriculum for upper secondary schools defines „physical education“ as compulsory. The purpose of teaching physical education in upper secondary school is to develop students' physical education competence, i.e., ability to recognise the value of physical activity and healthy living as a part of one's lifestyle; ability to assess one's physical fitness level in an objective manner and to use suitable means and methods for developing physical abilities; practice suitable sports or form exercise; recognise the value of cooperation in sports/exercise and of knowledge about Estonian and world sports events.

Teaching physical education is aimed at the upper secondary school graduate having developed the capability to:

- value life, understand the importance of physical activity to people's health and enjoy exercising/practising sports;
- master knowledge, skills and experience to practise recreational sports/exercise independently both indoors and outdoors;
- follow regulations and personal safety and hygiene requirements while exercising/practising sports and know how to act in emergency situations that may occur while practising sports;
- are able to objectively assess their level of physical ability and to use proper means and methods for improving it;
- exercise/practise sports respecting fellow students and preserving the environment;
- are cooperative and able to guide fellow students to perform simple physical exercises;
- know about the sports and dance events held in Estonia and around the world;
- master knowledge about the development of physical culture in Estonia and in the world and understand the role of physical culture in modern society;
- know the necessary physical fitness regime for service in the Defence Forces.

Physical education is taught in five compulsory courses and two elective courses. Compulsory courses include gymnastics, athletics, games (basketball, volleyball and football) of which the school has to select at least two, dance movement, navigation and winter sports (skiing and skating) of which the school has to select at least one.

The elective courses are "Physical abilities and exercise skills" and "Exercising outdoors". The passing of compulsory and elective courses helps to develop the competences of the subject field, while also preparing students for the physical readiness test of the Defence Forces (this applies in particular to male students, supporting their individual development, while female students can opt for this on a voluntary basis). The volume of

presentation of different sports in the courses and the number of lessons dedicated to particular sports are specified in the school curriculum.

In 2015, a manual for the teachers of physical education was published and is distributed free of charge to all the schools.

The initiative [Movement Laboratory](#) is a research group of physical activity for health in Institute of Sport Sciences and Physiotherapy in University of Tartu, which is designing the school-based interventions and their aim is to promote physical activity in whole community, as sufficient physical activity supports mental, physical and social well-being.

The research group is a permanent research unit in the structure of the University of Tartu.

The unit develops several tools and ideas to be used in schools both in and outside of classrooms.

### **Collaboration and partnerships**

There is no obligatory or policy framework for partnerships between formal education providers, youth workers and health professionals in order to promote youth fitness and physical activity among young people. Cooperation between different stakeholders may occur at the local, regional or national level; however, it is not guided centrally.

## **7.4 Healthy lifestyles and healthy nutrition**

### **National strategy(ies)**

[National Health Plan 2009–2020](#) (Rahvatervise arengukava 2009-2020) was approved by the Government in 2008, renewed in 20.12.2012.

The general objective of the National Health Plan 2009–2020 is to achieve a longer health adjusted life expectancy by decreasing premature mortality and illness. As people's ability to cope with daily life and participate in society and working life remarkably depends on their health, the achievement of the objectives of the National Health Plan is an essential prerequisite for the objectives of the social inclusion.

The priorities for achievement of the strategic general objective of the development plan and based on those also the means have been divided between five thematic fields: increased social cohesion and equal opportunities, ensuring healthy and safe development for children, shaping of a living, working and learning environment supporting health, facilitation of healthy lifestyle and ensuring the sustainability of the health care system. The priorities of all those thematic fields rely on one or more core values of the development plan: human rights, common responsibility for health, equal opportunities and justice, social inclusion, relying on evidence and consideration of international documents. The objectives of the plan emphasise the need to reduce gender inequality and the promotion of equal opportunities. With regard to the efficient operation and sustainability of the health and social protection system, the plan also points out the need to improve integration between the health and social protection system.

Safe and healthy development of children and adolescents is defined as one of the four main fields of development in the plan. Main objective in this field is to decrease mortality and primary mental and behaviour disorders of children and youth and to increase of young people's positive evaluation of their health. The measures under this objective are targeted at promotion of reproductive and infant health, health promotion of pre-school children and school-aged children.

The youth-specific target groups identified in the plan are children and young people in general (i.e. from 0 to 26 years old), children up to 18 years old, students in general education, young people with special needs and young people with behaviour that puts their health at risk.

The Ministry of Social Affairs is the main responsible authority for the implementation of the Plan.

No evidence-based assessment or evaluation of the implementation of both policy document has been conducted.

The document has been revised once in 2012.

## **Encouraging healthy lifestyles and healthy nutrition for young people**

### *The Network of Health Promoting Kindergartens and Schools*

Estonia is a member of the [Schools for Health in Europe network](#) since 1993. In Estonia the health promoting schools movement started in 1993, when 16 schools became a member of the [European Network of Health Promoting Schools](#). Since 2000 the movement was broadened to kindergartens. By the end of 2016 488 educational institutions (45% of the total number) are members of the Health Promoting Kindergartens and Schools network in Estonia. The network is coordinated by National Institute for Health Development.

Health promoting educational institution is defined as institutions that implements a structured and systematic plan for the health and well-being of all children and of teaching and non-teaching staff. This is characterized as a whole school approach and contains - healthy policies, physical and social environment, individual health skills and action competencies, links within the community and health and wellbeing services.

In county level there is a network of coordinators, who usually work in school or kindergarten and the coordination is additional work for them. There are coordinators in all 15 counties and also in 4 largest cities.

The coordination in state and county level is financed by state through National Health Plan 2009-2020 and Estonian Health Insurance Fund. Kindergartens and schools finance their activities itself and/or through different projects.

### The PAX Good Behavior Game (GBG) (in Estonian *VEPA Käitumisoskuste mäng*)

VEPA is an environmental intervention used in the classroom to create a nurturing environment that is conducive to learning. The intervention is designed to reduce off-task behavior; increase attentiveness; decrease aggressive and disruptive behavior, as well as shy and withdrawn behavior. PAX GBG has also shown improvements with academic success, and mental health wellbeing and reduces substance abuse later in life.

Since 2014 in 65 schools have been implemented PAX GBG in Estonia.

PAX game is implemented by the National Institute for Health Development in cooperation with the Ministry of Interior and funded by European Social Fund.

### KiVa

KiVa is a research-based antibullying program that has been developed in the University of Turku, Finland. The effectiveness of KiVa has been shown in a large randomized controlled trial. Since 2014 in 40 schools have been implemented KIVA in Estonia. The programme in Estonia is supported by the Ministry of Education and Research.

### School invites to move

The research group of physical activity for health in Institute of Sport Sciences and Physiotherapy in University of Tartu is designing the school-based interventions and their aim is to promote physical activity in whole community, as sufficient physical activity supports mental, physical and social well-being.

Current shortcomings in promoting active lifestyle lay in the lack of focus on environmental factors and the over-concentration on sports. The objective measurements show that children involved in organised sport activities do not necessarily have higher physical activity. The pilot project done by Tartu University showed that it is

far too frequent in Estonian schools to discourage the physical activity of children during school day.

The research group is a permanent research unit in the structure of the University of Tartu.

### Good School and Good Preschool

The “Good school, good preschool” is an ongoing project by [Centre for Ethics, University of Tartu](#), which is supported by the [Ministry of Education and Research](#).

The aim of the good school model is to describe different aspects of a good school and to find the criteria that indicate that a school actually deals with these aspects.

The focus of the model is on evaluation. The ultimate aim of the project is to achieve the situation where all schools are evaluated fairly and feel motivated to improve.

### Free of Bullying

The Estonian Union for Child Welfare has been leading a project called “Kiusamisest vaba lasteaed ja kool” (Kindergartens and schools free of bullying) since 2010, currently ongoing.

The mission of Free of Bullying is:

- To reduce the number of children subjected to bullying in preschools and primary schools
- To create a safe, positive and healthy environment for children attending preschool or primary school

The mission is to be achieved by:

- Teaching children how to be a good friend
- Giving children the courage to say no if they experience bullying
- Supporting the children to act based on the values of tolerance, respect, care and courage
- Strengthening group spirit among children and thus preventing bullying

Programme is supported by Ministry of Education and Research.

Estonian Youth Work Centre supports annually the participation of young people in [summer camps](#). In 2016, 29 423 young people participated.

## **Health education and healthy lifestyles education in schools**

### *Health education*

Health education and healthy lifestyles education in schools is part of national curricula subject Human Study in Basic school and in addition, subject Personal, Social and Health Education in upper secondary school. Human studies were included in all levels of the school curriculum as a compulsory subject in 1996. Main topics are physical activity, nutrition, social and life skills training (preventing risky behaviour and substance (e.g. drug, tobacco, alcohol) abuse), injury prevention and safety skills, mental health etc.

One of eight cross-curricular topic is *health and safety* – the aim is for the pupil to develop into a mentally, emotionally, socially and physically healthy member of society who is capable of following healthful lifestyles, act in a safe manner and take part in developing a health promoting environment.

There are different kind of supporting materials and trainings for teachers both in Estonian and Russian language (teacher or trainer guidelines; web resources such as: [www.toitumine.ee](http://www.toitumine.ee), [www.tubakainfo.ee](http://www.tubakainfo.ee); [www.noored.alkoinfo.ee](http://www.noored.alkoinfo.ee); [www.narko.ee](http://www.narko.ee) etc.; films: <http://www.terviseinfo.ee/et/valdkonnad/narkomaania/narkomaania-enetamine/oppefilm-motteaine> etc.).

### *Sex education and personal relationships education*

In Estonia, human studies was included in all levels of the school curriculum as a compulsory subject in 1996 and sex education and personal relationships education is part of it.

Sexual education and personal relationships education are based on „Standards for Sexuality Education in Europe. A framework for policy makers, educational and health authorities and specialists“. These standards are translated to Estonian language and are [freely available](#).

Apart from the standards there are different kind of tools and trainings in sexual health field created and available for teachers both in Estonian and Russian language (teacher or trainer guidelines; web resources: [www.amor.ee](http://www.amor.ee), [www.hiv.ee](http://www.hiv.ee); films: <http://raagiasjast.hiv.ee/et/raagi-asjast.html> etc.)

### **Peer-to-peer education approaches**

There is no central framework policy or guidelines established to develop peer-to-peer educational approaches aiming to enhance young people's knowledge and understanding of factors related to their health and well-being.

**TORE** is a youth organisation that promotes movement of support students in general education schools and vocational education schools. The organisation developing the programme in Estonia started in 1996 and is ongoing.

Main goal of the organisation is to increase the number of schools and people in schools, who support and develop friendly learning atmosphere, social skills and anti-bullying standpoint. The network is based on training students to be support-students for peers and training adults in schools to be able to cooperate better with youth. TORE is also member of anti-bullying coalition (see below). TORE targets general education and vocational education school students and adults in schools. The organisation is supported from the state budget through the Ministry of Education and Research. Mechanisms for monitoring and evaluation of the activities in the organisation are not available.

### **Collaboration and partnerships**

There is no obligatory or policy framework for partnerships between formal education providers, youth workers and health professionals. Cooperation between different stakeholders may occur at the local, regional or national level, however it is not guided centrally.

Local governments are obliged to analyse public health and security situation and prepare health and well-being profile and the format of the profile analyses foresees a cooperation between the specialists in different areas. This cooperation is however not formed as a permanent cooperation body in general.

In 2014 a Bullying Free Education Coalition was created. Coalition has been recognized and supported by Ministry of Education and Research. The number of partners has been increased and in 2016 the coalition under the leadership of the Ministry of Education and Research developed a "[Concept for education path without bullying](#)" – a document stating the main understanding of bullying, its prevention and interventions in Estonia. It lists main programs available to address bullying through all levels of education. The concept does not ensure public funding for the programmes.

### **Raising awareness on healthy lifestyles and on factors affecting the health and well-being of young people**

#### *Youth information*

In general, well-being and healthy lifestyle issues are considered to be part of youth information, youth information is defined as one area of youth work in Estonia. The Ministry of Education and Research is responsible governmental authority in charge of youth information.

There are 16 centralised public regional youth guidance and information centres, called Pathfinder centres (Rajaleidja), which provide career information, career counselling, psychological, socio-pedagogical, special education counselling and speech therapy. Please see [chapter 3.4.](#) for more information on guidance and counselling in Rajaleidja Centres.

Estonian Youth Work Centre organises yearly an information fair for youth [Teeviit](#) attended by thousands of young people in Estonia.

Foundation Innove hosts also a portal [Rajaleidja](#) (Pathfinder). The portal aims to support youth, adults and practitioners, providing information on career planning, work and education possibilities in Estonia and abroad. In addition, local and regional information for youth is available through local youth information portals such as

- [www.noor.laanemaa.ee](http://www.noor.laanemaa.ee)
- [www.polvanoored.ee](http://www.polvanoored.ee)
- [www.noorteinfo.ee](http://www.noorteinfo.ee)
- [www.tni.ee](http://www.tni.ee)

<http://www.tallinn.ee/est/noorteinfo/>

#### *Health counselling*

[Estonian Union for Sexual Health](#) coordinates the work of centres for youth counselling on sexual health, relationships and violence issues. The target group of the centres is young people until 24. There is also a web-portal [www.amor.ee](http://www.amor.ee) to provide online information and counselling on sexual health issues. There are 17 centres in the network and most of them are based in clinics or medical centres.

