

**School drop-out as an obstacle building the knowledge
based economy in Estonia**

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A limitation of this study was the limited availability of reliable statistics on dropout levels in basic education and children who have never attended school. For this review we decided to use the statistics available in November 2003. These statistics do not indicate all reasons why a rising number of young people are leaving school during the school year without finishing compulsory education. In addition there is the concern in Estonia among the politicians, that existing statistics is not correct and the evidence of dropouts needs to be more deeply studied. The timeframe of this study did not allow organizing additional data collection.

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List of Abbreviations

- SSR -Soviet Socialist Republic
- ESSR -Estonia Soviet Socialist Republic
- USSR -Union of the Soviet Socialist Republics
- UN -United Nations
- EU -European Union
- NATO -North Atlantic Treaty Organizations
- CPI -Consumer Price Index
- US -United States
- GDP -Gross Domestic Product
- CIS -Commonwealth of Independent States
- VET -Vocational Education and Training
- MoE -Ministry of Education and Research
- NGO -Non-Governmental Organization
- UK -United Kingdom
- NPAA -National Programme for the Adoption of the Acquis

Section 1: Introduction

This review will focus on the rising dropout rates at the basic level of education in Estonia. Over the last 5 years approximately 1,300 young people annually interrupted their studies in basic school, with a cumulative impact.¹ It is estimated that more than 20,000 (17-25 age group) Estonians without a secondary education did not continue their studies in 2001.²

The growing population of young people without a basic education is comprised of individuals with different backgrounds and different reasons (social, health, behavioral, learning difficulties) for not fulfilling the compulsory education. There is a lack of research and statistics to explain and understand the reasons for high drop-out rates in Estonia. In this report dropouts are defined as individuals who did not complete their studies in basic school with graduation certificate.

Rising Drop-out Rates and the Impact on Estonia

From the time Estonia regained independence; human capital has been viewed as a necessity to compete in the global economy.³ Estonia is a small country with limited natural resources. The talents, skills and knowledge base of the Estonian population are crucial for a strong knowledge-based economy. As a result, education is a central priority of the country. This has led to an ambitious scale of educational reforms⁴ as economic prosperity cannot be built on a work force that lacks a basic education unless circumstances are exceptional⁵. The rising drop-out rates from basic education is a serious threat to future stability and growth of Estonia's knowledge-based economy.

¹ See attachment 1

² Social Trends in Estonia 2001; Estonian Human Development Report 2001

³ OECD Education Policy Review in Estonia, 2001.

⁴ OECD Education Policy Review in Estonia, 2001

⁵ Low skills: a problem for Europe, Report prepared by S. McIntosh and H. Steedman, Centre for Economic Performance, London School of Economics, with the assistance from members of the NEWSKILLS research group; <http://158.143.98.51/homepage/tser/finalreport.pdf>, page 8

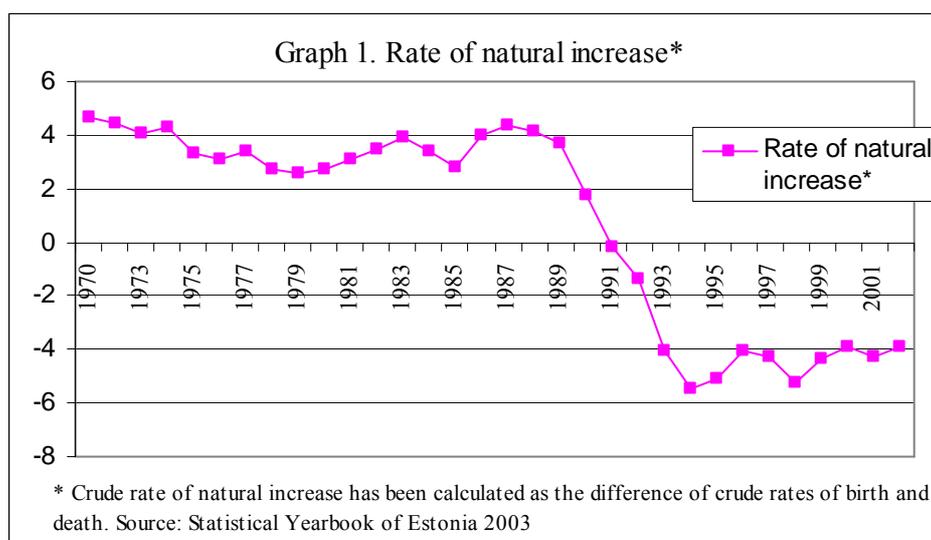
The purpose of this sub-sector analysis is to: (1) alert the Ministry of Education and Research to the magnitude of the issue; (2) draw attention to the rising levels of drop-outs from basic education with the hope of drawing donor involvement; (3) propose “safety-net” policies to the Estonian Ministry of Education and Research in order to curb future dropout rates. This report will begin with a review of background information on the social situation in Estonia. We will then provide a discussion of the Education sector in Estonia as a whole, and then focus on the issue of rising levels of drop-out rates in basic education. In conclusion we will develop a sub-sector strategy for attracting donor involvement and propose policy strategies suggesting an agenda for future to guarantee that every person in Estonia acquires basic education.

