



REPUBLIC OF ESTONIA
MINISTRY OF EDUCATION
AND RESEARCH



Youth Sector Development Plan 2021–2035

Photo: Renee Altrov

Youth Sector Development Plan 2021–2035

OVERALL GOAL:

A wide variety of development opportunities, a sense of security, and strong support for young people create an Estonian state that they wish to further.

INDICATOR:

The trust of young people in their state (%)

STRATEGIC GOALS:

MOMENTUM

Young people are the creative **momentum** driving the society onwards – the drivers and leaders in the fields of education, culture, economy, the environment, and so on.

Courses of action

- 1.1. Considering young people and the ideas and solutions they offer
- 1.2. Discovering and developing the talents and strengths of young people
- 1.3. Supporting the entrepreneurship, creativity, and ideas of young people

Indicators

Per cent of non-profit associations run by 18–26-year-olds
Per cent of 7–26-year-olds studying in hobby schools
The number of youth-led projects (including the ratio of funded projects)
Per cent of 18–26-year-old entrepreneurs

PARTICIPATION

The protection of youth rights in the state is consistent and active youth **participation** is supported.

Courses of action

- 2.1. Creating the prerequisites for an increased trust in and commitment to the state by young people
- 2.2. The participation of young people and listening to their opinion on all levels of governance
- 2.3. Empowering the civic participation of young people

Indicators

The number of participation formats
Per cent of local governments that have a functioning youth council
Per cent of 18–26-year-old candidates at local elections
The ratio of 15–26-year-olds participating in organised volunteer work

INDEPENDENCE

Quality youth work (including hobby education for young people) is available across Estonia and provides all young people with opportunities for versatile self-development, experiencing success, acquiring experience, and gaining **independence**.

Courses of action

- 3.1. Ensuring the availability of quality youth work
- 3.2. Consistently supporting the development of youth work
- 3.3. Facilitating the development of the competences of youth workers and the interest in the profession

Indicators

Per cent of local governments with an advanced level of youth work*
The satisfaction of young people with youth work services

*on the basis of the minumavalitsus.fin.ee indicators

SECURITY

The exclusion and detachment of young people is noticed and prevented through a safety network that increases a sense of **security**.

Courses of action

- 4.1. Providing young people necessary support and equal opportunities
- 4.2. Reducing the risk of exclusion and detachment of young people
- 4.3. Understanding the causes of young people's risk behaviour and the risk of exclusion; designing services based on the real needs of young people

Indicators

Per cent of 15–26-year-olds who evaluate support as available
Ratio (%) of 15–29-year-olds not in education, employment or training (young people with NEET status*)

*NEET – not in education, employment or training

BUDGET FOR 2021–2035:

356.29 million euros

MAJOR CHANGES:

Development of a youth talent policy
Systematic implementation of a youth sector monitoring and analysis system
Introducing the transfer to compulsory professional qualification
Strengthening youth-oriented solutions (including support and safety networks)

Contents

6	Introduction
7	Principles for the development of the youth sector
	Strengths and values of the youth sector
	Development framework and underlying principles
	Challenges for the period 2021–2035
14	The vision. Goals, courses of action, activities
	Strategic goal no. 1: MOMENTUM – Young people are the creative momentum driving the society onwards – the drivers and leaders in the fields of education, culture, economy, the environment and so on.
	Strategic goal no. 2: PARTICIPATION – the protection of youth rights in the state is consistent and active youth participation is supported.
	Strategic goal no. 3: INDEPENDENCE – quality youth work (including hobby education for young people) is available across Estonia and provides all young people with opportunities for versatile self-development, experiencing success, acquiring experience and gaining independence.
	Strategic goal no. 4: SECURITY – The exclusion and detachment of young people is noticed and prevented through a safety network that increases a sense of security.
20	Management and implementation of the development plan
21	Links with other relevant development plans
23	Youth sector's cooperation with the EU and international organisations
26	Forecast costs of the development plan
27	Annexes of the Youth Sector development Plan 2021–2035

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We do not want to be, and will not be a silent and forgotten page in the book of history [...]. We step towards the great goal: we want to live and write into the book of history.

”

Anna Haava

During the 2017 Youth Song and Dance Festival, tens of thousands of young people confirmed by singing Rasmus Puur's song 'Meie' ('We') that they are ready to take responsibility and be the worthy carriers of their country's culture and future. The daily expectations and contribution of young people are expressed via the versatile opportunities of the youth sector. The Youth Sector Development Plan is a response to the initiative of young people, compiled in conformity with their readiness and dreams of a better Estonia, written in cooperation with young people and other stakeholders and partners of the youth sector – for the young people!



Introduction

In 2019, there were 275,879 young people (aged 7–26) in Estonia as defined in the Youth Work Act. This is about 21% of Estonia's population, being the lowest in our country's history, and according to current forecasts, will remain on the same level at least until 2035. The number of young people has decreased by 17% over the past decade.

In comparison with other age groups, young people have more limited rights (for example the legal capacity of minors) and opportunities (such as entry to the labour market or access to economic resources). This is why young people need special attention and opportunities for discovery and experimentation in order to gain new experiences and learn to know themselves as well as the surrounding world. Young people are the key to the sustainability of this country; their creativity and active citizenship will further the society – which is why they need attention right here and now. Although this development plan sets goals for youth work (including hobby education for young people) specifically for the age group of 7–26, an integrated view of youth policy highlights the importance of including all areas of life and acting on the basis of a comprehensive long-term plan that would benefit young people in synergy with the 'Estonia 2035' strategy.

Valuing the position and opportunities of young people in the society is also an international priority. The EU has consistently called up member states to develop coordinated youth policy and youth work, also emphasising the importance of having youth strategies. The OECD's 2018 'Youth Stocktaking Report' emphasises that success is achieved by countries who include young people in governance. These countries have the highest level of trust in the state among young people, because a more conscious youth policy provides a foundation for a more cohesive society. The UN and the Council of Europe have expressed similar positions.

The development of the youth sector in Estonia has gained high-level international acknowledgement and recognition – for example, Estonia was given the Future Policy Gold Award by the World Future Council in 2019.

The youth sector has been regulated on state level from 2001, this development plan being a continuation of earlier strategic documents. The Government of the Republic approved the proposition for developing a youth sector development plan for 2021–2035 (hereinafter referred to as the 'development plan') on 28 November 2019. The development plan is based on earlier state-level and international agreements and decisions; the set goals and courses of action are based on the challenges young people face, the status and development needs of the youth sector as well as the trends in the state and society and the principles of integrated youth policy. Representatives of the youth sector and associated parties have been included in specifying the goals and courses of action. The development plan is based on surveys and analyses, policy recommendations, vision documents prepared by experts, outcomes of the 'Estonia 2035' strategy, results of the VI Youth Work Forum and Youth Forum and international agreements.

Principles for the development of the youth sector

In order to further the strengths and respond to the challenges of the youth sector, it is important to continue a broad and knowledge-based development of the sector in the years 2021–2035.

Strengths and values of the youth sector

The youth sector has a considerable role in ensuring the cohesive development of the society – by protecting and furthering human rights, tolerance and solidarity and by building respect for the native language and culture as well as for foreign languages and cultures. The youth sector thereby creates the prerequisites for the acknowledgement of cultural diversity, equal treatment and cross-generational cooperation, helping to build a cohesive and healthy society based on participation and cooperation. The youth sector forms an important part of Estonia's lifelong learning tradition and talent policy.

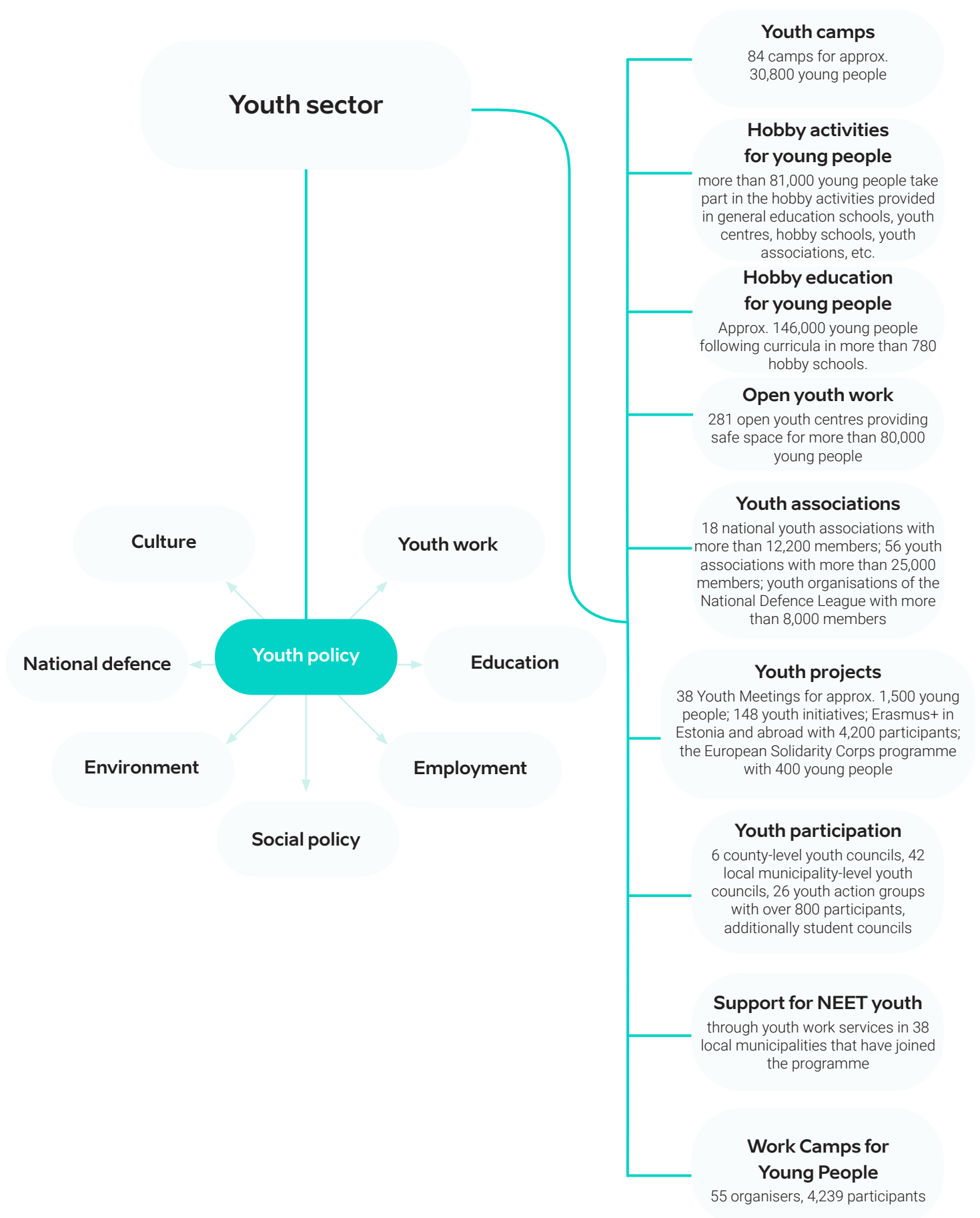
The youth sector with its more than one century of tradition is an international role model and its approach has received high acclaim. **This is based on an organisational model characterised by the following:**

- innovation and the continuous search for new solutions based on the real situation and needs to provide better support for young people;
- a strong platform for self-initiative (including activities introducing one's culture), executing one's ideas, active participation and systematic learning from experience;
- flexibility and interoperability enabling successful management of multilateral initiatives and programmes;
- an environment that values tradition, supports creativity and offers diverse opportunities to engage in hobbies;
- a versatile, growing and professional staff that values continuous self-development;
- a foundation of versatile knowledge;
- the provision of quality services on national and local level, supported by flexible regulation and in cooperating with the public, business and third sector;
- active participation in international cooperation where the introduction of Estonian practices offers valuable input to other countries and organisations;
- high satisfaction rate of young people with the quality of offered services.

The starting point of youth work (including hobby education for young people) and youth policy in Estonia has been the increase of youth inclusion and the development of important common societal values with youth policy tools – this has supported and strengthened an understanding of young people as a positive resource in the society. As of 2006, Estonia has implemented an integrated youth policy, i.e. coordinated and purposeful action in different areas of life. In order to implement an integrated youth policy, all ministries are under the obligation to consider the youth policy principles in their areas of responsibility when developing measures and making decisions that affect young people.