The service is financed by Health Board and National Institute for Health Development

#### *Youth information campaigns*

There are different kind of web and social media based materials ja campaigns for youth:

- Tobacco prevention - <http://www.tubakainfo.ee/tubakas/>
- Alcohol prevention - <http://noored.alkoinfo.ee/>
- Sexual health – [www.amor.ee](http://www.amor.ee)
- Mental health - <http://peaasi.ee/>
- Drug prevention - <http://www.narko.ee/>
- HIV prevention – [www.hiv.ee](http://www.hiv.ee)
- Nutrition - <http://fiidikaru.toitumine.ee/>, [www.toitumine.ee](http://www.toitumine.ee)
- Traffic Safety Education - <http://www.liikluskasvatus.ee/>

Regular national campaigns have been held in the areas of safe sex, nutrition, tobacco and alcohol prevention, oral health etc. In general the target group of the youth campaign is general youth age 7-26.

Program "Protect yourself and help the other" for 6-8. class students in school year and 15 youth camps (one in each county). The aim of the camp is to develop the way of thinking that would support and promote the health of children. In the camps, specialists in their fields teach how to foresee risks and cope with emergency situations. Program is organised by cooperation of the Estonian Road Administration, Rescue Board, Estonian Health Insurance Fund, Police and Border Guard Board, county governments, local governments etc.

## **7.5 Mental health**

### **National strategy(ies)**

The main policy document in relation to health, including mental health, is [National Health Plan 2009–2020](#) (Rahvatervise arengukava 2009-2020). Approved by the Government in 2008, renewed in 20.12.2012.



Please see [chapter 7.4](#). for the detailed information on the plan.

### Improving the mental health of young people

In the framework of the [Public Health Initiatives](#) coordinated by the Ministry of Social Affairs several projects on children and youth mental health were initiated during the period 2011-2016 supported by Norway Grants.

Most notably:

- **Establishing Children's Mental Health Centre**, Tallinn Children's Hospital  
Total Grant Amount (EUR): 4 165 000. This project provides North-Estonia with the children's mental health centres par excellence and by coordinating, training supervising the network of mental health centres it will also improve mental health services in other regions of Estonia.
- **Developing and providing/piloting the rehabilitation services for children with severe mental health problems in community residential setting**  
Estonian National Social Insurance Board, Total Grant Amount (EUR): 1 045 462. Objective of the Project was to design innovative service(s) for children with mental health and behavioural problems, which will provide integrated social, educational and health services to support children and youth suitable life and education environment.
- **Developing a concept for integrated services to improve children's mental health**  
Ministry of Social Affairs, The Department of Children and Families, Total Grant Amount (EUR): 200 000. The objective of the project was to develop [a concept paper](#) to build up a system of children's mental health services and interventions with reduced fragmentation in service provision and improved regional coverage with integrated health and social care services for children and families.
- Support for service network for the provision of integrated social education and health services for children with mental problems in Tartu University Hospital „[South-Estonian Mental Health Centre for children and youngsters](#)“, Pärnu Hospital „[Mental Health Centre for Children and Youth of Pärnu region](#)“ and Tartu University Hospital „[Ida-Viru county Mental Health Centre for Children and youngsters](#)“. Grant was 425 000 euro per institution.
- Web-based information sources and counselling services on mental health Peaasjad - "[Peaasi.ee - mental health e-counseling, web platform and online solutions for young people in Estonia](#)". Grant: 218 159 EUR and Estonian- Swedish Mental Health and Suicidology Institute "[AppsTerv - web-based applications for mental health](#)". Grant: 204 860, 73 EUR

In total under the Public Health Initiative 2011-2016 the following results were achieved:

- Integrated services concept for children's mental health
- 4 mental health centres
- 4 mental health counselling offices
- 3 web portals - [peaasi.ee](#), [enesetunne.ee](#), [amor.ee](#)
- 4 smartphone apps were developed for preventing [self-harm](#) and [suicidal behaviour](#), [depression](#) and [sleeping problems](#).
- 958 people got training on public health topics
- 1015 youth attended mental health lectures
- 6535 e-counselling
- 2 social campaigns were carried out about alcohol harms and tolerance about heavy alcohol drinking - [Uncle Alco](#) and [Passiv drinking](#)
- 2 rehabilitation programs for providing long-term rehabilitation service for children with severe mental health problems

Another project "[Improving the Support System for Children and Youth at Risk](#)" developed a cross-sectorial support system to alleviate the risks affecting children and youth and improved the wellbeing of children and youth. Two evidence-based programs - positive parenting program „Incredible Years“ and family-based intervention program

MDFT were adapted and are now implemented in Estonia. The Concept for Improving the Support System for Children and Youth at Risk was compiled by the Ministry of Social Affairs. The document describes the main challenges at establishing the cross-sectorial (healthcare, legal protection, education, welfare system, etc.) support system for children and youth at risk, and recommends the most vital courses of action to the state for the purposes of ensuring more streamlined operation and smoother co-operation.

Two evidence-based programs supporting mental health of young people are also implemented in Estonian schools:

- [KiVa](#) program is a bullying prevention program developed in Finland that uses a whole school approach. Its components aim to affect skills, behaviour, and classroom and school climate and have a positive impact on children's social and emotional well-being.
- [The PAX Good Behavior Game](#) (PAX GBG) is a universal classroom-based program that reduces behavioral and emotional problems, prevents the use of tobacco, alcohol and illicit drugs and improves educational attainment. In addition, several initiatives and science-based programs are used at schools and curricula-based activities carried out to support students mental health.

Another important initiative to highlight is [Estonian Mental Health and Well-Being Coalition \(VATEK\)](#), which was established in 2012 by the initiative of the Estonian-Swedish Mental Health and Suicidology Institute (ERSI) and support of the Estonian Ministry of Social Affairs. It is independent public interest foundation, which brings together mental health organizations across Estonia. For now VATEK has grown to a network of 38 organizations related to mental health (nongovernmental organizations, public sector organizations, professional organizations, trade companies). The main objectives of the VATEK are to promote Estonian population mental health and wellbeing and enhance development of mental health policy and legislation.

## **7.6 Mechanisms of early detection and signposting of young people facing health risks**

### **Policy framework**

The [Child Protection Act](#), defines early detection and prevention of risks as important area. Prevention is specifically addressed in the act, which stipulates that:

1. In order to ensure the rights and well-being of the child, the risks threatening the well-being and development of the child must be prevented. Prevention includes the detection of situations and events which threaten the child as early as possible and the reaction thereto, including the identification of the child's development and behaviour problems, problems occurring in the family environment, identification of abuse and the increase of protective measures promoting the child's well-being and development.
2. State and local government agencies shall, according to their possibilities, develop measures in order to prevent the child's need for assistance and to decrease the existing problems. The measures must be based on the child's needs, support the relations between the child and the persons raising the child, support the social performance skills and they must be accessible, timely, effective and have a long-term positive effect.

The Ministry of Social Affairs is responsible for developing legal and policy framework in the area of child protection, however, the implementation is ensured at the local level by local governments.

The [Development Plan for Children and Families](#) for 2012–2020, approved by the Government in 2011, renewed 24 October 2013 sets strategic objectives aimed at guaranteeing an improvement in the well-being of children and families and in their quality of living. This plan is the basis for improving the lives of children and families and

achieving an increase in population. One of the five strategic objectives is “The rights of children are guaranteed and a functional child protection system is created in order to value each child and the kind of safe environment that supports the development and welfare of children”. Under this objective 3 policy measures are planned:

1. Promotion of the rights of the child.
2. Increasing the efficiency of early intervention and the child protection system.
3. Provision and development of efficient interventions proceeding from the needs of people.

In the document a line of action „Early intervention system for noticing the developmental needs of a child” is planned including the following measures:

1. Development of a system for evaluation of the developmental needs of a child and early intervention
2. Analysis and development of a system of home visits by family nurses
3. Development of guidelines and provision of training for specialists who work with small children
4. Organising the provision of information to a broader target group that helps identify the developmental needs of a child early

Community-based development of a system for early noticing of and intervention in the risk behaviour of children.

The Ministry of Social Affairs is responsible for ensuring the implementation of the Plan.

In 2014, the Ministry of Social Affairs also developed [a Concept for Improving the Support System for Children and Youth at Risk](#), which states grounding principles and need for improving the support system in Estonia. The document defines as a main goal of improving the support system achievement of a situation in which the help for ensuring the well-being of children, youth and families is timely, appropriate, high-quality and sufficient, all over Estonia. In order to achieve it, the support system must be improved so that it guarantees (among other aims) „emphasis on prevention and effective intervention”.

The [Social Insurance Board](#) is responsible for providing the support and trainings for local governments responsible for the implementation of the early detection and prevention work.

## Stakeholders

The [Child Protection Act](#) defines the functions of local governments and among them the obligation to “develop programmes and projects ensuring the rights and well-being of children and the application thereof in its administrative territory to prevent and decrease the risks that endanger children”. The local government can also establish a committee of children and families at local governments as an advisory body, if necessary.

However, in Estonia, local governments are autonomous by Constitution and may develop their own approach to providing services, networking and ensuring the functions are fulfilled. Therefore there is no standard model for early detection and prevention network, its members and stakeholders.

## Guidance to stakeholders

Please see chapters [7.4.](#) and [7.5.](#) for information on awareness-raising campaigns, specific websites, guidelines, handbooks and other material and tools supporting local stakeholders and raise their awareness about health risks faced by young people.

Training Centre of [the National Institute for Health Development](#) offers professional development courses to specialists working to support health, such as kindergarten and school employees, youth workers, child adopters, foster care families, employees of social welfare services and rehabilitation centres, county and local municipality

employees, counsellors, psychologists, health care workers and health promoters, social workers, NGOs etc.. Main areas of training are:

- HIV/AIDS and substance abuse
- Health promotion and health counselling
- Network of Healthy Workplaces
- Health promotion for school and kindergarten staff
- Social work and pedagogics for residential home employees
- PRIDE-training courses for child adopters and foster families
- Courses for employees of social welfare services and rehabilitation centres

In addition, the centre also carries out analysis of training needs, and provides support to trainers in training methodology.

### Target groups

The [Development Plan for Children and Families](#) underlines the need to pay attention to “noticing and helping maltreated children” as a specific target group under the policy goal „Increasing the efficiency of early intervention and the child protection system”.

### Funding

In Estonia is in force a solidary [health insurance system](#). Solidarity in health insurance means that someone's health insurance payments or contribution to the system or access to the necessary assistance does not depend on age, income or health risks. All the medically insured people in Estonia are entitled to the same quality health care, regardless of whether or not they pay the health insurance tax. According to the Health Insurance Act persons for whom no social tax is paid are considered as having equal status to the insured person and all persons under 19 years of age have having equal status.

Local government is responsible for financing it functions from the local budget.

## 7.7 Making health facilities more youth friendly

### Youth-friendly sexual and reproductive health (YFSRH) services for young people

The first YFSRH services clinic of Estonia was started in 1991. The youth clinics network was created simultaneously with Estonian school-based sexuality education programme, web-based counselling and national campaigns.

The youth clinics (YC) are departments of larger healthcare institutions, private gynaecological practices, or private healthcare companies. All the clinics offer free services to young people up to the age of 25 years in Estonian and Russian. Most of the clinics are open daily and serve exclusively young people. All the clinics must comply with the quality requirements and operational principles of the youth clinics network, which define: 1) objectives of YCs, 2) operational principles, 3) sexual and reproductive health (SRH) services provided, 4) target groups, 5) quality requirements, and 6) monitoring and evaluation indicators. YCs' service package included the following SRH services:

1. STI consultations; STI testing, treatment and follow-up consultations, HIV services; voluntary confidential counselling and testing and in case of an HIV positive result referral for specialist consultation.
2. Contraceptive consultations; information and counselling about contraceptives, prescription and renewal of contraceptive prescriptions, and insertion of contraceptive devices.
3. SRH counselling; counselling, pregnancy diagnostics and referral for antenatal care or safe abortion, psychological counselling, human papilloma virus vaccination and counselling, and a range of other SRH services.
4. Sexuality education lessons at schools or YCs.

Youth clinics services have been financed by Estonian Health Insurance Fund and educational lessons by projects or local governments. Estonian Sexual Health Association is a non-governmental organization, which coordinates and represents the YCN.

### **Children's mental health centres**

Four regional children's mental health centres have been founded with the support of the Norwegian Financial Mechanism in 2014 (see [chapter 7.5](#) for further information). From April 2016 centres services are partly financed by Estonian Health Insurance Fund.

The main task of centres is organization of diagnostics and treatment of mental health disorders by complying with modern principles of treatment and evidence-based practice. Inpatient and outpatient treatment is provided in Tallinn, Tartu and Viljandi, only outpatient treatment is provided in Pärnu and Ida-Viru County.

## **7.8 Current debates and reforms**

Estonia is currently undergoing a major administrative reform. It is both a risk and an opportunity for public health. While many municipalities have adopted health promotion as part of their core activities, some have not. During the reform, it is important to support current health-friendly local governments to maintain their positions in the merging municipalities, as well as to encourage the others to review their agenda and adopt health and well-being as one of the core issues.

Priority areas in youth health are overweight and obesity prevention, tobacco, alcohol and drug prevention, mental health, injury prevention and safe environment.

