



HARIDUS- JA  
TEADUSMINISTEERIUM

# Ministry of Education and Research Annual report 2022

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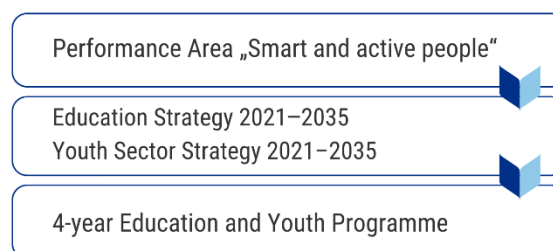
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## Introduction

Annual report of the Ministry of Education and Research (MoER) gives an overview of the implementation of the objectives of the **"Smart and active people"** performance area, the most important achievements towards the objectives and the budget implementation for the year 2022.

In addition, the report focuses on the most important challenges in the field and highlights the links with the achievement of the objectives of the long-term development strategy of the country "Estonia 2035".

Figure 1 shows the strategy documents that guide the work of the performance area.



**Figure 1.** The performance area and the strategy documents related to its activities.

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***In 2022, the ministry's operating environment was affected by the COVID-pandemic and its aftermath, Russia's invasion of Ukraine on 24 February, the economic and energy crisis and the change of government in the summer.***

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The **COVID-pandemic** increased uncertainty in society. Physical and social isolation, loneliness, reduced physical activity and coping difficulties<sup>1</sup> have a direct or indirect impact on the design and implementation of education and youth policies. The pandemic clearly worsened people's mental health<sup>2</sup>. Education system and youth work have an important role to play in shaping an environment supportive of mental health and in providing coping skills. In order to contain the pandemic, rapid testing continued to keep education and youth services open. From the 2022/2023 school year, no regular rapid testing will be organised, but testing will be provided to educational institutions for needs-based testing of students, teachers and other school staff in general and vocational schools.

Since February, following **Russia's aggression against Ukraine**, education and youth field have been affected by the arrival of Ukrainian war refugees in Estonia. The MoER had to support local authorities, schools and youth work institutions to ensure that the education of Ukrainian students could continue as smoothly as possible in Estonia. However, the activities related to the support of war refugees were so time-consuming and resource-intensive that some of the strategic sectoral actions planned earlier could not be taken forward at the desired pace.

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<sup>1</sup> Siska, M. and Värnik, A. (2023). Introduction. Estonian Human Development Report 2023. Mental health and well-being. <https://inimareng.ee/en/estonian-human-development-report-2023/>.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid.

In the summer of 2022, the **government changed** and so did the priorities in the field – the transition to Estonian-language education became a priority. The necessary legislative changes were quickly prepared and some of the other activities planned for this year (e.g. the fixed-term contracts of heads of educational institutions that had been discussed so far) were postponed. While it was decided to raise teachers' salaries by about 24%, 1.5 coefficient was applied to the salary of Ida-Viru County teachers and 1.3 coefficient for preschool teachers. The second priority was to increase funding for higher education – by an additional €10 million as a one-off payment and 15% a year for the next four years. Along with the increase in funding, universities were expected to ensure that Estonian-medium teaching was provided in the university's areas of responsibility. In addition, the new government's minister for education and research and minister for culture agreed to develop a salary model for youth workers (hobby education teachers and youth workers) to recognise their work with young people in non-formal education.

In 2022, people's livelihoods and the functioning of institutions were worsened by **the economic and energy crisis**. Estonia experienced one of the largest price rises in the euro area<sup>3</sup>, with energy and food prices rising the most<sup>4</sup>. For education, research and youth institutions' managers, this meant a more difficult financial situation, exacerbated by growing wage pressures.



**Figure 2.** Operational environment of the PPA 2022

<sup>3</sup> Eurostat <https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/en/>












<sup>4</sup> Statistics Estonia <https://andmed.stat.ee/en>

# 1. Achievement of the performance area targets

People in Estonia have the knowledge, skills and attitudes to fulfil their potential in personal, occupational and social life and contribute to promoting the quality of life in Estonia as well as global sustainable development. Young people have ample development opportunities, feel security and strong support to create an Estonian state that they wish to further.

**Table 1.** Overview of performance area indicators

## What do we want to achieve?

Performance indicators	Actual					Target		
	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2022	2023	Estonia 2035 target
18-24 year olds with low educational attainment <sup>5</sup> not in education or training (%),  Total  men  women <i>Source: Eurostat</i>	12,0 16,1 7,8	11,2 14,4 8,0	8,5 10,7 6,3	9,8 12,0 7,6	10,8 14,3 7,5	9,7 12,5 6,8	9,6 12,5 6,7	
Adults (25-64 years) with professional qualification (%) <i>Source: Statistics Estonia</i>	73,0	73,0	74,1	73,5	74,7	74	74,5	80
Adults in lifelong learning (%),  formal and non-formal education  informal learning <i>Source: Statistics Estonia, Estonian Labour Force Survey.</i>	19,7 -	20,2 -	17,1 -	18,4 59,6	21,1 62,6	>20 - <sup>6</sup>	>20 -	25 -
Employed in smart specialisation growth areas a year after graduation as a share of total employment (%) <i>Source: Graduate Survey</i>	11,7	11,6	12,9	27,3 <sup>7</sup>	data IV q	13	14	
Self-directed learner	Measurement to start in 2023							
Top performing students (PISA levels 5 and 6, %)  reading  mathematics  science <i>Source: PISA</i>	13,9 15,5 12,2		-	-	data in 2023	15,4 17,0 13,7	-	
Teachers' average pay compared to average pay in Estonia (%)  preschool teacher  general education teacher  vocational education teacher <i>Source:</i>	79 113 110	86 112 108	85 112 110	81 106 103	81 105 102 <sup>8</sup>	Maintain ratio to average wage	Maintain ratio to average wage 111	

<sup>5</sup> Basic education or below.

<sup>6</sup> To be added in 2023

<sup>7</sup> In 2022, the methodology for calculating the indicator was changed due to a change in the list of smart specialisation growth areas. Smart and sustainable energy solutions and re-use of resources have been added. The most significant impact is the inclusion of the entire health and social care sector as a smart specialisation growth area, compared to previous activities related to health technologies. The targets for this indicator are unchanged and derive from the 2022 programme.

<sup>8</sup> Teacher's average pay in 2022 will be 1358 in preschool education, 1763 in general education and 1719 in vocational education, with an average gross salary of 1685 euros.

Performance indicators	Actual					Target		
	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2022	2023	Estonia 2035 target
Young people's trust in the state (%) <i>Source: the International Civic Citizenship Survey ICCS</i>	56 (2016)				data 2023	60	-	

➤ **The share of 18-24 year olds with low educational attainment, i.e. basic education or less, who are not in education is a cause for concern in several respects.** In the few years before COVID, there was a strong improvement, but in the post-pandemic period the situation has deteriorated again. While during the pandemic in 2021, the share of young women not in education increased, the increase in 2022 will be driven mainly by men. The drop-out of young men from further education will further exacerbate gender inequalities in education.

➤ **The share of adults (25-64 years old) with professional qualification** has increased to 74.8% in 2022, reaching the target of 74%. However, it is worth keeping a close eye on this indicator, as failure to curb the drop-out rate from upper secondary education and vocational education and the increase in the share of 18-24 year olds not in education will lead to a decline in the share of adults with professional qualification in the coming years.

➤ **The participation rate of adults in lifelong learning, in formal and non-formal learning,** increased strongly, reaching 21.1% in 2022, and meeting the target of more than 20%. However, it is worth noting that men's participation in lifelong learning is still much lower than that of women and the gap is widening. Participation of non-Estonians in lifelong learning is also still lower. Although people with higher education continue to be the most engaged in self-training, it is still positive that the participation of people with basic education or less has increased strongly.

➤ **Although teachers' pay did not increase in 2022 (the ratio to the average salary decreased slightly), an agreement was reached to increase teachers' pay significantly in 2023:** the minimum teacher salary will rise from €1,412 to €1,749. In addition, there will be a differentiation fund of 17%, which will allow school leaders to regulate teachers' work and pay more flexibly. Local authorities will also receive a €15 million subsidy from the state budget to increase the minimum wage for preschool teachers in 2023. Teachers' salaries are an important factor in ensuring the next generation of teachers - linked to both the profession's reputation and retainment.

## Key achievements in 2022

### ➤ Transition to Estonian-language education

In 2022, the government decided to complete the transition to Estonian-language education and adopted a respective action plan. The action plan aims to ensure high-quality Estonian-language education for all students, from preschool education to admission to higher education. Implementation of the action plan started immediately after its adoption.

### ➤ Ensuring the continuity of education in the aftermath of COVID-pandemic

Despite the difficulties caused by the pandemic, schooling was continued thanks to rapid testing; support was provided to schools in recruiting assistant and substitute teachers and in maintaining the mental health of staff. Levelling of students' learning gaps was supported. Schools have highlighted that the pandemic increased a sense of community, accelerated the acquisition of new skills (especially digital skills) and the wider use of digital technologies in teaching. In the aftermath of the pandemic, schools have introduced new forms of learning (e.g. outdoor lessons, experts in the classroom, project lessons, creative lessons) and updated curricula. A large number of schools gave recognition to their students and teachers, and were pleased that, despite everything, students had not lost their motivation to learn.

### ➤ Support for Ukrainian war refugees

To support Ukrainian war refugee students, the School of Freedom was established at Tallinn Tõnismäe State Gymnasium, and support was given to school owners to provide study places across Estonia.

In cooperation with the municipalities, opportunities were created for students to participate in hobby education and youth work and to employ assistant teachers. Ukrainian study materials and materials for Estonian language learning were made available.

In higher education, funding was provided for additional study places for Ukrainian students and Erasmus+ opportunities were expanded.

In addition, action was taken to certify the skills of Ukrainian health professionals on the Estonian labour market, support mental health of refugees, advise and support Estonian teachers and organise integration activities to help Ukrainian youth settle in more smoothly.



➤ **National curricula in general education renewed and inclusive education indicators improved**

The renewal of the national curricula was an important step forward. The revised curricula give teachers greater freedom to approach subject content and offer more optional courses in upper secondary education to tailor teaching to students' needs and interests. The reforms will also help to ensure that general competences are systematically developed in the subjects taught. In addition, the number of lessons in Estonian as a second language will increase.

In addition to the new music and ballet school (MUBA), two new state secondary schools were opened in Rakvere and Saue.

Increasingly, the services of support specialists recommended by the out-of-school counselling team are being implemented and the proportion of students receiving enhanced and special support in mainstream classes is increasing.

There is a clearer focus on quality management in general education, including the methodology for quality assessment in general education and development programmes for schools with the support of the University of Tartu and Tallinn University.

