



HARIDUS- JA
TEADUSMINISTEERIUM

Ministry of Education and Research

Annual report 2023

Tartu 2024

Introduction

The annual report of the Ministry of Education and Research (MES) provides an overview of the implementation of the objectives of the **"Smart and active nation"** performance area for 2023, the most important achievements towards the objectives and the budget implementation. In addition, the report highlights the key challenges facing the area of education and research. The report also 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 underpin the activities of the performance area.



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

Operational environment of the Ministry of Education and Research in 2023

In March 2023, regular elections to the Riigikogu were held and the coalition government of the Estonian Reform Party, Eesti 200 and the Estonian Social Democratic Party set new goals for its term of office. The biggest new reforms agreed were the extension of compulsory schooling, a substantial change in the content of vocational education and training and the extension of studies to four years, as well as a reform of the school network with support for small schools. In addition, the minister's focus is firmly on teacher pay rises and the negotiation of a long-term education pact. The transition to Estonian-language teaching and the integration of pre-primary education and childcare into a single system will continue.

After the elections, when the state budget situation and the economic outlook for the next few years had become clear, the wage dispute between the Ministry of Education and the Estonian Teachers' Union intensified - the teachers were ready to call a strike to defend their wage demands. This was followed by a search for solutions to the labour dispute.

The economic downturn and the rising cost of living have exacerbated the situation in the education sector as a whole - with the ministry, local authorities and other education and youth providers looking for ways to cut back or save. Alongside austerity and smart management, the objectives of green transition must also be

borne in mind. In addition, the issue of the efficiency and effectiveness of education spending was highlighted in 2023.

The question of an affordable school network, which would enable high-quality education without reducing access to education, is still a topical one. Record low birth rates have renewed the attention to the issue and pointed to the need for long-term solutions. Solutions are being hampered by an increasingly acute shortage of skilled educators.

Technological changes, in particular the widespread availability and availability of large-scale language models from the first half of 2023, have brought artificial intelligence to the spotlight. Artificial intelligence will have a major impact on learning and teaching - ways need to be found to use AI to support the learning process. In order to prepare for the developments, the Minister has convened a working group on artificial intelligence.

The impact of the war in Ukraine continues to be felt in Estonia's education and youth sectors, although the emphasis has somewhat changed. While last year the education system had to adapt to the large numbers of refugees and quickly find solutions to provide learning opportunities, the focus has now shifted to engaging young ukrainians so that they are not excluded from education and youth work. The massive bomb threats towards educational institutions as a consequence of the war in 2023 tested the effectiveness of institutions' crisis plans. The issue of language learning for war refugees is still on the agenda.

1. Achievement of the performance targets

What do we want to achieve? People in Estonia have the knowledge, skills and attitudes to fulfil themselves in their personal lives, work and society, and to support the advancement of Estonian life and global sustainable development. Young people's ample development opportunities, sense of security and strong support create the Estonia they want to take forward.

Table 1. Overview of performance indicators

Performance indicators	Actual					Target		
	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	2023	2024	Estonia 2035 Destination
Percentage of 18-24 year olds with low educational attainment not in education or training (%), Total men women Source: Eurostat	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 11,4 7,8	9,6 12,5 6,7	9,3 12,0 6,6	
Share of adults (25-64 years) with professional (%) Source: Statistics Estonia	73	74,1	73,5	74,7	74,9	74,5	75	80
Adults in lifelong learning, formal and non-formal (%) Source: Eurostat, Statistics Estonia	20,2	17,1	18,4	21,1	23,2	19,4	19,4	25
Adults in lifelong learning, informal (%)	Methodology being developed							
Employed in smart specialisation growth areas a year after graduation as a share of total employment (%) ⁱ Source: Graduate Survey	11,6	12,9	27,3 ¹	26,7	Data 2024 III qu	29	29	
Self-directed learner	Measurement to start in 2023							
Top performing students (PISA levels 5 and 6) (%), functional literacy mathematical literacy scientific literacy Source: PISA	13,7 15,5 12,2	- - -	- - -	- - -	10,6 13,1 11,6	- - -	- - -	
Teachers' average pay compared to average pay in Estonia (%), kindergarten teachers general education teachers vocational education teachers	86 112 108	85 112 110	81 106 103	81 105 102	92 120 117	85 111 111	92 120 120	

¹ In 2022, the methodology for calculating the indicator was changed due to a change in the list of smart specialisation growth areas. The 2021 level is already measured according to the new methodology.

Performance indicators	Actual					Target		
	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	2023	2024	Estonia 2035 Destination
Source: Balance of payments, Estonian Education Information System, Statistics Estonia								
Young people's trust in the state (%)	56 (2016)	-	-	57	-	-	-	

- The proportion of **students with top PISA scores** fell in all three areas measured, with the largest decline in functional reading. Despite this, Estonian students are among the world's top performers in PISA and the drop in scores for Estonian students was relatively smaller compared to other countries. In Estonia, it was also positive that pupils from schools with a language other than Estonian improved their average scores in reading and science.
- The share of **18-24 year olds with low educational attainment who are not in education or training** has decreased overall compared to 2022, at the expense of men. For females, the indicator increased slightly in 2023, and the percentage of girls dropping out of basic school also showed a downward trend.
- The share of **adults with professional education** has remained stable at 75% in recent years. This does not give hope that the 80% target can be reached by 2035.
- **The participation rate of adults in lifelong learning** has been rising steadily year on year, reaching 23.2% by 2023. In the light of these developments, the 25% target for 2035 is feasible.
- **One year after graduation, the share of people employed in growth areas of smart specialisation as a share of total employment has decreased slightly over the year.** The decrease has been at the expense of male graduates, as the share of smart specialisation graduates has fallen from 29% to 27%, while the share of female graduates remained at the same level as before (26%). Although the share of graduates in smart specialisation growth areas has decreased as a percentage, the absolute number of graduates recruited in these areas increased in 2022 (+169 employees).
- **The average salary of teachers in general education schools** increased to 120% of the average salary in Estonia in 2023. The minimum salary for teachers was increased by 23.9% in 2023. A contribution of €13.1 million from local governments was added to the state budget wage fund, and from September, a 1.5-fold increase in the pay of teachers teaching in Estonian in Ida-Viru County schools was implemented, helping to reach the 120% level. The annual change in the Estonian average salary of 11% (lower than for teachers), also contributed to the achievement of the target. The average pay of pre-school teachers was 92% of the Estonian average and that of VET teachers 117%.

Key achievements in 2023

➤ **The draft law on early childhood education and care is ready.**

The law increases access to early childhood education, defines more clearly the provision of support services and support for children with special educational needs, sets out the requirement for teaching and education in Estonian, raises the qualification requirements for heads of institutions and childminders and introduces qualification requirements for assistant teachers, as well as clarifying the regulation on the formation of groups.

➤ **In general education, changes to the national curriculum were approved.**

Amendments to the national curricula for basic schools, upper secondary schools and simplified national curricula for basic schools, incl. subject syllabi, were approved by the government. On the basis of the revised national curricula, schools will modify their curricula to support the implementation of a contemporary approach to learning. Indicative descriptions of learning processes have been prepared to support teachers in their work.

➤ **Support for educational institutions in the transition to Estonian-language education continued, and the transition action plan was updated.**

From September 2023, the employment of Estonian-language educators in Ida-Virumaa will be supported by paying a wage subsidy to school owners. A programme to develop a value-based learning culture for the heads of educational institutions in Ida-Viru County has been launched. In addition, language training courses were offered in 2023 for education staff in four cities. Schools will be supported in recruiting substitute teachers and student teachers. School and ECEC teachers could apply for support for additional Estonian language training, increased Estonian language teaching and training for new immigrants.

➤ **Supporting the next generation of teachers.**

The minimum salary for teachers increased from €1,412 to €1,749 in 2023. In addition, enrolment to teacher training and support specialist programmes at Tallinn University and the University of Tartu were increased. A scholarship of €400 per month was introduced for students studying full-time in teacher education or support specialist training programmes. The induction year programme was renewed and, as an beginning teacher support programme, now supports all new entrants to the teaching profession, irrespective of their qualification.

➤ **In vocational education and training,**

The aim of the reform is to make the vocational education and training targeting basic school graduates more varied, flexible and predominantly four-year, increasing the proportion of general skills in the curricula. The

preparations for the VET reform were launched.