## **8. Creativity and Culture**

In general, the situation with cultural consumption is quite excellent in Estonia, when we look at event participation. The overall level of cultural consumption is remarkably high. [The Eurobarometer](#) cultural consumption index reveals that 30% of Estonians belonged to the group with very high or high level of cultural consumption in 2013. In the European Union (EU) as a whole, this group included only 18% of the population.

There is no single body responsible for creativity and culture of young people as the domain covers several policy areas, which have established different division of tasks between different Ministries and between local and central level. The main Governmental authority responsible for creativity and culture of young people in Estonia according to the [Government of the Republic Act](#) is the [Ministry of Culture](#), where there are two departments relevant to the culture and creativity of youth: the Arts Department and the Cultural Diversity Department.

### **8.1 General context**

#### **Main trends in young people's creativity and cultural participation**

##### *Cultural consumption of young people in Estonia*

In general, the situation with cultural consumption is quite excellent in Estonia, when we look at event participation. The overall level of cultural consumption is remarkably high. [The Eurobarometer](#) cultural consumption index reveals that 30% of Estonians belonged to the group with very high or high level of cultural consumption in 2013. In the European Union (EU) as a whole, this group included only 18% of the population.

According to the [analyses](#) by Triinu Lukas of the Statistics Estonia in 2016, the residents of Estonia are active culture consumers, particularly with regard to visiting cultural heritage sites and going to concerts. In 2015, 84% of Estonian residents of at least 15

years of age were active cultural consumers, i.e. they attended at least one cultural event in the past year.

The correlation between age and cultural consumption in Estonia is similar to that in Europe. While the oldest age group had the largest percentage of people who had attended events in only one cultural area (14%), the youngest age group only included 4% of people who had attended events in only one cultural area. The share of the most active persons was greatest in the youngest age group (2%) and smallest in the oldest age group (0.1%). Consequently, when younger people consume culture, they are likely to attend events in many cultural areas ([see Figure 1](#)). Lukas argues that the great impact of age can be explained by the somewhat unique Estonian context. As great social changes (such as restoration of Estonia's independence) shake existing social values and the level of cultural consumption is linked with different values, Estonian older and younger generations have different cultural consumption habits. The younger age groups often partake in a wider scope of culture, because they tend to participate in popular culture in addition to classical high culture genres. [Figure 1](#) provides a broad division between the generation of the period after the restoration of independence (20–29-year-olds), the generation immediately preceding it (30–49-year-olds) and the generation following it (15–19-year-olds) as well as those who have lived at least half of their lives in the closed society of the Soviet Union (at least 50-year-olds).

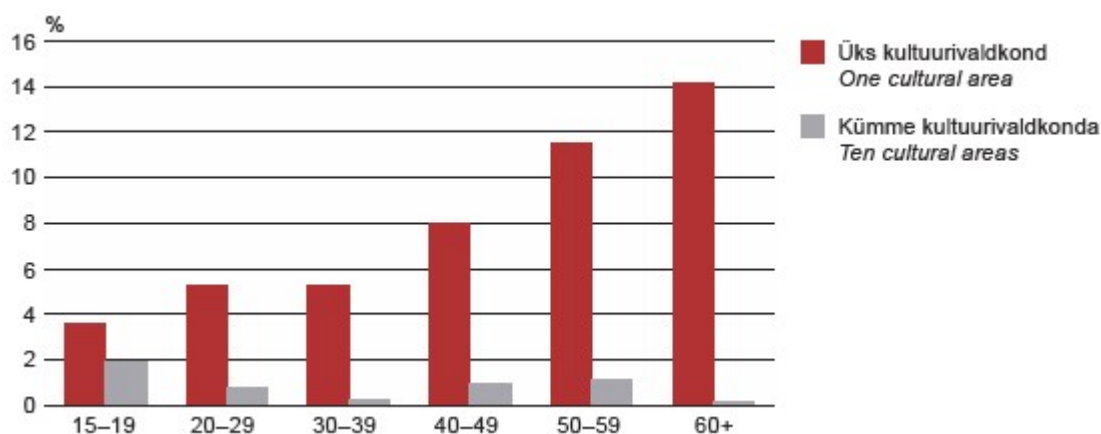


Figure 1. Most and least active culture consumers by age group, 2015

According to [the analyses of young people time usage and cultural consumption](#) by Kutt Kommel of Statistic Estonia in 2017, the most actively used cultural institution used by young people (15–24) is the cinema (83% of young people visit at least once a year), 72% visit libraries, 64% concerts and 62% visited cultural heritage site. Approximately half of the young people visit museum and theatre at least once a year.

10–14 years old spend in average 4 minutes per day on entertainment and culture, which increases to 13 minutes per day in the age group 15–24 years old. 20 minutes per day is spent on reading by younger youth (10–14) and 11 minutes by those of age 15–24. Time spent on reading has decreased compared to 2000, especially in the older group (decreased by 18 minutes).

#### *Challenges to young people's cultural consumption*

According to those young people (15–24) who have not visited a cultural institution, most prominent reason is the lack of free time. Lack of interest in both the type or the offer also plays role, especially concerning the area of museums, art exhibitions or cultural heritage sites ([See Table 1](#)).



**Table 1.** The obstacles to participate in culture, 2013. Data by Statistics Estonia, compiled by author.

(% of 15-24 years old persons, who have not visited cultural institutions by reason and type of cultural event\*)

	Theatre, opera, ballet or dance event	Concert	Cinema	Museum, art exhibition or cultural heritage site	Other cultural event
No free time	52,2	58,1	44,3	49,6	53,3
Culture events are not interesting	18,8	9,4	12,1	20	19,2
No cultural institutions nearby	9,1	10,5	21,5	11,5	7,9
The offer is not interesting	17,4	18,7	18,1	20,9	16
Need to take care of family	3,9	3,9	..	..	..
Tickets are too expensive	12,1	9,9	..	..	..
No or bad transportation opportunities	2,8	..	..	2,5	..
No company to go with	4,7	4,4	..	..	..
There is too little information about the cultural events	..	..	..	..	4,9

\*multiple reasons possible per respondent.

Young people, especially in younger age, are dependent on their parents. The parent-related impact factors of cultural consumption among 5–14-year-old children has been [analysed](#) by Triinu Lukas of the Statistics Estonia in 2016. The analysis revealed that, even though children are more active participants in culture compared to adults (probably owing to school), in current Estonian society, the parents' social background has a significant impact on the cultural consumption activity of their children. Thus, the children of parents with more cultural capital have a greater potential to attain a good life through a high level of cultural consumption activity. The strongest impact factors for children's cultural consumption include the cultural activity of the parents, the number of children in the parent's household, the age of the parent and the parent's employment status. The settlement type had no impact on the level of children's cultural consumption, which means that there is no evidence that children living in a city or a town are more active participants in culture than children living in a small town or a village. See [Table 2](#), which summarises the results of the regression analysis of children's cultural consumption and the respective impact factors, showing the relative significance of different characteristics of the parents' socioeconomic background.

	Regressioonikordajad <sup>a</sup> Regression coefficients <sup>a</sup>	
Vanema kultuuriline aktiivsus (võrdlusrühm: kultuuriliselt mitteaktiivsed)	.374	Cultural activity of parent (reference group: culturally inactive persons)
Laste arv vanema leibkonnas	.188	Number of children in parent's household
Vanema vanus	.170	Parent's age
Vanema haridustase (võrdlusrühm: esimese taseme haridus)		Parent's level of education (reference group: primary level of education)
teise taseme ja teise taseme järgne / kolmanda taseme eelne haridus	.025	secondary and post-secondary education / non-tertiary education
kolmanda taseme haridus	.014	kolmanda taseme haridus tertiary education
Vanema hõiveseisund (võrdlusrühm: mitteaktiivsed)		Parent's employment status (reference group: inactive population)
täistööajaga töötavad	.056	employed full time
osalise tööajaga töötavad	-.019	employed part time
üliõpilased ja tasustamata praktikandid	-.140	university students and unpaid trainees
Vanema rahvus (võrdlusrühm: eestlased)	-.085	Parent's age
Tulu leibkonnaliikme kohta	.007	Income per member of household
Vanema elupaiga tüüp (võrdlusrühm: linn või alev)		Parent's settlement type (reference group: city or town)
alevik või küla	-.003	small town or village

Table 2. Impact of parent-related socio-economic indicators on cultural consumption activity of children, 2015

Regression coefficients are significant at the 0.005 level, except in the case of tertiary education level of parent ( $p = .014$ ), income of household member ( $p = .016$ ) and parent's settlement type ( $p = .248$ ).

The analysis shows that children's cultural consumption was also influenced by the parent's ethnic origin (see [Figure 2](#)). Like in the case of adults, Estonian children were more likely to be active participants in culture compared to the children of parents who identified themselves as Russians, partially probably because Estonians are often financially in a better position. As household income divided by the number of household members, or monthly income per household member, only had a limited impact on cultural consumption in children – the impact was much weaker than in the analysis concerning parents – Lukas concludes that culture is more available to children than to their parents and the financially inferior position of Russians should not play such a great role. In addition, children have a considerably higher level of participation in culture, irrespective of ethnic origin, and there is a greater equality between the observed ethnic groups in children compared to their parents.

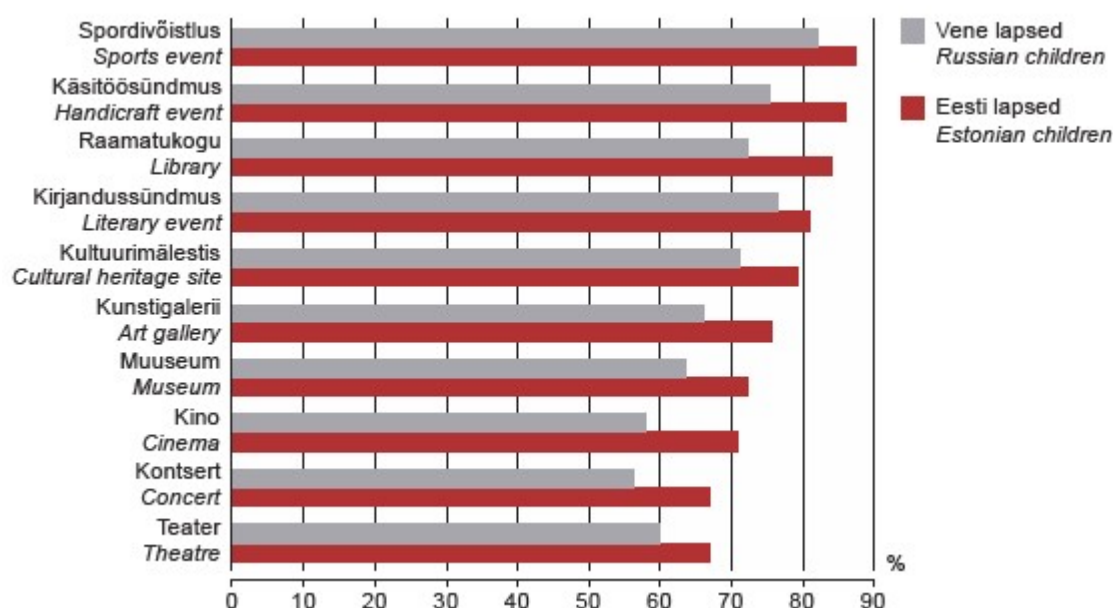


Figure 2. Cultural consumption among children by ethnic origin, 2015

## Main concepts

In 2005 the Parliament approved a development strategy [Sustainable Estonia 21](#), which is a strategy guiding all the policy areas until 2030. The main task of the strategy is to answer the question of what should be done to ensure successful functioning of the Estonian society and state also in the longer term.

Among other areas, the document formulates the essence and importance of Estonian cultural space and it can be perceived as a main concept to understand the relationship of the culture and the society as a whole in Estonia.

In this strategy the sustainability of the Estonian nation and culture is defined as the cornerstone of sustainable development of Estonia. According to the Constitution of the Republic of Estonia, the state of Estonia shall “ensure the preservation of the Estonian nature and culture through the ages”. Preservation of a nation “through the ages” is conditioned first of all on the existence of cultural mechanisms that enable the Estonian national identity (cultural cohesion) to persist and ensure that the values, traditions, behavioural patterns and elements of way of life intrinsic to the Estonian national culture are passed from generation to generation and also accepted by new settlers. The Estonian cultural space is defined as an arrangement of social life based on Estonian traditions and the Estonian language. This culture is carried by people identifying themselves as Estonians and communicating in the Estonian language. The Estonian cultural space is characterised by Estonian tradition based practices in behaviour, in relationships and in the mode of living. The Estonian cultural space has materialised in the Estonian natural and living environment and in the Estonian sign environment (communication language, symbols, personal and geographic names, colour preferences, building and home design practices, generally known pieces of art and literature and historical figures, historical anniversaries and calendar, etc.) Thus, the Estonian cultural space is a significantly broader concept than the spheres of direct creative activity or folk culture. Preservation of the cultural space is a precondition for the preservation of national identity, which in turn motivates people both to use the national language and to hold in esteem the national values in a changing and globalising world.