➤ **Vocational education and training (VET): modernisation of the VET legislation launched, national curricula updated**

The focus is on employers as stakeholders in the VET system, the trend towards openness in the VET system and the recognition of different learning pathways. The new law seeks to regulate fewer and more fundamental issues, to give both more freedom and responsibility to VET actors, to support the maintenance of the current strengths of VET and to address weaknesses.

Three new implementation models of work-based learning were developed (construction, metalwork and commerce).

➤ **It was agreed to launch a reform of the professional qualifications system.**

In order to increase the coherence between education and the labour market, the conditions of support for the reform of the professional qualification system (co-funded by the European Social Fund) and the conditions of support for the digital and greening of enterprises (co-funded by the Recovery and Resilience Facility) have been approved.

The new general labour force forecast and the latest sectoral surveys (social work, ICT, forestry, agriculture, food industry) have been published.



➤ **Agreements reached to increase funding for higher education**

Reform of doctoral studies, including the introduction of a junior researcher's salary, was implemented to ensure the next generation of academics and researchers.

In the state budget strategy, it was agreed to increase the operating support for higher education institutions by 15% each year, and management agreements were signed with universities for 2022-2025.

The conditions of state-guaranteed student loans were made more flexible and favourable for students.

In higher education, the number of students graduating during a nominal duration of studies and the PhD completion numbers have increased.

➤ **The lifelong learning participation rate of people with low levels of education has increased.**

The merger of adult upper secondary schools with vocational schools has been successful according to preliminary information: the number of students in second chance general education in the six merged schools has remained stable since the merger.

Participation in lifelong learning has increased and the number of training institutions has grown.

In adult education, amendments to the Adult Education Act were initiated, focusing on supporting flexible learning pathways for adults with the introduction of micro-qualifications.

➤ **Agreements to increase teachers' salaries and admission to teacher training**

A national agreement was reached to increase teachers' salaries and admissions to teacher training at universities (UniTartu +287 and UniTallinn +155 places).

The main content of the Teachers' Academy programme (microcredits, master teacher programme) was also agreed, and the focus of the national programme for research and development in the field of education was set on ensuring the succession of teachers.

➤ **In the youth sector, the share of local authorities that have completed a quality assessment of youth work has increased**

More and more local authorities are undergoing voluntary quality evaluation of youth work. The number of voluntary youth projects is recovering after the pandemic, youth participation is diversifying and participation in organised voluntary activities is increasing.

The share of young people in hobby schools continues to grow.

## Key challenges

### ➤ **Transition to Estonian-language education**

Transition to Estonian-language education is exacerbating the lack of teachers, as the change in qualification requirements for teachers' language skills further increased the teacher shortage. In addition, the transition has wider implications for education (e.g. performance, satisfaction, special needs, drop-outs, continuation of studies, etc.).

### ➤ **Insufficient succession of teachers - average age of teachers is rising and share of fully qualified teachers is decreasing**

Contrary to expectations, the admission of subject teachers and class teachers has not increased and only 62% of those entering teacher training graduate.

Nearly a tenth of the teaching force, or around 2200 teachers, do not have the necessary language skills, which complicates the transition to Estonian-language education.

### ➤ **Many minor Ukrainian war refugees do not enter education system**

Support for Ukrainian war refugees in the Estonian education system is complicated by the simultaneous transition of Russian-language schools to Estonian-language education.

Refugees are unevenly distributed across the regions, so the level of and needs for support vary. Not all the Ukrainian minors enter the education system - many of them have not enrolled in education in the hope of returning home soon. As of the beginning of May 2023, 23% of the 7-16 year old Ukrainian refugees staying in Estonia are not enrolled in Estonian schools.

Teaching refugees is complicated by language barriers and bilingual classrooms, differences in curricula between Estonia and Ukraine and the need to level Ukrainian students.

Many of the refugees are still studying in Ukrainian distance education. For example, according to the 2023 Satisfaction Survey, 32% of war refugees studying in the fourth grade in Estonian schools participate in Ukrainian distance learning, and 28% do not currently participate but used to. As many as 45% of 8th grade students in the EU responded that they participate in Ukrainian distance learning. Participation in distance learning in Ukraine is probably even more common among those who do not attend school in Estonia.

➤ **Increased drop-out rates in general and vocational education and training**

In general education, the drop-out rate has increased in basic school (boys) and in the first year of upper secondary school. Pupil satisfaction indicators have deteriorated, and there are concerns about the prevalence of school bullying in grades 4-9. The percentage of students who reach at least B1 level in the final exam in Estonian as a second language in basic education remains low.

The share of drop-outs and early leavers in VET has increased again<sup>9</sup>. In 2022, the share of drop-outs in VET as a whole was 21%, an increase of 0.7 percentage points compared to the previous academic year. At the level of upper secondary vocational education (year 1), the drop-out rate has also increased (20.6%). In 2022, 10.7% of learners left upper secondary vocational education (year 1).

➤ **Access to higher education is uneven and the student loans and grants system needs to be modernised.**

In higher education, the rate of early leaving<sup>10</sup> at level I and the gender gap in higher education attainment remain a concern.

Access to higher education is unequal because the current system of grants and loans does not provide equal access for students from economically disadvantaged families and rural areas.

➤ **Participation of adults in lifelong learning is uneven and largely depends on socio-economic background.**

Participation in lifelong learning is low among men and non-Estonians, and the share of men with a vocational education is significantly lower than that of women (men 69% vs women 80%).

Although the number of adults with low educational attainment is decreasing, it remains worryingly high.

A worrying trend in adult upper secondary schools is that more and more young people prefer these institutions to the traditional daytime form of education.

In adult learning, the impact of the deteriorating economic situation can be expected to become more evident. In 2022, training prices had not yet risen significantly, but in 2023 price increases are very likely. It is not known what the actual unit prices of training will be and how price increases will affect the supply of and participation in training.

<sup>9</sup> In vocational education, a person is considered to have dropped out if he or she has interrupted his or her study programme and does not attend the same school the following year. A learner is considered to be an early leaver if he or she has not continued his or her studies in formal education during the year. The calculation is based on those who were enrolled on 10 November and their status is reviewed on 10 November of the following academic year. Excluded from the calculation are those who studied for less than 31 days, those who interrupted their studies to go abroad or those who died. The indicator is comparable to the general education performance indicator 'Drop-out rate in upper secondary education' (%).

<sup>10</sup> In higher education, drop-outs are defined as those who have left higher education at the first level and in the first year of their studies and have not enrolled in another higher education course.

➤ **The targets related to education and labour market matching were not met, as overall employment in Estonia has not yet reached pre-COVID levels.**

Employment of graduates has increased, but has not yet reached pre-COVID levels. In 2021, 75.2% of graduates aged 20-34 with vocational and professional education were employed one year after graduation and 73.9% five years after graduation.

While employment rate of women is higher immediately after graduation (78% vs 72%), five years after graduation a larger share of men is employed (77% vs 71%).

➤ **The share of NEET-youth remains worryingly high and salaries of youth workers are not competitive.**

Although the proportion of young people not in employment, education or training (NEETs), **has** decreased since the pandemic, there are still around 21,300 of them.

Low salaries of youth workers is a critical problem in the sector. The average salary for people supervising hobby education and activities was €1,190 in 2022, and even lower for a youth worker, at €919 (compared to the Estonian average gross wage of €1,685).

The number of students participating in STEM hobby groups is low. In the youth sector, the proportion of local authorities with active youth councils has decreased.

## 2. Achieving the objectives of the Education and Youth Programme

**Table 2.** Overview of the Education and Youth Programme

<i>Name of the programme</i>	Education and Youth Programme 2022-2025
<i>The aim of the programme</i>	<p>People in Estonia have the knowledge, skills and attitudes to fulfil their potential in personal, occupational and social life and contribute to promoting the quality of life in Estonia as well as global sustainable development.</p> <p>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.</p>
<i>Estonia 2035 Strategy target</i>	<p>Smart people value knowledge, protect themselves, others and the (living) environment, and has a supportive attitude towards all groups in society.</p> <p>They are curious, creative and entrepreneurial, eager to learn and are ready for the nature of their work to change.</p> <p>Active people can handle their life well and are socially active and responsible, contributing to the development of themselves, their family and the community, as well as the state, throughout their life.</p>
<i>Programme period</i>	2022-2025
<i>Responsible ministry</i>	Ministry of Education and Research
<i>Co-implementers</i>	Education and Youth Authority, Language Board

## Action 1. Learning opportunities and organisation of education

**Objective:** learning opportunities are diverse and accessible, and the education system enables smooth transitions between different levels and types of education.

**Table 3.** Action indicators and their implementation

Indicator	Actual					Target	
	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2022	2023
Participation of children from 3 years old to school age in pre-school education (%) (%) <i>Source: EHIS (Estonian Education Information System)</i>	91,3	91,1	91,6	91,2	91,6	92	92
Share of 20 to 24-year-olds with at least secondary education (%) <i>Source: Eurostat</i>	81,5	82,6	85,7	85,9	83,2	85,2	85,4
Share of 25 to 34-year-olds with tertiary education attainment (%)* <i>Source: Statistics Estonia, Estonian Labour Force Survey.</i>	43,6	42,8	43,1	43,2	43,9	>40	>40
Share of VET graduates who participated in short-term international mobility (%) <i>Source: EHIS</i>	A new Indicator. Targets to be set in 2023						
Share of bachelor's and master's graduates who participated in short-term international mobility (%) <i>Source: EHIS</i>	-	8,0	8,3	8,0	-	8,5	9,0

\* Estonia 2035 indicator. Target by 2035: 45%.

See tables of operational indicators in Annex 1.

### What is positive?

- The share of children aged 3 to school age attending preschool has remained close to the desired 92% for many years.
- The **number of doctoral degrees awarded in 2022** has increased significantly (+12.6%), as so has the **share of graduates in nominal duration of studies** in higher education (51% in 2018 vs 56.1% in 2022).
- **Two new state gymnasium in Rakvere and Saue**, and the **Tallinn School of Music and Ballet** have been opened to ensure quality secondary education in Estonia.
- Participation of people with low levels of education in **lifelong learning** has increased strongly.
- **Participation in continuing training** has been stable; the number of training institutions has increased.

### What needs attention?

- Increasing drop-out rates, which either decreased or stayed at the same level in the COVID-years, remain a concern. The **drop-out rates from both basic school** (particularly boys) and the **first year of general upper secondary school** have increased.