Youth work (including hobby education for young people) has an important role in developing young people with versatile knowledge, skills and attitudes, empowering the youth and creating prerequisites for efficient gaining of independence, as well as in acquiring work experience, becoming more aware of changes on the labour market and in empowering young people as the carriers and spokespeople for values. Youth work (including hobby education for young people) allows the young people to enjoy their youth, get to know oneself and others and thereby learn to better navigate the surrounding world. Youth work (including hobby education for young people) supports the development of future skills, general competences and special skills, strengthens social networks and social capital and has a positive effect on behaviour, including the development into an entrepreneurial citizen who shows initiative.

Figure 1. Structure of the youth sector (data from 2019)



The main organisational level of youth work (including hobby education for young people) is the local government that ensures the development and provision of youth work services as close to young people as possible. The state creates the legal framework and supports local governments in strategically prioritised areas and in ensuring an even quality of services. The development of services is based on the agreed division of courses of action: youth participation and active citizenship, hobby education for young people and hobby activities, open youth work, youth information, youth monitoring, training of youth workers, special youth work, youth camps, work camps for young people and employment readiness, youth initiatives, international youth work (see details in Annex 1).

The participation of young people in youth work activities (including hobby education for young people) has been on the increase over the years. While in 2010, 37% of young people aged 7–26 were involved in different activities, the percentage had risen to 59.9% by 2019. The increase in participation has been positively affected by the higher activity rate of the participants as well as an increase in the number of youth service providers. For example, the number of hobby schools, i.e. the number of institutions active in the youth sector and offering hobby education to young people, has more than doubled in 2009–2019 – from 363 to 780. The number of open youth centres, i.e. youth work establishments offering open youth work, has increased from 222 to 281 over the same period. In comparison with hobby schools, open youth centres are more available to young people in rural areas. Alongside youth work services, the number of youth workers has also increased, exceeding 9,000 people in 2019 according to the data of the Estonian Youth Work Centre.

Development framework and underlying principles

To a great extent, the youth sector is a self-organising area of activity, competing internally for the time of young people and for human resources and developing as a result of cooperation within the sector (itself). In order to ensure the integrity of the field, young people must be viewed as a regular target group and as beneficiaries – by supporting them in handling the challenges they face – as well as central actors and partners when planning, implementing and assessing activities. **The focus when planning the development of the next period must be on the following:**

- **An integrated functioning of the youth sector.** A coordinated and purposeful activity in different areas of life that is based on the needs and challenges of young people must be systematic and consistent. Not every activity that targets and includes young people can be automatically considered as youth work and not every service intended for young people can be regarded as a youth work service. The youth sector only includes services that are youth-centred, developed and organised for young people, carry the values of the youth sector and are based on achieving synergy with other areas of activity. Achieving synergy is purposeful only when the services of the area of activity are not transformed due to cooperation and young people are not deprived of the specific impact of youth work services. Service providers have a key role in ensuring the development of youth work services. Eventhough all measures described in the development plan are mainly targeted for young people by the definition provided in Youth Work Act – natural persons between 7 to 26 years of age – the development plan might also include measures or activities targeted for younger or older persons, in order to prevent negative effects from transitioning as well allow more equal access to various services.
- **Quality youth work.** Quality youth work (including hobby education for young people) is a collection of public services with the purpose of providing young people with opportunities outside formal education, work and home for voluntary self-discovery and development and collective and individual action. Youth work as an area of activity that interacts with young people in diverse ways works as a bridge between different walks of life and where necessary, between young people and other public services meant for them, considering the interests and needs of young people. The quality is based on a systematic and conscious planning of activities as experiences of belonging, informal and non-formal learning and participation for the young person, from the initial introduction to in-depth education. The quality is based on qualified youth workers who possess professional competences, capability to initiate and lead, professional work practices and engagement in continuous self-education via tertiary education, training courses etc.
- **International cooperation.** International cooperation supports the comprehensive development of youth work (including hobby education for young people) and youth policy. It allows using international expertise to consis-

tently grow the competences and retention of youth workers, to empower youth sector actors and to develop quality youth work services. Estonia's best practices in turn inspire international cooperation in the youth sector and support a mutually enriching dialogue and intercultural learning. International cooperation in the youth sector is based on the Estonian membership of the European Union, Council of Europe and on other international cooperation platforms, including bilateral and multilateral cooperation agreements.

- **Broad-based knowledge.** Knowledge in the youth sector is based on the outcomes of analyses and scientific research, practical knowhow acquired in daily work and the input and contribution of young people as the experts of their lives. A synthesis of all the above mentioned provides the necessary knowledge base to measure performance, develop policies of the subject field and achieve progress. Coordinated action is required in the areas of systematic data collection from participants of the sector, monitoring of the situation, organisation of surveys and analyses and cooperation (including with scientists) for a comprehensive monitoring and analysis system that offers information about the lives of young people and the status of provided youth services necessary for decision-making and analysis of meaningful connections for youth policy.

The development of youth policy measures and services must be based on monitoring the situation of young people and analysing their needs. Decisions must be based on the best, most relevant and contemporary knowledge. Youth services must be subject to consistent collection of information, their implementation must be monitored and outcomes must be evaluated. Comprehensive and reliable knowledge must form the basis of decision-making on all levels and in all areas of the youth sector.

Parts of the youth monitoring and analysis system (see also Figure 2):

- data management of the sector, i.e. data creation and collection, data availability and analysis of the status of young people and the services provided to them;
- monitoring the execution of youth services and activities; analysis of quality, outcomes and impact;
- youth sector research and development activity for the development of youth-oriented services and policies.

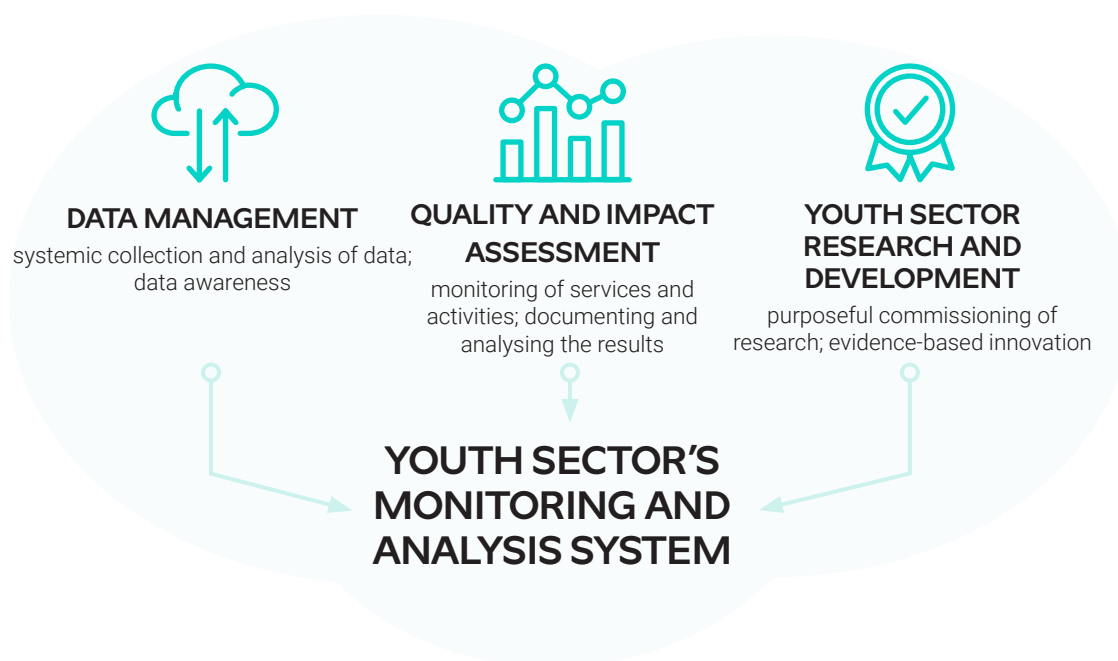


Figure 2. A comprehensive monitoring and analysis system

In order to achieve the strategic goals of the youth sector, it is important to see the area's services, staff, organisers, needs of young people and the related areas as a complex system and to be aware of the contribution of all areas of activity, agents and participants. For example, the facilitation of the creativity of young people as a driving force of Estonian culture is, in addition to the hobby education of young people (thorough dedication to a hobby), also significantly affected by the quality of youth information and counselling (finding suitable opportunities, first contact in a youth centre or youth association to discover one's interests) and the transfer of the acquired experience into formal

education and the labour market which, depending on the life stage of the person, take up the majority of a young person's time. The prerequisites for achieving high quality include relevant staff training and the development of methods and work formats.

A system based on synergy requires a proper environment: flexible regulation, accessible and high-quality infrastructure, readiness for equal partnership in other areas, etc. In addition to supporting the comprehensive development of young people, being aware of different services and activities also helps to organise the time of young people more purposefully and with greater quality. Family, community and friends also play a significant role in supporting the development of young people. In order to achieve the integrated synergy of all related areas, it is important to ensure the specific nature of the youth work services and to enrich them with efficiently functioning cooperation formats. To achieve such synergy, it is necessary to increase youth policy awareness in other areas of activity, basing the planning of the new period of the youth sector on the government strategy 'Estonia 2035' and on the vision document for policy areas 'Smart and Active Estonia 2035' by the Ministry of Education and Research and also considering that the development plan contributes to the achievement of the UN's sustainable development goals.

Youth sector organisers and workers who face the complex challenge of finding a balance between synergy and achievement of goals must be acknowledged and valued. Strategic approaches must be planned with the big picture in mind; a framework for allowing different agents and activities to achieve synergy and collective impact in a self-regulating system must be put in place. **The underlying principles of the field are as follows:**

- **Awareness that young people have specific needs.** Young people experience weighty transitions on their journey to independence and social maturity. They need attention and support to reduce the risk of social vulnerability and to make up for age-related limitations in political participation and representation. Young people are a consistently decreasing group in an aging society. The less there are young people, the more significant understanding, inclusion and empowerment becomes.
- **To be informed about and to understand young people.** Young people cannot be treated as a homogenous group – one must consider their age, different challenges and needs. A knowledge-based approach allows to understand the real interests, wishes and needs of young people and consider these when planning youth policies as well as for as early detection of individual cases as possible and for supporting each and every young person. The impact of each measure on young people must be consistently analysed during policymaking.
- **To ensure the autonomy of young people and the protection of their rights.** The youth sector sees the life and developmental needs of young people as an integral whole – this ensures support for young people without any prior categorisation (student, unemployed, offender, etc.). The protection of youth rights is the prerequisite of their awareness of the limitations of their rights and of their obligations.
- **To consider young people as equal partners.** Communication with young people must be based on ethical considerations and empathy. Free will and participation of young people are key factors here, as are their opportunities for communication and co-creation with peers as such activities facilitate self-discovery as well as the discovery of other people and the surrounding life.
- **To ensure meaningful active inclusion and participation of young people in weighing options, making decisions and implementing them.** Young people must have the ability to make choices, show initiative and create solutions regarding important challenges by receiving enough information, support and feedback. Young people must also have their say in the planning, design, implementation and evaluation of services intended for them. This is one way to empower young people in their development into active and caring citizens.
- **To value the development and self-realisation of young people.** The approaches intended for young people facilitate development and are based on the principles of non-formal education, such as transparency, confidentiality, voluntary nature, active inclusion of participants and other democratic values. When supporting development, it is equally important to shape the future and ensure a copious development environment here and now; this includes an awareness about the direct impact of family and the environment on the development of young people. The self-development process of young people must include versatile opportunities to challenge oneself in new situations, safely experiment, make mistakes and learn from one's experience while being understood and supported on their journey.
- **To value each young person.** In relationships with young people, their human dignity and right of self-determination is respected and their special needs and requests are considered. A respectful and empowering attitude towards young people facilitates their integration and the cohesion of the society as a whole.

Youth work (including hobby education of young people) with its values, principles, ethics and methods has a significant effect on the development of young people and the capacity to resolve challenges. Youth work is used to shape the value systems and ethical principles of young people by facilitating an open, caring and respectful attitude towards self and others and respect towards human dignity.

