

ESTONIAN YOUTH WORK IN BRIEF

LEGISLATION

There are different laws and regulations concerning youth affairs but specific laws are the Child Protection Act, Juvenile Sanctions Act, Hobby School Act and the most important, the **Youth Work Act**.

Special orders, decrees and regulations are ordained concerning registering youth associations and youth camps, camp director qualifications, camp licences, regulation for applying for annual and projects grants from the state budget, etc.

Existing **long-term projects and strategies** of the government:

- Estonian Youth Work Conception
- Estonian Youth Work Development Plan 2001-2004
- National Crime Prevention Strategy until 2005
- Integration in Estonian Society 2000-2007

The conception and development plan are the basis for specific action plans in eight subdivisions of youth work, with the horizontal themes of integration and criminal prevention.

THE ROLE OF THE AUTHORITIES: PARLIAMENT, MINISTRIES, COUNTY GOVERNMENT, LOCAL GOVERNMENT

The **Cultural Affairs Committee of the Parliament** is responsible for youth and youth work affairs.

The **Ministry of Education and Science** aims to plan, develop and arrange youth work. There is the Youth Policy Department at the Ministry. Arrangements are made at the **Estonian Youth Work Centre** administered by the Ministry of Education and Science. Pursuant to the Youth Work Act, the Ministry of Education and Science defines the main directions of youth work on the state level, and the executive tasks are to be fulfilled by local governments. The Ministry has formed the **Youth Work Council** as an inter-sectorial and consultative body of the Ministry of Education and Science including members from different ministries, youth workers associations and youth associations. The Youth Work Council aims to advise ministry in matters of youth work. The council will be reformed in the nearest future in order to plan Estonian youth policy in the long-term perspective. **Estonian National Youth Council** (Estonian Union of Youth Organisations) and **Estonian Association of Youth Councillors** are the most active partners for ministry in this process.

Core tasks of the Ministry:

- To prepare the national programmes for youth work;
- To support the activities of youth associations and allocate annual grants;
- To monitor the purposeful use of funds allocated for youth work from the state budget;
- To co-ordinate the organisation of recreational holidays for young people;
- To provide a system of information and counselling;
- To overview the results and studies of youth work;
- To keep the register of youth associations;

- To issue activity licences for youth camps and to keep the register of youth camps, etc.

Other ministries involved in youth issues are:

- Ministry of Social Affairs (social assistance and drug abuse);
- Ministry of Internal Affairs (juvenile police, juvenile delinquents);
- Ministry of Culture (youth sport and cultural movements as a part of sport and culture associations involving all age groups);
- Ministry of Defence (preparation of male youth for military service);
- Ministry of Justice (co-ordination of criminal prevention).

County governors shall (the Youth Work Act):

- Coordinate the drafting and implementation of the national youth policy in the counties;
- Exercise supervision over the use of funds allocated for youth work from the state budget in the counties;
- Organise the provision of information for and counselling of young people in the counties. There are youth workers of county governments who are planning the youth work in the county, counselling a youth worker and youth leaders, coordinating the interdepartmental cooperation between different agencies and organisations for developing youth work, implementing and executing youth projects, conducting youth events.

The **county governments** work closely together with local governments. The Youth Work Act contains an amendment to the Local Government Organisation Act – the responsibility of youth work was added to the list of responsibilities of local authorities. The local governments decide what the main objectives of youth work are in its territory and the extent to which these shall be implemented.

Functions of **rural municipality and city councils**:

- Determine the priorities of youth work in their administrative territories and set out the tasks necessary for the achievement thereof in the rural municipality or city development plans;
- Support the youth programmes and youth projects of youth associations operating in the administrative territory of the given rural municipality or city, approve the conditions, procedure and application forms for supporting the youth programmes and youth projects of youth associations from the rural or city municipality budget;
- Perform other functions connected with the organisation of youth work in their administrative territories.

SOME OBSERVATIONS ABOUT ESTONIAN YOUTH WORK

The process of preparing the youth work action plans in eight subdivisions as a first stage of the Estonian II Youth Work Forum was started in January 2002. Drafts of the action plans were completed by November 2002 when the **Estonian II Youth Work Forum – Time of Action** took place. The main goal of the Estonian II Youth Work Forum was to inform youth workers of the need to systematise and increase practical activities, based on the prepared Concept. The final act of the 2nd Youth Work Forum in Estonia and action plans in eight subdivisions will be presented to the new government and parliament.