The strategy defines viability of the Estonian cultural space as a first goal to ensure sustainability. The key mechanisms for achieving the goal are:

1. Educatedness i.e. the need to ensure that an education in the Estonian language and related to the Estonian culture is provided in Estonia, while being internationally

- competitive, grounded on developments in modern sciences and technology and connecting the Estonian culture with world culture.
2. Reflexivity i.e. the need to raise of the renewal capacity and critical reflexivity of the Estonian culture. This will result in an increase in the diversity and internal dialogicality of the Estonian culture, stimulation of the formation of new notions and interpretations, modernisation of the historical conscience and world picture of Estonians.
  3. Communicativity i.e. the need to ensure usability of the Estonian culture in international communication and its translatability into other languages and codes. It is important that the inevitable closeness and danger of self-centredness typical of a small culture will be overcome by digitising the Estonian cultural treasury, but also through investment into culture and through increased openness of the modern Estonian culture. Through this, the Estonian culture will also become more attractive among the young generation but also among immigrants thanks to its diversity and translatability.
  4. Innovativity i.e. the need for an increased renewal capacity of culture that will facilitate the integration of the Estonian culture into the modern technological civilisation and contribute to the understanding of central global issues.

## 8.2 Administration and governance

### Governance

There is no single body responsible for creativity and culture of young people as the domain covers several policy areas, which have established different division of tasks between different Ministries and between local and central level.

The main Governmental authority responsible for creativity and culture of young people in Estonia according to the [Government of the Republic Act](#) is the [Ministry of Culture](#), where there are two departments relevant to the culture and creativity of youth: the Arts Department and the Cultural Diversity Department.

The main public actors and foundations of policy fields relevant to social inclusion:

- [Ministry of Education and Research](#), responsible for youth policy and education policy
- the [Ministry of Economic Affairs and Communications](#), responsible for supporting creative industries and technological development
- [Estonian Youth Work Centre](#), an agency of the Ministry of Education and Research responsible for implementation of youth policy
- [Foundation Archimedes](#), an independent body established by the government under the Ministry of Education and Research, responsible for implementing youth policy and providing trainings, also National Agency for Erasmus+
- [Integration and Migration Foundation Our People](#), an independent body established by the government under the Ministry of Culture, responsible for supporting integration of national minorities in Estonia and cultural diversity
- [Estonian Song and Dance Celebration Foundation](#), an independent body established by the government under the Ministry of Culture, responsible for development and organisation of national song and dance celebrations.
- [Estonian Folk Culture Centre](#), an independent body established by the government under the Ministry of Culture, responsible for the survival and evolution of Estonian folk culture and intangible heritage.
- [the Cultural Endowment of Estonia](#), a legal person in public law the objective of which is to finance the arts, folk culture, physical fitness and sport and the construction and renovation of cultural buildings.

The main non-public actors

- the [Association of Estonian Youth Workers](#), union of youth workers, hobby education specialists

- the [Estonian National Youth Council](#)
- [Estonian Music Schools Union](#), an umbrella organisation for music schools in Estonia
- the [Union of Hobby Schools](#), an umbrella organisation uniting hobby schools in Estonia
- [the Union of Dance Education and Arts](#), an organisation uniting educators and artists in the area of dance
- [Estonian Arts School Union](#), an umbrella organisation for art schools in Estonia
- [Estonian Choral Association](#), an umbrella organization for all choirs and wind orchestras in Estonia
- [Estonian Music Council](#), a non-governmental organisation that serves as a representative body of Estonian musicians

#### *The distribution of responsibilities*

In general, the Ministry of Culture is responsible for the development of policy in the area of culture (including culture and creativity of youth) and for forming the principles of financing culture. Local authorities are responsible for municipal cultural and educational institutions (including hobby schools) and are also financing local activities, initiatives and non-governmental organisations.

#### **Cross-sectorial cooperation**

There is a mechanism established to ensure harmonized policy-making and implementation, which also covers the area of culture and creativity of youth. The central position in this mechanism - approving the propositions to develop a policy document or to change the existing one, monitoring the implementation through approving the action plans and their reports, monitoring the cooperation and in case of need initiating the cooperation - is granted to the [Government](#) and the [Government Office](#). The [Ministry of Finance](#) also plays a coordinating role in planning, monitoring and ensuring division of resources of different financial instruments including state budget, among all the policy fields.

### **8.3 National strategy on creativity and culture for young people**

#### **Existence of a national strategy**

There is no single document that could be considered a national strategy on creativity and culture for young people, but a set of official documents integrating major directions to be followed in the organisation of policy making and implementation in relation to creativity and culture for young people.

Two strategies are most relevant forming a national policy of creativity and culture for young people:

- The general principles of the cultural policy up to 2020 ([Kultuuripoliitika põhialused aastani 2020](#), approved by the Parliament 12. February 2014)
- the Youth Field Development Plan 2014-2020 ([Noortevaldkonna arengukava 2014-2020](#), approved by the Government 19. December 2013)

#### **Scope and contents**

##### *The general principles of the cultural policy up to 2020*

The general principles of the cultural policy adopted by the Riigikogu (the parliament) are the basis for the state's decisions in the field of culture up until 2020.

The document defines the main objective, the principles of shaping and realising the cultural policy and the priorities in specific areas such as architecture, design, performing arts, filmmaking, music, literature and publishing, visual arts, cultural journalism and media, cultural diversity, heritage conservation, museums, libraries, folk culture.

The main objective of the cultural policy is to form a society that values creativity by maintaining and improving the national identity of Estonia, researching, storing, and

transferring cultural memory, and creating favourable conditions for the development of a vital, open, and versatile cultural space and for participating in culture.

The target group of the policy document is whole population; children and young people are only highlighted under some of the priorities in specific areas. Within the youth population, no specific target groups are identified.

#### *The Youth Field Development Plan 2014-2020*

The general objective of the plan is to establish a coherent and creative society through development and self-realisation possibilities provided for young people.

The sub-objectives of the Development Plan are:

1. Young people have more choices to discover their own creative and developmental potential. The planned policy measures under this objective are aimed to increase opportunities for young people to develop their creativity, show initiative and act together.
2. Young people are at lower risk to be excluded. The planned policy measures under this objective are aimed to increase the inclusion of young people and improve their employability.
3. There is more support for participation of young people in decision-making. The planned policy measures under this objective are aimed to support the active participation of young people in the community life and in decision-making.
4. The youth field operates more efficiently. The policy measures aim to ensure the development of high-quality youth policy and youth work.

The plan is aimed at all young people from 7 to 26 years old.

#### **Responsible authority for the implementation of the strategy**

The responsible authority for the coordination of the implementation of the general principles of the cultural policy up to 2020 is the Government of Estonia, specifically Ministry of Culture.

The responsible authority for the coordination of the implementation of the The Youth Field Development Plan is the Ministry of Education and Research.

No evidence-based assessment or evaluation of the implementation of both policy document has been conducted.

#### **Revisions/updates**

Neither of the policy documents have been revised or updated since their first introduction.

The general principles of the cultural policy up to 2020 were not preceded by other policy document since 2000 as the earlier version of the general principles of the cultural policy was adopted in 1998.

The Youth Field Development plan was preceded by other policy documents since 2000. At the state level, development of the youth field is being planned for the third time. The "Estonian Youth Work Concept" and the "Estonian Youth Work Development Plan 2001-2004" were drafted in 2001, these were followed by the 'Youth Work Strategy 2006-2013' which was approved in 2006. What differentiates the current development plan from the previous documents is its approach to focus on goals and measures that will help to achieve positive change in the most significant challenges – the plan does not describe measures in all areas of youth work and youth policy. Also the aims and objectives based on and formulated in accordance with youth perspective as opposed to a perspective of the sector or services used in earlier documents – the analyses and the policy objectives were about young people not about the system and services of youth work or youth policy.



## **8.4 Promoting culture and cultural participation**

### **Reducing obstacles to young people's access to culture**

The main policy connected with ensuring young people access to culture is formulated in the [Youth Field Development Plan 2014-2020](#) described in more detail in the [chapter 8.3](#). Under this policy document, the most important governmental initiative concerned with culture and creativity of young people has been supporting hobby education and hobby activities, including removing obstacles of their access. This initiative is described in detail under the [chapter 8.5](#).

Two most prominent top-level projects that aimed to increase access to culture specifically young people are:

1. "An Instrument for Every Child";
2. „The HUKK-AP project”.

#### *An Instrument for Every Child*

Under the framework of celebrating [a hundred years of the Republic of Estonia](#), coordinated by the Government Office, an initiative [„An Instrument for Every Child”](#) was created in 2015.

The idea of the initiative is to encourage youth involvement in music by increasing access of young people to music instruments so that the fact of owning a music instrument would not limit access to be involved in music education.

The aim of the initiative "An Instrument for Every Child" is to upgrade, in cooperation with the private sector, the instrument collections of the institutions that offer musical education to children and young people. The mapping of the instrument collections of musical education institutions revealed a great need for new instruments.

The target group of the initiative includes any institutions offering musical education, such as traditional music schools and youth orchestras, as well as youth centres, culture centres and music groups in general education schools. There are no limitations in terms of musical styles. The initiative enables musical and hobby education institutions to apply for funding of the purchase of musical instruments. All acquired instruments will remain in shared use in the particular group.

There has been 3 annual application rounds (2015, 2016, 2017):

1. In 2015 support was given to 121 institutions to purchase 268 music instruments.  
Total sum of the support: 196 869 €
2. In 2016 support was given to 208 institutions to purchase 726 music instruments.  
Total sum of the support: 232 990 €
3. In 2017 support was given to 220 institutions to purchase 688 music instruments.  
Total sum of the support: 332 290 €

Currently the application round for 2018 is open.

#### *The HUKK-AP project*

[The HUKK-AP Project](#) - Involvement of Organisations Working in Area of Hobby Education for Young People – was initiated by the Ministry of Education and Research and implemented by Archimedes Foundation Youth Agency. The aim of the programme was to support the variety of hobby activities, their efficiency and suitability for youngsters' needs. The objective is to create prerequisites and working solutions in order to involve disadvantaged youngsters in hobby education. It is important to support opportunities for participating, introduce new methods and increase competencies of educators that enable to increase access of disadvantaged young people to hobby education, mostly in the area of culture and art education.

The main directions of activities:

1. increasing the capability of hobby schools to involve young people with fewer opportunities systematically;
2. promoting hobby activities in new priority target groups;
3. involving young people with fewer opportunities into hobby activities;
4. monitoring and assessing the impact of the project and hobby education.

The following most important results were achieved through the project:

- 3231 young people with fewer opportunities participated in hobby activities, 1806 of them doing so regularly. The participants showed a change in their attitudes, knowledge, skills and behaviour. They became more confident, took initiative more likely, and learned to concentrate, communicate and cooperate more successfully. The skills related to their hobby improved and they became academically more successful.
- 69 new regional hobby groups were established that focused especially on the needs of this particular target group: football training, a painting group, a theatre studio, a nature group, car modelling group, dance lessons, a photography group, guitar lessons, motorcycle training, a poetry group, a pool club, a sailors' club, a hand bell group, et al.
- New hobby activity models were established and approaches were tested that had not been previously implemented in the project areas at all or to such an extent. For example, young people with special educational needs were included in regular hobby groups and they were able to participate in smaller groups or individual lessons created especially for them. Young people living in areas that are more secluded were reached via a mobile hobby school.
- 442 parents were involved and advised, which turned out to be of great importance in youth work. Parents play an important role in whether a young person finds a hobby activity and whether they start participating regularly.
- 1647 specialists working with young people participated in training and mentoring, which has helped to change the way of thinking in the hobby activity system and including young people with fewer opportunities has become more natural part of everyday work.

The budget of the project was 453 412,57 euros, which was mostly covered by Iceland, Liechtenstein and Norway through the EEA Grants. The duration of the project was 01.02.2014-30.04.2016.

### **Disseminating information on cultural opportunities**

The most prominent youth-specific initiative to raise awareness of young people about the culture and the participation in the culture by the top level authority is the theme-year project [Children and Youth Year of Culture 2017](#).

The theme year is organised at the initiative of the Estonian [Ministry of Culture](#), and its implementation is coordinated by the [Estonian Children's Literature Centre](#).

The goals of Children and Youth Year of Culture 2017 are:

- to inspire children and youngsters to become the creators of culture
- to value children and youngsters as an audience for culture

The motto of Children and Youth Year of Culture, "Me too!" and keywords independence and collaboration invite children and youngsters to participate in culture as well as to create experiences themselves. Supporting and encouraging the young as creators as well as an audience helps us ensure a continuous and abundant cultural life for the coming generations. Public funding in 2017: 40 000 EUR.

### **Knowledge of cultural heritage amongst young people**

The most important nation-wide top level programme to support young people's discovery and appreciation of the cultural and artistic heritage of Estonia, is [The Youth Song and Dance Celebrations](#).

The Youth Song and Dance celebrations are targeted to youth (7-26, mostly young people in school age 7-17) and take place every five years in a dedicated area (Song Festival Ground) in Tallinn. Even though the event itself only lasts for few days in, the actual programme is covering also the period between the events as it includes the regular meetings (weekly in general) of dance groups, choirs, folk groups and orchestras in schools, cultural centres etc. throughout the years.

The celebrations focal point is Estonian folk culture with traditional songs and dances, however also new work is commissioned for every event. Participants mostly wear national costumes.

In addition to youth celebration, also a general song and dance celebration is held, where young people take part. According to the established tradition, every 2nd and 7th year of the decade a youth song and dance celebration and every 4th and 9th year of the decade a general song and dance celebration takes place. The tradition of Estonian Song and Dance Celebrations tradition began with the first Song Celebration in 1869. The celebrations have taken place regardless of the political situation and have been part of building Estonian identity that has united the nation in its struggle for national independence before 1918 and during the period of the Soviet occupation (1941-1991). The "[Singing Revolution](#)" began in 1988, based on the Song Celebration tradition, when hundreds of thousands of people gathered in the Song Festival Grounds to demand Estonia's independence and sing patriotic songs. Estonia regained its independence in 1991. In November 2003, [UNESCO declared Estonia's Song and Dance Celebration](#) tradition a masterpiece of the Oral and Intangible Heritage of Humanity.