Challenges for the period 2021–2035

It is important to treat young people the same way we want them to relate to their community and the society as a whole. The development of the state depends directly on the trust of young people (including fellow Estonians and those who temporarily reside abroad) in their state and their commitment to freedom, democracy and the rule of law. This gives birth to Estonia the development of which is supported by young people with their responsible, innovative, entrepreneurial, tolerant and sustainable attitude regardless of their geographical location.

The challenges of the youth sector focus on young people and their needs. The challenges are based on the previously articulated goals, global trends and the content of vision documents prepared by experts. On the other hand, the challenges are also related to developmental needs of the field – youth policy provides a backdrop for the creation of prerequisites and opportunities for the development and wellbeing of young people as well as the sustainability of the field.

1. Young people are taken into account in all (policy) areas

Different ministries and their entities have created cooperation formats; however, young people (their potential and relevant needs) are still not uniformly or sufficiently considered in all policy areas and cooperation between the different areas can be strengthened. It is important to consider young people and facilitate a youth-based approach consistently across all policy areas by analysing the situation and challenges of the youth, observing the results of development monitoring and implementing appropriate measures in cooperation between areas.

2. Every young person can discover their talents and interests in a suitable way, take part in collective activities and be supported in developing their ideas

Young people are a creative and impelling force in the Estonian society. In order to develop creativity and entrepreneurship, it is necessary to build the self-confidence and self-reliance of young people, enabling young people to experience making mistakes and succeeding and learning from the outcomes of their choices. The talents, interests and creativity of young people (including thorough studies in hobby education) must be consistently encouraged (considering the knowledge, skills and experience acquired in non-formal studies within their formal studies as well as the labour market) and additional opportunities must be developed for versatile development. Among other things, additional opportunities must also be created for young adults whose access to engaging in hobbies may be significantly hindered due to financial situation.

3. Equal opportunities for youth development in all areas of Estonia; noticing and supporting young people who for various reasons cannot access the opportunities offered to them

Being excluded should be avoided by supporting the mental health of young people and maintaining their self-reliance. To achieve this, young people must be supported in achieving their expectations and managing risks to avoid major setbacks. Young people at risk of social exclusion are often unaware of their opportunities and therefore need more attention and professional support. It is important to reduce the effect of poverty and other unequal circumstances on the development opportunities of young people.

4. Skills and support necessary for gaining independence

Each young person must be provided with opportunities to gain independence and progress in life in the areas of gaining education as well as entry into the labour market and career success. The prerequisite of self-reliance is the empowerment of young people; this includes the support of their mental and physical health and balance. Families as well as communities, peers, educational and youth institutions all have a significant role here as they take up the majority of a young person's time. Young people with more difficult backgrounds or those who have difficulties with taking responsibility need more support in order to prevent their isolation and exclusion in an effort to avoid social stratification and exclusion.

5. The availability of youth services (including hobby education for young people) regardless of the place of residence of the young person

The insufficient availability of youth work opportunities (including hobby education for young people) and the consequent neglect of young people means greater costs for the society in the long run (according to OECD, the costs related to NEET youth may amount to a total of up to 1% from the GDP). A limited access to youth work and counselling services among young people may have a long-term negative effect on personal development and may hinder skills development.

6. The starting position of young people in facing future challenges and global trends

Considering future trends and global challenges, it is important to provide opportunities for acquiring relevant competencies (digital competence, ability of critical analysis and problem-solving as well as social-emotional skills etc.) so that young people can face the future successfully. In addition, it is important to raise the awareness and readiness of young people to contribute to the solution of future challenges, such as the future of work, environmental protection, the climate, health and technology. The youth sector contributes, for example, via the development of smart youth work and digital security. Integration, inclusion of young people with migrant background and adaptation to cultural and language differences also become increasingly important in the backdrop of globalisation; non-formal studies and youth sector services can operate as effective measures in this area.

7. Natural participation of young people in making decisions affecting them

How young people perceive their inclusion and their sense of belonging depend on whether their thoughts are heard and responded to at home, at school and in the community, whether they have a sense of belonging with their peers and whether they are included in meaningful activities within the community. Young people need the knowledge, skills and attitudes necessary to participate in the society and express their opinion and also to cope with major changes in the society. Participation opportunities help to avoid social apathy or the want and need for radical self-expression. To increase participation, the rights of young people must be protected and their civic participation, including their age-appropriate involvement in representative democracy, must be supported. This is the foundation for the development of a strong civil society and the survival of democracy.

8. The sustainability of youth work (including hobby education for young people) and the valuing of youth workers in all areas of Estonia

The salary conditions and social guarantees of youth workers differ significantly in comparison with other specialists doing work of equal value in the field of education. The opportunities for professional development are limited. It is also important to increase the number of employees with appropriate professional qualifications in the area (mainly outside major centres). As far as the sustainability of youth work (including hobby education of young people) is concerned, it is important to value youth workers, bearing in mind that different areas of activity such as open youth work, hobby education of young people, camps etc. partially demand specific skills and professional training, and also the contribution of volunteers who work with young people. The position of specialists working with young people in society needs strengthening.



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The vision. Goals, courses of action, activities

Vision

In the year 2035, young people in all Estonian regions live a healthy and fulfilling life and are empowered to change the community and the country in a way that makes Estonia the world's best environment for growing, living and self-realisation.

Overall goal

A wide variety of development opportunities, a sense of security, and strong support for young people create an Estonian state that they wish to further.

Figure 3. Strategic goals with their relevant keywords



A wide variety of development opportunities, a sense of security, and strong support for young people create an Estonian state that they wish to further.

Strategic goals, courses of action, activities

Strategic goal no. 1:

MOMENTUM – Young people are the creative momentum driving the society onwards – the drivers and leaders in the fields of education, culture, economy, the environment and so on.

1.1. Taking young people and the solutions and actions offered by them seriously in the society:

- valuing young people and youth culture in order to ensure the sustainability of culture;
- creating favoring conditions to support the entrepreneurial ideas of young people;
- supporting young people with fewer opportunities and those living abroad by involving them in entrepreneurial, creative and development activities;
- in service development, ensuring consistent innovation and the development of smart solutions based on the needs and challenges of young people;

1.2. Discovering and developing talents and strengths:

- providing young people opportunities for in-depth engagement in their interests and talents;
- introducing and popularising different areas of activity (traditional as well as new ones based on the needs and development perspectives of the society);
- creating opportunities for young people to communicate with the professionals of their area of interest;

1.3. Encouraging entrepreneurship and creativity and supporting the ideas of young people

- providing young people with opportunities to receive support, use mentorship and the public space and resources in youth work (including hobby education for young people);
- ensuring opportunities for developing entrepreneurial competences via social entrepreneurship, community work, creative industries and youth work (including participation opportunities);
- developing the creativity and self-expression of young people through common activities, the exchange of ideas and experience, volunteer work and active participation in different competitions and contests;
- supporting youth initiatives, providing opportunities for developing ideas, safe experimentation and gaining practical experience.

Indicator	Reference level	Target level
1. Ratio (%) of non-profit associations among all active non-profit associations run by 18–26-year-olds	4,2	8
2. Ratio (%) of young people studying in hobby schools of all 7–26-year-olds	29,9	35
3. The number of youth-led projects (including the % of funded projects)	164 (71)	200 (75)
4. Ratio (%) of young entrepreneurs among all 18–26-year-olds	3,8	10

Strategic goal no. 2:

PARTICIPATION – the protection of youth rights in the state is consistent and active youth participation is supported.

2.1. Creating the prerequisites for an increased trust in and commitment to the state by young people:

- valuing and increasing the awareness about youth rights, including the right for free time and the right to make decision about time use;
- providing young people with opportunities to use the public space and by including young people in the design process of public spaces and services intended for them;
- harnessing the potential of the youth in developing the state (inclusion in national defence, developing attitudes and providing participation opportunities in the areas of the environment, safety, security, integration, and so on).

2.2. Ensuring that young people can express their opinion and heard out on all levels of governance:

- increasing knowledge about the actual needs and circumstances of young people that serves as the prerequisite of youth participation via the youth sector monitoring and analysis system;
- providing young people with the prerequisites of developing the habits and skills for self-expression (including through the development of school democracy on all levels of education and enabling creative self-expression through hobby education for young people);
- providing opportunities to express one's opinion by simple and convenient means (while also ensuring the representation of risk groups and young people living abroad and the participation of young people in the development of solutions supporting participation);
- giving young people feedback about how their opinion was taken into account, showing the actual impact of their participation and thereby increasing their motivation to express their opinion;
- increasing capacity for inclusion in ministries and local governments, for example by creating area-based solutions and responsibility networks for including young people and by training the decision-makers and officials;
- creating a advisory group at the Prime Minister's office and a youth roundtable at the President's office to give young people increased opportunities to express their opinion.

2.3. Empowering young people to be active citizens:

- ensuring young people has opportunities to partake in representative democracy in order to support growth in electoral turnout;
- supporting youth organisations and councils in including young people and ensuring the collection and dissemination of best inclusion practices;
- supporting youth initiatives on local level;
- supporting youth participation and meaningful contribution in the community (including the management of NGOs and volunteer work).

Indicator	Reference level	Target level
1. Number of participation formats	79	maintain the reference level
2. Ratio (%) of local governments out of all local governments that have a functioning youth council	89,9	maintain the reference level
3. Ratio (%) of 18–26-year-old candidates out of the total number of candidates at the local government council elections	6,5	13
4. Ratio (%) of 15–26-year-olds who have participated in organised volunteer work	to be specified	to be specified

Strategic goal no. 3:

INDEPENDENCE – quality youth work (including hobby education for young people) is available across Estonia and provides all young people with opportunities for versatile self-development, experiencing success, acquiring experience and gaining independence.

3.1. Ensuring regionally equal availability of quality youth work (including hobby education for young people):

- creating more systematic opportunities for young people for self-discovery, expanding horizons, self-initiatives and common activities through different youth work activities (including hobby education for young people), for example international cooperation, volunteer work, etc.;
- increasing the number of first encounters with youth work (including hobby education for young people) for the discovery and possible development of the interests of each young person and finding ways to include young people not partaking in youth work;
- improving the quality, availability and systematic development of youth information, including the general media literacy and digital skills of the youth;
- creating additional high-quality opportunities for young people in different forms of art;
- supporting young people in the development of a healthy lifestyle, including additional opportunities to move and engage in sports, raising awareness about the importance of a balanced diet and providing opportunities for mental health support;
- increasing the interest of all young people in STEAM¹ fields, such as environmental sciences, including the improvement of access, participation opportunities and quality;
- increasing the access of (special needs) youth to youth work organisations (including hobby schools) and improving their infrastructure;
- advising local governments to ensure at least one full-time employee responsible for youth work;
- supporting the opportunities of 18–26-year-olds to participate in youth work activities (including hobby education for young people) equally with other age groups.

3.2. Supporting continuous youth work (including hobby education for young people) development and increasing the capability of in-depth support of young people in acquiring skills, knowledge, attitudes and in purposeful learning and development of strengths in different areas:

- diversifying the formats and methods of youth work (including hobby education for young people), ensuring the mobility and dynamic nature of services and implementing innovation (including through smart youth work solutions) when offering and analysing services;
- creating a more systematic foundation for determining the quality of youth work (including hobby education for young people) by describing youth work services and their quality criteria;
- ensuring the support of the development of youth participation, open youth work, hobby education for young people and activities and other youth work services through a central quality analysis and development monitoring competence centre;
- creating a systematic foundation for consistent documentation of youth work knowledge;
- creating more opportunities for the analysis of the outcomes and impact of youth work services (including hobby education for young people), its knowledge-based development and the valuing and visibility of youth sector in the society;
- ensuring all-encompassing and meaningful impact analysis and development monitoring of services, their outcomes and impact in the field of youth education via a relevant monitoring and analysis system;
- ensuring the purposefulness, valuation, appreciation and acknowledgement of the competences acquired in youth work (including hobby education for young people), especially in formal education;
- increasing the data awareness and capacity for developing youth work quality among the local governments as the main youth work (including hobby education for young people) organisers.

¹ STEAM – integrated areas of science, technology, engineering, arts and mathematics – integrated studies with an applied approach that often include creative use of technology.