In Estonia young people have possibilities to get advice and counselling from youth information centres in each county as the national system of counselling centres has been developed in last three years. There are counselling and information centres on the county level and special website, see <http://www.rajaleidja.ee/pathfinder> The **county information and advisory network** now has 25 centres, of which 15 have been initiated with Ministry of Education funding. Information on the centres is available on the Internet. In 2002, the Ministry of Education is continuing to financially support the development of the network.

Recreational and educational leisure programmes support leisure activities of youth and youth camps. The number of children's **camps** with operation licences is stable and the number of children who have stayed during their holidays has grown (in the year 2000, 35 camps with an operations licence and 78 project camps that provided holiday residence to more than 27 000 young people).

In April 2002, a discussion was started to develop a national programme for Open Youth Centres and to support youth centres in 2003. The open centres where all young people can go on a voluntary basis serve as youth work co-ordination centres in a region. There are currently approximately 49 youth centres, and most of these operate on the principle of open youth centres. **The Association of Estonian Open Youth Centres** has become the primary partner in developing this program. In May 2002, a 2-day seminar for youth centres was held with the support of the Ministry of Education, and one of the topics was the launch of a nation-wide open youth centre program.

There are youth workers with different educational backgrounds (social work, psychology, etc.) and training. At the moment there is a debate about the **educational professional standard of youth workers** in Estonia.

Estonia is one of the countries where the youth work is taught as a basic profession. School youth workers (so-called hobby leaders) for both Estonian and Russian medium schools have continuously received training, in-service and retraining in the field of youth at the Viljandi Cultural College, and Estonian-speaking youth workers at the Tallinn Pedagogical Seminar. Non-governmental associations and the Estonian Youth Work Centre provide different types of training for people working with youth (camp leaders, etc.).

Pursuant to **the Hobby School Act** non-formal education is organized for children and youth for developing one's personality also providing knowledge and skills through leisure activities. There are 197 licensed centres. Many activities and trainings are also lead by the school youth workers (so-called hobby leaders) at schools in cooperation with the local pupils union.

Pursuant to **the Juvenile Sanctions Act** the activity of regional under-age crime commissions (34) on the county and local levels in the domain of special youth work has been financed by the Ministry of Education in order to develop different means of influence, aimed to create social competence for delinquents or to restore such competence. Committees co-ordinate criminal prevention activities, counselling, participation in youth or social programmes or rehabilitation projects, etc.

In order to enhance information about youth and for youth, counselling and research, preliminary work for the **Youth Barometer** will be finished by December 2002. Within these activities, support has been provided to the Estonian Youth Institute for 2002 (this non-profit organisation has also been commissioned to provide an overview of youth surveys carried out in Estonia), and a Finnish-Estonian youth surveys program group has been formed.

FINANCING

Institutions financed by the Government (name, tasks, functions):

- **Estonian Youth Work Centre** <http://www.entk.ee>, coordinates youth work in Estonia, arranges nation-wide actions and represents Estonian youth (policy) in different international organisations. Tasks: Information and advocacy, training, projects and programmes, social-pedagogical youth work, special youth work, local history study projects, international relations, youth information fair, adventure pedagogy.
- Viljandi College of Culture, educating school youth workers (so-called hobby leaders) .
- Tallinn Pedagogical Seminar, educating youth workers.

From the state budget the Ministry of Education and Science provides (2002):

- Grants for youth programmes and youth projects of youth associations;
- Annual grants for youth associations, the membership of which includes at least 500 young persons and the local units of which operate in the territory of at least one third of the counties (decisions are made by the Youth Work Council);
- Grants for national and regional programmes of youth work;
- Grants for international youth work;
- Grants for training youth workers;
- Instalment and administration of the Youth program;
- Maintenance of Estonian Youth Work Centre;
- Arranging the 9th Youth Singing and Dancing Festival, etc.

Through the Gambling Tax Council:

- Different projects of non-governmental youth organisations;
- Camps and recreation activities;
- Projects of Estonian Child Protection Union.

Apart from State grants there are other sources of funding. Local government budgets have funding for cultural and youth issues, which is used for financing projects and salaries of local youth specialists.

Different minority activities (camps, civic studies, etc.) are financed by the Integration Foundation, see <http://www.meis.ee/eng/index.html>

PARTICIPATION

The **Estonian Youth Council** was founded by 26 stronger youth organisations on 19th of May 2002. There are about 150 different youth (work) associations registered in the Estonian Register of Non-governmental Organisations; approximately 60 of them are socially active in the opinion of the Estonian Youth Council.