- Early leaving from education is linked to the **upper secondary education attainment target** that was neither met - 81.2% of students have reached upper secondary education four years after leaving basic school (against a target of 82%). **In vocational education and training and in higher education, the drop-out rate has** also increased in the first year of<sup>11</sup> compared to the previous year, but is still within the target. The **share of people aged 20-24 with** at least **upper secondary education** has fallen to 83.2%.
- There is a clear **educational divide in higher education**: in the 25-34 age group, 54% of women vs 33% of men have higher education.
- **Ukrainian war refugee learners** who cannot reach the education system. 23% (i.e. 1 924) of Ukrainian youth aged 7-16 are not in education, half of whom, for their part, have an unknown place of residence. Teaching refugees is made more difficult by language barriers and bilingual classes, differences in curricula between Estonia and Ukraine and the need to help Ukrainian students. At the same time, there is a general shift to Estonian in Russian-medium schools.
- A long-prepared new law on early childhood education and childcare sought to tackle the problem of **nursery school waiting lists**. The draft law reached the Riigikogu, but was rejected at first reading and dropped from the procedure. The process is continuing to make the necessary changes to the draft, to coordinate the updates with stakeholders and to prepare for implementation.
- Men and non-Estonians are much less likely than others to **participate in lifelong learning** - better coverage of these target groups remains a challenge.
- **The share of men with a vocational education** is significantly lower than that of women (69% men vs 80% women).
- As a growing trend, a proportion of upper secondary school leavers have opted for **adult upper secondary education** instead of stationary education to complete their general upper secondary education.

## Key developments in 2022

### ➤ Developing access and learning opportunities

Learning opportunities for **Ukrainian refugee** students are covered in the Education network sub-section.

A working group of experts was set up at the Ministry of Education and Training **to reform the funding model for vocational education and training institutions**, and developed proposals to change the funding principles. On the basis of the working group's proposals, the Decree of the Minister of Education and Research was renewed and entered into force in April 2023. The major changes concerned the criteria for performance funding. The organisation of in-service training is introduced as an additional performance funding component. A fundamental change concerns the application for employment. Whereas previously all graduates who took up employment after graduation were counted as employed, only those who took up employment in the profession studied after graduation will be counted as employed.

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<sup>11</sup> The methodologies for calculating drop-out rates in vocational education and training and higher education are slightly different. In the case of upper secondary vocational education, students who have dropped out and have not continued their studies at upper secondary level during the year are considered as drop-outs. The calculation is based on those who were enrolled on 10 November and their status is reviewed on 10 November of the following academic year. Excluded from the calculation are those who studied for less than 31 days, those who dropped out because they went abroad or those who died. The indicator is comparable to the general education performance indicator 'Drop-out rate in upper secondary education' (%). In higher education, drop-outs are defined as those who have left higher education at the first level and in the first year of study and have not enrolled in another higher education programme.



In spring 2022, the **process of updating the Vocational Education and Training Code** was launched, focusing on the right to education, the consideration of employers as actors in the education system, the trend towards openness of the education system and the recognition of different learning pathways. The new law aims to regulate fewer and more fundamental issues, to give more freedom and responsibility to VET actors, to legally support the maintenance of the current strengths of VET and to address weaknesses.

**At the level of VET, the revision of the national curricula will continue to** support a more effective implementation of lifelong learning principles in the VET system, as well as a better alignment of VET with labour market needs, the development of competences for the green turn and the introduction of micro-skills. In 2022, the national curricula for automotive and construction were amended.

Issues related to **the organisation and funding of higher education were a** particular focus. Funding for higher education, which is dependent on the government's annual budget decisions, is not sustainable. The introduction in 2013 of free tuition for full-time Estonian-language students has not improved access to higher education for young people from economically disadvantaged families, nor has it helped to reduce work during studies. The Council's Working Group on the Sustainability of Higher Education proposed to consider introducing a modest tuition fee (around €1000-1500 per academic year) to increase student ownership and raise additional funds for higher education. To **ensure equal access to higher education** and to reduce student unemployment, a new comprehensive system of student loans and grants is considered necessary.<sup>12</sup> The Centre for Development Monitoring's analysis of trends in higher education up to 2035 also highlights two options for financing higher education: 1) an increase in operating grants, combined with a reform of student loans and grants; 2) the introduction of tuition fees, together with the linking of student loan repayments to the graduate's subsequent income.<sup>13</sup>

In 2022, it was agreed in the national budget strategy **to increase the operating grant for higher education** by 15% each year. The additional funds promised to higher education allowed for the signature of management agreements with public universities, which had refused to sign management agreements at the beginning of 2022, citing underfunding and inability to meet contractual obligations. In order to ensure the succession of Estonian-speaking lecturers, the new management agreements with universities have agreed on the objective that at least 50% of doctoral graduates should have a minimum proficiency level of B2 in Estonian.

In 2022, the **conditions of** state-backed **student loans** were made more flexible and more favourable for students. One guarantor is now sufficient to apply for a student loan, compared to the two guarantors previously required. The interest rate on student loans was made more flexible and the maximum amount of a student loan was increased to €3,000 (previously €2,500). The change in interest rate policy led to competition between credit institutions, which initially also made the conditions of student loans more favourable for students. From 2022/23, the interest rate on student loans will be close to 2% in the banks offering student loans<sup>14</sup>, plus six-month Euribor. Although the European Central Bank has increased the Euribor rate sharply since 2022, and it already rose above

<sup>12</sup> Teadus- ja Arendusnõukogu. (2022). Kuidas tagada Eesti kõrgharidussüsteemi kestlikkus ja kvaliteet? Teadus- ja Arendusnõukogu kõrghariduse kestlikkuse tööühma raport. <https://valitsus.ee/valitsuse-eesmargid-ja-tegevused/teadus-ja-arendusnoukogu-tan>

<sup>13</sup> Arenguseire Keskus (2022). Kõrghariduse tulevik. Arengusuundumused aastani 2035. Raport. Tallinn: Arenguseire Keskus.

<sup>14</sup> 1.95% in LHV and 1.99% in Swedbank. Sources: LHV - <https://www.lhv.ee/et/oppelaen> and Swedbank - <https://www.swedbank.ee/private/credit/loans/student?language=EST> (both accessed 7.03.2023).

3% in early 2023<sup>15</sup>, students will be subject to a maximum interest rate of five percent per annum. Thus, even with a further possible increase in Euribor, the interest rate on student loans cannot rise above the level before the changes to the conditions of the student loan.

In order to ensure that more upper secondary school students have access to higher education and to encourage students to make responsible career choices, the basis for **reimbursement of study costs** was clarified in the Higher Education Act. In the future, it will no longer be possible to study for free on several courses at the same time (including at the same level of higher education). After an interruption, it will only be possible to return to study free of charge if the studies were interrupted in the first year. In order to be able to study again free of charge at the same level of higher education, at least 10 years must have passed since the previous graduation. Higher education institutions will retain the right to offer a second course free of charge in justified cases, for example in areas of higher labour demand such as teacher training and health. The changes will enter into force in 2024/25.

The aim of **the reform** was to increase the efficiency of doctoral studies and ensure the next generation of researchers. To this end, the working conditions of doctoral students were redesigned. Doctoral candidates are early-stage researchers who carry out research work for a university or an employer on the basis of an employment contract. An enterprise doctorate allows for the promotion of cooperation between research institutions and businesses. The current doctoral grant has been replaced by a junior researcher's salary, which provides the social guarantees previously lacking (e.g. annual paid leave, sickness benefit, etc.). According to university reports, 279 doctoral candidates will have started their doctoral studies as junior researchers in 2022/23, 21 doctoral candidates will be working outside universities and 62 doctoral candidates will have student status.

The number of foreign students in Estonian higher education institutions has fallen in recent years, both because of the pandemic and the war in Ukraine that started in 2022. Restrictions on Russian and Belarusian citizens have led to a significant decrease in the number of students from these countries, while the **number of foreign students from Ukraine has tripled**. A study group for EU-compliant higher education for Ukrainian refugees with nursing education was opened in Tallinn Health Care College. More attention has been paid to the language of instruction in higher education. Administrative contracts with universities **have been signed with the obligation to offer Estonian language and culture teaching to foreign students**.

**Mobility activities in educational institutions** have recovered from the COVID pandemic. The projects funded in 2022 will provide mobility opportunities for a total of nearly 7,000 people. Around 3,000 people are expected to participate in higher education, 1,510 in general education, around 1,060 in vocational education and training and around 410 in adult education. Erasmus+ conditions have been made more flexible to support refugees fleeing war.

In the area of adult learning policy, **amendments to the Adult Education Act** were prepared in 2022 - the draft was sent to partners for consultation in 2022. Preparation of the draft law will continue to regulate micro-qualifications. The regulation of micro-qualifications aims to ensure flexible, high-quality learning opportunities, to create the conditions for learners to move smoothly and flexibly between levels and types of education and the labour market. Micro-qualifications are one way of enabling adult learners to achieve full qualifications. In addition, the area is preparing for the mobilisation of the new period's structural funds, and the conditions for the provision of support for adults' participation in **non-formal** and **formal education** are being prepared.

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<sup>15</sup> In February 2023, the six-month Euribor will be 3.14%. Source: European Central Bank.

[https://sdw.ecb.europa.eu/quickview.do?SERIES\\_KEY=143.FM.M.U2.EUR.RT.MM.EURIBOR6MD.\\_HSTA](https://sdw.ecb.europa.eu/quickview.do?SERIES_KEY=143.FM.M.U2.EUR.RT.MM.EURIBOR6MD._HSTA) (viewed 7.03.2023)

## School Network

The downward trend in the number of students in general education schools stopped in 2014/15 and since then the number of students has increased moderately year by year. Compared to 2018/19, the total number of students in general education is almost 12 500 higher this year (+8%). This growth has been driven by an increase in the birth rate compared to the mid-1990s on the one hand, and an increase in immigration, including return migration, on the other. The number of students in the last two academic years has also been affected by the arrival of Ukrainian war refugees.

In Tallinn, which welcomed the highest number of children from Ukraine, the state has established the **Freedom School**, where 600 students started their studies in September 2022. The Vabaduse School operates as a place of study for the Tallinn Tõnismäe State Gymnasium. In addition to Estonian teachers and support specialists, the school team also includes teachers and support specialists from Ukraine. Vabaduse Kool is a school following the Estonian national curriculum, which offers students from war refugees in Ukraine the opportunity to acquire basic and secondary education. The school's aim is to support the integration of young Ukrainians into Estonian society, while preserving and developing their native language skills and knowledge of Ukrainian culture. Teaching at Vabaduse School is based on the language immersion method - 60% of the teaching is in Estonian and 40% in Ukrainian.

All school owners have received an **extra €506 per month from the state** for **each pupil coming from Ukraine**, to ensure that students have the necessary support to cope in an Estonian-speaking environment. The grant money can be used to set up a place of study in primary and general education (including payment of teachers and assistant teachers, purchase of teaching aids and technological equipment, organisation of field trips); to provide additional Estonian language teaching at basic level; to organise educational support services (interpreters, speech therapists, psychologists, etc.); to organise educational support services (e.g. student transport, catering); to provide hobby education, leisure or youth activities.

In autumn 2022, the Rakvere State Gymnasium and the Saue State Gymnasium started operating **as new state secondary schools**. In the autumn of 2022, the Tallinn School of Music and Ballet (MUBA), which was founded as a new state vocational school. MUBA offers both basic education, general upper secondary and vocational curricula. The new state secondary school in Mustamäe was due to open in 2022, but due to construction problems, the school will open in 2023.