3.3. Facilitating the development of competences and the training of new youth workers (specialists, managers, volunteers) sustainably across all Estonian regions:

- ensuring regional opportunities to receive bachelor and masters level higher education in the field of youth work;
- initiating the transfer to transfer to a compulsory professional qualification in the youth field professional qualification in youth sector;
- ensuring high-quality and impactful in-service training opportunities (including the offer of in-service training opportunities by employers);
- creating more relevant training opportunities for professional growth of hobby school staff;
- supporting the development of professional community, professional identity and career models in the youth sector;
- initiating support measures for starting youth workers;
- developing training and professional development programmes for specialists starting work in hobby schools;
- ensuring the systematic and consistent acknowledgement of youth workers;
- ensuring a working environment that fosters happiness at work;
- ensuring adequate salary equal with the salary level of specialists on similar positions (such as in the field of education).

Indicator	Reference level	Target level
1. Ratio (%) of local governments with at least an 'advanced' level of youth work services	50	75
2. Satisfaction rate of young people with youth work services (%)	87	90



Strategic goal no. 4:

SECURITY – The exclusion and detachment of young people is noticed and prevented through a safety network that increases a sense of security.

4.1. Providing all young people with equal opportunities to improve their quality of life and receive the necessary support to do so across all Estonian regions:

- strengthening the role of youth work in developing mutual detection and care;
- supporting young people in their transitioning to work life and developing measures to reduce labour market exclusion;
- improving a comprehensive support and security network available for young people (including between the areas of social work, youth work, education, internal security and law enforcement);
- supporting young people in becoming independent;
- raising the risk awareness and decreasing the risk behaviour of young people;
- increasing the efficiency of detecting exclusion of young people in formal education and the necessary interventions in cooperation between educational, social and youth work staff;
- determining and removing the hindrances young people experience (including geographical, physical, mental, socioeconomic, health-or age-related hindrances).

4.2. Improving the social inclusion of risk groups and reducing the exclusion and detachment risk of young people:

- ensuring the availability of necessary support, services (such as counselling, follow-up support, rectification) and information about support services, including through the existing support networks (libraries, social work networks);
- supporting young people who have been excluded from studies, labour market and/or in-service training for different reasons;
- paying extra attention to young people at risk of exclusion due to their health-related special needs when developing measures;
- increasing the opportunities of flexible and versatile education pathways for young people withdrawn from the education system;
- improving the efficiency of mobile youth work and special youth work;
- increasing the awareness in the society in order to reduce shaming or derogating of young people.

4.3. Increasing understanding of the causes of young people's risk behaviour and risk of exclusion and designing need-based services:

- basing the development of youth-oriented intervention measures, their impact and cost efficiency on best practices founded on research results and practical experience;
- mapping the underlying causes of youth mental health problems and supporting the development of comprehensive solutions;
- increasing the quality of service impact and cost-efficiency assessment on the basis of versatile knowledge and practices (such as the experience of partners from related fields), youth needs and research results;
- creating and testing new methods and approaches to support young people at risk of exclusion in cooperation with different establishments on the basis of Estonia's needs.

Indicator	Reference level	Target level
1. Ratio (%) of 15–26-year-olds who evaluate support as available	to be specified	to be specified
2. Ratio (%) of 15–29-year-olds not in education, employment, or training (NEET-youth)	9,8	8,5

Management and implementation of the development plan

The development plan is approved by the Government of the Republic after discussing the document at the Riigikogu. The implementation of the development plan is coordinated by the Ministry of Education and Research with all relevant ministries contributing within their scope.

The implementation of the development plan is based on inclusive management and organisation of youth policy. It is ensured that youth policy has a multidisciplinary approach and is based on understanding the real circumstances and needs of young people and the inclusion of young people. The management of the area is based on a functioning youth sector monitoring and analysing system which ensures the efficiency, impact analysis and development monitoring of youth sector services. A consistent evaluation of a youth-centred policy development is organised in cooperation with the Estonian National Youth Council.

The implementation of the development plan and relevant reporting is supported by a steering committee. The work of the committee is led by the Ministry of Education and Research and the committee includes representatives from the Ministry of Social Affairs, the Ministry of Justice, Ministry of the Interior, the Ministry of Culture, the Ministry of Finance and the Government Office. Additionally, an important role is taken by youth representatives; strategic partners of the Ministry of Education and Research and experts of relevant areas are also included. The committee advises the minister, supports the consideration of the connections and impact between different areas when implementing the development plan, analyses reports and evaluates progress towards the development plan's goals. The steering committee gives recommendations for the introduction, amendment and conclusion of programmes on the basis of related progress reports and provides an evaluation regarding the amendment and conclusion of the development plan. The work of the steering committee is based on the monitoring of youth sector, this including the national youth report commissioned by the Ministry of Education and Research monitoring the situation with young people and the development of the field. The committee consults with the youth sector advisory council (if active) working with the Ministry of Education and Research.

The development plan is implemented through the youth sector programme and if necessary, through a joint programme. The programme specifies a time-scheme and specific activities per each area, plus the costs for the four years (1+3). The programmes are prepared while planning the State Budget Strategy (SBS) and are reviewed annually in order to ensure coordination with the changing external circumstances and the SBS. The programme outlines the political instruments, activities, indicators and the financial plan used to achieve the sub-goals. The content of the programmes is discussed at the management committee before the approval of the SBS. The programme is enhanced after the approval of the state budget, if necessary. The programme is approved by the Minister of Education and Research. In case of a joint programme, it is approved by all participating ministers.

Development plan reporting is organised for each programme, using needs-based evaluation. The achievement of the development plan's goals is evaluated at least twice during the implementation period with the final interim evaluation organised not later than three years before the termination of the programme period. The Ministry of Education and Research prepares an annual progress report.



Links with other relevant development plans

In order to achieve the set goals and complete the planned activities, it is important to ensure that youth sector measures work in synergy with those of other areas. The courses of actions and activities of the youth sector development plan are coordinated with the following EU-level policies and national strategic documents:

Inclusion proposals of the **EU Youth Strategy 2019–2027** – to facilitate the democratic participation of young people in the society by involving young people and youth workers on all levels of governance and by developing new alternative participation formats – have been specified as youth sector activities. The development plan also supports proposals regarding the improvement of youth work and its quality and the principle of executing an evidence-based policy.

The strategy **‘Estonia 2035’** (under preparation) establishes five strategic goals the achievement of which also facilitates the development of the youth sector. The strategic goal ‘Estonia’s people are smart, active and care about their health’ is related to the empowerment of youth to be active citizens and the strengthening of their connectedness to Estonia. The development of the relevant skills and attitudes is supported by youth work. The strategic goal ‘Estonia’s society is caring, cooperative and open’ is related to harnessing the potential of each young person by ensuring the availability of appropriate youth services. The achievement of this goal is also facilitated by the support of young people at risk of exclusion and analysis of the core reasons of exclusion. ‘Estonia offers a safe and quality living environment that considers the needs of all its inhabitants’ is related to the youth field both in terms of the target group as well as the activities – the engagement of youth in the organisation of public spaces and the development of smart youth work that supports the improvement of the accessibility of (digital) spaces. Smart youth work is also related to the goal ‘Estonia’s economy is strong, innovative, and responsible’, which is facilitated by the empowerment of the youth by supporting their entrepreneurship, ideas and initiative. The goal ‘Estonia is innovative, reliable, and people-centred’ is related to the monitoring of the status of young people, the analysis of collected information and the design of youth-centred interventions and public services.

The goals set forth in the **‘Transforming our world: the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development’** are supported by the youth sector development plan which ensures the development of necessary skills and the preparation of young people for their entry into the labour and business market. Another shared goal is the development of digital competences with special attention on NEET youth, and the facilitation of inclusive governance practices that support the participation of young people on all levels of governance.

The joint focus of the **Education Strategy 2021–2035** (under preparation) and the youth sector strategy is the facilitation of versatile learning pathways and empowering approaches for young people. Through formal education and non-formal learning activities, young people acquire a more comprehensive understanding of their potential (their abilities and needs) and awareness of available opportunities. Smart youth work supports the development of the digital skills of young people. Youth work services and activities additionally support the smoother entry of young people into the labour market and create the prerequisites for a successful career.

The course of action ‘creation of a supporting business environment’ of **the Estonian RDI and entrepreneurship strategy 2021–2035** (under preparation) supports the entrepreneurship of the youth and their adaptation to future work (including support when starting one’s own business and organising employment and contractual relations).

The vision of the civil society programme until 2030 includes a wider use of the participation cafés approach among Estonian- and Russian-speaking young people as a recognised consultation format developed for the youth sector.

The programme also refers to the youth as the precursor of the sustainability of the civil society – it is important to integrate the work of youth organisations, NGOs and schools in order to support youth participation. The popularisation of volunteer work and a more playful approach in the fund-raising system with the help of the youth sector allows to improve the activity options at youth organisations and to create additional opportunities for expressing one's opinion, partaking in joint activities or showing initiative.

The National Health Plan 2020–2030 (under preparation) follows the priority of the green paper of alcohol policy – to ensure a supporting environment for the growth and development of young people – and highlights the need to focus on early detection of mental health problems at any age (including the development of self-help skills in all age groups). The vision of the youth sector to support a healthy and fulfilled life helps to achieve this goal.

The Welfare Development Plan 2016–2023 points to the removal of obstacles that reduce the opportunities of young people as a political instrument that supports youth participation in the labour market; this is also one of the actions listed in the youth development plan – it is necessary to prepare the ground for the smooth entry of young people from the education system into the labour market. The youth sector development plan sets the goal of ensuring a security network for NEET youth (by including youth service providers and youth workers) and ensuring counselling that is necessary for making conscious (career) decisions.

The Internal Security Development Plan 2020–2030 (under preparation) highlights the positive impact of youth work on the development of the social skills of young people and the importance of preventive work organised in cooperation with different partners (including from the youth sector).

The general principles of the Estonian sports policy until 2030 prioritise the course of action of providing young people with age-appropriate and safe environments for movement and sports in accordance with the activities of the youth sector development plan, thereby supporting the youth in finding appropriate opportunities for acquiring a healthy lifestyle.

The general principles of cultural policy until 2030 (under preparation) set the goal of maintaining and developing culture. The youth sector development plan emphasises the need to value youth culture and provide young people with opportunities to participate in culture creation.

The goal of the **Population and Cohesive Society Development Plan 2021–2030** (under preparation) is to ensure the sustainability and development of the population. The youth sector sets the goal of developing the talents of each young person to the maximum extent.

The foreign policy development plan until 2030 focuses on the facilitation of international cooperation (including in the youth sector) and raising awareness about foreign policy.

The National Defence Development Plan 2017–2026 emphasises the need for a cohesive society and increased trust in the state. The necessary awareness and the willingness to defend one's homeland is facilitated as part of youth civic education. Trust is built through national awareness and national defence studies.

The agriculture and fisheries development plan until 2030 establishes the development of rural and coastal regions as one of its priorities, including the development of youth-oriented activities.

The general principles of criminal policy until 2030 pays attention to the prevention of juvenile delinquency and highlights the importance of providing the necessary support – the youth sector can assist here by determining the reasons for risk behaviour, preventing the risk status of young people, providing quality youth services and a support network.

Youth sector's cooperation with the EU and international organisations

EU-level youth policy is mainly based on the union's overall goals (developing an inclusive society, the wellbeing of citizens and the protection of European values) and values (such as human dignity, human rights and democracy). These are important starting points for developing youth policy on the European as well as Estonian level. European youth policy is based on the principle of subsidiarity and cooperation between member states in the youth sector is based on the exchange of information and experience through the method of open coordination.

The youth ministers of the member states and EU institutions have jointly agreed on a cooperation framework – the EU Youth Strategy for the period 2019–2027 – and a Work Plan that supports the strategy, presenting the recommended goals and the expected results as well as their relation to the goals of European youth. The compliance of the activities to their goals, the good practices and the strategy implementation outcomes are evaluated by the European Commission and summarised in the EU Youth Report.

EU Youth Strategy 2019–2027

The goals of the EU Youth Strategy 2019–2027 include the improvement of political decisions concerning the youth, supporting young people to cope with independent life (including the reduction of poverty and discrimination) and empowering the youth to express their civic engagement. The strategy foresees the strengthening of cross-sectoral cooperation on all decision-making levels in an effort for interaction, greater engagement of young people and synergy between measures.