➤ **In higher education, operating grants for higher education institutions and needs-based student allowances were increased.**

➤ **Developing green skills and supporting a climate-neutral economy.**

➤ **The state-commissioned adult education programmes focused on the development of digital skills.**

➤ **Developing the quality of youth services.**

terms and conditions of the "Engineering Academy and IT Academy in Vocational, General and Hobby Education", which will support advanced training in engineering and ICT in vocational schools, were approved.

The operating grant for higher education has been increased by 15% and the needs-based student allowance has been doubled, up to €440 per month, depending on family income. In addition, a funding instrument was created for universities of applied sciences under the Ministry of Education and Research to support research and development.

In order to support the green transition of Estonian enterprises, the identification of the most important green skills and the formulation of learning outcomes have been launched in cooperation between higher education institutions, vocational education institutions and professional and trade associations. In 2023, the preparation and launching of R&D actions of the Just Transition Fund took place in Ida-Virumaa in cooperation with local partners. The actions will help support the region's transition to a climate-neutral economy and the diversification of its economic environment.

The procedures for ordering state-commissioned training courses were updated.

A digital environment to support quality management and evaluation of services has been completed, which allows the creation of data-driven pre-filled graphs and tables for the evaluator on the youth field in municipalities.

Key challenges

➤ **Transition to Estonian-language education in Russian-medium schools.**

The transition will exacerbate the problem of teacher supply, as the inclusion of language requirements in teacher qualifications will exacerbate the shortage of teachers. The wider educational impacts of the transition (e.g. impact on learning outcomes, satisfaction, support for learners with special needs, ELET prevention, further learning, etc.) need to be addressed.

➤ **Increase in the share of unqualified teachers.**

With an ageing teaching workforce and a general shortage of teachers, educational institutions are forced to hire staff who lack the necessary teaching skills. This jeopardises the quality of education and other performance indicators.

➤ **Declining student satisfaction with school.**

School satisfaction is decreasing and is particularly low among 8th grade students. One of the reasons for this dissatisfaction is the high incidence of school bullying. Increased drop-out rates of girls towards the end of basic school in 2023 may also be a partial due to this problem. The issue needs further analysis and possible new or enhanced support measures.

➤ **Implementing a contemporary learning approach in educational institutions.**

The implementation of a contemporary approach to learning has been set as a strategic objective, but the measures taken have not produced the expected results. According to the PISA survey (2022, 2018 and earlier) and the national satisfaction and school environment surveys, there are significant shortcomings in the creation of a learner-centred school culture and in teaching that takes into account the specificities and needs of the learner.

➤ **The student support and loan system needs attention.**

The system of grants and loans must ensure access to higher education for young people from lower socio-economic backgrounds and reduce the need to work while studying.

➤ **Lower-than-expected performance indicators for IT and LTT graduates.**

For the second year in a row, the share of LTT graduates in tertiary education has fallen, and the lower-than-expected number of IT graduates is also a cause for concern.

➤ **Qualifications of youth staff.**

Although a professional standard for youth workers has been developed and youth workers are trained at higher education level, there are no qualification requirements in youth work and hobby education. Setting qualification requirements would help to ensure the quality of the service.

2. Achieving the objectives of the Education and Youth programme

Table 1. Overview of the Education and Youth Programme

Name of the programme	Education and Youth Programme 2023-2026
The aim of the programme	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. 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.
Estonia 2035 Strategy target	Smart people value knowledge, protect themselves, others and the (living) environment, and has a supportive attitude towards all groups in society. They are curious, creative and entrepreneurial, eager to learn and are ready for the nature of their work to change. 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.
Programme period	2023-2026
Responsible ministry	Ministry of Education and Research
Co-implementers (institutions in their own area)	Education and Youth Board, Astangu Vocational Rehabilitation Centre, Qualifications 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	
	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	2023	2024
Participation of children from 3 years old to school age in pre-school education (%)	91,1	91,6	91,2	91,6	88,2	92	92,5
20-24 year olds with at least upper secondary education (%)	82,6	85,7	85,9	83,2	83,3	85,4	85,6
Share of 25-34 years old with tertiary education (%)*	42,8	43,1	43,2	43,9	43,5	43,5	43,6
Source: Estonian Labour Force Survey							
Share of VET graduates who participated in short-term international mobility (%)				2,3	6,9		

Source: Estonian Education Information System							
Percentage of bachelor's and master's graduates who participated in short-term international mobility (%)	8,0	8,3	8,0	6,7	7,3	9,0	9,3
Source: Estonian Education Information System							

* Estonia 2035 indicator. Target level 2035: 45%. For more detailed activity indicator tables, see Annex 1.

What is positive?

- The establishment of state upper secondary schools has progressed at the expected pace - by the end of 2023, there were 25 state secondary schools in total.
- There were also signs of improvement in the secondary education attainment rate, with 82% of pupils reaching upper secondary level four years after leaving basic school.
- In non-stationary general education, the drop-out rate has clearly decreased - 26% in 2023, down from 32% previously. The share of students in non-stationary general education or upper secondary vocational education among those aged 19-64 with no upper secondary education has also risen slightly over the year to 4.7%.
- The drop-out rate in the first year of vocational education and training fell significantly from 10.7% to 8.6%.
- The share of 25-34 year olds with tertiary education has remained steady at 43% in recent years, meeting the target.
- The drop-out rate in the first year of tertiary education is showing signs of a long-term decline, falling to 13% in 2023 from 17% in 2019.
- Compared to last year, the number of learners participating in short-term mobility has increased. The increase has been particularly strong for vocational graduates, who have seen a threefold increase compared to 2022.

What needs attention?

- The percentage of children aged three to school age who have attended early childhood education has fallen below 90%, well below the target of 92%. The biggest drop in attendance has been among 6 year olds - the reasons for this change need to be clarified.
- While the overall share of drop-outs from basic school remained unchanged compared to the previous year, the drop-out rate for girls has increased. There was also an increase in the drop-out rate in the first year of upper secondary school.

- The share of people aged 20-24 with at least upper secondary education has remained essentially unchanged compared to last year and has not moved closer to the target.
- The participation rate in lifelong learning of low-educated adults aged 25-64 has decreased slightly over the year and is below target.
- The number of PhD graduates is lower than expected - 250 in 2022 and 237 in 2023. The target of 300 remains far from being reached.
- The share of foreign students studying in Estonia has been falling rapidly. On the one hand, this is due to the war in Ukraine (Russian citizens are not allowed to enter higher education here, European citizens are discouraged from coming to study near the war zone), and on the other hand, to the change in visa policy - fewer residence permits are granted to third-country nationals for study purposes.

Most important developments in 2023

➤ Developing access and learning opportunities

In the field of early childhood education, a **draft law on early childhood education** has been completed, which increases the availability of early childhood education, defines more clearly the provision of support services and support for children with special educational needs, sets out the requirement for early childhood education in Estonian, raises the qualification requirements for head teachers and childminders, introduces qualification requirements for assistant teachers and clarifies the regulation on the formation of groups.

Needs-based student grants were increased twice, to €440 per month, from the 2023/24 academic year. The rates of needs-based student support had remained unchanged since 2014. Eligibility for and the amount of the needs-based study allowance depends on the student's average monthly income per family member.

In 2023, **state operating grant for higher education will increase by** 15%, from €175 million to €201.5 million. The increase in operating grant in particular made it possible to reduce the gap between the salaries of lecturers and those of teachers in general education schools.

➤ School Network

In 2023, **five new state gymnasiums will** open: Mustamäe State Gymnasium, Pelgulinna State Gymnasium, Tõnismäe State Gymnasium, Narva Gymnasium, Narva Estonian Gymnasium. The Rae State Gymnasium has also been completed, but educational activities start there on 1 September 2024.

Regarding the basic school buildings, Narva Estonian Basic School, Hariduse School, Tartu Kroonuaia (Pärli) School and Võru Järve School buildings **were completed**. The opening of the Kohtla-Järve Kesklinna school was postponed to January 2024.