According to the research by Lauristin & Vihalemm ([Minu laulu- ja tantsupidu. Sotsioloogilise uuringu aruanne](#). Eesti Laulu- ja Tantsupeo Sihtasutus, 2013) The tradition to hold celebrations is very viable, also among young people. The number of participants has not dropped in spite of the general decrease of youth population and the number of groups taking part in selection process before the event is increasingly larger than the number selected to participate. The Register of Estonian Song and Dance Celebration Foundation has in 2016 a record of 50196 members of groups (dance, groups, choirs, orchestras, folk music groups) , aged 7 to 26; the number of individuals of the same age group is 37,722, which means that the Register has a record of 13% of Estonian young people. In the age group from 7 to 19, the Register has a record of 21% of all Estonian young people ("[Hobby education, hobby activity, and youth workers in local municipalities](#)", the Centre for Applied Social Sciences of the University of Tartu, 2016).

In 2017 the [12th Youth Song and Dance Celebrations](#) were held, in which 797 collective took part in Song Celebrations, that makes about 24 000 singers. Dance Celebrations had 585 collectives, with about 9000 dancers. Folk Music Fest had about 550 performers.

The event is funded from the state budget and ticket revenue. The financial cost of the last event is not available yet.

The responsible body for the organisation is the [Estonian Song and Dance Celebration Foundation](#).

## **8.5 Developing cultural and creative competences**

### **Acquiring cultural and creative competences through education and training**

#### *Formal learning*

The standard for basic education is established by the [national curriculum for basic schools](#). General secondary education is a set of requirements established with the [national curriculum for upper secondary schools](#). At the core of the national curriculum are general competencies, the development of which must be supported by the entire learning process. In addition to teaching and learning objectives of subject areas, the

development of general competencies is supported also by integration of subjects and study of cross-curricular topics.

*Basic school: 1st-9th grades*

The national curriculum for basic schools defines among the 8 general competences a cultural and value competence. This is described as an ability to evaluate human relations and activities from the standpoint of generally accepted moral norms; to sense and value one's ties with other people, the society, nature, the cultural heritage of one's own country and nation and those of others, and events in contemporary culture; to value creation and shape the sense of aesthetics; to value general human and societal values, to value human, cultural and natural diversity; to acknowledge one's values.

Among the compulsory subject fields is a subject field „Art“. The objective of teaching subjects of the art field in basic school is to develop in students age-appropriate art competence: ability to understand the diversity of arts, to reflect on issues of art and music; to value the artistic heritage of the local region, Estonia and the world; to see the relationship between the culture of different eras and modern culture; to use means of artistic and musical expression in personal and collective creative efforts, to appreciate their own artistic creations and those of their peers.

It is expected that, through art education, basic school graduates will:

1. have acquired experience of creative activities and self-expression, recognize their creative abilities and value individual and environmentally-friendly approaches;
2. use various visual and musical means of expression in creative work, discuss age-appropriate cultural messages and value judgments and are able to shape their opinions and express emotions through art;
3. value culture and human creativity, participate in individual and collaborative art projects and appreciate solution-seeking and creative thinking;
4. notice cultural traditions and global cultural diversity, understand the relative importance of music and art in present-day society, accept different cultural phenomena;
5. value and maintain Estonian culture and the culture of ethnic minorities living here, feel responsible for the preservation of cultural traditions, see connections between the development of art and culture and science and technology in the past and present day; and
6. have an overview of the professions, occupations and further education opportunities associated with the art field.

The subject field of art subjects comprises art and music, compulsory at all stages of basic education. Art and music are taught from the 1st-9th grades. The design of required learning outcomes and contents in the subjects of the art field is based on the following division of weekly lessons between study stages and subjects:

- 1st Stage of Study  
Art: – 4.5 lessons  
Music: – 6 lessons
- 2nd Stage of Study  
Art: – 3 lessons  
Music: – 4 lessons
- 3rd Stage of Study  
Art: – 3 lessons  
Music: – 3 lessons

The compulsory subject „Music“ aims that by the end of the basic school, the student would:

1. derive joy from music and discern, realise and develop their abilities through making music;
2. become interested in music as an art form and shape their personal aesthetic tastes;

3. think and act creatively and also express themselves creatively through musical activities;
4. apply the acquired basics of musical literacy skill in musical activities;
5. value music and musical activities as they enrich people, culture and daily life;
6. know and maintain the traditions of national culture, participate in the process of transmitting the tradition of song festivals and understand and respect different national cultures;
7. comprehend and value the creation of pieces of music and take a critical attitude to the information technology and media-based environment;
8. know prominent Estonian and local composers and musicians and value cultural traditions; and
9. understand how interest in the field, musical abilities and knowledge can lead to formation of a hobby or choice of a profitable profession.

The compulsory subject „Art” aims that by the end of the basic school, the student would:

1. be able to use the skills of creative and critical thinking and problem solving in creative activities, assignments, research and reflection;
2. perceive and develop their creative potential, appreciate originality and different solutions;
3. learn about the means of expression in visual arts and be able to create different works of art, using acquired knowledge and skills;
4. experiment with ideas, concepts, tools, materials and techniques;
5. work independently and in cooperation with peers;
6. apply acquired skills in other school subjects and in daily life;
7. learn about and value both art heritage and contemporary art;
8. make connections between the development of art, culture, science and technology;
9. regard art as a language of intercultural communication and comprehend cultural diversity and the role of art in society;
10. express their opinions and knowledge in oral and written forms using specific (art) vocabulary;
11. act in an ethical and safe manner in actual and virtual cultural environments;
12. comprehend aesthetic, ethical, functional and ecological aspects of examples material and spatial environments and design;
13. have an overview of the professions and occupations associated with the field of arts, design and architecture.

In addition, eight cross-curricular topics are defined in the curriculum, including cultural identity. The aim of the learning under this topic is for the pupil to develop into a person who is culturally aware, who understands the role of culture in shaping people's thought and behaviour and who knows how cultures have changed over history, who has acquired an idea of the versatility of cultures and particularities of lifestyles determined by culture and who values native culture and cultural diversity and is culturally tolerant and prepared for cooperation.

*Upper secondary school: 10<sup>th</sup> to 12<sup>th</sup> grade*

The national curriculum for upper secondary schools defines among the eight general competences, cultural and value competence. This is described as an ability to evaluate human relations and activities from the standpoint of generally accepted moral norms and ethics; to sense and value one's ties with other people, the society, nature, the cultural heritage of one's own country and nation and those of others, and events in contemporary culture; to value art and creation, and shape the sense of aesthetics; to value general human and societal values, to value human, cultural and natural diversity; to acknowledge one's values and take them into consideration when making decisions; be tolerant and cooperative and to contribute for achieving joint objectives.

Among the compulsory subject fields is a subject field „Art”. The objective of teaching art subjects in upper secondary school is to develop students' art competence, i.e., cultural

awareness, understanding of the variety of arts and cultural diversity of the world; basic knowledge of Estonian, European and global cultural heritage; appreciation of creative achievements in visual arts and music; ability of critical and creative thinking; high regard for versatile self-expression skills, originality and readiness to find fresh solutions in changing circumstances; ability to use the means of art and music for individual and collective creative activities.

Upper secondary school graduates:

1. see art and music as natural parts of life and understand the significance of aesthetic factors of these art forms in modern society and everyday life;
2. explore and value the diversity of arts and their changes over time and in different places and cultures, see the connections between the development of art, culture, science and technology in the past and today;
3. think and act in an informed and critical manner in the cultural landscape and express their opinions and emotions;
4. are aware of their creative potential, realise their creative ideas confidently and competently and value their peers' different ideas and solutions;
5. know the diversity of cultural traditions, compare and value similarities and differences between cultural phenomena;
6. value and maintain Estonian culture and the culture of ethnic minorities living here, perceive themselves as bearers of cultural tradition and;
7. have an overview of the occupations, professions and continuing education opportunities in the fields of music and arts.

The compulsory subjects in the field of art subjects include music and art. The compulsory courses by subject are the following:

- Art – 2 courses: "Art and art history" and "Art and visual culture in the 20th and 21st centuries";
- Music – 3 courses: "Development of modern musical expression", "Patriotism in music", "Music of the 20th and 21st centuries". All courses include modules of "Musical self-expression: singing, instrument playing, original creation".

The compulsory subject „Music“ in upper secondary school seeks to ensure that students:

1. realise the possibilities of music and see its potential applications as a means to elaborate on, to influence and shape personal life and actions, as well as communication and the surrounding world;
2. value music as an important part of human culture and perceive themselves as bearers of native culture; understand and value the social and political nature and educational meaning of the choir singing movement and song festivals;
3. participate in musical life and have acquired readiness for musical performance and lifelong music activities;
4. can critically listen to, analyse and interpret music and discuss it, use creativity in musical self-expression;
5. are aware of and follow the rights and obligations associated with intellectual property and use modern information technology.
6. take their peers into account and value cooperation; and
7. have an overview of the professions and further education opportunities related to composition, interpretation, musical education, etc.

The compulsory subject „Art“ in upper secondary school seeks to ensure that students:

1. perceive the potential of art and see its applications as a means of interpreting, influencing and designing their personal lives and actions as well as the world around them;
2. are familiar with the basic concepts and stages in the history of art;
3. describe and compare diverse ideas and means of expression used in modern art;
4. understand that art and visual culture are connected to social processes and other spheres of life;



5. apply different artistic means of expression and techniques in creative self-expression, interpret and solve various problem assignments;
6. value the surrounding living environment and visual cultural heritage, understand the innovative, human-friendly and ecological way of thinking; and
7. have an overview of the professions and further education opportunities associated with the fields of art, architecture, design, etc.

In addition, eight cross-curricular topics are defined in the curriculum, including cultural identity. The aim of the learning under this topic is for the student to develop into a person who is culturally aware, who understands the role of culture in shaping people's thought and behaviour and who knows how cultures have changed over history, who has acquired an idea of versatility of cultures and particularities of lifestyles determined by culture and who values native culture and cultural diversity and is culturally tolerant and prepared for cooperation.

#### *Non-formal learning*

Large number young people in Estonia develop their cultural and creative competences taking part in hobby education and hobby activities.

[Youth hobby education and hobby activities](#) are long-term and curricula-based (hobby education) or short-term with no demand for curriculum (hobby activities) systematic and supervised engagements with one's hobbies at one's will outside formal education or job for acquiring intensive knowledge and skills in selected hobby.

Both hobby education and hobby activity play an important role in the Estonian social and cultural context by promoting the cultural development and socialisation process of children and young people.

**Hobby education** is non-formal learning based on clear learning aims (school curricula) taking place in hobby schools. According to the [Standard for Hobby Education](#) the purpose of hobby education is to provide opportunities for the comprehensive development of personality and to support young persons in their development into members of society with good coping skills. A hobby school, as defined in the [Hobby Schools Act](#), is an educational establishment operating in the area of youth work which creates an opportunity for the acquisition of hobby education and for the diverse development of the personality, including cultivation of one's own language and culture, in different areas of hobby education.

**Hobby activities** can take place in various locations (mostly general education schools, youth centres, culture institutions).

Hobby education and hobby activity can take place in the following fields:

1. sports;
2. technology;
3. nature;
4. general culture;
5. music and arts.

According to the most recent research on hobby education and hobby activity ("[Hobby education, hobby activity, and youth workers in local municipalities](#)", the Centre for Applied Social Sciences of the University of Tartu, 2016) an estimated 40% of all the Estonian young people from age 7 to 26 (total number of 106 658 people) were involved in the hobby activity and hobby education in 2016.

It is estimated that the number of institutions providing hobby education and hobby activity to young people is approximately 3500 including altogether 711 institutions that are providing hobby education. According to the research, every Estonian school has some kind of hobby activity opportunities to the young people. Young people can also participate in hobby education or hobby activity in 571 culture centres and 924 civil or youth associations. The number of young people connected to some kind of hobby education and hobby activity is the biggest in the case of general education schools,

namely 33.7%. 25% practises hobby activity in a youth centre, 15% practises hobby education or hobby activity in a hobby school, and 11% practises hobby activity in another cultural or social institution. Less than 10% of the young people practises hobby education or hobby activity in an association, culture centre and club. In terms of field of hobbies, 42% of the institutions are active in the field of culture and arts education: 15% music, 15% arts, 12% dance.

In Estonia, there is no guidelines for the recognition of specifically cultural and creative competences acquired through non-formal and informal learning.

#### *Additional financing for hobby education and activities since 2017*

In general the hobby education and hobby activities are financed by local governments and parents' contribution, the state budget supported until 2017 only priority-based projects.

In 2017, the Government proposed and the Parliament [decided](#) to [finance additionally hobby education and hobby activities](#) from state budget with an aim to increase access to, variety and quality of hobby education and activities for young people between 7-19 years old. The annual support is 15 million euros. It is divided to local government budgets based on the number of young people taking into account the problems young people are facing in the municipality (the formula includes the number of young people with special needs, financial capability of local government and the ratio of the number hobby opportunities and number of young people). In order to use the support, a local government (or a group of local governments together) has to draw up a plan on how to increase the access to and variety of hobby education and activities provision. The first deadline to submit the plans was 1.09.2017. A vast majority of all the municipalities (a total number of 199 from 213 in Estonia) submitted the plan, of which 53 in a group.