The guiding principles of the strategy state that all youth-related policy measures and activities must be based on the following principles:

- **Equality and non-discrimination:** combating all forms of discrimination, including age-based discrimination, and promoting gender equality.
- **Inclusion:** acknowledging that young people are a heterogeneous group with diverse needs, backgrounds, life situations and interests, thus supporting those with fewer opportunities and/or those whose voices may be overlooked.
- **Participation:** supporting the meaningful participation of young people and youth organisations in the development, implementation and follow-up of policies affecting them, paying attention to digital communication affecting democratic and civic participation.
- **Global, European, national, regional and local dimension:** considering the opinion of young people at all levels, ensuring that youth policy be implemented with the interlinkages with regional and local levels (to support the grass-roots levels) in order to ensure a sustainable impact.
- **Dual approach:** youth-oriented policy measures should be taken with a cross-sectoral view in mind; in other words, the impact of the measures in the youth sector as well as in other policy areas should be observed.

The strategy calls member states to work with three core areas of action – to engage, connect and empower young people, paying attention to the acquisition of competences in informal and non-formal studies and improving access to quality youth services.

The EU Youth Dialogue

The EU Youth Dialogue is a dialogue between young people and policy makers as well as experts, researchers and other relevant actors with the aim of setting priorities regarding cooperation, implementation and possible follow-up measures for the EU youth policy. The dialogue is organised in 18-month cycles, each focusing on at least one priority of the EU Youth Strategy. The Youth Dialogue follows the principles of the EU Youth Strategy and aims for evidence-based policy development. Each cycle ends with the decision of the Council of Youth Ministers regarding further action. The work of the Youth Council in member states is coordinated by national working groups, which in Estonia is managed by the Estonian National Youth Council (ENL).

The European Youth Goals

The European Youth Goals supporting the EU Youth Strategy were developed after discussions between young people, policy makers, researchers and other relevant actors and on the basis of the sixth cycle of the European Youth Dialogue. The 11 goals describe the goals of the EU-level policy areas significant to the youth sector, provide a basis for the Work Plan supporting the implementation of the strategy and can be implemented on member state level.



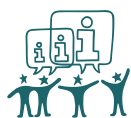
Connecting the EU with Youth. To ensure meaningful involvement of the youth and dialogue on all decision-making levels as well as equal access to impartial and youth-friendly information about how the EU works and what opportunities it offers (different educational programmes). Paying attention to the funding, efficiency and impact assessment of youth programmes.



Equality of all genders. To eliminate stereotypical gender roles in education systems, family life, the workplace and other areas of life by providing equal rights, access and opportunities.



Inclusive societies. To increase social inclusion by reaching marginalised young people, increasing their awareness of accessible places and opportunities and ensuring participation in decision-making processes.



Information and constructive dialogue. To ensure the availability of youth-friendly information that follows ethical and quality standards and to teach young people to handle the information available on different platforms with responsibility and critical thinking by developing their digital literacy.



Mental health and wellbeing. To pay attention to awareness activities and preventive measures (such as development of individual skills and strengths) and to provide the availability of quality treatment services.



Moving Rural Youth Forward. To provide access to education and quality labour market and youth work services in rural areas, to support the participation of young people in strengthening their community and the image of the local area.



Quality employment for all. To ensure equal opportunities for all young people, social protection, fair working conditions and accessibility to quality jobs, practical experience and volunteer work opportunities. To prepare young people to adapt to the changing labour market and future jobs and to support a smooth transition from the education system to the labour market.



Quality education. To create and implement a more personal and learner-centred approach based on participation and cooperation, to equip young people with necessary life skills and ensure access to recognised and sufficiently funded non-formal as well as civic education.



Space and participation for all. To increase the equal representation of young people in electoral processes, elected bodies as well as in any other decision making bodies on all levels of the society. To improve the opportunities of young people from different backgrounds to participate through virtual spaces, through open and accessible youth spaces and through sustainable quality youth work activities.



Sustainable green Europe. To raise awareness about the environmental impact of our daily activities, to consider the environmental impact during policy making and to create the prerequisites for the use of environmentally sustainable solutions and infrastructures.



Youth organisations and European programmes. To improve access to European youth programmes, to link them better with the activity of youth organisations and education systems and to ensure the availability of sufficient resources.

In addition to the aforementioned, these goals also support the initiatives of the EU commission and the Council of Europe. For example, the goal 'Inclusive societies' supports the implementation of the commission's strategic agenda for 2019–2024 and the goal 'Quality employment for all' supports the European Commission's Youth Guarantee initiative.

International youth programmes and activities

Cooperation in the youth sector on EU level is supported by the Erasmus+ and the European Solidarity Corps programmes.

Erasmus+ is an EU programme that is used to finance international projects in the fields of education, sports and youth work. The goals of the Erasmus+ programme are mainly achieved through project funding. In the youth sector, the Erasmus+ programme is also used to support youth participation, entrepreneurship and self-fulfilment, youth work quality improvement and internationalisation and the development of youth policies.

The possible activities include youth exchange, youth participation projects, international youth initiatives, mobility of youth workers and strategic cooperation between organisations for the development of youth work. Successful projects support the development of the competences of young people, employment and active participation in the society and democratic life, facilitate the development of knowledge- and evidence-based youth policies and policies of the area, acknowledgement of non-formal and informal learning, intercultural dialogue, including the increasing of solidarity and engagement, raise the quality of youth work and/or facilitate cooperation between youth work and other areas (labour market, education, etc.) or strengthen international youth work.

The European Solidarity Corps is a EU programme that provides European young people and organisations with opportunities to start or participate in 2–12-month local or international solidarity projects or participate in volunteer action in order to jointly build a more caring society and react to societal challenges in the areas of education, culture, youth work, environment, social services, human rights, etc.

The Solidarity Corps programme is open to all young people 18–30 years of age. All socially responsible organisations willing to participate in the development of the youth and the society are welcome to participate. The tasks of the programme are the development of an open society, intercultural learning, and support of active citizenship and engagement of communities. The activities involve local solidarity projects, work and traineeship projects and volunteer service.

The Council of Europe and the UN

Cooperation between the Council of Europe's youth sector and the member states and youth organisations is based on a strong civic society (including youth participation), human rights protection, social cohesion and cultural diversity and takes place in different formats. The Steering Committee for Youth (CDEJ) and the Advisory Council on Youth (AC) convene twice per year with additional Joint Council on Youth (CMJ) organised as well. The Programming Committee on Youth operates as a place of joint decisions between the representatives of the youth and the officials and it also monitors and evaluates the work of the European Youth Centres and the European Youth Foundation.

Cooperation with the youth sector is regulated by the Youth Sector Strategy which sets forth the priorities of extending meaningful youth participation and raising awareness about different contributing opportunities on all decision-making levels and developing an environment that facilitates efficient functioning of the youth sector. The achievement of these priorities is supported by youth work tools and a supportive legal space.

The United Nations Organisation (UN) pays attention to the youth sector by empowering and engaging the youth in high-level discussions (the UN Youth Delegate Programme), through the United Nations – World Youth Report which analyses the global youth sector challenges and through strategic goals the implementation responsibility of which is shared with its member states. The current UN youth strategy is titled 'Youth2030: The United Nations Strategy on Youth', the vision of which is harnessing the maximum potential of each young person and implementing it in society in order to bring about change. The strategy emphasises the need to pay attention to the engagement and

agency of young people while considering the goals of sustainable development, among other things. In addition to the aforementioned, resolution 2250 (2015) of the UN Security Council is the first international political framework that recognises the positive role of the youth in conflict prevention and solution, in excluding violent extremism and in creating peace. Resolution no 2250 of the Security Council was followed by an independent Global Survey on Youth, Peace and Security (2018) and the UN Security Council's resolution 2419 (2018).

Forecast costs of the development plan

Year	Explanation
	Youth sector programme (in millions euros)
2021	30,47
2022	23,83
2023	25,72
2024	25,50
2025	24,52
2026	25,28
2027	22,33
2028	22,33

Year	Explanation
	Youth sector programme (in millions euros)
2029	22,33
2030	22,33
2031	22,33
2032	22,33
2033	22,33
2034	22,33
2035	22,33

Costs in the forecast are presented in millions of euros.

Annexes of the Youth Sector development Plan 2021–2035

Annex 1. Current situation of the youth sector

28

Annex 2. Methods and sources for indicators

32

Annex 3. The preparation process of the development plan and inclusion

35

Annex 4. Contribution of the youth sector to the UN sustainable development goals

37

Annex 5. Impact assessment

39

Annex 6. References

43

Annex 1. Current situation of the youth sector

Youth participation and civic engagement

Youth participation is developed through youth associations, participation groups, student councils and other participation formats. Youth councils enable young people to participate in the decision-making process and to protect their interests in the areas concerning them on local as well as national level. In 2019, there was an active youth participation group (either a youth council or action group) in 72 local governments. A youth association is a non-profit organisation where at least two thirds of the members are young people and which aims to organise and execute youth work. An estimated 10% of young people belong to a youth association. Youth participation and the achievement of the area's goals is supported by national defence-oriented youth organisations – Home Daughters (Kodutütred) and Young Eagles (Noored Kotkad) who in 2019 offered activities for at least 8,000 young people. Youth volunteer work is also important – 69% of 15–24-year-old young people have contributed as volunteers, making up one fifth of all volunteers.

Youth advisory boards that provide ministries with input in policy-development or treat issues that are relevant to young people have been created to support youth participation on state level. The Ministry of Education and Research and the Ministry of the Environment have youth boards. Student councils operating across Estonia in educational institutions of different levels are also an important participation format.

Hobby education and hobby activities for young people

Hobby education for young people is the most formal part of youth work and is provided in hobby schools in accordance with the Hobby Schools Act. The participants are learners who are interested in a specific hobby and are consistent learners of that hobby. The main goal of hobby education is to offer the target group systematic education in their field of interest and to develop special skills, thereby creating opportunities for diverse development and supporting the growth of young people into successful members of the society. Hobby education in Estonia also supports Estonian culture and sports traditions, technological development, sustainability of the environment as well as the development of local traditions.

Hobby education for young people is provided in hobby schools by suitably qualified hobby teachers and instructors on the basis of curricula registered in the Estonian Education Information System. According to the Estonian Education Information System, there were 782 registered hobby schools (that is approximately 2.8 hobby schools per one thousand young people) and 5,777 hobby school teachers offering hobby education for young people on the basis of 3,908 curricula in Estonia in 2019. More than 100,000 learners participate in hobby school work, acquiring hobby education in the fields of sport, music, art, dance, natural and exact sciences and technology and in many other fields. The availability of hobby education and the ratio of young people learning in hobby schools is mainly higher in the major centres and wealthier municipalities surrounding the centres. Lower participation ratio is mainly conditioned by geographical and economic limitations on accessibility.

In the context of hobby education for young people, events for different hobby fields and youth development programmes are organised, for example in the area of the arts:

dance: school dance festival 'Koolitants' (ca 6,000 participants), the Youth Dance Forum, the Dance Hobby Education Gala, Festival 'Notafe', the 'Golden Cup' dance festival, the creative contest 'Future' etc.;

theatre: the school theatres festival (ca 2,000 participants), international theatre festivals 'EDERET' and 'NEATA YOUTH', the national student actor contest, theatre festival 'Savilind' for special needs students, theatre days for university students, etc.;

art: young designer contest 'NODI', Tallinn Artweek, annual art project 'Kunstikompott', ceramics contest 'Savi-sellid', etc.;

music: the contest for best young instrumentalist (ca 1,000 participants), music camps and workshops instructed by professional musicians, etc.

Additionally, nearly all hobby schools organise their own events and projects: concerts, creative and performance contests, stage performances, workshops, camps, youth exchange, etc.

The main goal of hobby education for young people is to engage the target group, develop their social and general skills and create interest through hobby-related activities and education. Participants include those who try out different hobby fields, looking for a suitable hobby. Much of hobby education is organised in the school environment in the framework of youth work in general education schools and vocational schools and additionally as hobby classes in hobby centres, hobby schools, sports clubs, youth centres, community centres and so on. Youth work in schools is mainly organised by the manager of extracurricular activities or any other youth worker employed by the school in cooperation with the student council and hobby lesson instructors.