The **Students' Council** is an advisory body for the Minister of Education comprised of representatives of the **Estonian School Student Council Union** <http://www.escu.ee/> and **Federation of Estonian Student Unions** <http://www.eyl.ee/>. The Estonian School Student Council Union founded in 1998 is a non-governmental politically independent organisation based on students' active voice. At the present moment it is the only organisation in Estonia, which represents Estonian secondary and vocational school students from all over Estonia on the national and international levels as well. At the present moment the organisation unites 110 school student councils. The **School Student Council Union "Open Republic"**, an association of the student governments of non-Estonian medium schools, was formed as a legal entity and registered as a youth organisation in the Ministry of Education register in January 2002. The Federation of Estonian Student Unions (FESU) was established in 1991 and it has been expanding quickly representing today 95% of the students. The organisation also tries to improve academic as well as social standards for students. All university student unions that have democratic structures and have been recognised by the Estonian Ministry of Education as institutions of higher education can apply for membership in the FESU.

INTERNATIONAL CO-OPERATION

Estonia is a member of the Council of Europe since 1993. There are several European Union projects promoted like PHARE since 1993, YOUTH, Socrates, 5th Framework Programme and many special projects initiated in higher education, veterinary science, vocational education and employment, minority integration, language policy, etc.

Estonia is taking part in co-operation projects of the Baltic Sea states and there are more than 30 different agreements and network activities, including youth work. Estonia has bilateral agreements on youth work with Finland (since 1993), Germany (1993), Russia (2000), Egypt (1999) and Belgium (Flemish community, 2000).

Participation in **the Youth programme** has over the past five years of implementation clearly become the focal point of international youth work in Estonia. The range of applicants is very wide, including traditional youth organisations, youth work institutions, schools, non-formal youth groups and other NGO's that deal with youth and youth work development in various local communities of Estonia. During the period from September 2001 until May 2002, the Estonian Programme Committee for the *Youth* programme has granted 18 international youth exchange projects; 35 European Voluntary service projects; 8 youth initiative projects; 2 Future Capital projects and 7 support projects (training, study visits, job-shadowing, contact making seminars, etc.). In order to support the quality of the projects, the Estonian National Agency for the *Youth* programme has established a long-term training strategy through which over the period of time numerous training courses focusing mainly on project management, cultural preparation and risk management are offered to the applicants.

The Youth programme has been widely promoted in both the Estonian and Russian languages amongst the target groups and new informational materials and web sites have been recently developed in order to support that. As the Youth programme aims to offer an excellent opportunity for young people to experience European co-operation in various forms, the decentralised co-ordination and management of the programme funding enables the project's realisation at a very grass-roots level.

WHITE PAPER PROCESS

The Estonian Ministry of Education in co-operation with the European Movement in Estonia and the Estonian Youth Work Centre are planning to organise the translation of White Paper, public debates, training and seminars for youth associations and leaders concerning White Paper at the second term of 2002 and in the beginning of 2003. The priorities of the field of youth described in WP have been taken notice of forming the priorities of the state budget in the area of youth matters for 2003-2006.

ANALYSIS AND REPORTS MONITORING THE YOUTH SITUATION IN ENGLISH:

- A detailed overview is available about youth policy in Estonia in English and French as well, "Youth policy in Estonia (2001)" <http://book.coe.fr/gb/cat/liv/htm/l1755.htm>
- Statistical overview "Young People in Estonia. 2001" Statistical Office of Estonia
- "Living conditions in Estonia. 1999" (Ministry of Social Affairs)

MOST SIGNIFICANT PROBLEMS AND PRIORITIES

- Financing non-formal education (so-called hobby education)
- Developing the structure of youth work

- Knowledge about and acknowledgement of youth work
- Future development of youth information and counselling
- Quality of education for entering the labour market, school drop-outs and unemployment as a result of poor preparation
- Drug abuse and the growing population of HIV-positive youngsters

CONTACTS

Estonian Ministry of Education and Science
Munga 18, 50080 Tartu
Tel + 372 7 350 222, Fax + 372 7 350 200
E-mail hm@hm.ee

Estonian Youth Work Centre
Uuslinna 10, 11415 Tallinn
Tel + 372 6 380 757, Fax + 372 6 380 756
E-mail entk@entk.ee