**The transfer of schools from local authorities to the state** has continued. In 2021, the state took over Narva Estonian Gymnasium from the city of Narva, and in 2022, Kohtla-Järve Järve School was transferred to the state. The transfer of three schools in the Lüganduse municipality to the state has also been agreed.

**Investments** supported by the state budget **in local government schools include the** renovation of the learning environment at Valga Basic School (EUR 0.8 million), Lihula Gymnasium (EUR 1.5 million) and Maardu Gymnasium (EUR 0.6 million). The investment support has been conditional on the reorganisation of the school network in the municipality.

**Changes to the operation of adult upper secondary schools** will continue, in agreement with the state and local authorities. In 2022, the state took over the organisation of adult education in Jõgeva County and Valga County. In Jõgeva County, second chance general education for adults will continue at the Jõgeva County State Gymnasium and in Valga County at the Valgamaa Vocational Training Centre. Second chance general education at vocational schools and state gymnasiums improves the learning conditions for adult students, creates additional options, reduces redundant school space and makes more efficient use of resources.

## Action 2. Teacher career development, approach to learning and teaching, and learning environments

**Objective of action:** Estonia has competent and motivated teachers and heads of school, a diverse learning environment, and learner-centred approach to learning and teaching.

**Table 4.** Action indicators and their implementation

Indicator	Actual					Target	
	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2022	2023
Percentage of students scoring below level 3 in PISA <sup>16</sup> (%) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>reading</li> <li>mathematics</li> <li>science</li> </ul> Source: PISA	32,0 31,0 30,2	-	-	-	-	31,5 30,5 29,5	-
Percentage of 16-24 year olds with h digital skills above the basic level (DESI) (%)           Source: The Digital Economy and Society Index (DESI)	-	76,2	-	-	-	-	80
Subjective wellbeing of participants in the learning process: percentage of students who are fairly or completely satisfied with school (%). <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>8th grade</li> <li>11th grade</li> <li>Vocational education and training</li> </ul> Source: satisfaction survey	26,1 34,2 60,1	24,5 33,6 52,4	24,4 35,4 -	24,6 39,6 54,8	23 33,4 52,7	increasing	increasing
Subjective wellbeing of participants in the learning process: percentage of teachers who are fairly or completely satisfied <sup>17</sup> (%)           Source: satisfaction survey	83,7	-	-	84,2	-	increasing	increasing
Percentage of students achieving at least B1 level in Estonian as a second language at the end of basic school (%)           Source: EHIS, EIS (Examinations Information System)	-	67,8	-	57,9	55,6	-	-
Percentage of students achieving at least B2 level in Estonian as a second language at the end of basic school (%)           Source: EHIS, EIS	a new indicator, methodology to be developed						
Teacher retainment <sup>18</sup> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Percentage of teacher training graduates who have worked as a teacher for five consecutive years after graduation (%)</li> </ul>	-	54 50	57 46	51 50	55 51	maintain	maintain

<sup>16</sup> Measured on a scale of 1 to 6, with 1 being the lowest and 6 the highest.

<sup>17</sup> Incl. teachers in preschool, general and vocational education, including adult secondary school teachers.

<sup>18</sup> Incl. teachers in pre-school, general education, vocational education and training and higher education who have worked for five consecutive years after completing their teacher training or entering the profession for the first time.

 percentage of first-time teachers who have worked as a teacher for five consecutive years after taking up their post (%) <small>Source: EHIS</small>	-						
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*Comprehensive tables of operational indicators are provided in Annex 1.*

## What is positive?

- On the positive side, there has been a clear improvement in **inclusive education indicators**. Year by year, the percentage of implementation of the support services recommended by the out-of-school counselling team in basic education has increased, reaching 76% in 2022. In addition, the share of students receiving enhanced and special support in mainstream classes has been increasing: 36.2% of all SEN students were in mainstream classes in 2022.
- Teachers' **retainment indicators** have remained stable - both hover around 50%.
- The competition for **teacher training places** in 2022 was 1.1<sup>19</sup>, indicating that enrolment in teacher education programmes is more popular than the average (average=1).

## What needs attention?

- One of the key objectives of the Education Strategy is to improve wellbeing of those involved in the learning process, as perceived satisfaction supports learning outcomes. In 2022, there were no positive developments in this respect: **students' subjective wellbeing in school** has decreased.<sup>20</sup> Satisfaction is lowest among 8th-graders, where the downward trend is more prolonged. Satisfaction is generally higher among young people in grade 11, but the satisfaction indicator has been volatile, decreasing by 6 percentage points compared to last year. Satisfaction with school among students in vocational education and training is also on a downward trend, although the average is still high compared to general education, with more than half of students satisfied.
- One of the factors affecting well-being is the **spread of school bullying** in schools. While 2021 saw an improvement in school drop-out rates, in 2022 the situation has been worsening. Concern about bullying is highest in the grades 4-6 and 7-9, where 63.5% and 76.7% of students respectively had not experienced bullying repeatedly in the two weeks preceding the survey. However, at secondary school level, bullying has decreased in the longer term. No further action has yet been planned to reduce bullying in schools.
- The achievement of the B1 level in **the final exam of Estonian as a second language** is a concern: in 2022, only 55.6% of those who passed the exam achieved the required language level. The low level of proficiency of Estonian as a second language learners is also reflected in the increasingly low average exam results (in 2022, the average score was 60 points in basic school and 67 points in upper secondary school). As a consequence, by the end of upper secondary school, fewer and fewer students will pass the B2 level exam in Estonian as a second language - 75.5% in 2022, compared to 86.5% in 2018. The reform on the transition to Estonian-language education will provide solutions in this regard.

<sup>19</sup> The list of teacher training programmes has been adjusted, the competition data are not 100% comparable with the figures for previous academic years.

<sup>20</sup> Wellbeing in school as a general indicator of satisfaction is assessed on the basis of the ratings given by students in the national satisfaction surveys for the statements "school is interesting", "I feel good at school" and "I usually feel good about going to school".

- **The succession of teachers** remains a pressing challenge, as the teaching force is ageing and the share of qualified teachers is decreasing, including among novice teachers. The shortage of STEM teachers is particularly acute. Activities to promote the teaching profession have not significantly increased the attractiveness of the profession to student candidates. There has been no increased admission of subject and classroom teachers, and only 62% of entrants graduate from teacher training. A high proportion of non-native teachers (10% or 2200) do not meet the Estonian language requirements. There are 2,366 teachers with higher education qualifications who do not have a teaching qualification.
- Already in 2018, in cooperation with the Ministry of Social Affairs, the preparation of the necessary changes to **improve the system of support services for learners with special educational needs** was started, in order to provide children with faster, more effective and comprehensive support. In 2022, the Reform Task Force has analysed the evaluations carried out in the support system for children with special needs (education, health, social and employment). The Ministry of Education and Research has provided in-depth input on the support for students in the education system. However, the reform of support services has not progressed at the expected pace, due to the need for a more in-depth analysis of the needs for changes in rehabilitation services.

## Key developments in 2022

### ➤ Teachers and school leaders

In 2022, actions were agreed with universities to address the problem of the **next generation of teachers and support specialists**. A Steering Committee on the Succession of Teachers has been set up to coordinate the implementation of both the "Education Research and Development Programme" (ER&D Programme) and the Teachers' Academy (TA). The focus of the TA is on ensuring the succession of academic staff in teacher education and increasing the number of qualified teachers in schools. To this end, micro-credentials are offered to facilitate the reconciliation of work and learning in the curricula of science and technology, mathematics, Estonian as a second language and inclusive education.

In 2022, an education **R&D programme** was developed (formal adoption postponed to 2023) to support the research and development needed to ensure the next generation of teachers and support specialists in Estonia. The programme will focus on the development of a model for initial and in-service teacher education and training, the development of a teacher career model, a motivation system and a support system for early career teachers, the implementation of learning organisation management models in educational institutions and municipalities, and the renewal and analysis of the content of the teaching profession. The TA programme will also support research on didactics in critical areas of teacher education (science and technology, Estonian as a second language, inclusive education).

An agreement was reached **to increase the teacher's salary**: according to the draft state budget for 2023, the minimum salary will increase from 1412 euros to 1749 euros. In addition, there will be a differentiation fund of 17%, which will allow school leaders to regulate teachers' work and pay more flexibly. In 2023, at the discretion of the local authorities, the minimum salary for preschool teachers will be at least 90% of the minimum salary for general education teachers if they meet the requirements of the Language Act, and 100% if they have a Master's degree or equivalent qualification in addition to meeting the same requirements. To this end, €15 million of state budget subsidy was allocated to local authorities.



According to the 2023 higher education funding agreements signed between the Ministry of Education and Science and the University of Tartu and Tallinn University, the **admission numbers to teacher training and educational science and support specialist programmes will be increased**. Priorities will be given to the specialisations of Estonian language teacher, including Estonian as a second language, science teacher, including mathematics, and class teacher. The number of student places at the University of Tartu and Tallinn University has been increased by 287 and 155 respectively. The annual replacement need of teachers is estimated at 380 teachers (320 posts).

On the initiative of the Association of School Leaders and with funding from the Good Deed Foundation, Fontes developed a **new competence model for school leaders**, which was presented to the Ministry of Education and Training at the end of 2022. It will be complemented by a career model for school leaders in the future. To support the work of head teachers and school leaders, a handbook "Handbook for the modernisation of teachers' work and pay arrangements" has been published. Information days and seminars were organised in cooperation with the Union of Estonian Cities and Municipalities for local government teams on how to modernise teachers' work and pay arrangements. In the second pilot project, the local authorities involved drew up an updated model for teachers' work and pay arrangements with the support of mentors and experts.

**Work** has begun **on updating the induction year programme** offered by the University of Tartu and Tallinn University to provide better support for teachers starting their careers at school to help them settle into the organisation and adapt to the teaching profession. The induction year programme for school psychologists has been launched and will continue in 2023.

The conditions for awarding grants for the "Initial and continuous training of education and youth staff and their successors 2023-2029" for the new Structural Funds period are being finalised, as well as the concept of continuing training for education staff, which aims to define the general principles of continuing training for education staff and the roles and responsibilities of the parties involved in its implementation.

## **Transition to Estonian-language education**

The government of the Estonian Reform Party, the Isamaa Party and the Social Democratic Party, formed in the summer of 2022, set as one of its priorities the transition to Estonian-language education in Russian-language kindergartens and basic schools.

On 12 December, the parliament adopted the **Act amending the Basic School and Upper Secondary School Act and other Acts**, which provided for the transition to Estonian-language education. The transition will take place in three stages:

- a) In 2022, the preparatory phase for the transition to Estonian-language education began;
- b) In 2024, there will be a transition to Estonian-language education in preschool education;
- c) In 2024, the transition to Estonian-language education will start in the first and fourth grades.