In 2019, more than 81,000 students participated in the hobby lessons of general education schools in addition to hobby lessons organised in youth centres, hobby schools, youth associations, etc.

Open youth work

The purpose of open youth work is to provide young people with opportunities for voluntary participation to support the activity of young people and their ability to cope in society. Keywords here are 'openness' and the 'free will' of young people. The strength of open youth work lies in the engagement and initiative of young people. In open youth work, activities are organised according to the principles 'from young people to young people' or 'with young people'. It is a long-term process that supports the youth in being young or growing up. The focal point is the process, not the outcome. This allows to create a positive environment where young people feel like they matter in their community and in the society. The open youth work method is used to implement the principles of open youth work as a tool for creating conditions for activities that help young people grow. The implementation of the open youth work method in youth centres offers all young people growth-oriented and meaningful activities on a voluntary basis and according to individual capabilities and preferences. In 2019, there were 281 open youth centres in Estonia, a majority of them situated and accessible in rural areas. The activities organised in youth centres guide young people to acquire and use important life skills and competences, facilitate initiative and entrepreneurship, support the search for one's identity and socialisation and shape values.

Youth information

The youth information service offers information about the surrounding life in a youth-friendly format, supports the independence of young people, increases awareness and opportunities for better organisation of one's life and increases meaningful participation in the society. The youth information service is provided by youth work establishments and youth workers according to the needs and interests of young people on the basis of the principles of youth work and the European Youth Information Charter. Youth information covers centrally all fields of youth work and the local governments are responsible for service provision. The youth work professional standard requires youth information provision skills from each youth worker. The government is responsible for service development (including the inclusion of young people in the creation and validation process) and the provision of a central youth information service. The provision of youth information is centrally developed by the implementing agency in the youth sector who offers immediate information regarding education, learning, work and career, relationships, health and society through the youth information portal 'Teeviit'. Central coordination also includes the training and informing of youth workers for better organisation of services.

Youth monitoring

The provision of youth services that support comprehensive development of young people demands consistent and relevant knowledge about the situation, challenges and interests of young people. The systematic analysis and development of the quality, efficiency and impact of youth services and youth policy has been a long-term goal of Estonian youth sector. A comprehensive monitoring and analysis system offers relevant information about youth-related areas for the development of a knowledge-based and integrated youth policy that considers youth-related aspects during the development of policy areas and allows to evaluate the possible impact of policy changes. Youth monitoring is coordinated by the national implementing agency in the youth sector in cooperation with Tallinn University (www.noor-teseire.ee), Statistics Estonia (<https://juhtimislauad.stat.ee/>) and other youth sector-related researchers, policymakers and practitioners.

Training of youth workers

The quality of the activities and services offered in the youth sector is based on qualified staff. According to the data of Estonian Youth Work Centre, Estonia had more than 9,000 youth workers in 2019, plus thousands of additional volunteers. The in-service training in the youth sector has mainly been developed through national programmes. A significant part of (in-service) training is organised through universities and youth sector organisations or national agencies, which are partially supported by the resources of international self-improvement opportunities and EU programmes (such as Erasmus+ and the European Solidarity Corps).

The specialty of youth work is taught at Tallinn University, the University of Tartu Narva College and the University of Tartu Viljandi Culture Academy. A degree can be obtained in the format of professional higher education, Bachelor's studies or Master's studies. The specialty of a hobby school teacher can be obtained on the level of vocational or higher education in the Estonian Academy of Music and Theatre, Pallas University of Applied Sciences or through a special in-service training programme in addition to the aforementioned educational institutions.

Special youth work

Special youth work is targeted youth work that provides developmental advantages for young people at risk and/or exhibiting behavioural difficulties by activating their capabilities and skills and increasing their motivation. The services of special youth work are provided in tight cooperation with the fields of justice and internal security and with labour market representatives. Versatile additional support to prevent and reduce the risk of exclusion is offered through youth work, including by getting in contact with youth at risk of exclusion, including them in youth work activities, providing counselling and creating individual solutions (such as support measures to NEET youth). Activities preventing repeated offences are offered to juvenile delinquents, etc. Local governments engage in prevention work through committees in the fields of law enforcement, social and child protection, welfare, education, culture, sports, etc.

Youth camps

Youth camps enable young people to participate in healthy and developing activities. The duration of a youth camp is at least six work days, it is generally organised away from the young person's place of residence and helps the youth to gain experience in independent living, communication, coping and so on. In 2019, there were 27 youth and 65 project camps in Estonia with 30,782 young people participating. The organisation of youth camps and project camps is regulated with the Youth Work Act, a regulation of the Minister of Education and Research and health protection requirements established by the Ministry of Social Affairs. The organisation of a camp requires an activity licence and the presence of a professional youth worker.

Work Camps for Young People and employability

Versatile work education methods are implemented according to target group needs in order to prepare young people for their entry into the labour market. The most common are work camps which are mainly held in summertime and which combine youth work and practical work. In 2019, there were 49 work camp organisers in Estonia with 4,224 young people participating. General education schools also promote student businesses which facilitate the development of entrepreneurship among youth. Youth self-initiative is supported through inspirational events, mentorship, supporting the fine-tuning of ideas and providing financing. Development programmes etc. organised in cooperation with businesses promote volunteer action and work education.

Youth initiatives

Youth initiative is the development and implementation of personal ideas by young people themselves. The support of youth initiatives gives young people opportunities to develop and execute their ideas. The execution of one's own ideas allows young people to learn new skills, gain experience and value the skills and experience acquired in the process. The execution of one's own ideas develops a proactive frame of mind, increases awareness about the ways the labour market works and develops entrepreneurship. The execution of youth initiative is supported on the local level through project calls (including the inclusive budget model), nationally through the 'Nopi Üles' and 'Ideeviit' contests and internationally through the activity opportunities of the Erasmus+ programme and the European Solidarity Corps (youth initiatives, youth participation projects, solidarity projects, youth exchange, etc.).

International youth work

Youth work gives young people and youth workers many opportunities for international cooperation and intercultural learning. Cooperation develops language skills, knowledge about different cultures and nationalities and creates new ideas for joint activities. International youth work allows to unite fellow Estonians by helping people preserve their connection with Estonia and by engaging them via their expertise and experience and so on. A good example is the Estonian Worldwide Youth Network which unites young people with Estonian roots from nearly 30 countries. Conclusions from the virtual days and other formats of the network serve as a valuable input in youth policy development, for example.

Strategic partners

In 2019, the Ministry of Education and Research switched to a system of strategic partnership, whereby organisations who contribute in the development of youth policy and/or the achievement of the strategic goals of the youth sector are financed from the income of the gambling tax and from the youth sector programme of the state budget. Cooperation agreements regarding activities expected from the partners with the purpose of achieving the goals are agreed on during negotiations – this allows organisations to engage in the achievement of long-term goals, among other things.

During the preparation period of the development plan, the strategic partners included the following organisations: the Estonian Association of Youth Workers, the Association of Estonian Open Youth Centres, the Estonian National Youth Council, The Estonian Union of School Student Councils, the Federation of Estonian Student Unions, the Estonian Guides Association, the Estonian Scout Association, the Estonian Debating Society, Youth Association ELO, Youth Association 4H Estonia, youth association for special needs students 'Tugiõpilaste Oma Ring Eestis', the Estonian School Sports Association, the Estonian Association of Art Schools, the Estonian Society of Music Schools, the Estonian Dance Hobby Education Society, the Estonian Association of Science Hobby Education, the Hobby Schools Association.

Annex 2. Methods and sources for indicators

Indicator	Reference level	Target level 2035	Explanation
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OVERALL GOAL: A wide variety of development opportunities, a sense of security, and strong support for young people create an Estonian state that they wish to further.

1. The trust of young people in their state (%)	56	70	<p>This indicator expresses the ratio (%) of students who trust the Estonian parliament as an institution 'completely' and 'quite a lot'. The levels are measured on the basis of Estonia's results in the IEA's International Civic and Citizenship Education Study (ICCS).</p> <p>The selected indicator is the trust for parliament as the central democratic institution in Estonia.</p> <p>The reference level has been determined on the basis of 2016 research results (Toots, A. (ed.) (2017). Noorte kodanikukultuur muutub maailmas. Eesti tulemused IEA Rahvusvahelises Kodanikuhariduse Uuringus (ICCS 2016). (The youth civic culture in the changing world. Estonia's results in IEA's International Civic and Citizenship Education Study (ICCS 2016). Tallinn, Tartu: Tallinn University, Ministry of Education and Research). The next planned cycle of the survey is in 2022.</p> <p>The target level has been determined on the basis of the current change trend (increase by 12% in 2009–2016)</p>
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Strategic goals

MOMENTUM Young people are the creative momentum driving the society onwards – the drivers and leaders in the fields of education, culture, economy, the environment and so on.

2. Ratio (%) of non-profit associations among active non-profit associations run by 18–26-year-olds	4,2	8	<p>This indicator refers to the ratio of non-profit associations run by young people (meaning active non-profit associations, except apartment, gardening and other such associations where at least one board member is 18–26 years of age) of all non-profit associations.</p> <p>Reference data in the statistics database: NH13, the youth monitoring dashboard of Statistics Estonia</p> <p>Reference level from 2019.</p>
3. Ratio (%) of young people out of all 7–26-year-olds studying in hobby schools	29,9	35	<p>This indicator refers to the ratio of young people out of the total number of young people (7–26) studying in hobby schools. The indicator measures the engagement of youth in hobby education, which is the most wide-spread opportunity for the youth for long-term and consistent engagement in a hobby. Only hobby schools can offer hobby education on the basis of the Hobby Schools Act.</p> <p>Reference data is available in the statistics database: NH10, the youth monitoring dashboard of Statistics Estonia.</p> <p>Reference level from 2019.</p>

Indicator	Reference level	Target level 2035	Explanation
4. The number of youth initiatives (including the % of funded projects)	164 (71)	200 (75)	<p>This indicator measures the total number of youth initiatives and project applications submitted by young people (aged 7–26; 13–30 for the Erasmus+ youth programme and the European Solidarity Corps calls) in project calls initiated by the Education and Youth Board, including the Erasmus+ youth programme and the European Solidarity Corps calls.</p> <p>The figure in the brackets shows the number of projects that received funding out of the total number of submitted applications.</p> <p>The reference level is from 2019. The reference level includes open project calls from 2019:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Youth Agency at the Erasmus+ and European Solidarity Corps Agency (the former Youth Agency at the Archimedes Foundation) (youth exchange, mobility of youth workers, strategic cooperation projects, local solidarity projects); • The Education and Youth Board (Ideeviit).
5. Ratio (%) of young entrepreneurs out of all 18–26-year-olds	3,8	10	<p>This indicator expresses the ratio of young entrepreneurs (that is 18–26-year-olds who are self-employed people or are company owners with at least a 10 per cent share) out of all young people in their age group.</p> <p>Reference data is available in the statistics database: NH08, the youth monitoring dashboard of Statistics Estonia</p> <p>Reference level from 2019.</p>

PARTICIPATION The protection of youth rights in the state is consistent and active youth participation is supported

6. Number of participation formats	79	maintain the reference level	<p>This indicator measures the number of participation formats, i.e. permanent engagement formats (for the purpose of including the youth in decision-making processes) on local and national level.</p> <p>The reference level is from 2019, including 45 youth councils, 26 action groups, 6 county-level youth councils, additionally the youth council at the Ministry of Education and Research and the youth environmental council at the Ministry of the Environment.</p>
7. The ratio (%) of local governments with a functioning youth council out of all local governments	89,9	maintain the reference level	<p>This indicator expresses the regional coverage of functioning youth councils among all local governments. A functioning youth council is a consistent and active youth engagement format for the purpose of involving the youth in decision-making processes.</p> <p>The reference level is from 2019. The number includes youth councils and action groups working with local governments.</p>
8. The ratio (%) of 18–26-year-old candidates out of all local government council election candidates	6,5	13	<p>The ratio of 18–26-year-old candidates out of all candidates running at the local government council elections is measured in order to evaluate the interest of young people in active participation in representative democracy, in proving themselves in the local government and acting as leaders in local development.</p> <p>Reference data is available at the statistics database NH14, the youth monitoring dashboard of Statistics Estonia.</p> <p>The reference level is based on the 2017 local government election results.</p> <p>The target level is for 2033 (the next local elections are held in 2021, 2025, 2029, 2033).</p>

Indicator	Reference level	Target level 2035	Explanation
9. Ratio (%) of 15–26-year-olds who have participated in volunteer action	to be specified	to be specified	<p>This indicator expresses the participation of 15–26-year-olds in organised voluntary work on the basis of survey results. Results are measured with a survey. The survey will be added to the Estonian Labour Force Survey in 2021.</p> <p>The reference and target levels are specified with the first monitoring results in 2022.</p>

INDEPENDENCE Quality youth work (including hobby education for young people) is available across Estonia and provides all young people with opportunities for versatile self-development, experiencing success, acquiring experience and gaining independence.