Sillamäe Upper Secondary School, Sillamäe Estonian Basic School, Kiviõli 1st Secondary School, Kiviõli Russian School and Lügánuse School were **taken over by the state.**

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

Objective: 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	
	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	2023	2024
Percentage of students scoring below level 3 in PISA ⁱⁱ (%), functional reading skills Source: PISA	32,3	-	-	-	36,2	-	-
Percentage of students scoring below level 3 in PISA (%), mathematical literacy Source: PISA	31,0	-	-	-	38,2	-	-
Percentage of students scoring below level 3 in PISA (%), science literacy Source: PISA	30,2	-	-	-	32,0	-	-
Percentage of 16-24 year olds with digital skills above the basic level (%) Source: The Digital Economy and Society Index (DESI)	-	-	47,5	-		To be specified	
Subjective satisfaction of participants in the learning process: percentage of students who are rather or completely satisfied with school (%), grade 8 Source: satisfaction survey	24,5	24,4	24,6	23	20,1	25	25
Subjective satisfaction of participants in the learning process: percentage of students who are rather or completely satisfied with school (%), grade 11 Source: satisfaction survey	33,6	35,4	39,6	33,4	30,1	40	40
Subjective satisfaction of participants in the learning process: percentage of students who are rather or completely satisfied with the school (%), upper secondary VET Source: satisfaction survey	52,4	-	54,8	52,7	45	55	55
Subjective satisfaction of participants in the learning process: percentage of teachers who are rather or completely satisfied ⁱⁱⁱ (%) Source: satisfaction survey	-	-	84,2	-		85	85
Percentage of students who have at least B1 level in Estonian as a second language at the end of basic school (%)	67,8	-	57,9	55,6	52,3	66	68

Source: Estonian Education Information System, Examination Information System							
Percentage of students who have at least B2 level in Estonian as a second language at the end of basic school (%) Source: Estonian Education Information System, Examination Information System	a new indicator, methodology to be developed						
Teacher professional security: percentage of teacher graduates who have worked as a teacher for five consecutive years after graduation (%). Source: Estonian Education Information System	57	51	55	62	56	maintain	56
Teachers' professional security: percentage of first-time teachers who have worked as a teacher for five consecutive years after taking up their post (%). Source: Estonian Education Information System	46	50	51	50	52	maintain	52

For detailed tables of activity indicators see Annex 1.

What is positive?

- The 2023 targets for both indicators of teacher professionalism have been reached: compared to the previous year, there was an increase in the proportion of first-time entrants who have worked as a teacher for five consecutive years after taking up their post (however, there was a noticeable drop in the proportion who have worked for five consecutive years after graduation). The popularity of the teaching profession is also highlighted by the fact that in 2023, the intake of teacher training students increased significantly (1,518 students were admitted, compared to 1,173 previously), but competition for places did not decrease. The highest competition is in the fields of early childhood teacher education and class teacher education.
- Inclusive education indicators are gradually improving, with a steady increase in the share of pupils in mainstream classes and in mainstream schools receiving enhanced and special support. In 2023, 72.8% of pupils in need of support were already enrolled in mainstream schools; the share of inclusion increased to 38%.
- The top scores in PISA of pupils in Russian-medium schools have improved since five years ago in science and reading, with particularly marked improvements in reading.

What needs attention?

- Students' satisfaction with school has declined in both 8th and 11th grades and at upper secondary VET. Dissatisfaction is strikingly high among 8th graders, with only one in five saying they feel good at school.

Girls are more discontented than boys, and satisfaction rates are also lower among students whose families have fewer financial resources. Clearly, the underlying causes of the decline in student satisfaction need further analysis. Indicators suggest that a lack of a sense of security plays a role in satisfaction, as the bullying rate has also worsened. The proportion of pupils who have not been bullied repeatedly in the past week has decreased. 40% of pupils in grade 4 say they have been bullied repeatedly in the last two weeks. In older classes and in VET, fewer students experience bullying, but there too bullying has increased. Students' perception of the opportunities for physical activity in school also plays an important role in their satisfaction - an indicator that has not improved significantly in recent years.

- The proportion of teachers meeting the qualification requirements is decreasing in general education and ECEC (79% and 85% respectively in 2023/24). Our teaching workforce is ageing - in the last five years, the share of teachers aged 60 and over has already risen to 24%, while the share of young teachers shows no sign of increasing. It is noteworthy that the proportion of qualified staff among new teachers is lower than that of those leaving the profession, exacerbating quality problems.
- Competition for teacher-training places gives some hope of alleviating the teacher shortage. While the overall picture is positive in the light of increased take-up, there are concerns about the curricula for subject teacher training, where enrolment has been low for some time.
- Learning outcomes in Estonian as a second language continue to be poor, well below the targets set. The situation is particularly bad for those who have reached the B2 level by the end of upper secondary school, with the percentage of those who have reached the required level steadily decreasing over the last four years.

Key developments in 2023

➤ Teachers and school leaders

The minimum salary for teachers **increased from €1,412 to €1,749 in 2023**. In addition to the minimum salary, the state will allocate an additional 17% to school leaders to cover teachers' labour costs (the so-called differentiation component), which will allow school leaders to regulate teachers' working conditions and salaries more flexibly. In 2023, the minimum salary for ECEC teachers will, at the discretion of local authorities, be at least 90% of the minimum salary for general education teachers if they meet the language requirements, and 100% if they also have a master's degree or equivalent qualification. A total of €15 million in state budget support was allocated to local authorities to subsidise the salaries of ECEC teachers.

The induction year programme, designed to support teachers starting their careers at school, has been renewed - from 1 September 2024, the University of Tartu and Tallinn University will offer **a support programme for starting teachers**. As schools employ teachers who have not yet qualified as teachers but also need support in their work, the programme has been extended to all beginning teachers. The University of Tartu also offers the programme for beginning support specialists. Participants in the programme will receive support in settling into school life and the profession, as well as expert advice on further studies and applying for a professional qualification. In order to keep the content and format of the programme up to date,

an advisory board consisting of experts from Tallinn University, the University of Tartu and the Ministry of Education and Research is in place from 2023.

In 2023, when the activities of the two EU-funded actions supporting the professional development of teachers and leaders and the implementation of a contemporary approach to learning came to an end, the results of the measures were summarised. The results showed that the number of **teachers participating in in-service training** (over 30 hours) **exceeded expectations**. A total of 39 409 teachers and 5456 heads of educational establishments participated. The evaluation of the effectiveness and impact of the actions carried out by the think-tank Praxis also showed that the activities planned under the objectives have been largely effective. However, the evaluation showed that the indicators in use do not enable to assess of the substantive effectiveness of the programme and should be reviewed in the new period. The evaluation showed that the contemporary approach to learning has not yet been widely implemented in Estonia, but that there is a discernible movement in this direction. The relationship between the indicator of uptake of the contemporary approach to learning and the activity of teachers in in-service training was not quantified, but both the training providers and the training participants overwhelmingly rate it as (rather) effective. The results of the evaluation will be taken into account in the planning of the new ESF+ measure "In-service training in education and youth field and the next generation of teachers".

In order to ensure that teachers and youth workers have access to high-quality and accessible opportunities for further learning, the Ministry of Education and Research developed **a concept for in-service training for education and youth workers** in 2023, in cooperation with partners. Coherence and flexibility between all levels of learning and types of- have become increasingly important, and the education and youth sectors are therefore addressed together in the concept. In the light of the results of the evaluation of the completed actions, the concept defines the general principles of in-service training: there are several actors involved in the organisation (individual, school/institution, school manager, state and universities) and each actor has its own roles and responsibilities, publicly funded in-service training is based on the Adult Education Act, professional standards and research, supports the development of the skills and knowledge needed in the professions in the field and the development of education and youth institutions. An important improvement compared to the previous concept is the formulation of the roles and responsibilities of the actors involved in in-service training.

In the autumn of 2023, the topic of **a teacher career model** was raised - in October, a working group was set up to create a teacher career model, consisting of representatives of teachers, principals, managers, non-profit organisations and the Ministry. In 2024, the work of the expert group will continue under the education pact. The task of the working group will be to prepare a vision for a teacher career model for the negotiations on the education pact.

In 2023, the Ministry of Education and Research, in cooperation with the University of Tartu, Tallinn University and the Estonian Association of School Leaders, started **to develop an implementation plan for the competence and career model for school leaders**. In order to encourage the spread and implementation of educational innovations and the creation of a safe learning environment that supports mental and physical health and well-being, a system for assessing school leaders will be in place by the end of 2024.

At the end of 2023, the Ministry of Education and Research submitted an application to the Qualifications Authority for the creation of a **professional standard for teaching assistants**, in order to harmonise the tasks of teaching assistants and to describe the nature of their work as educational assistants. The Authority's Qualification Council decided to merge the process of creating a professional standard for teaching assistants with the process of updating the professional standards for teachers. The Qualification Standards Committee will start its work in 2024 and the new qualification standards will come into force in 2025.