#### **Specialised training for professionals in the education, culture and youth fields**

Yes, specialised training organised or funded by top-level authorities is available for fostering the acquisition of cultural and creative skills amongst young people to relevant professionals in Estonia.

There is a vast amount of formal education and additional training opportunities concerned with culture and creativity.

Most important higher education institutions, that provide formal education connected with culture and arts, but also additional training for professionals already working in the area (including teachers in formal education, educators and youth workers, professionals in the cultural sector) are the following:

- [Estonian Academy of Arts](#) – a public university providing opportunities of higher education in fine arts, design, architecture, media, visual studies, art culture, and conservation.
- [Estonian Academy of Music and Theatre](#) - a public university of music and drama, offering higher education in all major fields of music and theatre through bachelor, master and doctoral programmes.
- [University of Tartu](#) – a public university offering a large number study programmes under the Faculty of Arts and Humanities and has a collage [Viljandi Culture Academy](#) specialising on education in different areas of culture.
- [Tallinn University](#)- a public university that offers studies in different areas of culture such as cultural theory, Estonian language and culture, cross-media in film and television, audio-visual media, film arts etc.
- [Tartu Art College](#) (University of Applied Sciences) - applied higher education institution that educates professional applied artists and artists-restorers who value and preserve cultural heritage

There is also a vocational education providers such as the [Tallinn Music School of Georg Ots](#) and [Tartu Music School of Heino Eller](#).

In 2015 the Ministry of Education and Research initiated a specific programme “Development of youth workers training” with an aim to raise the competencies of youth workers working in different areas. The programme duration of 2015-2018, the budget is 1 898 601 euros and 85% of it is supported from European Social Fund. The special attention in the programme has been on the specialists working in the area of hobby education and hobby activities. There have been several long-term training courses to support competencies of workers to include young people with special needs in hobby education, methods and tools fairs in order to use innovative approaches in hobby education, training courses dealing with using digital tools in hobby education etc.

### **Providing quality access to creative environments**

Most prominent recent initiatives with an aim to widening the access of young people to creative environment have been created and/or developed further in the framework of the theme-year project [Children and Youth Year of Culture](#) 2017, organised at the initiative of the Estonian [Ministry of Culture](#) and coordinated by the [Estonian Children’s Literature Centre](#):

#### *Year of Experience*

Year of Experience is a series of meetings that takes creative people to schools to talk about experiences that have shaped and influenced their personal identity – whether this experience is related to art or anything else in life. During their visits, the inspirational role models share their personal stories of situations that considerably influenced their life and that formed them into the people that we know and value them as. They speak of finding the paths that have made their lives fascinating and creative. There are always two people talking to the students at each session, whereas they represent different fields of the creative spectrum. The leitmotif of these performances is the importance of creativity and its meaning in life. Many schools have added the Year of Experience meetings to their programme and sharing experiences has become a natural tradition.

The project started already in 2011 and by the end of 2015 more than 200 creative professionals and 7000 pupils have participated.

The initiative is supported by the Ministry of Culture and private donations. The amount of the budget is not available.

#### *50 ideas*

“50 ideas!” is an idea competition in the framework of the theme year. There have been two submission deadlines for two rounds: January 20 and April 20, 2017.

The aim of the competition was to enrich the cultural life and landscape of children and young people. The competition was open to all the applicants (including families, groups of friends, youth groups, communities, institutions) and preference was given to ideas developed and implemented by children and people.

A total amount of 30 000 euros was given to supported projects. Maximum amount per project was 500 euros; one project got special larger financing. All together 249 ideas were submitted and 62 of them were financed.

#### *Children’s Republic*

Children’s Republic was a series of events dedicated to the centenary of the Republic of Estonia. It was targeted to children up to 12 years of age and their families. The goal of the Children’s Republic is the introduction and promotion of culture in an attractive form.

Children’s Republic:

- Connects various fields: language and literature – history – cultural heritage – art – crafts and folk art – nature and environmental preservation – science – marine culture – performance arts.
- Is supported on the principles of value education, based on which we tell a story of our surroundings and ourselves; our life and dreams, friendship and caring.

- Offers children developing and creative activities and educational high-quality entertainment
- Is in movement and plans to take the mood of national celebration to all counties of Estonia in 2017

The Children's Republic tour took place from May to September 2017. Designers and artists redesigned a large vehicle and it stopped in more than 50 places all over Estonia providing children and young people opportunity to play, engage in work-shops and theatre.

All children participating in the events of the Children's Republic received a passport on entry to the event area; and with that, they became the citizens of the Children's Republic. The passport grants free or discount entry to museums and adventure centres all over Estonia as far as partners creating the play area for the Children's Republic are concerned. The passport of the Children's Republic is valid until the end of 2018.

The initiative is supported by the Ministry of Culture and private donations. The amount of the budget is not available.

## **8.6 Developing entrepreneurial skills through culture**

### **Developing entrepreneurial skills through cultural activities**

#### *Formal Education*

Entrepreneurship education is explicitly referred to in the national curricula, which is described in detail in [chapter 3.8](#).

In higher education culture management can be studied (BA, MA) in [Estonian Academy of Music and Theatre](#) and [University of Tartu](#) including in its collage [Viljandi Culture Academy](#).

#### *Non-formal Education*

The entrepreneurship of young people has important place in youth work, described in more detail in [chapter 3.8](#).

### **Support young entrepreneurs in the cultural and creative sectors**

The initiative "[Creative Estonia](#)" is in the heart of developing and supporting entrepreneurs in the cultural and creative sectors.

Creative Estonia was established in 2009 by Enterprise Estonia, funded by the European Social Fund in order to increase awareness about the potential of creative industries in Estonian economy. The larger aim is to present the content, unique characteristics, economic, social and regional value of creative industries and to create a platform for the discussion of creative industry problems and solutions. In addition, to support beginning and established creative businesses with much needed information and advice, increasing the business and export ability of creative businesses. Creative Estonia has contributed to forming cooperation networks, and the exchange of expertise and information nationally and internationally.

The Creative Estonia portal [www.looveesti.ee](http://www.looveesti.ee) gathers a lot of information and support material about creative industries in Estonia. It functions as a news portal for the sector in cooperation with partner organisations, offering up-to date information about events, studies, support measures and also featuring interviews and articles with outstanding people in the sector. The most visited pages focus on starting and developing a creative business.

As the role of starting and existing creative businesses is vital, Creative Estonia launched the virtual product and service development environment [PESA](#) in 2011. Each year, 20 companies with great export potential from different parts of Estonia are taking part in the 1-year support program. Businesses and cultural organisations are also invited

to free regional marketing seminars taking place once a year in five different towns in Estonia. The [2016 PESA graduates catalogue](#) illustrates the activities of these projects.

[TeamLab](#) product development days take place twice a year. TeamLab aims to connect designers, engineers and managers in order to create new products. The first TeamUp was held in 2010 autumn as a one-day-event. The next events have already been a two-day event – during the first day teams are formed who will prepare a product project. On the second day, the teams will present their business plan to the jury.

To encourage contact between businesses and creative people, Creative Estonia organises various events and seminars, open-coffee style meetings and short lectures where creative businesses and potential investors are brought together. To promote the idea of creative industries, Creative Estonia participates in conferences to do with management, business and innovation as well as other areas, and seeks solutions to problems in the creative industries with input from key figures from local government level right up to the parliament.

## **8.7 Fostering the creative use of new technologies**

### **New technologies in support of creativity and innovation**

#### *Infrastructure support for schools*

In 2017, Estonia is one of the most digitized societies in the world, with a large number of public services available to citizens online, broadband internet coverage across the majority of the country etc. In order to provide all schools with computers and internet access, the Tiger Leap Foundation was launched in 1997. Tiger Leap Plus, which followed the Tiger Leap program, focused mainly on the ICT competences of students, teachers and educational staff. Its main activities included the creation of electronic educational materials, in-service training and support of teacher cooperation and experience exchanges. Under the Tiger Leap Plus program the Learning Tiger program was launched, the main focus of which was to make e-learning a natural part of daily tutorial work, curricula and teacher training. The Estonian Education and Research Network (EENet) established in 1993, which in 2013 was transferred to be part of the [Information Technology Foundation for Education](#) has been providing a high-quality national network infrastructure for Estonia's research, educational and cultural communities. All schools have free internet, including via WIFI, available for their students.

#### *HITSA*

[The Information Technology Foundation for Education \(HITSA\)](#) is a non-profit association established by the Republic of Estonia, the University of Tartu, Tallinn University of Technology, Eesti Telekom and the Estonian Association of Information Technology and Telecommunications. The role of the HITSA is to ensure that the graduates at all levels of education have obtained digital skills necessary for the development of economy and society and the possibilities offered by ICT are skilfully used in teaching and learning, which helps improve the quality of learning and teaching at all levels of education. HITSA initiates and guides innovation and development in our area of activities and introduce the best practices.

The activities of the educational programmes are targeted at advancing and intensifying the cooperation between ICT industry, universities, other educational institutions and the state. HITSA also offers [a training portal](#) for educators, youth workers etc. in the area of digital technologies, including on how to support creativity of young people.

#### *PROGETIGER*

With the view of arousing young people's interest in IT and introducing to them the future possibilities in the area, the activities of the programme PrigeTiger are aimed at encouraging preschool, general and vocational education teachers to use technology (including programming and robotics) more widely in teaching.

To support this goal, the [The Information Technology Foundation for Education \(HITSA\)](#) implements the ProgeTiger technology education programme, which offers varied opportunities for integrating technology into studies, including basic and in-service training courses, subject-based model lessons and tasks, learning and teaching materials and examples of curricula that integrate technology.

Programme ProgeTiger was launched in Estonia in 2012 when the idea of teaching programming and robotics was introduced to our schools.

In primary education there is a national cross-curricular theme called “Technology and Innovation” which requires all teachers to implement technology in their teaching. That means that teachers have to integrate technology in their subjects in different fields (for example using Scratch in mathematics, music programs in music lessons and so on). It does not say what to use or how to use technology specifically. Teachers can choose themselves how they want to do this. Also, there are different national optional curricula and schools own subjects in technology education (programming, robotics, 3D graphics, computer science, informatics etc.) which schools can choose to add into their school programme (approximately 67% of Estonian schools have one or more optional lesson in their programme). Some examples what the teachers do in schools:

- In preschool, teachers teach and use LEGO WeDo, Kodu Game Lab, tablets (apps), programmes to make animations etc.
- In primary school, teachers teach and use Kodu Game Lab, Logo MSW, Scratch, LEGO Mindstorms EV3, mobile app making programmes and environments, many different programmes and environments which are used for teaching various subjects (music, mathematic, physics, biology), e-labs etc.
- In high school and vocational education, teachers teach and use different programming languages (Python, JavaScript etc), Codecademy.com courses, 3D graphics, robotics, programmes to make games, web-pages and apps etc.

ProgeTiger programme is supported and funded by the Estonian government through the Estonian Ministry of Education and Research.

#### [Look@World](#)

[Look@World](#) Foundation (Vaata Maa ilma SA) was founded in 2001. The goal of the foundation is to serve public interest by supporting education, science and culture via encouraging and popularising the use of Internet and ICT.

The Foundation launched a [SmartLab project](#) in 2012. The project aims to promote ICT related after school hobby education that will contribute to the IT awareness of the youth. During the first season, it gave more than 500 young people the opportunity to engage in activities related to ICT (programming, web-design, app development etc.). Since then the number of kids and clubs has constantly risen.

The Foundation also implemented the Project [„Theatre on the Internet”](#). The target group of the performance comprised of young people aged 12-16. However, the performance also addressed teachers and parents and made them see that in today's world there is no line between the virtual and the real world. The topic is approached in an unusual way and the threats of the online world are explored through theatre. The material for the play was collected through the methods of forum theatre where young people could share stories of the things that had happened to them online. The web-police and Estonian Child welfare Union also provided stories.

[For real though?](#) is a project of the foundation initiated in 2013. 10 440 young people aged 10-15 were advised during the active phase of the project. Additionally, an interactive web-environment [www.pariseltkavoi.ee](http://www.pariseltkavoi.ee) was developed. The page provides access to information materials for youth and adults alike. One can also find lesson plans for teachers. The information regarding safe use of mobile and smart devices is available on the project web page [www.pariseltkavoi.ee](http://www.pariseltkavoi.ee).



*Smart youth work*

In 2017, a [concept of smart youth work](#) was introduced with an aim to support and develop better usage of technological advancement in youth work. The implementation plan covers the years 2017 and 2018 lists all together 22 directions of activities to be implemented at National level.

**Facilitating access to culture through new technologies**

In Estonia there are several initiatives aiming at access to culture through technologies, however, there are none specifically targeting young people as the only or main target group.

**8.8 Synergies and partnerships****Synergies between public policies and programmes**

In Estonia there is a mechanism established to ensure harmonized policy-making and implementation, which also covers the area of promoting young people's creativity and capacity for innovation. The central position in this mechanism - approving the propositions to develop a policy document or to change the existing one, monitoring the implementation through approving the action plans and their reports, monitoring the cooperation and in case of need initiating the cooperation - is granted to the [Government](#) and the [Government Office](#). The [Ministry of Finance](#) also plays a coordinating role in planning, monitoring and ensuring division of resources of different financial instruments including state budget, among all the policy fields.