10. The ratio (%) of local municipalities where youth services are at least on the 'advanced' level	50	75	<p>This indicator measures the status of youth service organisation on a local level.</p> <p>The overall indicator is based on the youth work service quality section of the evaluation system for local government service quality prepared by the Ministry of Finance and it contains 20 indicators:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Development plan 2. Youth work establishments with a development plan 3. Youth council 4. Support of youth organisations 5. Youth work committee 6. Quality assessment 7. Acknowledgement 8. Youth work officials 9. Qualified youth workers 10. Status of the facilities 11. Versatility of opportunities 12. Near-home youth centres 13. Choices in hobby activity and education 14. Work opportunities 15. Consideration of different target groups 16. Youth work information 17. Weekly opening hours of youth centres 18. Youth satisfaction with opportunities 19. Participation activeness in hobby education 20. Participation activeness in hobby activities offered by schools <p>The reference level is from 2019.</p>
11. The ratio (%) of young people who are satisfied with youth work services	87	90	<p>This indicator shows how young people evaluate the availability and quality of youth work (including hobby education for young people and activities). Measured with a survey ordered by the Ministry of Education and Research and conducted once in every two years.</p> <p>The reference level is from 2018.</p>

SECURITY The exclusion and detachment of young people is noticed and prevented through a safety network that increases a sense of security.

12. Ratio (%) of 15–26-year-olds who evaluate support as accessible	to be specified	to be specified	<p>This indicator expresses on the basis of survey results how 15–26-year-olds evaluate the availability of support. Measured with an annual survey.</p> <p>The question is included in the Estonian Labour Force Survey questionnaire as of 2021.</p> <p>The reference level is specified with the first results in 2022.</p>
13. Ratio (%) of 15–29-year-olds not in education, employment, or training (NEET-youth)	9,8	8,5	<p>This indicator expresses the ratio of NEET-youth out of all 15–29-year-olds.</p> <p>Reference data in the statistics database: LES39.</p> <p>The reference level is from 2019.</p>

Annex 3. The preparation process of the development plan and inclusion

The Ministry of Education and Research is responsible for the preparation of the Development Plan. The strategy planning processes included four stages: (1) idea collection and vision creation; (2) preparation of the draft legislation of the development documents; (3) pre-evaluation and analysis of the options; (4) preparations for implementation as of 2020.

The strategy process started with idea collection at events organised for the general public and representatives of different fields in fall 2018. In parallel, expert groups worked from August 2018 till March 2019, preparing cross-policy area vision documents on three subjects: values and responsibility, wellbeing and cohesion and competitive advantage. These are the aspects most affected by the fields of education, research, youth and language on the individual as well as collective level. The vision documents prepared by experts served as an input for all the strategic development documents prepared by the Ministry of Education and Research.

In September 2018, the Estonian National Youth Council in cooperation with the Government Office and the Ministry of Finance organised a youth forum related to the planning of the 'Estonia 2035' strategy with the aim of mapping out the youth vision of Estonia in 2035 and to provide input for the youth sector development plan 2021–2035.

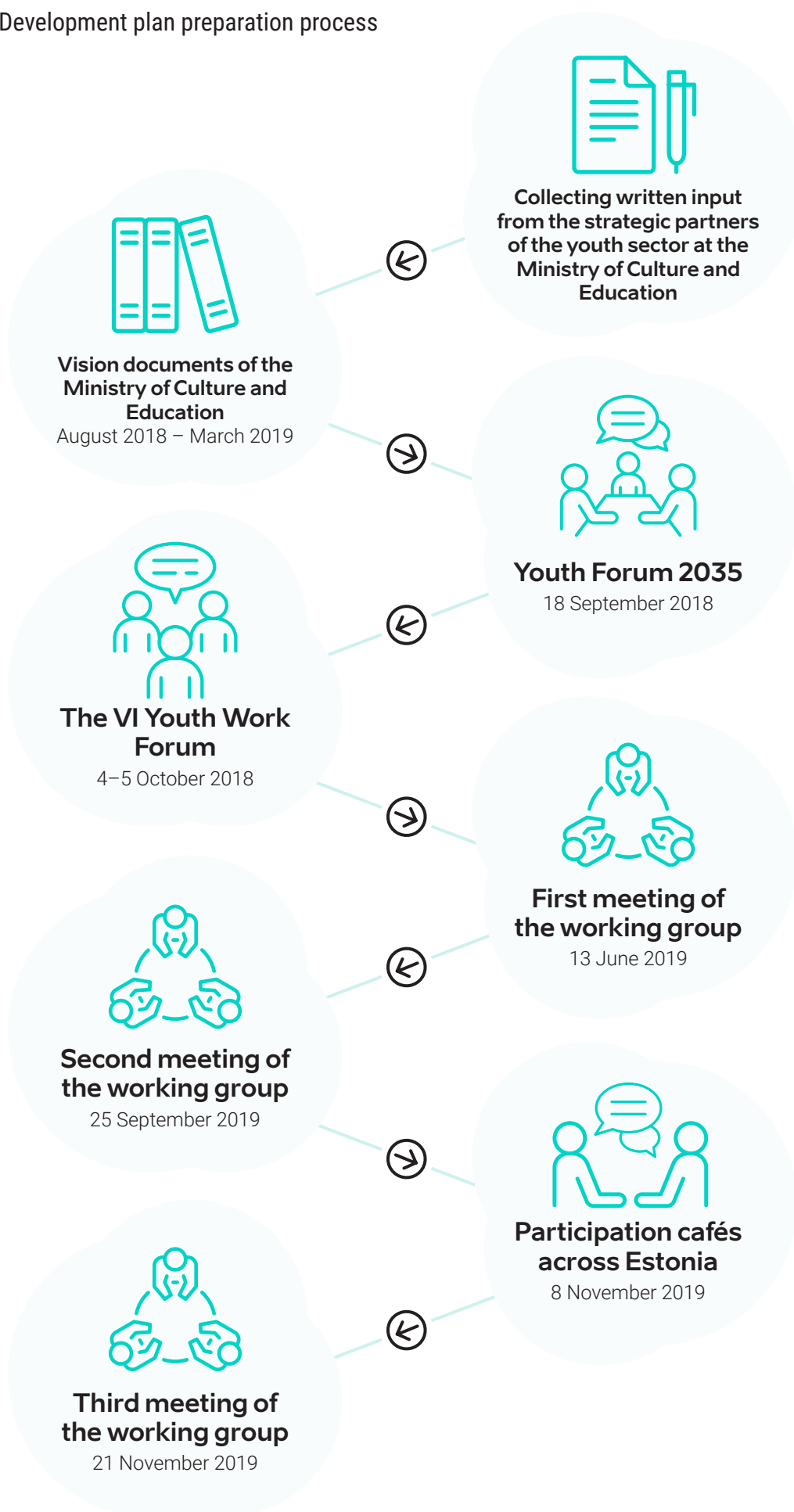
In early October 2018, the VI Youth Work Forum titled 'Back to the future!? Let's create a vision for the future for young people and with young people!' was organised with over 200 participants – mainly young people, youth workers and partners from different walks of life. The discussions revolved around the wishes and goals of young people as well as their challenges and problems and how youth workers can support the youth in coping with the challenges ahead.

A working group including the Ministry of Education and Research's partners and interest groups in the youth sector started work in June 2019. The task of the working group was to contribute to the analysis of the current situation and the specification of the goals of the youth sector, policy courses and actions. The working group based their work on the vision documents, analyses, EU legislation and documents and OECD analyses. The working group included representatives of the Ministry of Education and Research as well as partner ministries and implementing and representative agencies, establishments of higher education and local governments – a total of 62 members.

On 8 November 2019, the Estonian National Youth Council organised ten participation cafés around Estonia – the discussion results from these cafés were also used as input for the development plan.

Additional meetings and discussions were organised with partners and experts of the subject area; written input was also requested.

Figure 4. Development plan preparation process



Annex 4. Contribution of the youth sector to the UN's sustainable development goals

On the 25 September 2015 summit, the UN adopted the declaration 'Transforming our world: the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development' which sets forth 17 global goals for sustainable development with 169 targets and implementation guidelines. In Estonia, the principles of sustainable development are integrated in national development plans and the goals are achieved through policies of the specific areas.

Sustainable development plan 2030		Contribution of the Youth Sector Development Plan
Goal	Target	
1. End poverty in all its forms everywhere	1.4 By 2030, ensure that all men and women, in particular the poor and the vulnerable, have equal rights to economic resources, as well as access to basic services, ownership and control over land and other forms of property, inheritance, natural resources, appropriate new technology and financial services, including microfinance.	1.3 Supporting the entrepreneurship, creativity and ideas of young people;
		4.1. Providing all young people with equal opportunities to improve their quality of life and get the necessary support to do so;
		4.2 Facilitating the social inclusion of risk groups, thereby reducing the risk of exclusion and detachment of young people;
3. Ensure healthy lives and promote well-being for all at all ages.	3.4 By 2030, reduce by one third premature mortality from non-communicable diseases through prevention and treatment and promote mental health and well-being.	4.3 Increasing awareness about the causes of youth risk behaviour and risk of exclusion and designing services based on the real needs of young people;
		3.1. Ensuring equal access to quality youth work across all regions (including the support of young people in developing a healthy lifestyle, e.g. by increasing opportunities for movement and sports, raising awareness about the importance of a versatile and balanced diet and about the opportunities to support one's mental health);
		4.2 Facilitating the social inclusion of risk groups and reducing the risk of exclusion and detachment of young people;
	3.5 Strengthen the prevention and treatment of substance abuse, including narcotic drug abuse and harmful use of alcohol.	4.3 Increasing awareness about the causes of youth risk behaviour and risk of exclusion and designing services based on the real needs of young people;

Sustainable development plan 2030		Contribution of the Youth Sector Development Plan
Goal	Target	
4. Ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all.	4.4 By 2030, substantially increase the number of youth and adults who have relevant skills, including technical and vocational skills, for employment, decent jobs and entrepreneurship.	<p>1.3 Supporting the entrepreneurship, creativity and ideas of young people;</p> <p>3.2 Supporting the consistent development of youth work and increasing the capability for deep development of the skills, knowledge, attitudes and strengths of young people in different subject areas;</p> <p>4.1. Providing all young people with equal opportunities to improve their quality of life and get the necessary support to do so;</p>
	4.7 By 2030, ensure that all learners acquire the knowledge and skills needed to promote sustainable development, including, among others, through education for sustainable development and sustainable lifestyles, human rights, gender equality, promotion of a culture of peace and non-violence, global citizenship and appreciation of cultural diversity and of culture's contribution to sustainable development.	<p>2.2 Providing young people with opportunities to express their opinion and listening to them on all levels;</p> <p>2.3 Empowering young people to be active citizens;</p> <p>3.1. Ensuring the regional availability of quality youth work;</p> <p>3.2 Supporting the consistent development of youth work and increasing the capability for deep development of the skills, knowledge, attitudes and strengths of young people in different subject areas;</p>
8. Promote sustained, inclusive and sustainable economic growth, full and productive employment and decent work for all.	8.6 By 2020, substantially reduce the proportion of youth not in employment, education or training.	<p>1.2 Discovering and developing the talents and strengths of young people;</p> <p>1.3 Supporting the entrepreneurship, creativity and ideas of young people;</p> <p>3.1. Ensuring the regional availability of quality youth work;</p> <p>3.2 Supporting the consistent development of youth work and increasing the capability for deep development of the skills, knowledge, attitudes and strengths of young people in different subject areas;</p>
	8.b By 2020, develop and operationalize a global strategy for youth employment and implement the Global Jobs Pact of the International Labour Organization.	<p>4.1. Providing all young people with equal opportunities to improve their quality of life and get the necessary support to do so;</p> <p>4.2 Facilitating the social inclusion of risk groups, thereby reducing the risk of exclusion and detachment of young people;</p> <p>4.3 Understanding the causes of youth risk behaviour and risk of exclusion and designing services based on the real needs of young people.</p>

Annex 5. Impact assessment

The Youth Sector Development Plan was prepared in accordance with the impact assessment method of the Ministry of Finance and the Government Office. Idea collection among the general public and representatives of different areas was organised in stage 1. In parallel, expert groups worked from August 2018 till March 2019, preparing cross-policy area vision documents in three areas – values and responsibility, wellbeing and cohesion and competitive advantage. The outcomes of expert groups are considered during the preparation of all strategic development documents (including the Youth Sector Development Plan) of the Ministry of Education and Research. In June 2019, a working group including the partners and interest groups of the youth sector started work, contributing to the analysis of the current situation and the specification of the goals, policy courses and activities of the youth sector.