Section 2: Background information

Social Developments in Estonia

Demographics: Birth Rates

Since the beginning of the 1990s, birth rates have significantly decreased (graph 1 below). In 2000 birth rate trends and characteristics began to resemble those prior to the 1990's. The number of abortions and infant mortality fell and the mean age a marriage and mother's age at childbirth grew. In 2000 more children were born than a year earlier and the growth in fertility that started in 1999 continued. The share of women who gave birth to a third or subsequent child grew. The share of boys among newborn children was the highest of the last decades - 1,094 boys per 1,000 girls. Only 46% of children were born to legally married couples. 117 abortions were induced per 100 live births.⁶



On September 1, 2002 only 13,343 children were enrolled in grade 1, compared to 21,000 in 1997 (Annex VIII). While changes in enrollment rates will not affect economic activity in the near future, it is important to consider these changes when planning the general and vocational education and training. The number of basic school graduates will start quickly decreasing in 2004/05 academic year.

⁶ Estonian Statistical Office, "Yearbook", 2001

Labour market and unemployment

An analysis of unemployment rates for different age groups indicates that in 1998 – 2000⁷ unemployment levels increased the most among young people (15 – 24 years old, especially 20 – 24 years old). Unemployed youth from the age of 15 – 24 increased by 4,300— unemployment rate going from 19.8% in 1999 to 23,9% in 2000. Further, registered unemployment shows that 10.5% of young people do not register themselves actively. The Labour Force Survey (Annex II) shows that the unemployment of young people has particularly increased in rural areas, with higher levels among the women. Every fourth unemployed person in rural areas is aged 16 – 24 and 30.5% of the young women are unemployed. Since 2001, however, the unemployment among young people has decreased from 22.2% in 2001 to 17.6% in 2002⁸ and shows an increase tendency during the first quarters in 2003.

Failure to find a job can be caused by an inadequate command of the Estonian language of non-Estonians. In 2000⁹, the unemployment rate of the Estonians aged 15 – 24 was 19.7%, but 30,7% among the non-Estonians. The same tendency continued in 2002, when the unemployment rate of the Estonians aged 15-24 was 15%, but 22.7% among the non-Estonians. For example, according to the Census 2000 – 20% of the population in Ida-Viru County are Estonians, 65,9 % are Russians. Young people in Ida-Viru County have great difficulties finding a job after graduation from the local Vocational Education Institutions (VET) schools. Compared to the other age groups, the unemployment rate of young people is also high because many young people are still studying (and thus belong among inactive people). The absolute figure of the labour force is therefore relatively low.

In regional perspective, due to the restructuring of the economy job losses in the rural areas have resulted in a relative decrease of living standards, an increasing population outflow, a dependence on public sector employment and state aid. Job losses in industrial regions were somewhat less

⁷ Statistical Department, Labour Force Survey, 1998, 1999, 2000, 2001, 2002

⁸ Statistical Department, Labour Force Survey, 2000, 2001, 2002, 2003

⁹ Statistical Department, Labour Force Survey, 2000, 2001, 2002

problematic due to a compensatory increase in tertiary sector employment (except for the Ida-Viru County where industry is still the dominant sector). General economic activity is higher in the capital region and other urban areas, as well as in the western part of the country. In addition to the relatively high unemployment in the southeastern parts, longer-term unemployment (more than 12 months) is increasing in other regions of Estonia. Income levels are highest in the capital area and lowest in the southern and eastern parts of Estonia.