As an example, the Government Office coordinated the division of tasks to create the opportunity for additional funding of hobby education and hobby activities (see in more detail in [chapter 8.5.](#)). In 2017, the Government proposed and the Parliament [decided](#) to [finance additionally hobby education and hobby activities](#) from state budget with an aim to increase access to, variety and quality of hobby education and activities for young people between 7-19 years old. The initiative was developed under the responsibility of the Ministry of Culture and the implementation is under the responsibility of the Ministry of Education and Research.

**Partnerships between the culture and creative sectors, youth organisations and youth workers**

There is no established regular policy/programme/initiative by national authorities to foster partnerships between stakeholders of the cultural sector (professionals, entrepreneurs, cultural institutions, associations...) and youth organisations and youth workers. As both the cultural sector and youth sector has a number of active umbrella organisations representing different areas of culture or youth field, and also active formats of cooperation between those organisations, the dialogue and partnerships are created based on their aims and objectives and by them.

**8.9 Enhancing social inclusion through culture****Fostering equality and young people involvement through cultural activities**

The main new initiative to foster equality and involvement through participation in cultural activities is the Additional financing for hobby education and activities since 2017. The programme is described in [chapter 8.5.](#)

However, many of the initiatives described in the [next section](#) directly support this aim as well.

## Combating discrimination and poverty through cultural activities

### *Integrating Estonia 2020*

“Integrating Estonia 2020” is a strategy of the Government to ensure integration and social cohesion in Estonia in the period 2014–2020. The Ministry of Culture is in charge of the coordination of the strategy.

The general objective of the development plan “Integrating Estonia 2020” is a socially cohesive society where individuals with different linguistic and cultural backgrounds actively participate in society and share democratic values. The new development plan serves as the basis for integration policy that is carried out during 2014–2020, and it aims at:

- increasing the cohesion of the society;
- increasing the competitiveness of the Republic of Estonia;
- ensuring security;
- preserving the Estonian language and culture;
- preserving the culture and language of the ethnic minorities;
- ensuring increasing tolerance towards different groups of society;
- ensuring a stronger civic identity.

In the framework of the strategy, several objectives are defined relevant to social inclusion of young people and intercultural awareness. The youth-specific objective of the strategy is “Students with a native language different from Estonian actively participate in youth work and have close contacts with Estonian-speaking peers”. The objective shall be achieved through increasing opportunities for initiatives, joint activities and increasing the involvement of young people in youth work.

The [report about the implementation of the strategy in 2016](#) states the following outcomes under the indicators concerned with young people:

- The participation of young people in youth work in municipalities, where the majority of the population has not Estonian ethnic origin has risen from 30% in 2015 to 36% in 2016.
- The percentage of young people, who are not in employment, education or training (the NEET) is 10,9% in 2016 and the difference between Estonians and young people with other ethnic origin has decreased from 3,6% in 2015 to 1,8% in 2016.

The youth specific target groups addressed in this document are young people in general (i.e. 7–26 years old) and young people with ethnic minority background.

The estimated total cost of the development plan from 2014–2020 is 73,52 million euros.

### *National minorities’ Sunday schools*

The Integration Foundation provides annual funding for national minorities’ Sunday schools and their development, including training leaders and teachers of Sunday schools. National minorities’ Sunday schools are a form of hobby schools that provide children aged 3–18 opportunity to develop their National language and culture studies. The aim is to support National and cultural identity of young people.

The annual funding is available to Sunday schools, which offer learning at least 100 academic hours per year in which at least 10 children or young people participate.

In 2016, 30 national minorities’ Sunday schools got annual grant. In addition, trainings on pedagogical methods for leaders and teachers of Sunday schools, several seminars, open doors days and meetings were organised together with fair of National cultures.

The public funding to support the Sunday Schools and their development was approximately 180 thousand euros in 2017.

### *Caring Values*

In 2016, Archimedes Foundation Youth Agency started to implement the Activity Plan for Caring Values, aimed at the field of youth in Estonia.

The aim of the Activity Plan for Caring Values is to highlight positive values, such as compassion, respect, kindness, diversity, in the field of youth. The aim is to advance understanding and deepening of these values among youth in Estonia, as well as in the larger society, through the means of youth work. The basis of the Activity Plan has been developed and stipulated from November 2015 under the framework of a joint think tank 'The Role of Youth Work in Shaping Friendly Estonia', co-organised by the Youth Agency alongside with the Estonian Youth Work Centre.

Main Activities for 2016 and 2017 include:

- Organising youth workers' basic training on human rights education, cultural diversity, marginalized and vulnerable target groups, prevention of hate speech, and enhancing value-based youth work. Basic training is provided in Estonian and in Russian. A Value Forum of Youth Work will be organised, based on the outcomes of the trainings
- Organising Value campaign for youth that comprises of cultural cooking action 'Culture to the Jar' in youth centres and in schools all over Estonia; a social media campaign advancing media critical competence in youth; idea competition for artistic gifts, and various workshops for youth
- Translation and mapping of human rights education study material

The main target group of the activity plan are young people (7-26) and youth workers.

The Activity Plan is financed by the Estonian Ministry of Education and Research.

### *"I dare to think, to do, to stand up, to understand"*

The Archimedes Foundation Youth Agency established a central theme "I dare to think, to do, to stand up, to understand" for all the youth projects in 2017. The central theme highlights the range of topics that are important in society today. The Youth Agency has established this theme in order to encourage people to write projects that significantly add to the relevant debates. The central theme focuses socially critical projects on the following issues (the list is not final):

- Migration and refugees
- Human rights, including gender equality and LGBT projects
- Intercultural dialogue, including challenging cultural stereotypes
- Dialogue between youth and their peers in socially vulnerable positions
- Creative projects (art as a medium for social messages)
- Advancing media literacy and critical analysis (skills) in youth

Under the central theme, focus consultations are provided for applicants. During the consultation, there is an opportunity to obtain thorough feedback on the quality of the project. Applicants pondering how to set the focus of the project are offered the opportunity to register for a consultation on issues concerning the content of the project.

The central theme is valid until the end of 2017.

### *Youth Meetings*

Youth Meetings is a programme established to increase interactions between young people from a different ethnic background and thus increase their mutual understanding and development but also to enhance their cultural awareness, openness and tolerance. Through the programme, organisers promote positive contacts between young people (11 to 16 years-of-age) living in Estonia but speaking different mother tongues (mainly Estonian and Russian) by giving them an opportunity to carry out projects together. These projects detail the goals and targets they expect to achieve.

“Youth Meetings” has been very popular since its creation in 2015 with approximately 1700 Estonian and Russian speaking young people participating yearly in the project. All together, “Youth Meetings” has brought together 4231 young people to cooperate in 199 youth meetings and trainings since the project started.

The “Youth Meetings” programme is financed through the Ministry of Education and Research. The budget of the programme in 2017 is 205 000 euros.

In addition, Estonian Youth Work magazine MIHUS has focused on issues such as inclusion and solidarity among young people:

- [Youth work with young people with fewer opportunities](#) (2010),
- [Youth work and sensitivity towards different cultures](#) (2016).

In addition, a manual for inclusive youth work has been created and published in Estonian and Russian languages: “[Inclusive youth work](#)” (2012).

## **8.10 Current debates and reforms**

In 2017, new financial instrument was introduced in Estonia from state budget to support young people’s participation in hobby education and hobby activities ([see chapter 8.5.](#)). The impact of this instrument on its main aims: greater access of young people to hobby education, enlarged variability of the offer and better quality of hobby education and hobby activities is yet to be seen. The financing scheme of the instrument ensures finances to be available at the local government level. How the local governments will engage in developing their plans to use additional financing is of great importance for the whole youth work sector, as the provision of youth work is the responsibility of local level in Estonia.

As the Ministry of Culture has dedicated the year 2017 to the culture of children and youth, many activities and initiatives have emerged specifically targeted to the young. Whether this momentum will be gathered to further prioritise young people as participants and creators of culture will be essential to the new initiatives designed specifically to youth.

As a result of lowering the voting age in Estonia, in local elections in autumn 2017 16-17 years old young people are voting first time. The effect of lowered voting age is already seen in the election campaign as all mayor political movements declare special plans for youth, including in the areas related to culture and creativity of young people. Considering the impact of local level decisions on youth work provision and on opportunities to engage in cultural activities, it will be of great importance to see, whether the elected politicians commitment to youth issues will continue and create positive impetus for youth sector.

## **9. Youth and the World**

In the [Strategy for Estonian Development Cooperation and Humanitarian Aid 2016–2020](#) the main objective of Estonian development cooperation is defined as following: to contribute to the eradication of poverty and to attaining the other Sustainable Development Goals. The Document states, that Estonian development cooperation has always focused on safeguarding human rights and environmental friendliness. Estonia considers it important to observe the principles of empowering women and gender equality in all activities of development cooperation and humanitarian aid, to ensure the performance and sustainability of development cooperation.

The main governmental authority responsible for youth policy, including youth's contribution to global processes of policy-making, implementation and follow-up, including youth cooperation at the global level is [the Ministry of Education and Research](#), the Youth Affairs Department. The main function of the Ministry of Education and

Research is to ensure targeted and effective development of education, research, youth and language policy.

## **9.1 General context**

### **Main concepts**

In the [Strategy for Estonian Development Cooperation and Humanitarian Aid 2016–2020](#) the main objective of Estonian development cooperation is defined as following: to contribute to the eradication of poverty and to attaining the other Sustainable Development Goals.

The goals of Estonian development cooperation across the areas of activities are the following:

1. supporting the quality of education,
2. supporting the development of health care,
3. guaranteeing peace and stability,
4. supporting the development of democracy, introduction of good governance practices and guaranteeing human rights,
5. promoting economic development,
6. fostering environmentally friendly development,
7. raising the awareness of the Estonian public, particularly younger people, concerning development cooperation and humanitarian aid, as well as global development problems.

The Document states, that Estonian development cooperation has always focused on safeguarding human rights and environmental friendliness. Estonia considers it important to observe the principles of empowering women and gender equality in all activities of development cooperation and humanitarian aid, to ensure the performance and sustainability of development cooperation.

### **Youth interest in global issues**

According to [the study about global issues and values in schools](#), young people were more aware on two global issues in 2016: poverty and refugees. The number of students claiming that it is important to put Estonian issues in global context in order to understand them has dropped significantly.

The Ministry of Environment has commissioned regular surveys on environmental awareness of the population, which are representative of population 15-74 years old. The [most recent survey](#) (2016) indicates that young people (15-19 years old) give the highest evaluation to the condition of the environment in Estonia, they assess their environmental awareness to be somewhat lower and they are more actively taking part in activities connected with environmental issues compared to other age groups

The [Summary research on youth work and global issues in Estonia](#) indicates that the youth organizations have positive interest towards global issues. Respondents of the online survey claimed that the most interesting topics in global issues are intercultural dialogue (79% of the respondents), access to education (75%), sustainable development (70%), human rights and discrimination (62%). According to the study, organizations show high interest in developing the knowledge, skills and attitudes connected with global education, however, Estonian youth and youth organization members are not accustomed to think about global issues or to link local issues to global problems.

## **9.2 Administration and governance**

### **Governance**

The main governmental authority responsible for youth policy, including youth's contribution to global processes of policy-making, implementation and follow-up, including youth cooperation at the global level is [the Ministry of Education and Research](#), the Youth Affairs Department. The main function of the Ministry of Education and Research is to ensure targeted and effective development of education, research, youth and language policy.

The main other Governmental authorities:

- the [Government Office](#): responsible for coordination of cooperation in the area of sustainable development,
- the [Ministry of Environment](#): responsible for environment and sustainable development issues,
- the [Ministry of Foreign Affairs](#): responsible for global cooperation,
- the [Ministry of Social Affairs](#): responsible for labour market policy, but also for social protection and services including child and family policy,
- the [Environmental Board](#): responsible for fostering a sense of responsibility and economy in the people of Estonia – particularly young people – in regard to nature.

Main public actors and foundations:

- [The Foundation Environmental Investments Centre](#) (EIC) is an independent body established by the government under the Ministry of Finance, responsible for mediating state budget funds, EU funds, funds from foreign aid programmes and the Green Investment Scheme, and granting loans for the implementation of environmental projects,
- [Foundation Archimedes](#), an independent body established by the government under the Ministry of Education and Research, responsible for coordinating and implementing different international and national programmes and projects in the field of youth, training, education and research,
- education institutions of Estonia,
- [Estonian Youth Work Centre](#), an agency of the Ministry of Education and research responsible for implementation of youth policy.

The main non-public actors

- [Estonian Roundtable for Development Cooperation](#), the umbrella organisation for organisations active in the field of development co-operation and global education;
- [Mondo](#), a non-governmental organisation, devoted to development cooperation, global education and humanitarian aid;
- [National Youth Council](#), the umbrella organization of youth associations and youth organisations;
- the [Estonian Green Movement](#): a non-profit organisation for environmental protection the aim of which is to improve the environmental situation in Estonia and to guide our society to sustainable, green thinking.

#### *The general distribution of responsibilities*

The responsibility for youth's contribution to global processes of policy-making, implementation and follow-up, including youth cooperation at the global level is divided between central government and non-governmental organisations.