Impact assessment is based on the following:

- . [Future vision and proposals of expert groups for the development of the education, research, youth and language areas in Estonia in the years 2021–2035;](#)
- . About the development needs and fact sheets of the 'Estonia 2035' strategy;
- . Materials of the youth sector working group;
- . Outcomes of the [VI Youth Work Forum](#) and [Youth Forum 2035;](#)
- . [Analysis of the performance of the year 2018 development plans of the Ministry of Education;](#)
- . [EU Youth Strategy 2019–2027;](#)
- . Outcomes of Estonian and international surveys and analyses;
- . [UN resolutions 70/1 \(2015\)](#) ja [2250 \(2015\);](#)
- . [OECD report GOV/PGC\(2018\)7REV1.](#)

Overall goal of the development plan: a wide variety of development opportunities, a sense of security, and strong support for young people create an Estonian state that they wish to further.

Four strategic goals have been defined for the achievement of the overall goal:

- . Young people are the creative momentum driving the society onwards – the drivers and leaders in the fields of education, culture, economy, the environment and so on.
- . The protection of youth rights in the state is consistent and active youth participation is supported.
- . Quality youth work (including hobby education for young people) is available across Estonia and provides all young people with opportunities for versatile self-development, experiencing success, acquiring experience and gaining independence.
- . The exclusion and detachment of young people is noticed and prevented through a safety network that increases a sense of security.

Social, including demographic impact

The vision document created by the expert group highlighted the necessity to look at the big picture when supporting the development of young people. According to the expert group, there is a need for a societal agreement that would have the youth as a priority group when drafting and executing policies in an aging society. Young people have a more vulnerable position compared to other age groups due to their more limited rights and economic resources. The EU Youth Strategy highlights the need to increase youth participation and equal representation in the election process as well as in the elected organs of other decision-making bodies on all other levels of the society.

Preparedness for the future means the capacity to participate in the society and influence people, situations and events in a positive way. Youth work (including hobby education and activities) has the potential to increase social and cultural capital as well as the capability of people to create new values, expand their horizon, learn better time management and planning skills, support the mental health of young people (stress, exhaustion, etc.) and reduce negative influences. A young person can acquire the skills and experience needed for value creation in non-formal education (youth associations, youth projects and other youth work activities).

Despite the high life expectancy of today's youth, their death rate is also high due to risk behaviour and health risks. Young people also face new challenges, such as digital threats, cyber-fraud and –bullying, which also have an impact on their mental health, promoting excessive self-criticism and stress as well as unhealthy habits. According to the experts, focusing on the big picture requires the integration of youth work and other service areas young people use (employment services, counselling services and social welfare).

In order to respond to these challenges, the development plan has included the following activities: supporting young people in becoming independent and entering the labour market; providing opportunities for engagement in representative democracy; improving the availability of youth services for groups to whom services may be currently unavailable (18–26-year-olds); acknowledging the need for equal treatment of young people; creating opportunities for self-discovery, experiences, self-initiative and common activities; increasing access to youth work activities and establishments; ensuring the quality, systematic development and availability of youth information; enriching youth work formats (methodical versatility and the mobility and dynamic nature of services in order to respond to the needs of young people to the maximum extent).

Impact on the state security and foreign relations

The greater readiness of young people to contribute to national defence is supported by a stronger connection to the state. Such a connection does not grow on mere patriotism, but also through opportunities to contribute in the local community and by being included in state-level decision-making processes. Developing the skills of participation and engagement and offering relevant opportunities supports the development of a stronger bond with the community and the state. The development of skills is also supported by participation in youth association activities or in youth work more generally.

Under the conditions of increased migration and urbanisation, it is important to find opportunities for supporting the development of a common cultural and value space and to include all young people. The synergy of youth work activities and formal education allow to develop a common value space for people living in Estonia, develop cooperation and language skills and intercultural understanding.

In order to respond to these challenges, the development plan has included the following activities: to ensure the sustainability of culture, it is necessary to value one's own culture and ensure that the youth and youth culture are also considered; to pay attention to the opportunities of young people to contribute in business, creative and development activities; to increase the understanding of the important role of youth work the noticing and caring between young people; the improve the efficiency of a functioning support and security network for young people.

Impact on the economy

The vision document of the expert group explains that the economic crisis of 2008 has increased unemployment among young people and made a seamless transfer from the education system to the labour market more difficult. The changing nature of work, business models and technology require that young people have the readiness to adapt to changes. Non-traditional working times and places may have the flexibility young people expect, but they also require better future work skills (self-regulation, problem-solving and analysis skills, etc.). Young people must be prepared to undergo retraining and compete with foreign workers. Digital and social-emotional skills are equally important.

In order to realise the potential of young people in supporting Estonia's economy, the fulfilment of their ideas must be supported and the solutions offered by them must be valued. Youth work, alongside formal education, has a significant role in developing entrepreneurship. The activities of the youth sector offer opportunities to deepen the interests

of young people in the priority areas of natural and exact sciences and technology as well as in different arts. The contacts of young people with professionals and opportunities to discover different areas of activity facilitate the development of innovative solutions and enrich the world of business. It is important to provide opportunities to young people with fewer choices and to ensure a safe environment for experimentation, gaining experience and learning from it. It is possible to prevent the exclusion and desolation of young people by offering integrated youth services.

An entrepreneurial attitude among the youth does not only support the economy, but also has a positive effect on other areas (including creative and development activities) through the self-initiative of the youth. The preparation of youth workers has a significant role in achieving the desired impact: (in-service) training opportunities for achieving necessary qualification help to maintain a high service standard and ensure the necessary competencies for supporting young people. Neglecting the development of the quality and/or availability of youth services would have a negative impact (in terms of talent policy development) on the competitive advantage and would also reduce the positive effect that young people gain from their participation in youth work activities (such as team work, communication and other social skills).

In order to respond to these challenges, the development plan has included the following activities: development of the entrepreneurship of young people; facilitation of innovation through smart youth work solutions; supporting activities that help to reduce withdrawal from formal education or risk of reaching the NEET-status and the related expenses; supporting engagement in hobbies related to the STEAM-subjects, entrepreneurship on local and community level (including social entrepreneurship) and the preparation and in-service training of youth workers.

Impact on the living and natural environment

Climate and environmental themes are important to young people around the world. In Estonia, this is expressed through participation in civic action and protests and as a wish to be engaged in the decision-making processes regarding the environment (such as the Environmental Youth Council working with the Ministry of the Environment). People need to change their habits and attitudes in order to manage environmental problems. The need to raise a sense of caring and solidarity within the youth expressed by the expert group can be addressed through different formats of study, including non-formal education and youth work activities. The Ministry of Education and Research and the Ministry of the Environment are already collaborating to implement an environmental education and awareness action plan that increases cooperation between the areas and raises awareness about environmental issues. The complex climate and environmental choices that we are facing in the near future have a direct impact on the wellbeing of our current youth. It is therefore important to offer them versatile opportunities to have their say. When planning policies or changes, it is also important to analyse their economic, social and value-related impact on the youth. Leaving the impact from the point of view of the youth uncharted and their needs unattended may put the youth at risk of exclusion already in the near future.

In order to respond to these challenges, the development plan has included the following activities: providing opportunities to discover different themes (including environmental and climate-related issues) through youth work activities, supporting youth initiatives and active citizenship in-service training of youth workers; development and testing of methods and solutions.

Impact on regional development

Youth work activities are a tool for young people to discover and develop their interests and creativity. With increasing urbanisation, there is also an increased need to improve the availability and choice of services in rural areas in order to ensure young people have equal access to youth services wherever they live. The vision document of the expert group highlights the need for systematic and conscious empowerment of young people through youth policy. When planning activities, it is important to consider the youth as a versatile target group, taking into account their interests and needs.

Versatile engagement of young people in the local-level decision-making processes helps to increase the number of conscious and responsible members of the society. Supporting young people in their participation in representative democracy also helps to increase overall voter turnout and helps to connect young people better with their local community and their state. Offering young people appropriate participation opportunities helps to develop a more cohesive

and healthier society where young people can act as equal members of the community. This is the key to fight a trend on the increase in Europe – young people's estrangement and disappointment in politics.

Regardless of their country of origin, it is important to provide all young people with the opportunities to succeed in life and to prevent the risk of exclusion. Youth work activities can be used to decrease the ratio of excluded young people and to help withdrawn youth back into the education system or labour market. Considering the development of the region, it is important to support the harnessing of the potential of young people and provide the prerequisites for experimentation in the areas of entrepreneurship, creative work and development. The vision as well as the overall goal of the development plan create the prerequisites for ensuring young people opportunities for activeness and self-development regardless of their place of residence or other circumstances. The development and implementation of smart youth work solutions are equally important as they support the improvement of the availability of youth work regardless of the location and support the access of young people with special needs to services, for example.

In order to respond to these challenges, the development plan has included the following activities: ensuring young people support in executing their ideas (mentorship, public space and the tools); creating opportunities to support entrepreneurial ideas on the labour market (including the empowerment of youth with fewer opportunities); developing the existing and creating new smart solutions to improve the availability of youth work; supporting the engagement of young people in participatory and representative democracy; participation in community action (including in the management of NGOs and in volunteer work) and gaining skills and experience through quality youth work (including hobby education for young people) that can be taken into account in formal education and in the labour market.

Impact on the organisation of state institutions and local governments

In terms of the organisation of state institutions and local governments, a comprehensive approach needs to be observed to ensure integrated policies and services for the development of young people. Consistent financing is equally important. According to the working group of the development plan, young people must be provided with a comprehensive support and trust network that would facilitate their development and ensure necessary interventions. The prerequisite of a comprehensive approach is a more efficient cooperation between local governments and a clearer division of tasks and areas of responsibility between the central government, the local level of governance and the civil society. When preparing policy proposals regarding the youth, it is important to analyse the resulting impact on the status of young people and to ensure a regular overview of the state's investments in the public services of the youth sector.

The engagement of young people in the design and innovation of (public) services meant for them supports better correspondence of the services to the needs of the youth. This requires that the officials who deal with youth issues are aware of the youth policy goals and the actual needs of young people, know how to engage young people and treat young people as an individual and priority target group. Improved awareness and skills of the officials also help to avoid 'fake' inclusion where the opinion of young people is left unconsidered or their actual needs unmapped and which may discourage young people to contribute the next time around. In addition to prioritising the youth group, it is also important to gain a better understanding of their position and impact in the decision-making process. More transparent decision-making is more likely to motivate young people to contribute the next time around. Development of the competences necessary for engagement and a change in attitudes is supported by the existence of a full time youth work coordinator in the local government.

In order to respond to these challenges, the development plan has included the following activities: collecting and distributing the best inclusion practices; preparing the officials of different levels for working with young people; including young people in the design of the services meant for them (including through smart youth work); supporting the engagement capacity of young people through the solutions and responsibility networks of different areas (including the proposition of creating counselling units at the Prime Minister's office as well as the President's office); using the best practices based on research results and practical experience when developing interventions for young people; improving the quality of service impact and cost-efficiency assessment on the basis of versatile knowledge, practical experience, youth needs and research results; providing the youth with simple, convenient and versatile formats for expressing their opinion; giving young people feedback on how their opinion was considered; obligating the ministries and local governments to consult with young people with regard to decisions affecting them; ensuring support of youth initiatives in local governments.

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