



# ESTONIA

Population: **1,325,000** | Income Level: **High Income** | Policy Decisions: **National** |  
Level of Career Development Initiatives on Scale of 1-5: **4**

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## EMERGING TECHNOLOGIES

Please describe how technologies are CURRENTLY used to support workforce preparation, placement, and development policies for young people in your country.

“e-Estonia” is a term commonly used to describe Estonia’s emergence as one of the most advanced e-societies in the world – an incredible success story that grew out of a partnership between a forward-thinking government, a pro-active ICT sector and a switched-on, tech-savvy population. For citizens of Estonia, e-services have become routine: e-elections, e-taxes, e-police, e-healthcare, e-banking, and e-school. The “e” prefix for services has almost become trite in the sense that it has become the norm. See more <https://e-estonia.com/>

In order to facilitate the activities related to the management and administration of study process, Information Technology Foundation for Education administrates and develops different information systems, learning environments and learning resources. See more <http://www.hitsa.ee/en>.

As of 2003, it is possible for all Estonian schools to use the web-based school-home communication environment e-School (eKool). The purpose of e-School is to engage parents more actively in the study process, make information on subjects more available to children as well as to parents, and to facilitate the work of teachers and the school management. For example, via e-School one can follow the marks given to students, their absence from classes, the content of lessons, and homework and assessments given to students by teachers at the end of the study period.

### Top 3 Barriers for Youth Employment:

1. A lack of knowledge on how to gain the proper skills needed for specific jobs.
2. Disconnect between jobs available and education received.
3. Lack of technical skills.

Examination Data Base (EIS) is electronic environment for developing of tasks and conducting of tests, including examinations. EIS allows them to:

1. Conduct and administer tests (both in paper form and electronic)
2. Assess tests electronically
3. Provide feedback on tests taken and display assessed tests for teachers/pupils
4. Develop and store electronic tasks
5. Use tasks stored in the examination data base

There are several web-based resources available, including:

#### Foundation Innove

Hosts career planning portal Rajaleidja (Pathfinder), see [www.rajaleidja.ee](http://www.rajaleidja.ee). The portal aims to support youth, adults and practitioners, providing information on career planning, work and education possibilities in Estonia and abroad. Rajaleidja network also has Facebook site <https://www.facebook.com/rajaleidja>

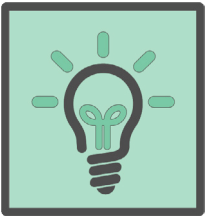
#### Unemployment Insurance Fund (Estonian PES)

[www.tootukassa.ee](http://www.tootukassa.ee) has a self-service portal for job-seekers and employers. Job Seekers can do following: draw up a CV, look/apply for a job, receive automatic job offers, fill in job-search diary, follow-up decisions regarding registration and benefits, follow up the activities in the individual action plan, search and register for a training course, notify of getting a job, submit registration application, submit unemployment benefits applications, apply for a business start-up subsidy and follow up services and upload business reports.

#### Tudengiveeb.ee (Studentweb)

Initiated by universities and is the opportunity to apply for the jobs and internships, to order delivery to your e-mail of job and intern-ship offers in your preferred field, receive information and direct references to living, studying and working in Estonia

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



## EMERGING TECHNOLOGIES

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### Delivering Distance Services

- There are services available through helpline by phone – one central service in labor sector is available for all introducing services and disseminating contact information; regional services within education sector – every regional center has publicly announced phone;
- Pathfinder ([rajaleidja.ee](http://rajaleidja.ee)) has central e-mail service. When client identifies the region of origin, relevant regional center is responsible for the response.
- Citizens have access through Skype to all youth guidance centers and centralized services for job seekers on Tuesdays at 14.00 – 16.00 at Skype:karjaari.info

How does the use of technology connect with existing structures or provisions of career guidance?

*Rajaleidja.ee* (mentioned in point 9) including its portal of occupations and [www.tootukassa.ee](http://www.tootukassa.ee) are directly connected with existing structures of career guidance. In addition, the state register of occupational qualifications (see [www.kutsekoda.ee/en/kutsereregister](http://www.kutsekoda.ee/en/kutsereregister)) is in use.

What are the challenges your country faces related to Emerging Technologies?

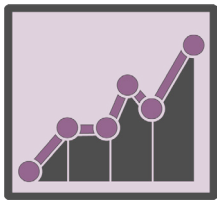
A digital focus in lifelong learning is one of the five strategic goals set in Estonian Lifelong Learning Strategy 2020. A new generation of digital infrastructure (personal digital devices, digital infrastructures in schools, inter-operable information systems, web services, cloud solutions, open linked data) and its utilization methodologies will create opportunities for the rapid adoption of the new approach to learning and an increase in the quality of education. The use of digital learning resources will help make studying more engaging and will expand opportunities in lifelong learning.