Funding agreements were signed with the University of Tartu and Tallinn University **to increase enrolment in teacher training and support specialist** programmes. The priorities are to increase enrolments in the specialisations of Estonian language teacher (including Estonian as a second language), science teacher (including mathematics) and class teacher. For admission in 2023/24, the number of study places at the University of Tartu has been increased by 287 and at Tallinn University by 155. For admission in 2024/25, it has been agreed to increase the number of study places at the University of Tartu by 270 and at Tallinn University by 175 compared to admission in 2021/22.

From 2023/24, students enrolled full-time in teacher training or support specialist training programmes will receive a **scholarship of** €400 per month. The proportion of students receiving the scholarship varies from one programme to another, depending on the priority given to the field and on previous admission competitions. In the fields of science and technology and language teacher training, where the shortage of teachers is most acute, 80% of students will receive a scholarship.

➤ Transition to Estonian-medium education

On 11 December 2023, an **updated Action Plan for the transition to Estonian-medium education** 2022-2030 was approved. The most important additions were:

- Tools will be created to monitor the quality of learning of pupils with a mother tongue other than Estonian and to assess the level of Estonian as a second language, science, maths and Russian as a mother tongue, and guidance material will be developed to support the transition to Estonian for children and pupils with special needs;
- The programme of the Centre for Ethics of the University of Tartu for the period 2023-2024, "Shaping a value-based educational culture in local governments of Ida-Viru County to support the transition to Estonian-medium education", aimed at the heads of schools and ECEC centres in Ida-Viru County;
- To support the transition, schools can apply for a substitute teacher from the NGO's Substitute Teacher Programme, and students from the University of Tartu and Tallinn University offer support as an assistant teacher.

From September 2023, the Ministry of Education and Science will support the employment of Estonian-language educators in Ida-Viru County by paying a **wage subsidy to school owners**. In total, 1151 educators received support from the measure, in addition to around 150 headmasters and head teachers. The planned cost of the measure in one calendar year is about €15 million. The cost in 2023 was €4.2 million.

Educational researchers from Tallinn University and the University of Tartu, in collaboration with teachers of primary education, created **100 technology-enriched learning games for kindergartens to teach Estonian to pupils whose mother tongue is not Estonian**. In addition to the Estonian language, the digital learning tools

enable the acquisition of knowledge about Estonian culture by integrating different areas of general skills and learning-education established in the national curriculum for ECEC. Twenty pilot kindergartens participated in the project, where teachers tested the teaching materials. The games are available in the learning Resources repository eKoolikott.

In cooperation with the Ministry of Education and Culture and the Integration Foundation, **language training courses** were offered in 2023 **to educators in four cities**. A total of 297 people participated in language courses at B1, B2 and C1 level in Narva, Sillamäe, Kohtla-Järve and Tallinn. The Estonian Language Institute will continue to provide language training for teachers from 2024.

In cooperation with the Astangu Vocational Rehabilitation Centre, a **project** was initiated to **develop integrated subject and language learning for learners with special needs in vocational education**, with the aim of supporting learners in learning in an Estonian-speaking environment, gaining the knowledge and practical skills necessary for work and independent living. As part of the project's activities, a course was opened for learners with a mother tongue other than Estonian to pilot the language model and curriculum developed. In addition, a supportive language-learning environment was created that would take into account the physical, mental and social support needs of learners.

Local governments and other school/kindergarten managers could apply for support for additional Estonian language training, increased Estonian language training and training for new immigrants. A total of €5 064 124 was allocated in language grants in 2023. 32 hobby schools for minorities received grants of €217 150 to support the teaching of their mother tongue and culture.

Quality of learning, curriculum and equal opportunities

In December 2023, the **National Curriculum for Basic Schools, the Simplified National Curriculum for Basic Schools and the National Curriculum for Upper Secondary Schools** were **accompanied by indicative descriptions of learning processes**. The materials created have been made available [in the Confluence environment of the MoE](#). The descriptions of the learning processes describe learning outcomes and learning content by grade and provide recommendations for the choice of teaching methods and learning materials. In order to support the implementation of the new curricula, the first information sessions for schools were held in the spring to explain the main changes in the subject curricula.

In December 2023, the Minister of Education and Research, the Minister of Justice, the Minister of the Interior and the Minister of Social Affairs signed the [Action Plan for the Prevention of Domestic Violence for the years 2024-2027](#). The Action Plan was prepared with the participation of the MoER.

On 28 November 2023, the **results of the IEA Civic and Citizenship Education Study** (ICCS) conducted in spring 2022 were published. The survey was carried out by Tallinn University with support from the Ministry of Education and Research. The survey provides an overview of 8th grade students' civic and citizenship knowledge and attitudes. A total of 3,961 students from 254 Estonian schools participated in the ICCS 2022 survey. In addition to the students, data was collected from 8th grade teachers and school leaders to gather contextual information for a better interpretation of the results for students in this country. Estonia has been

participating in the ICCS since 1999, and the results of the different rounds of the survey (1999, 2009, 2016) have provided important input for the development of the curriculum and civic education as a subject. The survey measures students' civic knowledge by means of a test. The focus is not on students' factual knowledge, but on their ability to reason and argue, and to apply their knowledge in different contexts. The survey showed that Estonian students have a good level of civic knowledge but a low level of civic engagement, especially among young people with higher civic knowledge. There were large differences between girls' and boys' attitudes, especially on gender equality.

The open learning Resources repository e-Koolikott was updated. To improve the accessibility of the resources, the textbooks were moved from the view of learning resources to a separate register of textbooks. The quality control of learning resources also included improvements to the materials data. New functionality was added to allow users to provide feedback on problematic and inappropriate materials, and to add a reference to collections functionality, which allows for a better grouping of learning resources and makes them easier to find.

With the support of the Ministry of Education and Research, [cultural history teaching material](#) (17 books: counties, Tallinn, Tartu) was transferred to the digital library. The cultural objects can be found interactively on a map, the information texts and the tasks have been entered into the H5P task templates. The teaching material supports the use of local examples in the teaching of history and the teaching of an elective course in local cultural history.

Within the framework of the programme "Promoting evidence-based quality management in general education that supports learner development", **quality criteria and a quality assessment model for general education** were developed with the involvement of target groups and **will be** piloted in schools in 2024. The aim of the programme is to encourage institutions to focus more on self-analysis to support the development of each learner.

The terms and conditions of the **"Engineering Academy and IT Academy in Vocational, General and Hobby Education"**, which will support engineering and ICT education in VET schools and higher education, including the development of 4-year curricula, have been finalised. In addition, practical teaching of STEAM subjects, i.e. mathematics, science, technology, engineering and the arts, is developed in general and vocational education.

The terms and conditions for the award of support for the implementation of the activities **"Quality and internationalisation of higher education"** and **"Cooperation between universities to promote doctoral studies"** were approved. The aim of the first measure is to improve the quality of higher education through better cooperation between higher education institutions, to improve the teaching capacity and flexibility of higher education institutions and to increase the international visibility and competitiveness of Estonian higher education. The second measure aims to improve the quality of doctoral studies through a joint doctoral school across universities, including support for the establishment of research contacts through interdisciplinary and international cooperation and exchange of experience.

A funding instrument was created to support up-to-date research and development activities for universities of applied sciences under the responsibility of the MoER. As higher education is evidence-based, the research and development capacities needed to ensure the quality of higher education must also be ensured in the universities of applied sciences. The award of a grant is conditional on the existence of a development plan for the higher education institution and an action plan based on it, setting out the objectives, expected results and activities of the higher education institution's research and development activities. The amount of the grant shall be 5% of the operating grant allocated to the higher education institution of applied sciences on the basis of § 45(1) of the Higher Education Act.

In vocational education and training, **preparations** started **for a VET reform** to increase the diversity and flexibility of vocational education and training offered to basic school graduates and to extend the upper-secondary VET programmes to four years, increasing the share of general skills in the programmes.

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	
	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	2023	2024
Employment rates among 20 to 34-year-olds with professional education (%) Source: Graduate Survey	78,4	73,5	75,2	78,9	Data 2023 III qu	77	77
Employment rates among 20 to 34-year-olds with professional education five years after graduation (%) Source: Graduate Survey	74,4	72,5	73,9	75,1	Data 2023 III qu	75	75
Digital competences above base level among 16 to 74-year-olds (%)* Source: The Digital Economy and Society Index (DESI)	-	-	28			Specifications at	
Graduates' entrepreneurship	New indicator, methodology to be developed						

For detailed tables of activity indicators see Annex 1.

What is positive?

- Vocational and higher education graduates are successfully integrated into the labour market. Employment rates for 20-34 year olds with vocational or higher education were very good in 2023. By now, employment rates have also surpassed pre-pandemic levels.

What needs attention?