Local governments are vested with the primary responsibility for the youth work provision, which might include activities on global issues, however, it is not obligatory. The regional (county) governments will be abolished by 1.01.2018.



## Cross-sectorial cooperation

There is a mechanism established to ensure harmonized policy-making and implementation, which also covers the area of youth and global issues. The central position in this mechanism - approving the propositions to develop a policy document or to change the existing one, monitoring the implementation through approving the action plans and their reports, monitoring the cooperation and in case of need initiating the cooperation - is granted to the [Government](#) and the [Government Office](#).

## 9.3 Exchanges between young people and policy-makers on global issues

### Global issues exchanges with policy-makers at the domestic level

In Estonia, there are no additional specific top-level policies, programmes, projects or initiatives aimed to allow young people to exchange views at home with regional, national or international policy-makers, which are not described in [chapter 5](#) as youth participation and consultation mechanisms.

### Global issues exchanges with policy-makers at the international level

In Estonia, there are no additional specific top-level policies, programmes, projects or initiatives aimed to allow young people to exchange views abroad with policy-makers, which are not described in [chapter 5](#) as youth participation and consultation mechanisms.

## 9.4 Raising awareness about global issues

### Formal, non-formal and informal learning

#### *Formal learning*

[National curricula for upper secondary schools](#) defines two general competences most related to global issues:

- cultural and value competence - ability to evaluate human relations and activities from the standpoint of generally accepted moral norms and ethics; to sense and value one's ties with other people, the society, nature, the cultural heritage of one's own country and nation and those of others, and events in contemporary culture; to value art and creation, and shape the sense of aesthetics; to value general human and societal values, to value human, cultural and natural diversity; to acknowledge one's values and take them into consideration when making decisions; be tolerant and cooperative and to contribute for achieving joint objectives;
- social and citizenship competence – the ability to become self-actualized; to function as an active, aware, helpful and responsible citizen and to support the democratic development of society; to know and follow values and moral standards in society; to respect the rules of various environments, including communication environments and societal diversity, human rights, the particularities of religions and nations; to engage in cooperation with other people in different situations; to accept differences in people and their values and to take them into account in interacting with people; the ability to understand global problems, take responsibility for solving them; value and follow the principles of sustainable development: feel as a member of society capable of dialogue in the context of Estonia, Europe and the whole world.

General competences are shaped through learning outcomes expected in all subjects, but also through discussing cross-curricular subjects at lessons, extracurricular and out-of-school activities.

The relevant subjects in this field are: History; Civics and citizenship education; Personal, social and health education and Geography (Human Geography). The subjects are divided into compulsory and optional courses.

The compulsory courses by subject are the following:

1. History 6 courses: General History; Estonian History I (until the sixteenth and turn of the seventeenth centuries); Estonian History II (until the end of the nineteenth century); Contemporary History I – Estonia and the world in the first half of the twentieth century; Contemporary History II – Estonia and the world in the second half of the twentieth century; and Modern History III – Main characteristics of 2 the developments of the twentieth century: Estonia and the world.
2. Human Studies 1 course: Family Studies
3. Civics and citizenship education 2 courses: „Development of the society and democracy“, „Economy and world politics“.

The optional courses in the subject field are:

1. History 2 courses: General History – World History: Civilization outside Europe; and General History – History of European countries and the United States of America.
2. Human Studies 1 course: Psychology.
3. Civics and citizenship education 1 course: Everyday law.

The field of social studies includes the compulsory course on 'Population and economy', which is described in the field of natural sciences under human geography, and the optional course on 'The globalizing world'.

#### *Non-formal learning*

Youth participation in non-formal learning is supported mostly in youth work. There is a large variety of opportunities provided for youth to participate in youth organisations, youth centre activities and hobby schools. All of these formats may provide non-formal learning experience for youth also related to the promotion of knowledge or understanding of global issues. There are hobby schools with dedicated activities on nature and environment, lot of activities in youth organisations and youth centres are based on self-initiative and volunteerism of young people, which is also encouraged; etc.

There are number of youth work programmes initiated by the top-level authority and many of them support the awareness and understanding of global issues among youth, however there is no specifically addressed to them.

In addition, the Erasmus+ programme opportunities for youth, including European Voluntary Service, provide considerable part of opportunities for available for youth in Estonia in relation with global issues.

#### *Educators' support*

The non-governmental organisation [Mondo](#) has created a portal for educators [Maailmakool](#), where training materials and information, including about training courses is available. The materials for educators are presented by age group, subject and possible subject field in school curricula. The materials are available in Estonian and Russian.

There are training courses offered for teachers and youth workers on subjects connected with youth and global issues. For example, [Mondo](#) provided a [training course "Digital learning through the global education for secondary schools"](#) targeted to teachers.

The Youth Agency of the Foundation Archimedes is providing trainings and materials for mostly youth workers in a dedicated portal [mitteformaalne](#). They have also publicised [the special issue on intercultural topics](#) in youth work in youth work magazine MIHUS.

Mondo has a network of [film clubs](#) targeted to young (16-30) people, who are interested to show documentary films in their schools, community, networks on global issues.

[Keskkonnaharidus.ee](#) mediates information on environmental education opportunities in Estonia. The portal aims to support teachers and nature enthusiasts by providing information on nature centres, educational programmes and educational materials.

*Informal learning*[HeaTeoTöö päev](#)

The HeaTeoTöö päev (HTT) is a new innovative activity for young people, local communities and enterprises. Young people are encouraged to work for a day and the money earned is donated to the development cooperation causes. Young people can also initiate joint activities to raise money. The programme started in 2014 and is ongoing. The organisation in charge - the non-governmental organisation [Mondo](#) - is partly supported by the public funding, however

**Youth-targeted information campaigns on global issues**

The non-governmental organisation [Mondo](#) has, supported by the public funding from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, created a portal for educators [Maailmakool](#), which is also developing and promoting campaigns and information activities targeted at youth, specifically in schools.

The portal encourages youth workers and teachers to initiate [campaigns](#), [competitions](#), [theme days](#), [exhibitions](#) for youth in order to support the awareness-raising about global issues for youth.

Most prominent campaigns has since 2005 throughout the years been the World Day celebration. There is [support available](#) for local celebrations by organisation [Mondo](#).

In 2015, [the youth climate campaign](#) was held with an aim for youth to take part in shaping the climate policy in Estonia.

[Grass-root campaigns](#) – the non-governmental organisation [Mondo](#) has implemented the project “Grass-root Campaigns” in 2013-2014 aimed to raise youth awareness about basic rights and active citizenship through encouraging local youth –led campaigns and helping young people with creation of films, materials etc. Young people receive also training about social campaigns.

**Information providers***Public authorities*

Youth information belongs to the area of responsibility of the Ministry of Education and Research, central organisation responsible for the system of Rajaleidja centres is [Foundation Innove](#). [Estonian Youth Work Centre](#) as an implementing agency for youth policy is also concerned with developing the provision of youth information in Estonia.

*Contact points for youth and youth information and counselling structures*

Youth information has been recognized as a specific field in youth work since 2001. There was a separate system of youth information centres, which in 2014 were merged with career guidance centres. In 2016 there are 16 centralised publicly financed centres in all counties. The regional youth guidance centres, called [Pathfinder centres](#) (Rajaleidja), provide information and counselling for young people up to 26 years.

There are also dedicated websites available for provision of youth information:

- National portal [www.eesti.ee](http://www.eesti.ee)
- Web-sites providing information for youth [www.rajaleidja.ee](http://www.rajaleidja.ee); [www.stardiplats.ee](http://www.stardiplats.ee)
- Regional youth information portals such as [www.noor.laanemaa.ee](http://www.noor.laanemaa.ee); [www.polvanoored.ee](http://www.polvanoored.ee); [www.tni.ee](http://www.tni.ee); [www.noorteinfo.ee](http://www.noorteinfo.ee)

The centres and youth information activities are receiving annual public funding.

**Key initiatives**

There have been no additional key initiatives to specifically disseminate information on global issues among young people besides the campaigns noted in section *Youth-targeted information campaigns on global issues* in Estonia.

## **9.5 Green volunteering, production and consumption**

### **Green volunteering**

#### Junior Ranger

The objective of Junior Ranger courses is to increase the awareness of the environment and nature among youngsters and to create and develop the cooperation network around national parks. In Estonia, the courses have been organised since 2004 and are ongoing.

The objective of the summer course and the continuing seminars of Junior Ranger is to increase the awareness of the environment and nature among youngsters. Junior Rangers are shown the practical work of nature conservation, they acquire knowledge of flora and fauna of the national park and discuss how to make the world a better place. In the camps, several necessary works are performed which can help endangered species and conserve cultural heritage.

Target group is young people from 6 to 12 grade who are interested in nature, who live in the territory of a national park or nearby, who have participated in natural science quizzes, subject Olympics and/or are truly interested in nature can participate in the summer courses. In the summer courses, up to 20 youngsters can participate in each national park; in the autumn and spring continuing seminars, up to 15 youngsters interested in nature can participate.

The responsible authority is the [Environmental Board](#). The programme is funded from the state budget.

### **Green production and consumption**

The Ministry of Environment initiated **The environmental awareness programme**

in 2006 and the programme is ongoing. The aim is to support the development of environmentally friendly consumption habits by the Estonian people and an awareness of ecological balance.

Four action lines are supported under the programme, of which one is explicitly targeting young people in general education schools: „Activities supporting the development of environmentally friendly consumption habits and learning about the ecological balance by students in the general educational system.“

The activities supported under this line of action:

- Study trips with active learning programmes in nature- or environment education centres
- Outdoor camps for young people
- Local school project to support environmentally friendly consumption and the richness of ecological environment.
- Development of study materials to support trips, camps, projects.

The responsible authority for the implementation is [The Foundation Environmental Investments Centre](#) (EIC). The programme is funded from the state budget.

## **9.6 Intercontinental youth work and development cooperation**

### **Intercontinental youth work cooperation**

#### Youth exchanges with Japan

Under the Japanese International Youth Development Exchange Program youth exchanges between Estonia and Japan have taken place since 2007.

The aim is to support development of friendship and understanding between the young people, intercultural learning and international cooperation.

The target group of the programme in Estonia are young people 18-30 years old.

The organisation in charge in Estonia is [Estonian Youth Work Centre](#). The programme is funded from the Japan and Estonia state budgets.

### Development cooperation activities

#### [GLEN Estonia](#)

Global Education Network of Young Europeans (GLEN) is a network of non-governmental and governmental organisations as well as committed young people who are involved in global education. GLEN's core activity is an annual training and experience programme for young Europeans consisting of three seminars, a three-month project-based internship in Africa, Asia, Latin America, Caucasus or Southeast Europe as well as awareness raising and global education activities. GLEN Estonia sends every year 5-10 volunteers to participate in the programme since 2004, ongoing.

The target group is young people in the age group 21-30. The programme is supported by private funding. The organisation in charge in Estonia is [Estonian Roundtable for Development Cooperation](#).

## 9.7 Current debates and reforms

Estonia lowered the voting age for young people so that the 16-17 years old could vote at local election. The first elections with lowered voting age were held on October 2017. The impact of the reform is important to observe in coming years considering especially the emergence and sustainability of youth-centred policy in political parties in Estonia.

The administrative reform currently taking place influences the provision of youth work opportunities. Starting from the January 2018, the number of local governments will be reduced significantly and as the local level is responsible for youth work, the impact of the reform is important to see. As large amount of international cooperation is also done via the local twinning relationships, it could also have an effect on the international youth work offer for youth.

## Glossary

**Hobby activities:** short-term with no demand for curriculum systematic and supervised engagements with one's hobbies at one's will outside formal education or job for acquiring intensive knowledge and skills in selected hobby.

**Hobby education:** long-term and curricula-based systematic and supervised engagements with one's hobbies at one's will outside formal education or job for acquiring intensive knowledge and skills in selected hobby.

**Hobby school:** an educational establishment operating in the area of youth work which creates an opportunity for the acquisition of hobby education and for the diverse development of the personality, including cultivation of one's own language and culture, in different areas of hobby education ([Hobby Schools Act](#)).

**Juvenile committee:** an institution that coordinates work in the field of crime prevention carried out with minors within its administrative territory ([Juvenile Sanctions Act](#)).

**Work camp:** camp of work training, which aim to enhance the situation of young people in the labor market and to increase their employment readiness ([Estonian Youth Work Strategy](#)).

**Youth camp:** a general term for two types of camps – a [youth project camp](#) and a [youth permanent camp](#) ([Youth Work Act](#)).

**Youth permanent camp:** a camp of a person entered in the commercial register, the non-profit associations and foundations register or the register of religious associations, or a camp of an agency entered in state register of state and local government agencies, or a camp of a legal person in public law, which is conducted on the basis of youth camp statutes and activity licence issued by the minister responsible for the area and the duration of one camp period of which is at least six twenty-four hour periods and which operates more than sixty days in a year ([Youth Work Act](#)).

**Youth participation council:** an advisory participation council consisting of young people which operates at rural municipality or city council ([Youth Work Act](#)).

**Youth project camp:** a camp of a person entered in the commercial register, the non-profit associations and foundations register or the register of religious associations, or a camp of an agency entered in state register of state and local government agencies, or a camp of a legal person in public law, which is conducted with the permission of rural municipality or city government and the duration of one camp period of which is at least six twenty-four hour periods and which operates up to sixty days in a year ([Youth Work Act](#)).

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