The areas with the highest growth potential in the Estonian economy are the horizontal application of Information and Communications Technology through other sectors, health care technologies and services, and the more effective use of resources. If the general population is better equipped with technological skills and more capable of innovation, it will help increase productivity in the economy. The objective is to apply modern digital technology in learning and teaching in a more efficient way and with better results, to improve the digital skills of the general population and to guarantee access to the new generation of digital infrastructure.

The strategy states as one of the advances “There are reliable databases for monitoring the progress of learners, education institutions and learning results. This allows resources to be allocated where they are needed most.”

### Among the 16 obstacles there are two related directly to the sub-theme:

1. Teachers' access to the digital infrastructure and learning materials is limited and inconsistent.
2. Approximately one third of the working age Estonian population<sup>12</sup> lacks even minimal ICT skills and the existing skills are insufficient for working



## WHY ROI MATTERS

Please describe how the value and impact of policies for workforce preparation, workforce placement, and development of young people is assessed (if at all) in your country.

There are several surveys focusing on different aspects.

### European Social Fund Measures

In 2013, the Estonian Ministry of Education and Research commissioned a midterm evaluation (see [www.htm.ee/sites/default/files/uldhariduse\\_ja\\_noortevaldkonna\\_struktuurifondide\\_kasutamise\\_vahearuanne.pdf](http://www.htm.ee/sites/default/files/uldhariduse_ja_noortevaldkonna_struktuurifondide_kasutamise_vahearuanne.pdf)) with the aim to evaluate the implementation of seven European Social Fund (ESF) measures in the area of general education and youth work in Estonia.

The main objective of the evaluation was to provide independent expert feedback on whether the planned activities are the most appropriate ones in order to obtain the goals set by these particular measures as well as the Operational Program for Human Resource Development in Estonia. The evaluation addressed issues of relevance, coherence, efficiency, effectiveness and sustainability (including the two programs in the field of lifelong guidance; see executive summary in the end of the report).

### Employment Contract Act

This is a new act that was adopted on 17. December 2008 and came into force six months later, on 1 July 2009. The Act aims at increasing flexibility in employment relations, which would allow both employers and employees to agree on terms that would best fit the needs of both parties, while ensuring the protection of interests of the parties. Good legislative practices necessitate that follow-up policy analysis must be carried out to assess the implementation and impact of the act. The Analysis of the Labor Contract Act (see [www.centar.ee/uus/wp-content/uploads/2013/03/Analysis-on-Labour-Contract-Act.pdf](http://www.centar.ee/uus/wp-content/uploads/2013/03/Analysis-on-Labour-Contract-Act.pdf)) focuses on employees and employers awareness of employment rights, legal certainty, and also conclusion of contract, working conditions and termination of contract. Our tasks in this project were mostly related to topics covering financial support during forced unemployment and termination on labor contract. The analysis was commissioned by Ministry of Social Affairs in 2013.

### Evaluation of Labor Market Training and Wage Subsidy

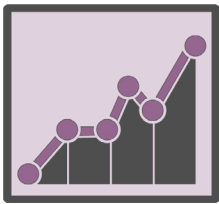
See <http://www.centar.ee/uus/wp-content/uploads/2012/01/Executive-Summary.pdf>. The aim of the study was to evaluate the relevance, effectiveness, sustainability and efficiency of the labor market training and wage subsidy measures offered by the Estonian Unemployment Insurance Fund. Different methods were used for this: to obtain information on subjective opinions on the services, training providers and companies that had received wage subsidies were interviewed. A survey was carried out among the people who had been unemployed during the time period under review, including both recipients of the respective services and non-recipients. In order to evaluate the effectiveness of the services, the administrative dataset of the Unemployment Insurance Fund (UIF) was linked to that of the Tax and Customs board, enabling us to compare employment and wage outcomes for program participants and non-participants with similar characteristics.

### Career Services

Survey of career services (2011; see executive summary in English at the end of the report at [http://vana.innove.ee/orb.aw/class=file/action=preview/id=36529/Karjaariteenuste\\_susteemi\\_uuring\\_loppraport.pdf](http://vana.innove.ee/orb.aw/class=file/action=preview/id=36529/Karjaariteenuste_susteemi_uuring_loppraport.pdf)). The aim of the study was to evaluate the citizens' awareness of career services and their career planning skills, analyze the availability of career services and cooperation between different interest groups at providing career services in Estonia.