- For the second year in a row, the share of LTT graduates in higher education has decreased. However, it should also be noted that Estonia is already among the best performers in international comparisons, which may suggest that it may be necessary to revise the indicator's targets. The outlook for the coming years also does not give cause for optimism, as although the number of students in LTT fields has increased, the increase in students in other fields of study has been much higher, suggesting that an increase in the share is unlikely.
- The number of IT graduates in both higher education and vocational education was lower than expected. The number of graduates in tertiary education is further behind target (minus 182 graduates). In higher education, the number of students admitted to IT has decreased for the third consecutive academic year, including both the number of foreign students admitted and the number of students of Estonian origin. At the same time, the drop-out rate has decreased slightly. The number of graduates in vocational education and training increased compared to the previous year, but the target of 520 graduates was still

not reached (496 graduates in 2023). IT enrolment increased by nearly 8% in 2023.

- The share of graduates in work-based learning has declined over the last two years and is now below 12% (target 19%). The decline is due to a decrease in support between the two support periods.

Key developments in 2023

The terms and conditions of the support measure "**Engineering Academy and IT Academy in Higher Education**" were approved. The aim of the measure is to modernise the content of higher education in the fields of engineering and ICT in cooperation with employers and to increase the popularity and relevance of these fields in order to meet the needs of the labour market. A broad steering committee was set up to promote engineering education, comprising representatives of the Ministry of Economic Affairs and Communications, the Employers' Confederation and professional associations.

The terms and conditions of the grant "**Development of vocational and higher education in line with labour market needs PRÕM+**" were approved. The support will be granted for the development and expansion of work-based learning and apprenticeships in vocational and higher education institutions.

In 2023, research and education activities of the Just Transition Fund were prepared and launched in Ida-Virumaa in cooperation with local partners. The actions will help support the region's transition to a climate-neutral economy and the diversification of its economic environment. The **activities of the research action will support the region's research and development capacity in the colleges of universities in Ida-Viru County** in the following fields of research: 1) transition to renewable energy and distributed energy solutions; 2) industry 4.0; 3) refining by chemical processes; 4) monitoring and analysis of transition processes in Ida-Viru County and new management models for the transition to renewable energy. In turn, the R&D grants will help to enhance cooperation between research institutions, universities and businesses and to develop high added value products and services as an alternative to shale energy in Ida-Viru County and create new jobs. The education measure is designed **to develop the skills of the working-age population according to the needs of Ida-Viru County**. In order to diversify learning opportunities, curricula will be developed in Ida-Virumaa and both formal education and in-service training will be offered. In 2023, the first vocational and higher education curricula will be launched with the support of the measure.

The state-commissioned training courses for adults, launched in spring 2023, **focused on developing digital skills**: digital basic skills, cyber security, data analytics, professional ICT skills development for employees in different fields and e-service development skills training. **The procedures for preparing and commissioning training courses for adults were updated to allow** Estonian higher education and vocational training institutions to continue providing training tailored to labour market needs in 2024.

In order to support the green transition of Estonian enterprises, the **identification of the most important green skills** and the formulation of learning outcomes have been initiated in cooperation between higher education institutions, vocational education institutions and professional and trade associations. To this end, nine

consortia were formed in 2023, which have started with the definition of sectoral green skills, followed by the development of curricula for vocational education and training.

In the field of adult education, a research on the use of study leave (carried out by the Centre for Applied Social Research RAKE) was completed in 2023, which gave the first **overview of the practices of applying for and granting study leave in Estonia**. According to the research, the use of study leave is relatively low, the take-up of study leave is more common in sectors with a high need for professional development, such as health and education, and the regulation of study leave needs to be clarified and better communicated to raise awareness among employers and users.

Commissioned by the Ministry of Education and Science, the think tank Praxis carried out an [impact analysis of the merger of adult upper secondary schools with vocational schools](#), which showed that communication plays a very important role in mergers. It is important to maintain clear communication before and during the process of merging and to support all parties involved. In conclusion, the first five merged schools have shown that mergers have been successful in reducing the proportion of adults without upper secondary education in society and in providing more opportunities and better learning conditions for adults.

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

Indicator	Actual					Target	
	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	2023	2024
Percentage of local authorities having completed a quality assessment of youth work (%)	-	15	20	24	40,5	37	45
Source: Education and Youth Authority, Estonian Youth Workers' Association							

For detailed tables of activity indicators see Annex 1.

What is positive?

- The percentage of municipalities that have completed a quality assessment of youth work and hobby education is increasing. Municipalities are implementing the voluntary quality management model with increasing regularity - 40.5% of municipalities have carried out an evaluation in the last four years, including municipalities that have not carried out evaluations before or have done so for a very long time.
- The range of forms of youth participation continues to be varied, although it has decreased by three (to 89) compared to last year, mainly due to the youth active groups operating in municipalities. At national level, youth participation is becoming more widespread and new youth councils are being

set up each year within ministries. In 2023, a Youth Council was launched at the Ministry of Regional Affairs and Agriculture. Altogether, there are five youth councils in the ministries, four provincial participatory councils, 59 municipal youth councils and 21 active groups in the reporting year.

- The share of young people aged 15-29 who are not in education, employment or training (NEET status) fell to 9.6% of the age group and the target of 11.1% was met. However, despite the decrease, the figure has remained at 10-11% since 2017.
- Youth volunteering is on the rise. In 2023, 27.2% (target 23%) of 15-26 year olds will have volunteered in an organised voluntary activity, 0.7 percentage points more than in the previous year. Surveys increasingly show that young people are more willing to get involved in civic life through informal initiatives and to contribute their time to issues that concern them personally².

What needs attention?

- Although the involvement of young people in decision-making has been nationally coordinated and supported since the early years of the legalisation of youth councils, and diverse formats for youth civic participation have been created, meaningful youth participation remains a challenge. The percentage of municipalities with functioning, i.e. active and representative youth participation councils has decreased to 62% (68% in 2022). Although the majority (75) of municipalities have established youth participation councils (youth councils or informal active groups), the substantive activities (e.g. meetings, youth participation in the youth field, etc.) are not yet fully developed. meetings, debates, etc.) took place in 49 municipal participatory assemblies during the reporting year.
- To empower young people's entrepreneurial spirit, support is given to young people's own initiative, i.e. projects based on young people's ideas and needs. The number of project applications submitted has fallen slightly, but the percentage of applications supported has increased to 69%.
- Valuing professionals in the youth field, including paying them a decent wage, remains a challenge. Salaries for youth workers and hobby education teachers are significantly below the Estonian average, with 70% of full-time staff earning less than €1,500 (gross).

Key developments in 2023

➤ HOOG

In 2023, the three-year cooperation project Supporting Youth Success - Capacity Building for the Integration of Non-Formal and Formal Education, launched to promote the integration of non-formal and formal education, came to an end. The project highlighted a number of bottlenecks that hinder integration. Among

² See e.g. the reports of the "Increasing Youth Participation" project 2020-2023
<https://haridusportaal.edu.ee/noorteseire/noortevaldkonna-teenuste-arendamine-0#noorte-osaluse-suurendamine>

other things, it was found that participants' awareness of integration is low and perceptions differ, making it difficult to motivate them to engage in the integration process. Integration is also hampered by the different structures of the MFÕ and FÕ curricula, making it difficult to compare learning outcomes. The existing digital infrastructure does not support integration either. Based on the results of the project, a concept and action plan for integration has been launched and will continue to be developed in 2024, methodological guidance material will be produced, curricula for VET will be developed and developments of the Estonian Education Information System will be prepared to support the above-mentioned concerns.

The project [Digital Leap in Youth Field](#) (03.2022-12.2023) supported by EEA-Norway measure "Smart Solutions in Youth Work" has ended. The project aimed to increase the possibilities and capacity of local authorities to use digital solutions in youth work. As a result of the project, 207 youth workers acquired new knowledge and skills on digital solutions, such as design programmes, social media use, digital threats, youth information, etc., to increase the capacity of local authorities to improve the use of digital solutions in youth work. The project produced five learning materials for youth workers with written instructions and video tutorials on how to use different digital solutions such as podcasts, Canva, Instagram reels, TikTok, E-games and ChatGPT in youth work. A digital competence and maturity framework for youth workers and youth work institutions was also developed, together with assessment tools to enable youth workers to assess their level of digital skills and to plan for self-development.