The transition to Estonian-language learning will end in 2030 (with justified exceptions). An important part of the transition will be to **change the qualification requirements for** teachers, principals, head teachers and support specialists in general education and preschool education so that Estonian language proficiency is part of the qualification requirements. A starting allowance for support specialists in kindergartens was provided for, similar to that for support specialists in general education schools. The national curriculum for basic schools was amended, increasing the number of lessons of Estonian as a second language and reducing the number of lessons of Russian as a mother tongue. The national curriculum for pre-school education was amended and the principles



of support for children with a second mother tongue in Estonian-language kindergartens were clarified. The curriculum changes will enter into force from 1 September 2024.

**An action plan for the** implementation of the transition to Estonian-language education was prepared<sup>21</sup>. To support the transition, **models for language learning support** were developed **and proposals for language learning support were presented**, on the basis of which transitional support will be calculated from January 2025 for grades 1 and 4 and from January 2026 for grades 1 to 2 and 4 to 5.

By 2022, 60 kindergartens and 151 Estonian-language teachers from ten local governments will have joined the pilot project **"Professional Estonian-language teacher in a Russian-language group"**, which was launched in 2018. By 2022, 21 schools (including 11 Estonian-language schools and 10 Russian-language schools) and 40 Estonian-language teachers from nine local governments have joined the pilot project "Professional Estonian-language teacher in basic schools", which was extended to schools in the 2020-2021 school year. Activities supporting Estonian-language education will continue in the kindergartens and schools that have joined. In addition, the best practices developed as a result of the pilot project will be implemented more widely in the classes of the non-participating schools and the curricula of language training courses will be developed.

Details of the changeover can be found on the MoER's website [hm.ee/uleminek](https://hm.ee/uleminek).

## **Quality of learning, curriculum and equal opportunities**

In order to support the development of students' skills and wellbeing, **changes to the national curricula for basic and upper secondary schools** were prepared in 2022 and approved by the Government of the Republic in February 2023. The revised curricula give teachers greater freedom in the way they approach teaching content, and offer more elective courses in upper secondary education to tailor teaching to students' needs and interests. The innovations will help to ensure that general competences such as learning, digital, communication, culture and values are systematically developed. In addition, the number of lessons in Estonian as a second language will be increased, so that in the future, significantly more students will be able to reach the language level needed to succeed in society. In order to ensure equal opportunities, it is important that, together with the renewal of the curricula, adult learners are given the opportunity to continue their studies up to basic education or to complete a simplified curriculum.

On the basis of the input gathered from the lessons of the Quality Assessment System Development Programme in general education schools, the terms and conditions for the Structural Funds funded action **"Promoting evidence-based quality management in general education that supports learner development"** were prepared and entered into force in September 2022. The aim of the support is to promote a culture of quality, including evidence-based management in general education institutions and local authorities, to support access to quality, inclusive and sustainable education for all students. Within the framework of the action, Tallinn University and the University of Tartu will provide development programmes for a total of 50 educational institutions with the greatest challenges in meeting national performance indicators in the period 2022-2029. **A General Education Advisory Board was set up** to provide guidance and feedback to the Estonian Quality Agency for Education (HAKA) in promoting evidence-based quality management that supports learner development.

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<sup>21</sup>[https://hm.ee/sites/default/files/documents/2022-10/eestikeelsele\\_oppele\\_ulemineku\\_tegevuskava\\_2022\\_2030%20\(1\).pdf](https://hm.ee/sites/default/files/documents/2022-10/eestikeelsele_oppele_ulemineku_tegevuskava_2022_2030%20(1).pdf)

Recommendations for legislative change and policy development to **take into account competences acquired through non-formal learning (e.g. hobby education, hobby activities and youth work) in the delivery of basic, upper secondary and vocational education and training curricula** were made to take into account learners' individuality and support their motivation to learn. Guidance on the inclusion of competences acquired through non-formal learning in formal learning was also prepared and will be piloted in 2023.

In 2022, **LAHE, an e-tool for assessing the development of five-year-old children**, will be ready to assess the development of a five-year-old child in five areas: cognitive processes, learning competences, speech and language, mathematics and social competences.

In 2022, a **pilot project** was carried out to produce digital lessons in mathematics with interactive videos and exercises. The project had a twofold objective: to create a framework for digital learning resources based on a modern approach to learning and to provide additional maths learning resources on the topics where experts had identified the deepest student gaps in the wake of the COVID-crisis.

**Institutional accreditations of higher education institutions** are organised to ensure the quality of higher education. In 2022, institutional accreditation was carried out in four higher education institutions: the University of Tartu, the Estonian University of Life Sciences, the Theological Seminary EMK and the Art High School Pallas. Two of institutions (UT and EULS) were accredited for seven years.

An amendment to the Basic Schools and Upper Secondary Schools Act (entered into force on 14.11.2022) was adopted, which **reduced unnecessary bureaucracy in the activities of the out-of-school counselling team and speeded up the process of obtaining educational guidance**. From now on, the involvement of social and health professionals will be on a needs basis instead of the previous mandatory one. This will reduce unnecessary burdens on both education and social and health services.

In order to contribute **to the mental health of students and school staff**, a crisis team has been set up across the Pathfinder network, and a series of crisis team trainings have been launched to build their response capacity. Phase I of the trainings took place in Q4 2022 and will continue in 2023. A school psychologists' helpline was launched, open to people working with children and young people, parents and learners.

Strategic partners were selected in 2022 to **prevent and reduce bullying** and to effectively support mental health in educational institutions. The aim of the partnership is to support educational institutions in creating a mentally and physically safe learning environment and school culture. The partners implemented a range of programmes to support the development of socio-emotional skills and to prevent and reduce bullying in nursery, general and vocational schools.

**The PISA 2022 survey** took place. Data collection in Estonian schools was successful and the data has been submitted to the PISA 2022 consortium. The results will be published by the end of 2023.

## Action 3: Links between education, society and the labour market

**Objective of action:** Learning options are responsive to the development needs of society and the labour market.

**Table 5.** Action indicators and their implementation

Indicator	Actual					Target	
	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2022	2023
Employment rates among 20 to 34-year-olds with professional education (%) <i>Source: Graduate Survey</i>	79,4	78,4	73,5	75,2	III q data	80	80
Employment rates among 20 to 34-year-olds with professional education five years after graduation (%) <i>Source: Graduate Survey</i>	74,2	74,4	72,5	73,9	III q data	75	75
Digital competences above base level among 16 to 74-year-olds (%)* <i>Source: The Digital Economy and Society Index (DESI)</i>	35	37	-	-	-	37,5	39
Graduates' entrepreneurship	New measurement, methodology to be developed						

\* The DESI methodology changed in 2021, so the target levels will also change.

Comprehensive tables of operational indicators are provided in Annex 1.

### What is positive?

- ▶ Although the **number of IT graduates in higher education** has decreased compared to 2021 (-13%), the longer-term trend is still positive - the figure for 2022 significantly exceeds the number of IT graduates in 2018-2020.
- ▶ 70% of educational institutions in Estonia have adopted the entrepreneurship module developed under the ESF's Edu&Tegu programme.

### What needs attention?

- ▶ **The employment rates in the 20-34 age group with professional education** has increased, but is still below pre-pandemic levels. The end of the COVID-related restrictions has boosted business activity, which has contributed to an increase in the employment rate.
- ▶ The operational indicators reflecting **the link between education and labour market needs** (see Annex 1 for more details) do not show any improvement in the broader picture - all the targets set for the operational indicators for 2022 have not been met. Compared to 2021, the employment rate of 20-34 year olds who have completed VET 1-3 years ago has increased (from 70.6% to 75.1%), but is also well below the target of 80%.
- ▶ Support measures are being launched to **ensure the next generation of professionals in the field of LTT and IT studies**, including the continuation of the IT Academy and the Engineering Academy.
- ▶ The share of **work-based learning graduates among** all VET graduates has decreased. This is due to the end of the ESF action "Developing Vocational and Higher Education and Training to Meet Labour Market Needs" (VET) and the reduction in the number of work-based learning places funded under this action. Follow-up actions are being prepared to launch the "Development of Vocational and Tertiary Education and Training in response to Labour Market Needs (PRÕM+)" with external funding. Additional work-based training places will be funded from the academic year 2023/24.

## Key developments in 2022

According to **the general jobs and skills forecast for 2022** by OSKA, labour market developments will be strongly influenced by ageing populations, migration (including refugees), digitalisation and automation, and the green transition. Jobs will be created in particular in the services sector, while employment in technical occupations will also grow. The projected labour demand over the next decade is higher than can be absorbed by the generation entering the labour market. Flexible working and learning arrangements and the reconciliation of work and private life must therefore be supported to enable all groups to participate in employment. Automation and digitalisation need to be promoted and, where appropriate, foreign labour needs to be attracted.<sup>22</sup>

**In order to support the digital and green transition of businesses**, the conditions for granting support from the Recovery and Resilience Facility have been approved to create additional flexible learning opportunities that meet the development needs of the labour market. ICT skills training, including cyber-security, and the development of ICT modules in vocational training curricula will be supported. Professional standards for teaching green skills will be updated and VET curricula revised, continuing training programmes will be developed to equip the workforce with green economy knowledge and skills.

The terms and conditions for ESF support for **the reform of the professional qualifications system** for the period 2021-2027 were approved. The reform aims to improve the coherence between education and the world of labour and reorganise the professional qualifications system. By integrating the different parts of the system, a comprehensive and digitally-supported professional qualifications system, OsKuS, will be created to support the individual skills development and career management of different target groups, as part of lifelong learning. Activities were launched in November 2022.

The OSKA sectoral surveys on **labour and skills needs** were carried out in the social work, ICT, forestry and timber, and agriculture and food processing sectors<sup>23</sup>. In addition, the general skills survey<sup>24</sup> and the OSKA's general jobs and skills forecast for 2022-2031<sup>25</sup> have been completed and published. In total, 28 sector-specific analyses and forecasts have been carried out and published by OSKA.

Under the European Social Fund's programme "Development of Vocational and Higher Education and Training in line with Labour Market Needs" (PRÕM), **three new models of work-based learning** (construction, metalwork and commerce) have been developed in vocational education and training, which will be implemented in 2023/24. Between 2015 and 2022, the programme has involved more than 1500 companies and institutions in work-based learning and created training places for more than 7600 work-based learners.

By the end of 2022, a total of 661 educational institutions (of which 25% preschool, 67% general education, 5% vocational education and training and 3% higher education institutions) will have participated in **the entrepreneurship and career education programme Edu&Tegu**.

<sup>22</sup> Rosenblad, Y., Leoma, R., Krusell, S. (2022). OSKA üldprognoos 2022–2031. Ülevaade Eesti tööturu olukorrast, tööjõuvajadusest ning sellest tulenevast koolitusvajadusest. Tallinn: SA Kutsekoda.