Youth monitoring has been established for the purpose of introducing a knowledge-based youth policy. It provides information about various fields related to the lives of young people by enabling to make assessments about the situation of the youth, take the aspects concerning young people into account in developing different policies and evaluate the potential effects of policy changes.

A database of studies, which are related to the lives of young people and carried out in Estonia includes information on research papers, analyses and surveys related to the field of youth in Estonia. The database includes references to studies carried out at the request of ministries, scientific studies and Master's and Doctoral theses prepared by students.



## WHY ROI MATTERS

*Continued...*

How is the value of career guidance provision in supporting such policies measured?

Value of career guidance is not measured.

What are the challenges your country faces related to measuring Return on Investment (ROI)?

Co-operation with our colleagues from other European countries on this issue has been active as part of European Lifelong Guidance Network. Still the national approach is still under discussion. Systematic research on ROI is not established.

2015 International Symposium Goal:

**“ Explore experience and knowledge of other participating countries and develop lifelong guidance strategy at the national level with special interest in integrated services.”**



## ENGAGING EMPLOYERS

Please describe the formal and informal roles and mechanisms that employers play/participate in to support workforce preparation, workforce placement, and development of young people in your country.

Employers are encouraged to take active role in all education measures.

### **Social and Economic**

Analysis of social and economic needs will be carried out prior to formulating the state commissioned education request for vocational training. The analysis will consider the number of individuals in need of vocational training and their preferences with regard to specific subjects taught and the needs of the labor market.

The assessment of economic needs is primarily based on the labor force demand projections up to 2020,

as compiled by the Estonian Ministry of Economic Affairs and Communications, together with data on the employment of vocational education graduates on the labor market.

### **Schools**

Vocational education school curricula are compiled based on vocational standards and are compiled by expert groups including employers. Occupational standards are designed in close collaboration with employers. In cases where no occupational standards exist, the schools must apply for recognition of the curricula by social partners (incl employers).

### **Workplace**

Workplace based studies constitute a specialized form of vocational education where the ratio of practical assignments undertaken in companies or institutions encompasses at least two thirds of the curriculum. The student achieves the learning



## ENGAGING EMPLOYERS

*Continued...*

outcomes described in the curriculum by fulfilling working tasks at the company. The remainder of the studies will be undertaken at school. Workplace based studies are conducted upon signing an intern contract between the school, student and employee. Expanding workplace based study form in Estonia is one of main goals for vocational education training system till 2020.

**What policies exist, if any, to support employer engagement? Please refer to occupational and labor market information, work experience, interventions in education and training institutions, and career guidance.**

The occupational qualifications system in Estonia is an interface between the labor market and the lifelong learning system enhancing the development, assessment and recognition of persons occupational competence. The system is developed and administered by the Estonian Qualifications Authority. In Estonian occupational qualifications system the labor market is divided into 16 sectors and each sector is managed by a sector skills council.

Institutions represented in sector skills councils are nominated by the Government (10-20 institutions) and persons representing these institutions are nominated by the Minister of Education and Research. Typically institutions represented in sector skills councils are: employers organizations of the sector; trade unions of the sector; professional associations of the sector; education and training institutions; responsible ministries.

The objective of the sector skills council is registering the viewpoints and suggestions of different institutions, and achieving a consensus upon working out, developing and implementing the occupational qualifications system of the sector.

**What are the challenges your country faces related to Engaging Employers?**

It is important to point out that Estonia there are mainly small and medium enterprises and therefore involvement has it's limits.

One of the obstacles defined in the Estonian LLL strategy: There is a substantial mismatch of skills. There is a considerable difference between what is offered by the education and training system and what the labor market needs. Education institutions and representatives of employers do not collaborate sufficiently to develop the lifelong learning system.

### Major Challenges:

1. Lack of resolve and creativity in using different skills in new contexts.
2. The decline in age-related skills proficiency is too rapid.
3. Older generations have lower information-processing skills and lack the courage to use computers.





## INTEGRATED POLICIES: CREATING SYSTEMS THAT WORK

Please describe how policies for workforce preparation (including entrepreneurship) and workforce placement are integrated or coordinated, if at all, in your country. Who and/or what is driving the integration or coordination? How are local communities and public service users involved, if at all, in those policies?

**Youth Guarantee Initiative Action Plans:** In addition to existing labor market measures, complementary measures have been planned. These measures can be divided in to preventive activities and labor market measures.