In the period 2020-2023, the ESF co-funded project "[Increasing Youth Participation](#)" was implemented in cooperation with Tallinn University.". The aim was to provide a research-based understanding of changes in youth civic participation that would support both policy makers and practitioners in developing youth participation to better meet the needs of young people. The project produced a multifaceted view on youth civic participation, including the key issues (e.g. inclusion of new immigrants, social media participation) that need to be addressed in supporting young people's active citizenship. The material produced will also serve as an input to the development of a concept on youth participation.

Under the leadership of a strategic partner, the Estonian National Youth Council (ENL), the [development of quality criteria for youth councils](#) was launched. The aim is to improve the work of youth councils as a form of youth participation towards more meaningful youth participation. Under the auspices of a stakeholder group and with the support of the Ministry, a set of 'minimum standards' for functioning youth councils will be established. Cooperation was also launched between ENL and Tallinn University, a higher education provider in youth work, to train youth work students in the field of youth participation and to provide future practitioners with more skills to promote youth participation.



Preparations for amending the Youth Work Act started in 2023. The basic law in this area has remained unchanged since 2010. The [drafting proposal](#) identifies the following issues as needing to be addressed:

³ Read more about youth participation in the analytical annex to the performance report.

updating the roles and responsibilities of the state and local authorities, regulating and/or updating the requirements for youth workers, quality requirements for youth work services and regulating nationwide uniform data collection. In the draft law, inter alia, input from the 2023 Youth Forum, informal input from representative associations in the field, and the findings of recent studies, including a study on the reform of the introduction of qualification requirements (to be published in 2024) has been taken into account.

Preparations were made **for the drafting of a law on hobby education**, which will replace the current law on hobby schools. The main problems addressed in the draft law are the inherent difference between hobby education and youth work; the lack of qualification requirements for teachers in hobby schools; the scarcity and inconsistent quality of data on hobby education needed for data-driven policy making; the unclear role and funding of the state and local governments in the organisation of hobby education, etc. The draft law will also address the issue of the role of the state and local governments in the organisation of hobby education.

The renewal of the professional standard for youth work was completed in 2023. The most important changes in the revised standard are the addition of the obligation of continuing education to each professional level, changes in the requirements for the educational levels, including the abolition of professional level 4 and the creation of a higher professional level 5, and the renaming of professional level 7 to youth work supervisor, among others.

To support the qualification of youth workers, including the acquisition of professional qualifications, **a concept for the continuous training of education and youth workers** was developed in cooperation with partners. Its aim is to define the general principles of in-service training for education and youth workers and the roles and responsibilities of the parties involved. The concept will contribute to meeting the training needs of youth workers, for example, cross-training between the two sectors will be open to staff from both sectors.

A large-scale survey on **working conditions of youth workers in Estonia** completed, which for the first time surveyed professionals in hobby education and youth work across Estonia. The survey found that a total of around 12 300 people are employed in hobby education and youth work, the majority of whom receive salaries well below the Estonian average. 70% of full-time employees earn less than €1,500 gross and 55% less than €1,300. Based on the results of the survey, a concept for valuing education and youth professionals and increasing the attractiveness of the professions has been launched (to be finalised in 2024).

KINDLUS

A new period of European Social Fund co-financing in the youth field (2023-2029) has been launched, with the key actions being to improve the quality of youth services, support young people in NEET status, improve the monitoring and analysis system in the youth field and implement activities to support young people's mental health.

The education information portal HaridusSilm **has developed a digital environment for local authorities to assess the quality of youth governance**. The digital evaluation module consists of three evaluation phases: evaluation planning, self-evaluation and external evaluation. From 2024, municipalities will be able to assess

the organisation of their youth field in a digital environment, which will allow them to create graphs and tables on the youth field in their municipality based on the data available in Education Eye.

Research-based models for improving youth services. The University of Tartu developed the [N-TELG](#) model for the youth-centred organisation of youth services and activities. Tallinn University created a model to support the social inclusion of young people, called [TASK-U](#), which focuses on improving measures to support young people at risk of exclusion and empower professionals. Tallinn University also created the '[Youth Empowerment](#)' model, which looks at how political participation has changed and should change to meet the needs and interests of young people today. The research-based models created include not only a theoretical approach but also practical worksheets, and are used in universities to teach youth work students. The models are primarily aimed at youth practitioners and professionals to increase their knowledge and practical skills.

The analysis "[What influences young people's fall into NEET status?](#)", prepared by Statistics Estonia, highlights the factors that most affect young people's exclusion from the labour market and education, broken down by local governments. According to the analysis, young people of foreign origin (especially those born outside Estonia), with no work experience, with basic education or e.g. children of parents with low educational attainment are at higher risk of falling into NEET status (see also additional analysis). The results of the analysis will be used to inform the design of public policies and prevention activities targeting young people at risk of exclusion.

An international youth forum [Changing Patterns in Youth](#) was organised. The forum brought together professionals from the field to discuss key challenges in the youth field, such as working conditions and qualifications of the workforce, sectoral coherence and divergence, future trends. The results of the discussions were documented in [a report](#) and will be used as input for the basic and development documents in the field, e.g. in the process of amending the Youth Work Act and drafting the Law on Hobby Education.

3. Implementation of the programme and the budget for the programme activities for the reporting year

The final budget for the Education and Youth programme increased by around €100.9 million (14%) compared to the initial budget. The bulk of this amount, EUR 49.3 million, was made up of carry-overs from the previous financial year (including a balance of EUR 25.7 million for the war refugee measures allocated in the 2022 supplementary budget and EUR 2.7 million for investments).

Among the institutions of the government sector, the largest share of 32.4% (EUR 248.9 million, including investments of EUR 3.9 million) of the programme's budget execution was accounted for by the activities of state general education schools, state vocational training institutions and state higher education institutions of applied sciences.

The share of external expenditure and investment in the programme was 17.9% (€137.7 million), of which €71.7 million was used for the construction and renovation of state gymnasiums, schools for pupils with special educational needs and basic schools (programme action "Rehabilitation and development of the education network").

The most important part of the programme's actions was "Learning opportunities and organisation of education". 67% of the measure (€514.8 million) is devoted to general and vocational education and higher education, 15% (€113.7 million) to the organisation and development of the education network, 6% (€45.2 million) to the development of adult education and learning opportunities and the promotion of the international competitiveness of education. 9% (€71.8 million) of the budget execution is accounted for by the measures "Teacher career and development, learning approach and environment, including curriculum and school organisation development activities" (€34.2 million), "Ensuring equal opportunities in education" (€33.6 million) and "Supporting the development of teachers and school leaders" (€4 million). The measures "Links between education, society and the labour market" (2%, i.e. €11.8 million) and "Development of the youth field" (1%, €10 million) have the lowest share.

The following budget balances (EUR 17.4 million) will no longer be carried over to 2024 due to maturities or end of operations: EUR 16.5 million from the 2022 supplementary budget for Ukrainian refugees; EUR 0.5 million from the VAT contribution to the Reconstruction and Resilience Facility; EUR 0.3 million from the reserve.

49.3 million will be carried over to 2024, including the larger ones:



- From the programme's action "Reorganisation and development of the education network" €3.7 million for the renovation of the school in Lääneranna municipality (€1.1 million); ICT and furniture purchases for state schools, design of the Narva Adult School and Kohtla-Järve Adult Gymnasium (€2 million), and ICT and real estate costs (€2 million). The remaining balance is e.g. foreseen for activities that would allow cost savings in the future: construction and maintenance of technical systems, implementation of automation and digital operator, energy efficiency (including LED).

- "Ensuring Equal Opportunities in Education" included activities for the transition to Estonian-language education. The budget balance of EUR 6,3 million was due to the exclusion of three action lines from the action plan for the transition to Estonian language teaching. The remainder will be used to cover the growing volume-based expenditure needs (additional labour costs in Ida-Virumaa, teacher training scholarships, additional Estonian language grants for pupils/children on a per capita basis, etc.) until the end of the period of transition to Estonian-language learning, i.e. until 2030.
- The balance of €2.5 million in indirect costs for the ministry has been generated by saving on economic and personnel costs. The balance of the agency's indirect costs is planned to be used in 2024 for one-off development activities for which there are no funds in the 2024 budget due to savings (including preparation for the introduction of the Estonian Information Security Standard (E-ITS), consultancy and audit, information security audits of IT systems, development of the IT system for the internal website of the MoH, joint workflows and work plan, analysis of the need for additional functions, security enhancements and development work).

*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 state budget funds for 2023 to 2024".