<sup>23</sup> OSKA sectoral surveys, <https://oska.kutsekoda.ee/uuringud/valdkonnauuringud/>

<sup>24</sup> Leemet, A., Ungro, A. (2022). Tööelu üldoskuste klassifikatsioon ning tulevikuvajadus. Uuringu terviktekst. Tallinn: SA Kutsekoda.

<sup>25</sup> Rosenblad, Y., Leoma, R., Krusell, S. (2022). OSKA üldprognoos 2022–2031. Ülevaade Eesti tööturu olukorrast, tööjõuvajadusest ning sellest tulenevast koolitusvajadusest. Tallinn: SA Kutsekoda.

In 2022, a customised version of the WorldSkills Global Skills Competition was organised. Estonia was given the opportunity to **organise a WorldSkills competition strand for the first time**: the Landscape Construction Competition, which was attended by teams from 16 countries.

**The national skills competitions** were held in 23 specialties and attracted 222 participants. Compared to the pandemic years, the number of specialties and the number of competitors has started to increase again. The compendium of skills competitions was updated and a single evaluation system will be applied to all specialties.

The conditions for ESF support **for IT education and digital skills development in general** - , vocational and higher education are under preparation. Activities are planned until the end of 2028/29. The ICT sector study by OSKA forecasts that employment in the sector will grow 1.5 times over five years. Together, the ICT sector and all other sectors of the economy will need at least 2600 new ICT professionals every year.<sup>26</sup>

**A new format for professional qualification exams in the IT field** was developed in the framework of the **IT Academy for Vocational Education** and Training. In 2022, Tartu Vocational College (VOCO) admitted IT students on the basis of the vocational **aptitude** tests and entrance interviews developed within the framework of the Vocational **Aptitude Assessment** project. According to the school, the test enabled to admit students who had made an informed choice, were motivated and had the right aptitudes for the studies.

The volume of assessment of **foreign qualifications** increased significantly in 2022 due to the need for information on Ukrainian refugees and the processing of assessment requests. In 2022, the ENIC/NARIC Centre assessed 885 qualifications issued in the Ukrainian education system (most of them higher education qualifications). A large proportion of refugees from southern and eastern Ukraine have been educated in Russia, and there are also holders of Soviet Union diplomas among the refugees who are not included in the Ukrainian statistics on qualifications.

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<sup>26</sup> Mets, U., Viia, A. (2021). Tulevikuvaade tööjõu- ja oskuste vajadusele: info- ja kommunikatsioonitehnoloogia valdkond. Uuringuaruanne. Tallinn: SA Kutsekoda.

## Action 4. Development of youth sector

**The aim of the action:** by 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.

Table 6. Action indicators and their implementation

	Actual					Target	
	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2022	2023
Percentage of local authorities having completed a quality assessment of youth work (%)	-	-	15	20	24	30	increasing

Source: Education and Youth Authority, Estonian Youth Workers' Association

Comprehensive tables of operational indicators are provided in Annex 1.

### What is positive?

- ▶ The pre-pandemic entrepreneurial mindset among young people is recovering. While in 2021 the number of **young people's initiative projects** was only 32 (largely due to the late launch of the call for proposals), by 2022 it had risen back to 2019 levels (168).
- ▶ In terms of youth civic participation, there is a **continuing diversification of formats of participation**. There is a proliferation of new local youth councils and activist groups, and national youth councils that give young people a say in the organisation of society. In 2022, there were 92 formats of participation, including national advisory councils made up of young people set up in four ministries: Ministry of Education and Research, Ministry of Economic Affairs and Communications, Ministry of Environment and Ministry of Culture.
- ▶ By 2022, **the percentage of local authorities having completed a quality evaluation of youth work had increased to 24%**. Although this figure is below the annual target (30%), 15 municipalities are still in the process of quality assessment at the end of 2022, which suggests that the proportion of municipalities that have undergone quality assessment will increase and the target will be reached in the coming years.
- ▶ **The participation of young people** aged 15-26 in **organised volunteering in Estonia**<sup>27</sup> was measured annually from 2021, when 22% of all 15-26 year olds were engaged in volunteer activity. In 2022, the figure was 26.5%. In 2022, the increase in volunteering was also influenced by the war in Ukraine, which, among other things, increased the volunteer contribution of young people.

### What needs attention?

- ▶ The share of **youth-led NGOs** among all active NGOs has decreased significantly in the last two years, reaching 1.8% in 2021 (previously 5.4%). The figure for 2022 is not yet known, but the reason for the previous decrease is probably complex, being influenced by demographics (young board members outgrowing the age group) as well as by insufficient succession of new young board members.

<sup>27</sup> Volunteer activity means devoting time, skills, knowledge, energy of one's own free will and without remuneration.



- The concern is that the share of local authorities **with functioning, or active, youth participative councils** is declining and will remain below the desired level of 68% in 2022. This decline can be attributed in particular to more effective monitoring of the functioning of participative councils (more effective mapping of their participation, for example at council and committee meetings, etc.). The aim is to have an active youth participation body in at least 90% of municipalities. Although opportunities for young people to participate in decision-making processes have been formally created - almost every municipality has a participative body (76) - the active participation and involvement of young people in local life needs to be improved and more attention should be paid to developing appropriate and up-to-date forms of youth participation. In addition to promoting opportunities for participation and active involvement in formal forms, more attention needs to be paid to young people who are unwilling or unable to participate in traditional, formal structures, such as young people from other linguistic and cultural backgrounds, young people excluded from education and the labour market.
- **The proportion of unemployed youth, not in education or training (NEETs)**, has been decreasing since the pandemic, with 10.6% of young people aged 15-29 in NEET status (the target was for the figure not to exceed 11.7%). However, we have a total of around 21,300 young people not in education, training or employment - a very high number for a country the size of Estonia. It can be assumed that the relatively high level of NEETs is maintained by the difficult global economic situation and the still ongoing pandemic crisis<sup>28</sup>.
- In addition to support for Estonian youth, some 17,500 **Ukrainian refugees** under the age of 19 who have arrived in Estonia need attention. It can be expected that many of the families who have arrived will stay in Estonia for longer periods or permanently. Involving these young people, including in non-formal learning activities, will require both additional training for youth professionals (inclusion of young people with foreign language and traumatic experiences, mental health support and integration), and additional resources both to reach and engage young people. Alongside the Ukrainian youth who have been added, there is still a large number (10.6%) of Estonian youth who have been excluded from the labour market and education system.
- A number of students participating in **STEM hobby education/hobby groups** is still low - in 2022, there were 5040 registered programmes in hobby schools, of which 5.5% (277) were technical and 2.2% (112) nature-related, with 3.7% (6390) and 1.4% (2480) of young people enrolled in these programmes, respectively. Opportunities in STEM are limited both by the high cost of the field and by the shortage of tutors. There is a need to train specialists in the field to provide STEM hobby education in more remote regions. In the context of the 'smart youth work' concept, more attention needs to be paid to innovative solutions to enable young people living in remote areas to access a wider range of hobby education and activities.
- **In order to support gifted children and young people in a more systematic way, there** is a need for a research-based definition and conceptualisation of giftedness, and for the development of guidance and training materials for identifying and developing giftedness.
- **Developing the quality of services in the field of hobby education, hobby activities and youth work** remains a priority and will be pursued with strategic partners in the field in the coming years. To this end, discussions have been launched, inter alia, with representatives of the sector and the Union of Teachers, on the development of a professional standard for teachers in hobby education. The updating and digitisation of the model for assessing the quality of youth work (including a specified module for hobby education and activities) was launched in 2022 and will continue in the coming years. Identifying the quality and development needs of youth services and designing improvement actions is still hampered by a lack of data quality and systematic data collection. Therefore, the development and implementation of a system for monitoring and analysis in the youth sector remains a priority.

<sup>28</sup> Haugas, S., Allemann, M., Anniste, K. (2021). Mõttekoda Praxis. COVID-19 pandeemia sotsiaal-majanduslik mõju noortele. [https://www.praxis.ee/wp-content/uploads/2021/01/COVID\\_19\\_maju\\_noortele\\_lopparuanne\\_241121.pdf](https://www.praxis.ee/wp-content/uploads/2021/01/COVID_19_maju_noortele_lopparuanne_241121.pdf)



➤ **The lack of recognition of the youth workforce, including working conditions and in particular low pay, is a critical issue in the sector.** The average salary of a municipal hobby education tutor was €1,190 in 2022, and even lower for youth workers at €919 (compared to the Estonian average gross monthly wage of €1,685). In the light of the upcoming increase in the minimum wage for teachers, and against the background of the economic downturn, equal pay for youth workers is an important challenge.

## Key developments in 2022

### ➤ HOOG

To promote **the integration of non-formal and formal education**, the project "Supporting the success of young people – developing capacities for integrating non-formal learning into formal learning" was launched in 2021.<sup>29</sup> In 2022, the project produced, in partnership with stakeholders, initial guidelines for different levels (national, local, general, non-formal) to support the wider integration. The project produced two research reports, the first [on the current state of integration of formal and non-formal learning in Estonia](#) and the second on [integration practices in other countries](#).

As a milestone, **an event** was launched in 2022 to **recognise young people who have won medals in international competitions and their mentors**.

Launch of the project "[Digital Leap in Youth Sector](#)", which aims to raise the **digital competences of** youth workers and other **youth professionals** in a minimum of 48 municipalities and to create and develop innovative youth-centred solutions for better quality youth work. To advise local authorities on smart youth work, a "[digital skills bank](#)" was launched, to which ten youth workers are currently contributing.

### ➤ OSA

**In the national calls for applications supporting youth participation** (youth camps, permanent and project camps, "For Youth"-initiative), this time more attention was paid to the involvement of Ukrainian war refugee children and young people in order to support their adaptation and integration into Estonian society and culture, Estonian language learning and the continuation of their self-development path. A total of 842 young people of Ukrainian origin took part in permanent and project youth camps, and 108 young people took part in youth camp activities. **A support measure for integration and language learning camps** was developed, supporting the organisation of 141 camps. Nearly 11 000 young people participated in the camps, of which almost half were of Ukrainian origin. In order to better integrate young Ukrainian refugees into Estonian society, additional support was provided to municipalities for language learning and integration activities in non-formal learning environments (including youth centres, recreational schools, organisations and institutions offering recreational activities). The results of the activities will be published in 2023.

### ➤ ISE

As an important step in the development of the youth sector, **the modernisation of the laws governing youth work and hobby education was launched**. The amendments have four main objectives: a) to modernise the definitions and tasks in the field; b) to ensure the accessibility and quality of youth work and hobby education; c) to change the model for the allocation of additional state support for hobby education and activities; d) to streamline the regulation of operating support for youth associations.

<sup>29</sup> <https://hm.ee/noorte-edu-toetuseks-voimekuse-arendamine-mitteformaalope-loimimiseks-formaalopega-2021-2023>

**A study on future scenarios in the youth sector** was completed and a study was launched to analyse the working conditions, current situation and challenges of the youth workforce, which will be completed in 2023.