**Activities Preventing Youth Unemployment:** The preventive activities mostly aim to raise youth awareness about working life, and to launch and develop supportive measures targeted to NEET youth. To guarantee the effectiveness of preventive measures, resources shall also be allocated to increase knowledge and to better investigate and understand the situation of NEET youth.

**Labor market measures:** In addition to existing labor market measures, the Estonian Unemployment Insurance Fund will start to offer the first job measure, aiming to decrease youth unemployment due to little or no work experience, and to help youth without specialized education to find a job.

**To what extent do these sectors coordinate such policy or program initiatives? To what extent do they include career guidance/advice/information provision? How useful and efficient are these to support the policy initiatives?**

Co-operation, co-ordination and exchange of information within the institutional network in the fields of education, guidance, youth work and employment is essential to efficient and coherent guidance systems. Guidance forums is an important feature to bring together actors and stakeholders in partnerships.

Estonian career guidance forum was established in 2008, when involved stakeholders agreed that there is a need for a common understanding and leadership, strategic thinking at national level. The membership includes representatives from the ministries of education, labor and economy, public employment service, training institutions, employer, client and practitioner organizations. Since 2012 the scope is widened – in addition counseling services for special educational needs are in the agenda.

In 2014, the productivity of Estonian national and regional forums was assessed. Regarding to the productivity of forums, the Estonian national forum has done good job in fostering co-operation between lifelong guidance services and different stakeholders. Due to successful co-operation it has been possible to fix the gaps and focus on working out efficient solutions. Also, the regional forum has been effective in bunching and sharing information about lifelong career topics. Thirdly, the regional forum functions as an umbrella in terms of holding and developing the big picture of lifelong guidance. Regional forums have been effective in promoting awareness of lifelong career guidance, and bringing different stakeholders together. The study confirmed that regional forums play an important role in the area of career guidance. There is true readiness to continue developing well organized regional units and predispose nationwide systematic co-operation.

**What are the challenges your country faces related to Integrated Policies: Creating Systems that work?**

The network of guidance related institutions and stakeholders is extensive including educational institutions at all levels, local governments (193), county governments (15), employment offices, youth centers, youth guidance centers, labor offices (15), associations of practitioners and clients etc.

Integrated policies for lifelong guidance development and service provision has been a crucial topic in the agenda for many years. Analysis has shown that a major concern for guidance is the program-based funding and resulting uncertainty about the future. Therefore the reorganization of lifelong guidance was initiated in 2013 both in education and labor sector. In education the 24 fragmented youth guidance centers (NGOs, VET schools, local and county governments, private centers) were replaced by 16 centralized public centers of Foundation Innove. Unemployment Insurance Fund (Estonian public employment service) opened their doors to all – since 2015 career counseling is also available for working adults.



Are there any other unique challenges within your country to which you would like to draw attention?

The future demographic trends of Estonia are similar to general European trends. The declined birth rate in the 1990s has not yet influenced the proportion of working-age population, but a significant influence will appear in the near future. The decrease of the population is happening mainly at the expense of working-age people (15-64 years) and in 20 years there will be over 100,000 less working-age people living in Estonia according to the prognoses of Eurostat. Those trends give a clear signal for the necessity to ensure the options for people's long-term active participation on the labor market, which is in turn supported by a strong lifelong learning system where quality career services play an important role in making decisions.

One significant problem in the Estonian economy is structured unemployment. That means the labor market is simultaneously lacking both jobs and labor force.

Are there any additional examples of successful programs or policies you would like to share? Please provide references or links to any key reports that have discussed career development in your country.

The e-learning repository at <http://www.e-ope.ee/repositoorium> mainly holds learning materials in vocational and higher education in different formats, which concern different theoretical and practical matters in different fields of study.

The repository of the School Life (Koolielu) educational portal at <http://koolielu.ee/waramu> mainly contains electronic learning assets sorted in line with the general education curricula. The subject experts of Koolielu update it on an on-going basis with exciting learning materials that relate to the curriculum. Anyone can give their contribution to the improvement of the database. The quality of the learning assets is guaranteed by subject experts who review all materials before their release.

What is the extent and nature of government funding to support these developments? From which sources and for what purposes (distinguishing system development, system maintenance, and service delivery)? Where possible, please quantify the government funding provided.

Full review on the funding of lifelong guidance services is not available.

Government funding (including resources from European Social Fund) for the development and provision of lifelong guidance services for 2015 – 2019 in education sector is ca 45 million €. Comparing to the previous period (2008 – 2014), the yearly average has increased ca 50%.



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