Table 7. Implementation of the budget for the Education and Youth programme (in thousands of euro)

Education and Youth Programme		Indicative budget	Final budget	Completion	Execution %
➤ Action 1. Learning opportunities and organisation of education		709 642	810 546	673 810	83%
1.1. Organising and developing the education network	Costs	67 689	63 337	59 134	93%
	Investment	81 848	65 914	54 673	83%
1.2 Ensuring access to education and training	Costs	264 720	304 578	269 666	89%
	Investment	615	1 167	878	75%
1.3. Ensuring access to higher education	Costs	242 560	251 085	242 621	97%
	Investment	692	2 887	1 660	57%
1.4 Developing adult learning and creating learning opportunities for adults	Costs	15 189	8 741	5 753	66%
	Investment	0	9	9	100%
1.5. Promoting the international competitiveness of education	Costs	36 328	112 840	39 428	35%
	Investment	0	12	12	100%
➤ Action 2. Teacher career development, approach to learning and teaching, and learning environments		97 236	101 024	71 741	71%
2.1 Curriculum and school organisation development activities	Costs	33 274	35 153	28 666	82%
	Investment	2 233	6 834	5 530	81%
2.2 Ensuring equal opportunities in education	Costs	55 185	53 722	33 608	63%
2.3. Supporting the development of teachers and educational leaders	Costs	6 543	5 316	3 937	74%

Education and Youth Programme		Indicative budget	Final budget	Completion	Execution %
 Action 3: Links between education, society and the labour market		31 787	23 456	11 754	50%
3.1 Developing the vocational training system and skills forecasting system OSKA	Costs	3 420	3 210	3 159	98%
3.2 Linking learning to labour market needs	Costs	28 219	20 011	8 560	43%
	Investment	149	235	35	15%
 Action 4. Development of youth sector		13 123	15 524	10 013	64%
4.1. Supporting youth entrepreneurship and initiative (HOOG)	Costs	2 554	6 471	3 052	47%
	Investment	0	1	1	100%
4.2. Supporting youth civic participation and protecting young people's rights (OSA)	Costs	853	853	815	96%
4.3 Developing the accessibility and quality of youth work (ISE)	Costs	4 664	5 593	4 350	78%
4.4. Ensuring equal opportunities for young people in society (KINDLUS)	Costs	5 053	2 312	1 520	66%
	Investment	0	293	274	94%
Total Education and Youth programme	Costs	766 251	873 223	704 270	81%
	Investment	85 537	77 327	63 048	82%

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

➤ Action 1 activity indicators

Action 1.1: Restructuring and developing the education network

Programme performance indicators	Actual					Target	
	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	2023	2024
Number of upper secondary schools (pcs)	157	158	158	158	156	153	150
Number of state secondary schools (pcs)	16	16	18	20	25	25	26

Action 1.2: Ensuring access to general education and VET

Programme performance indicators	Actual					Target	
	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	2023	2024
Basic school drop-out rate in the third year of full-time education (%), total Source: Estonian Education Information System	0,3	0,2	0,25	0,3	0,3	0,3	0,3
Basic school drop-out rate in grades 7–9 (%), boys Source: Estonian Education Information System	0,4	0,3	0,3	0,4	0,4	0,4	0,4
Drop-out rate from primary school in the third year of compulsory education (%), girls Source: Estonian Education Information System	0,2	0,1	0,2	0,2	0,3	0,2	0,2
Upper secondary school drop-out rate in the first year (%) Source: Estonian Education Information System	1,2	0,7	0,9	1,2	1,3	1,2	1,2
Vocational drop-out rate in year 1 of upper secondary vocational education (%) Source: Estonian Education Information System	10,6	9,4	8,9	10,7	8,6	8,6	8,4
Percentage of people with upper secondary education 4 years after leaving upper secondary school Source: Estonian Education Information System	81,2	82,1	81,9	81,2	82,1	82	82

Percentage of people with vocational education and training* 5 years after leaving upper secondary school (%) Source: Estonian Education Information System	23	22,4	22,3	21,6	21,2	22,7	22,9
--	----	------	------	------	------	------	------

* Vocational education and training is understood to mean only vocational education and training received at tertiary level.

Action 1.3: Ensuring access to higher education

Programme performance indicators	Actual					Target	
	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	2023	2024
Higher education drop-out rate (first year of 1st level tertiary education) (%) Source: Estonian Education Information System	17,0	15,2	14,5	15,1	13,2	16,2	16,0
Number of doctoral degrees defended per academic year Source: Estonian Education Information System	235	221	222	250	237	300	300
Percentage of graduates in higher education with nominal time (%) Source: Estonian Education Information System	51,4	52,3	55,0	56,1	54,8	53,6	54
Percentage of graduates who are satisfied with their teachers and the teaching and guidance they receive ^{iv} Source: Graduate Survey	79,6	-	-	81,4		-	-

Action 1.4: Developing adult learning and creating learning opportunities for adults

Programme performance indicators	Actual					Target	
	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	2023	2024
Participation rate in lifelong learning of adults aged 25-64 with low educational attainment* (%) Source.	8,6	6,5	8,6	10,7	9,95	10,1	10,8
Percentage of students in non-stationary general education or upper secondary vocational education among persons aged 19-64 with no upper secondary education (%) Source: Estonian Education Information System.	-	4,6	4,8	4,5	4,7	3,2	3,3
Non-stationary general education drop-out rate** (%) Source: Estonian Education Information System	32	28	30	32	26	32	31
Adult participation rates in lifelong learning in the last 12 months (%) in formal and non-formal learning***	-	-	-	48,1		-	39
Adult participation rate in lifelong learning in the last 12 months (%) in informal learning****	-	-	59,6	62,6	67,8	-	For details

* Data from Statistics Estonia. The measure is calculated on the basis of the Estonian Labour Force Survey and reflects the share of 25-64 year olds who participated in upper secondary 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).

** All forms of non-stationary learning at upper secondary level are taken into account.

*** European Commission's methodology, the indicator covers formal and non-formal learning, excluding supervised work-based learning.

**** Includes learning from a family member, friend or colleague, through printed materials, electronic devices, guided tours, learning centres.

Action 1.5 Promoting the international competitiveness of education

Programme performance indicators	Actual					Target	
	2019	2020	2022	2022	2023	2023	2024
Percentage of international students enrolled in Estonia (%) Source: Estonian Education Information System	12,2	11,6	11,4	11,0	9,7	11,0	11,0

➤ Action 2 activity indicators

Activity 2.1 Curriculum and school organisation development activities

Programme performance indicators	Actual					Target	
	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	2023	2024
Number of schools in the Inviting Schools network Source: the Inviting Schools programme ^v	78	148	148	184		194	204
Percentage of students who are rather satisfied or very satisfied with physical activity at school ^{vi} (%), 4th grade Source: satisfaction survey	26,3	31,6	31,8	30,7	31,7	32	32
Percentage of students who are somewhat satisfied or very satisfied with physical activity at school (%), 8th grade students Source: satisfaction survey	12,3	14,7	16,3	16,1	15,5	16	17
Percentage of students who are rather satisfied or very satisfied with physical activity at school (%), 11th grade Source: satisfaction survey	13,8	16,3	15,8	15,5	16,5	16	16
Percentage of pupils not bullied repeatedly in the last two weeks (%), 4th grade Source: satisfaction survey	65,4	67,8	66,0	63,5	60,9	66	66
Percentage of pupils not bullied repeatedly in the last two weeks (%), 8th grade students	74,0	74,2	79,3	76,7	69,9	80	80

<i>Programme performance indicators</i>	<i>Actual</i>					<i>Target</i>	
	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	2023	2024
Source: satisfaction survey							
Percentage of students not bullied repeatedly in the last two weeks (%), 11th grade Source: satisfaction survey	89,5	89,1	92,4	90	88,1	92	92
Percentage of students who have not been bullied repeatedly in the last two weeks (%), VET students Source: satisfaction survey	87,6	-	92,4	87,8	86	92	92
Percentage of teachers in general education schools who have not been bullied repeatedly (including by pupils, parents, colleagues) in the last two weeks (%) Source: satisfaction survey	.	-	87,5	-	-	-	89
Supporting gifted learners	a new indicator, methodology to be developed						

Action 2.2 Ensure equal opportunities in education

<i>Programme performance indicators</i>	<i>Actual</i>					<i>Target</i>	
	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	2023	2024
Percentage of implementation of support professional services in primary education recommended by the out-of-school counselling team (%) Source: Estonian Education Information System	69	72	74	76	75	76	77
Pupils in mainstream class receiving enhanced and special support as % of all pupils in mainstream class receiving enhanced and special support (%) Source: Estonian Education Information System	31,1	32,1	34,4	36,2	38	35	36
Pupils in mainstream schools receiving enhanced and special support as % of all pupils receiving enhanced and special support (%) Source: Estonian Education Information System	63,5	64,9	68,4	70,8	72,8	70	71
Average result of the final exam in Estonian as a second language in basic school Source: Education and Youth Board	69	-	65	60	58,9	75	75