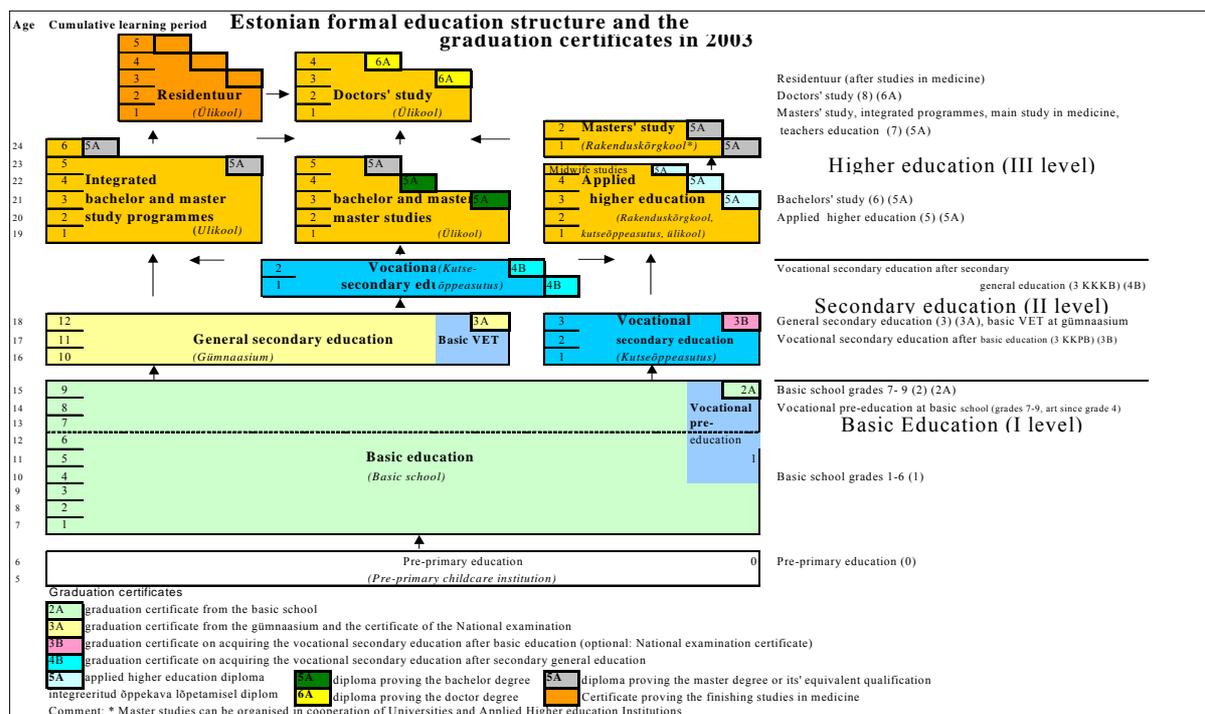
Social Welfare Services

Estonia's social welfare 'safety net' services incorporate cash benefits and in kind assistance. Current cash benefits include pensions, child benefits (primarily family allowances), sickness, maternity and other leave-related benefits, unemployment compensation, and means tested income support. Housing support for lower income families is an additional cash benefit, although the household itself does not receive cash, payment is made directly to the property owner to cover rent and heating expenses over and above a certain share of household income for a specified maximum floor space. In kind components of Estonia's safety net include training for the unemployed, other employment services and counseling, institutional care and material assistance administered through the social welfare offices. Majority of the benefits are paid on the basis of eligibility criteria. Only social assistance, which includes both housing support and income support, is explicitly targeted by income.

Estonian Education System

The Estonian Education System has been under constant change and reform since the beginning of the 1990's. The need to meet the demands of a changing society and build economic prosperity after the long Soviet occupation has been the driver of those changes. Currently, The 1992 "Constitution of the Republic of Estonia" (§37) provides everybody in Estonia with the right to an education. Compulsory schooling is free of charge at state and municipal schools. The chart below (Annex III) describes the Estonian Education System since 2003. Since 1998, the Educational Structure has been changed three times due to new legislation.