**In order to increase the visibility of youth work and hobby education and** to make **national youth information** more accessible to young people from other languages, a multilingual youth information website [www.teeviit.ee/youth-info](http://www.teeviit.ee/youth-info) was created on the youth information portal Teeviit. Support for local authorities continued as an important step towards providing better quality youth work and hobby education services for young people. For example, work has started on the development of a concept for national support activities for municipalities in the field of youth work, which will be finalised in 2023. Quality indicators for hobby schools were also developed in 2022 in cooperation with strategic partners in the field of hobby education and will be piloted and updated in 2023.

To introduce and market **innovative models of organising youth work** created in cooperation with local authorities (during the period 2018-2022), regional seminars were held and an [online tool](#) was developed to support the introduction of models to better organise and improve the quality of youth work.

## **KINDLUS**

Mobile youth work is one way of bringing youth work opportunities to all young people, but it does not yet have a clear national strategic direction or purpose. The value of mobile youth work became more evident in society during the pandemic, when many young people were no longer able to be in their usual environments - schools, hobby schools, youth centres - and became isolated. In 2022, one of the priorities for youth policy was to develop **a concept for mobile youth work** (to be finalised in 2023), which would help to make more coherent sense of mobile youth work at national level and to implement it better in local authorities.

Ensuring equal opportunities for all young people and preventing isolation and social exclusion were helped by the **ESF's programme to support young people at risk of exclusion**. Over the period 2015-2022, 264 258 young people benefited from the activities of the programme, including 17 333 young people in NEET status. The programme's performance indicator (percentage of NEET-youth having participated in support measures and escaping NEET status 6 months after measure, target 50%) was 67.6%, i.e. a high proportion of NEET-youth who participated in the programme returned to the labour market or education system.

## Budget implementation

The final budget of the Education and Youth programme for 2022 was nearly €840 million, an increase of nearly €209.5 million (33%) compared to the initial budget.

Of the increase, €63.7 million was made up of additional funding from the supplementary budget for measures related to the immediate needs of war refugees, including support for language learning and integration, and for the creation of additional places. The breakdown of the additional funding by programme action is as follows:

- ensuring access to general education €48.9 million;
- equal opportunities in education €6.3 million;
- ensuring access to vocational training €5 million;
- ensuring access to higher education €2.7 million; and
- organisation and development of the school network and development of curricula and school organisation €0.5 million.

EUR 12.9 million was added from the Government's reserve. The budget carried over from 2021 was EUR 30.4 million, of which the activities carried over to 2022 will be continued. The final size of the budget was also influenced by actual receipts of unrestricted funds and the volume of open bridge financing.

The final budget for the action 'Promoting the international competitiveness of education' includes the total amount received for the Erasmus+ 2021-2027 funding period and therefore differs from the budget proposed for 2022. However, the budget was executed according to plan, as initially planned.

The activities of state general education schools, state vocational education institutions and state higher education institutions of applied sciences accounted for 27% (€205 million) of the programme budget. The share of external funds in expenditure and investment is about 20% (€122 million), of which €90 million is EU structural funding.

The transfer of the budget balance of EUR 46.5 million is made for expenditure in the area of results. Of this amount, €25.7 million (55%) is the balance of the supplementary budget, which was used for targeted actions related to the immediate needs of the Ukrainian refugees, which will continue in 2023, when no funds are foreseen. Of the total budget surplus, the largest were the balance of funds for educational integration and support for Estonian language learning of EUR 3 million, which will be carried over to 2023 to support the transition to Estonian language education, the balance of operating costs and budget of state educational institutions (75) under the administration of the MoE of approximately EUR 2.9 million, which will be used for targeted educational activities and deferred activities, and the costs related to the renovation works of State Real Estate AS, as the completion of the works will be deferred to the following year. Detailed information on the transferred state budget funds can be found in the explanatory memorandum to the decree of the Minister of Education and Research "Transfer of 2022 state budget funds to 2023".

The balance of investments in the area of results is EUR 2.7 million, of which the balance of IT investments is EUR 1.7 million, the balance of investments of State Real Estate AS is EUR 624 thousand, the balance of investments of agencies under the administration of the Ministry of Finance is EUR 261 thousand and the balance of the supplementary investment budget is EUR 97 thousand. The balance is due to delays in the preparation of tenders and implementation of investments: due to the volume and cost of works, some of them have been postponed to 2023.

The achievement of the objectives of the performance area is also supported by the budget of the Government of the Republic's Support Fund for Local Authorities for education expenditure, which amounts to EUR 405.9 million and is not reflected in the government budget.

**Table 7.** Overview of the implementation of the budget of the Education and Youth programme (in thousands of euro).

Education and Youth Programme		Indicative budget	Final budget	Completion	Execution %
Action 1. Learning opportunities and educational organisation		555 424	742 738	607 829	82%
1.1. Organising and developing the education network	Investment	60 214	64 256	56 824	88%
	Costs	42 778	52 938	45 291	86%
1.2. Ensuring access to general education	Investment	64	718	611	85%
	Costs	111 134	177 847	151 362	85%
1.3. Ensuring access to vocational training	Investment	499	1 769	1 574	89%
	Costs	97 847	112 117	103 191	92%
1.4. Ensuring access to higher education	Investment	1 717	2 016	1 675	83%
	Costs	200 334	221 393	210 155	95%
1.5 Developing adult education and creating learning opportunities for adults	Investment	0	2	0	0%
	Costs	6 213	10 177	6 169	61%
1.6. Promoting the international competitiveness of education	Investment	0	194	128	66%
	Costs	34 624	99 311	30 848	31%
Action 2. Teacher career development, approach to learning and teaching, and environments		44 994	61 943	50 671	82%
2.1 Curriculum and school organisation development activities	Investment	1 575	6 729	4 283	64%
	Costs	26 412	26 152	23 934	92%
2.2 Ensuring equal opportunities in education	Costs	10 368	23 490	17 790	76%
2.3. Supporting the development of teachers and educational leaders	Costs	6 639	5 573	4 663	84%
Action 3: Links between education, society and the labour market		17 574	19 275	13 961	72%
3.1 Developing the professional qualifications system and jobs and skills forecasting system OSKA	Costs	2 089	2 362	2 311	98%
3.2 Linking learning to labour market needs	Investment	0	222	136	61%
	Costs	15 485	16 691	11 514	69%
Action 4. Youth development		11 703	15 570	9 125	59%
4.1. Supporting youth entrepreneurship and initiative (HOOG)	Investment	0	21	21	100%
	Costs	3 472	6 403	2 078	32%
4.2. Supporting youth civic participation and protecting young people's rights (OSA)	Costs	853	1 084	853	79%
4.3 Developing the accessibility and quality of youth work (ISE)	Investment	0	2	2	100%
	Costs	5 078	5 596	4 809	86%
4.4. Ensuring equal opportunities for young people in society (KINDLUS)	Investment	0	52	34	65%
	Costs	2 300	2 413	1 329	55%
<b>Total: Education and Youth programme</b>	<b>Investment</b>	<b>64 069</b>	<b>75 982</b>	<b>65 288</b>	<b>86%</b>
	<b>Costs</b>	<b>565 626</b>	<b>763 545</b>	<b>616 297</b>	<b>81%</b>
<b>TOTAL</b>		<b>629 695</b>	<b>839 527</b>	<b>681 585</b>	




## ANNEX 1: Tables of indicators, incl. action level indicators

### Operational indicators for Action 1

#### Action 1.1: Restructuring and developing the education network

Programme operational indicators	Actual					Target	
	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2022	2023
Number of schools with upper secondary level (pcs)	160	157	158	158	158	-	-
Number of state upper secondary schools (pcs)	15	16	16	18	20	21	25

#### Action 1.2: Ensuring access to general education

Programme operational indicators	Actual					Target	
	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2022	2023
Drop-out rate from basic school in grades 7-9 (%)							
 Total	0,3	0,3	0,2	0,25	0,3	maintain	maintain
 boys	0,3	0,4	0,3	0,3	0,4		
 girls	0,2	0,2	0,1	0,2	0,2		
Source: EHIS							
Drop-out rate in 1 <sup>st</sup> year of general upper secondary education (%)	1,6	1,2	0,7	0,9	1,2	<1,0	<1,0
Source: EHIS							
Share of people with upper secondary education 4 years after graduating basic school	80,4	80,7	82,1	81,9	81,2	82	82
Source: EHIS							

#### Action 1.3: Ensuring access to vocational education and training

Programme operational indicators	Actual					Target	
	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2022	2023
Drop-out rate in 1 <sup>st</sup> year of vocational upper secondary education (%)	11,7	10,6	9,4	8,9	10,7	<11	<11
Source: EHIS							
Share of people having completed vocational education <sup>30</sup> 5 years after graduating basic school (%)	23,0	23,0	22,4	22,3	21,6	increasing	increasing
Source: EHIS							

#### Action 1.4: Ensuring access to higher education

Programme operational indicators	Actual					Target	
	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2022	2023

<sup>30</sup> By vocational education and training, only vocational education and training leading to a formal qualification is meant.

Higher education drop-out rate (first year of 1st level tertiary education) (%) <i>Source: EHIS</i>	17,3	17,0	15,2	14,5	15,1	16,4	16,2
Number of doctoral degrees defended per academic year <i>Source: EHIS</i>	244	235	221	222	250	300	300
Percentage of higher education graduates with nominal duration of studies <sup>31</sup> (%) <i>Source: EHIS</i>	51,0	51,4	52,3	55,0	56,1	53,2	53,6
Percentage of alumni who are satisfied with their teachers and the teaching and supervision they received <sup>32</sup> <i>Source: alumni survey</i>	-	79,6	-	-	data 2023 III q	maintain	maintain

**Action 1.5: Developing adult learning and creating learning opportunities for adults**

Programme operational indicators	Actual					Target	
	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2022	2023
Participation rate in lifelong learning of adults aged 25-64 with low educational attainment <sup>33</sup> (%) <i>Source:</i>	7,6	8,6	6,5	8,6	10,7	>9,0	>9,0
Number of second chance general education students aged 19 and over <i>Source: EHIS</i>	3487	3487	3698	3596	3541	keep levels	keep levels
Drop-out rate in second chance general education <sup>34</sup> (%) <i>Source: EHIS</i>	33	32	28	30	32	30	30
Percentage of students aged 25 and over in vocational education and training (%) <i>Source: EHIS</i>	39,6	41,7	42,4	41,1	38,5	keep levels	keep levels

**Action 1.6 Promoting the international competitiveness of education**

Programme operational indicators	Actual					Target	
	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2022	2023
Percentage of international students enrolled in Estonia (%) <i>Source: EHIS</i>	11,0	12,2	11,6	11,4	11,0	10-15	10-15

<sup>31</sup> Nominal duration + 1a for programmes with a nominal duration of less than 4 years, nominal duration + 2a for programmes with a nominal duration of at least 4 years. BA and MA level programmes are taken into account.