Programme performance indicators	Actual					Target	
	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	2023	2024
Average result of the Estonian as a second language state examination at upper secondary level Source: Harno	75	74	73	67	72,2	75	75
Proportion of students who have achieved at least B2 level in Estonian as a second language in upper secondary school (%) Source: Harno	81,8	83,1	77,3	75,5	69	76	77
Proportion of students with top-level skills in a school with a language other than Estonian compared to a school with Estonian as the language of instruction, natural sciences Source: PISA	5,3 vs 14,6	-	-		5,9 vs 13,3	-	-
Proportion of students with top-level skills ^{vii} in a school with a language other than Estonian compared to a school with Estonian as a medium of instruction, reading proficiency Source: PISA	5,7 vs 16,7	-	-		7,3 vs 11,6	-	-
Proportion of students with top-level skills in a school with a language other than Estonian compared to an Estonian-language school, mathematics Source: PISA	9,8 vs 17,5	-	-		7,8 vs 14,7	-	-
Percentage of teachers who self-assessed as having received the necessary training to teach and/or support children with special needs, primary education Source: satisfaction survey		-	46,3	-	-	-	47
Percentage of teachers who consider themselves to have received the necessary training to teach and/or support children with special needs, general education Source: satisfaction survey			43	-	-	-	44
Percentage of ECEC teachers who agree that there is good cooperation between the ECEC centre and various professionals outside the centre, including doctors, support and child			59,2	-	-	-	60

<i>Programme performance indicators</i>	<i>Actual</i>					<i>Target</i>	
	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	2023	2024
protection professionals, the police, etc., in supporting children with special needs. Source: satisfaction survey							
Percentage of teachers in general education schools who consider that the school and various professionals outside the school, including police officers, counsellors, doctors, psychologists, youth workers, etc., work well together in supporting children with special educational needs. Source: satisfaction survey			65,3	-	-	-	67
Percentage of teachers who feel well or very well prepared to teach in a multicultural or multilingual environment. Source: TALIS	15,7 (2018)	-	-	-		-	20

Action 2.3 Support the development of teachers and educational leaders.

<i>Measures of programme activity</i>	<i>Actual</i>					<i>Target</i>	
	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	2023	2024
Percentage of school leaders who took action to support teachers to work together to develop new teaching practices (%) Source: TALIS	45 (2018)	-	-	-	-	-	55
Percentage of teachers aged 39 and under in general education schools (%) Source: Estonian Education Information System	27,0	27,0	26,5	26,4	26,4	28	28
Competition for teacher training for teaching posts Source: SAIS, Estonian Education Information System	1,1	1,0	1,2	1,1	1,2	1,3	1,3
Percentage of teachers (%) who think that the teaching profession is valued by society Source: TALIS	26,4 (2018)	-	-	-	-	-	35
Percentage of teachers who have co-taught with another teacher at least once a month (%)	21,5 (2018)	-	-	-	-	-	25

Source: TALIS							
---------------	--	--	--	--	--	--	--

➤ Action 3 activity indicators

Action 3.1: Development of a vocational training system and skills forecasting system OSKA

Programme performance indicators	Actual					Target	
	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	2023	2024
Measure(s) under development	indicators to be developed						

Action 3.2: Link learning to labour market needs

Programme performance indicators	Actual					Target	
	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	2023	2024
Employment rate of people aged 20-34 having completed vocational education 1-3 years ago (%) Source: Eurostat	82,7	80,3	70,6	75,1	84,6	80	81
Employment rate of 20-34 year olds having completed tertiary education 1-3 years ago Source: Eurostat	87,6	85,7	92,4	87,3	96,7	88	88
Percentage of graduates in STEM (science, technology, engineering, manufacturing and construction) in higher education (%) Source: Estonian Education Information System	27,9	27,4	28,1	27,5	26,5	30	30
Number of IT graduates per year in higher education Source: Estonian Education Information System	718	766	975	847	793	975	975
Number of IT graduates per year vocational education and training Source: Estonian Education Information System	507	486	499	424	496	520	520
Students' satisfaction with traineeships ^{viii} , undergraduate (%) Source: graduate survey	58,0	-	-	66,2 ^{ix}		-	-
Alumni satisfaction with traineeships, Master's degree (%) Source: graduate survey	61,3	-	-	58,8 ^x		-	-
Share of work-based learning graduates among all VET graduates (%) Source: Estonian Education Information System	12,4	15,2	17,2	13,2	11,6	19	21

Action 4 Activity indicators

Action 4.1 Supporting youth entrepreneurship and self-initiative (HOOG).

Programme performance indicators	Actual					Target	
	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	2023	2024
Share of active NPOs run by young people aged 18-26 (%) Source.	4,2	4,0	3,6	4,7	3,7	2,6	3
Percentage of young people aged 7-26 in hobby education (%) Source: Estonian Education Information System, Statistics Estonia.	29,9	30,3	32,3	32,9	32,7	32,9	33,2
Number of youth initiated projects (and % of projects supported)) Source: Harno, Association of Estonian Open Youth Centres ⁴	164 (71%)	179 (74%)	32 (50%)	168 (42%)	111 (69%)	maintain	
Young entrepreneurs as a share of young people aged 18-26 years old Source.	3,8	4,0	4,3	4	4,1	4,7	5,0

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

Programme performance indicators	Actual					Target	
	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	2023	2024
Number of forms of participation Source: the Estonian Federation of Youth Associations	79	82	91	92	89	maintain	maintain
Percentage of local authorities with a functioning participatory assembly (%) Source: the Estonian Federation of Youth Associations	89,9	94,0	92,0	68	62	at least 90%	at least 90%
Candidates aged 18-26a as a percentage of all candidates in local council elections (%) Source.	-	-	5,4	-	-	-	-
Percentage of young people aged 15-26 who have participated in organised voluntary activities (%) Source.	-	-	22	26,5	27,2	23	>23

⁴ From 2023, the call for applications for youth initiatives will be conducted by the Estonian Association of Open Youth Centres as part of a strategic partnership.

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

Programme performance indicators	Actual					Target	
	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	2023	2024
Percentage of local authorities with youth work services at least at advanced level (%) Source: RM, minuomavalitsus.ee	59,0	69,6	34,2	39,2	June data	growing (>35)	growing (40)
Percentage of young people satisfied with youth work services (%) Source: survey "Satisfaction with youth work among young people involved in youth work"	-	90	-	-	-	maintain	-

Action 4.4 Ensure equal opportunities for young people in society (ACTION 4.4).

Programme performance indicators	Actual					Target	
	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	2023	2024
Percentage of young people aged 15-26 who think support is available (%) Source.	Methodology for the indicator is under development						
Percentage of 15-29 year olds not in employment, education or training (NEETs) (%) Source.	9,8	11,7	11,2	10,6	9,6	11,1	10,8

ⁱ 2020 graduates in 2021, tertiary level I and II. The methodology for calculating the indicator has changed in 2022 due to changes in the growth areas of smart specialisation.

ⁱⁱ Measured on a scale of 1 to 6, with 1 being the lowest and 6 the highest.

ⁱⁱⁱ Teachers in primary, general and vocational education, including adult secondary school teachers, are included.

^{iv} The 2019 result has been revised due to a change in methodology. Source.

^v Inviting Schools to Move programme (project "Supporting physical activity of school children" under the European Economic Area and Norway's 2014-2021 grant programme "Local Development and Poverty Reduction").

^{vi} Source: satisfaction survey. Percentage of students who are more than moderately 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 during at least some of my breaks. 2. I don't have to sit all the time in class, but I can move around in between, e.g. when I'm doing group work or solving tasks. 3. The teachers encourage us to move actively during the shift)), the percentage of respondents with an average of 4-5 for the three questions (on a scale of 4 for "I rather agree" and 5 for "I strongly agree").

^{vii} PISA levels 5 and 6

^{viii} The proportion of satisfied alumni is expressed in the response options "tend to agree" and "strongly agree".

^{ix} In 2022, the indicator will include ISCED level 6 graduates (both bachelor's and higher education graduates).

^x In 2022, the indicator will include ISCED level 7 graduates (both Master's and integrated Bachelor's and Master's graduates).