<sup>32</sup> The 2019 result has been revised due to a change in methodology. Source: Alumni Survey

<sup>33</sup> The indicator measures the share of 25-64 year olds who have participated in formal or informal education or training in the four weeks preceding the survey. Low educational attainment is defined as people with basic education or less (ISCED 0-2).

<sup>34</sup> All forms of second chance studies at upper secondary level are taken into account.

## Operational indicators for Action 2

### Activity 2.1 Curriculum and school organisation development activities

Programme operational indicators	Actual					Target	
	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2022	2023
Number of schools in the Schools in Motion network <i>Source: Schools in Motion programme<sup>35</sup></i>	40	78	148	148	184	increasing	increasing
Percentage of students who are fairly or completely satisfied with physical activity opportunities at school <sup>36</sup> (%)	27,4	26,3	31,6	31,8	30,7	increasing	increasing
4th grade	13,8	12,3	14,7	16,3	16,1		
8th grade	15,9	13,8	16,3	15,8	15,5		
11th grade							
<i>Source: satisfaction survey</i>							
Percentage of students not bullied repeatedly in the last two weeks (%)	67,6	65,4	67,8	66,0	63,5	increasing	increasing
4th grade	75,6	74,0	74,2	79,3	76,7		
8th grade	82,1	89,5	89,1	92,4	90		
11th grade	88,0	87,6	-	92,4	87,8		
vocational education							
<i>Source: satisfaction survey</i>							
Percentage of teachers in general education schools who have not been repeatedly bullied by students, parents, colleagues in the last two weeks (%)	85,0	.	-	87,5	-	-	-
<i>Source: satisfaction survey</i>							
Supporting gifted learners	a new indicator, methodology to be developed						




### Action 2.2 Ensure equal opportunities in education

Programme operational indicators	Actual					Target	
	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2022	2023
Percentage of implementation of the services of support specialists recommended by the out-of-school counselling team in basic school education (%) <i>Source: EHIS</i>	-	69	72	74	76	to be specified	to be specified
Share of students receiving enhanced and special support included in mainstream classes of all students receiving enhanced and special support <i>Source: EHIS</i>	33,1	31,1	32,1	34,4	36,2	>31	>31

<sup>35</sup> The Schools in Motion programme (project "Supporting physical activity of school pupils" under the European Economic Area and Norway's 2014-2021 grant programme "Local Development and Poverty Reduction").

<sup>36</sup> Percentage of students who are above average satisfied with physical activity opportunities at school, i.e. students who answered all three questions assessing physical activity opportunities (1. I can go outdoors every day for at least some of my breaks. 2. I don't have to sit all the time in class, I can move around sometimes, e.g. when doing group work or solving tasks. 3. Teachers encourage us to move actively during the breaks) "I rather agree" and "I strongly agree".



Programme operational indicators	Actual					Target	
	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2022	2023
Average mark in Estonian as a second language in the basic school final examination <i>Source: Education and Youth Authority</i>	69	69	37	65	60	75	75
Average mark in the Estonian as a second language in upper secondary school state examination <i>Source: Education and Youth Authority</i>	75	75	74	73	67	75	75
Percentage of students in general upper secondary education who achieved at least level B2 in the Estonian as a second language exam (%) <i>Source: Education and Youth Authority</i>	86,5	81,8	83,1	77,3	75,5	to be specified	to be specified
Top performing students ( <sup>38</sup> in a school with a language other than Estonian compared to a school with Estonian as the language of instruction.  natural sciences  literacy  Mathematics <i>Source: PISA</i>	5,3/14,6 5,7/16,7 9,8/17,5	-	-	-	data in 2023	6,5/16 7/18 11/19	-
Percentage of teachers who self-assessed as having received the necessary training to teach and/or support children with special needs, basic education <i>Source: satisfaction survey</i>	45,5	-	-	46,3	-	increasing	increasing
Percentage of teachers who consider themselves to have received the necessary training to teach and/or support children with special needs, general education <i>Source: satisfaction survey</i>	43,7	-	-	43	-	increasing	increasing
Percentage of preschool teachers who agree that there is good cooperation between the preschool and various outside professionals, including doctors, support and child protection professionals, the police, etc., in supporting children with special needs <i>Source: satisfaction survey</i>	56,2	-	-	59,2	-	increasing	increasing
Percentage of teachers in general education schools who consider that the school and various professionals outside the school, including police, counsellors, doctors, psychologists, youth workers, etc., work well together in supporting children with special educational needs <i>Source: satisfaction survey</i>	60,8	-	-	65,3	-	increasing	increasing
Percentage of teachers who feel well or very well prepared to teach in a multicultural or multilingual environment	15,7	-	-	-	-	-	-

<sup>37</sup> Not possible to calculate due to the Covid-related emergency situation.

<sup>38</sup> PISA levels 5 and 6.

Programme operational indicators	Actual					Target	
	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2022	2023
Source: TALIS							

**Action 2.3** Support the development of teachers and educational leaders.

Programme performance indicators	Actual					Target	
	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2022	2023
Percentage of school leaders who took action to support teachers to work together to develop new teaching practices (%) Source: TALIS	45	-	-	-	-	-	-
Percentage of up to 39 years old teachers in general education schools (%) Source: EHIS	27,0	27,0	27,0	26,5	26,4	27,5	28,0
Competition upon admission to teacher training programmes <sup>39</sup> Source: SAIS, EHIS	0,9	1,1	1,0	1,2	1,1	>1	>1
Gender structure of teachers women/men (F/M) in general education schools (%) Source: EHIS	F 85,5 M 14,5	F 85,5 M 14,5	F 85,4 M 14,6	F 85,2 M 14,8	F 85,2 M 14,8	F 84,5 M 15,5	F 84 M 16
Percentage of teachers (%) who think the profession is valued in society Source: TALIS	26,4	-	-	-	-	-	-
Percentage of teachers who have co-taught with another teacher at least once a month (%) Source: TALIS	21,5	-	-	-	-	-	-





## Operational indicators for Action 3

**Action 3.2:** Link education to labour market needs

Programme operational indicators	Actual					Target	
	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2022	2023
Employment rate of people aged 20-34 having completed vocational education and training 1-3 years ago (%) Source: Eurostat	77,8	82,7	80,3	70,6	75,1	>80	>80
Employment rate of 20-34 year olds having completed tertiary level education 1-3 years ago Source: Eurostat	89,2	87,6	85,7	92,4	87,3	>88	>88
Percentage of educational institutions that have introduced an entrepreneurship module <sup>40</sup> (%) Source: report of the Entrepreneurship Education Programme, EHIS.	37	48	59	63	70	65	70

<sup>39</sup> Indicates the ratio of the teacher education programmes' competition to the average competition for all undergraduate and postgraduate programmes in universities. Above 1 means that the competition is above average, below 1 that it is below average. The competition indicates the number of candidates per enrolled students.

<sup>40</sup> The indicator covers all general education schools, vocational education institutions and higher education institutions.

Programme operational indicators	Actual					Target	
	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2022	2023
Percentage of graduates in STEM (science, technology, engineering, manufacturing and construction) in higher education (%) <i>Source: EHIS</i>	27,7	27,9	27,4	28,1	27,5	30	30
Number of IT graduates per year  in higher education  vocational education and training <i>Source: EHIS</i>	604 520	718 507	766 486	975 499	847 424	975 520	975 520
Alumni satisfaction with traineeship opportunities <sup>41</sup>  BA programmes (%)  MA programmes (%) <i>Source: alumni survey</i>	-	58,0 61,3	-	-	data 2023 III kv	maintain	maintain
Share of work-based learning graduates among all VET graduates (%) <i>Source: EHIS</i>	11,9	12,4	15,2	17,2	13,2	18,0	19,0

## Operational indicators for Action 4

### Action 4.1 Supporting youth entrepreneurship and initiative (HOOG).

Programme operational indicators	Actual					Target	
	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2022	2023
Share of youth-led NGOs aged 18-26 among active NGOs (%) <i>Source: Statistics Estonia</i>	4,6	4,2	2,0	1,8	data in May 2023	4,8	5,0
Percentage of young people in hobby schools among all 7-26 year olds (%) <i>Source: EHIS, Statistics Estonia.</i>	28,9	29,9	30,3	32,3	34,1*	30,8	31,1
Number of youth initiative projects (and percentage of projects supported) <i>Source: Education and Youth Authority</i>	-	164 (71%)	179 (74%)	32 (50%)	168 (42%)	maintain	maintain
Share of young entrepreneurs among 18-26 year olds (%) <i>Source: Statistics Estonia</i>	3,9	3,8	4,0	4,3	data in May 2023	4,4	4,7

\* Preliminary data

### Action 4.2: Supporting civic participation of youth and protecting the rights of young people (OSA)

Programme operational indicators	Actual					Target	
	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2022	2023
Number of formats of participation <i>Source: Estonian Federation of Youth Associations</i>	-	79	82	91	92	maintain	maintain
Percentage of local governments with a functioning youth council of all local governments (%) <i>Source: Estonian Federation of Youth Associations</i>	74,4	89,9	94,0	92,0	68	maintain (89,9)	maintain (89,9)

<sup>41</sup> The proportion of satisfied alumni is expressed in the response options "tend to agree" and "strongly agree".

Candidates aged 18-26a as a % of all candidates in local government council elections <i>Source: Statistics Estonia</i>	6,5 <sup>42</sup>	-	-	5,4	-	not measured	not measured
Percentage (%) of young people aged 15-26 who have participated in organised voluntary activities <i>Source: Statistics Estonia</i>	-	-	-	22	26,5	to be specified	to be specified

**Action 4.3: Developing accessibility and quality of youth work (ISE)**

<i>Programme operational indicators</i>	<i>Actual</i>					<i>Target</i>	
	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2022	2023
Percentage of local authorities with youth work services at or above "advanced" level (%) <i>Source: minuomavalitsus.ee</i>	-	59,0	69,6	34,2	<i>data in June 2023</i>	maintain	maintain
Percentage of young people satisfied with youth work services (%) <i>Source: survey "Satisfaction with youth work among young people involved in youth work"</i>	87	-	90	-	-	maintain	maintain

**Action 4.4 Ensure equal opportunities for young people in society (KINDLUS)**

<i>Programme operational indicators</i>	<i>Actual</i>					<i>Target</i>	
	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2022	2023
Percentage of young people aged 15-26 who think support is available (%) <i>Source: Statistics Estonia</i>	Methodology for the Indicator is under development						
15-29 years olds not in employment, education or training (NEET-youth) (%) <i>Source: Statistics Estonia</i>	11,7	9,8	11,7	11,2	10,6	maintain	11,1

<sup>42</sup> Based on the 2017 local elections.