Exhibit 1 Estonian Formal Education Structure and the Graduation Certificates in 2003



Current Educational Policy Strategies in Estonia

Education policy in Estonia is framed by the Parliament (approving laws regulating education) and the Government (deciding on the national strategies for education). The majority educational policies address higher and general education. In the 1990's there was a shift toward more attention

for Vocation Education and Training (VET), a trend that has continued to grow gradually in the last few years.

Policy making in the field of education has not been stable in post soviet times. Since 1996 six different persons have held the position of minister of education, each having very different background and age. Every new Government has implemented a slightly different policy as to how the educational system must be organized. The biggest change was in 2001 when the Ministry of Education was moved from the capital, where Government is sitting to Tartu - the second largest town. Ministry did not only change the location, but also the structure and 2/3 of personnel. The change has slowed down the reform processes in some areas where new specialists were hired and has created the communication problems even though Estonia is famous as an advanced e-state.

Current education policy tends to follow the overall liberal economic and political approach. This approach has been dominant in the Estonian society for the last decade, paying much attention on issues such as privatization and municipalisation of schools, rationalization and cost-efficiency of education. Several initiatives in the period 1997-2000 ("Learning Estonia", "Education Scenarios 2010", "Tiger Leap Programme", "Education Forum") focused on strategic thinking regarding the overall education system but also in a broader context of a global, knowledge- and IT-based economy.¹⁰ As a result, an important **policy document (Education Strategy "Learning Estonia")** was prepared by the Ministry of Education, (Ministry of Education and Research since 2003) (MoE) and the task force of the "Education Forum" in 1999 - 2000 (involving social partners and NGOs).

The purpose of the strategy was to visualize the Estonian education system, develop a strategic plan, provide a foundation for reorganizing the education legislation, improve teachers' initial and complementary training and improve the education institutions administration and management. The most

¹⁰ Although the contrast between the vision of « Learning Estonia » and the reality of the conditions in VET has been « stark » according to the OECD review team in 1999

important national objective in Estonia was to create an open learning society. The vision was to create a society where individuals and organizations are informed learners and the primary learning language is the Estonian language. The Education system had to provide people with learning opportunities throughout their lives, ensure the development of the necessary institutions and support continuous development of the learning organizations and the whole society.

The draft of policy document “Learning Estonia” was widely discussed during two years of Educational Forums. Eventually the Government adopted the policy before any discussion in Parliament. There were several discussions in Parliament commissions before the general discussion started and finally consensus among the key players was achieved. During the hearing in Parliament (May 2002), however, a sudden change occurred among some people from the coalition who started to strongly criticize the structure of document. As a result, the Education Strategy as document was drawn back by the Government.

Since May 2003 the Ministry of Education and Research has been preparing a new educational strategy. If the previous strategy paper was stressing the future and did not give direct solutions how to achieve all the aims, the new document is stressing the problems our educational system is confronting every day and setting the benchmarks for next 3-4 years.

Section 3: Issues and Challenges of the Estonian Education Sector

Estonia declared that human capital is an essential component to achieve a high quality life for all people living in Estonia. The Education Sector was the first to respond to the challenge, taking the following steps toward the creation of a Knowledge and Innovation Based Estonia: (1) a Research and Development strategy was adopted for 2002-2006 by Parliament in 2001; and, (2) a Round Table of Education Policy was set up as an advisory body to the Minister of Education and Research. The task of Round Table is to support the Ministry of Education and Research in finding solutions for urgent problems in education policy on consensus basis.

Since the summer 2003, the Round Table has identified general aims of educational system including: to guarantee the high quality efficient education on all levels; to increase the adequacy of content of studies to the needs of individuals and society; to achieve the equal access to the high quality education to all people despite the regional; economical and gender differences; and, to sustain the Estonian culture and language in the world of rapid globalization.

More specifically the objectives for the Educational System are defined as follows:

- Every person in Estonia must acquire basic education;
- The quality secondary education must be provided in every region of Estonia;
- The reliability and quality of higher education system in Estonia is as high as in Europe;
- The lifelong learning possibilities are assured to every person according to the his/her abilities and needs;
- In areas where the primary language in schools is not Estonian, students are provided opportunities to continue studies in their native instructional language;
- Teachers at schools and pre-primary childcare institutions are competent and highly motivated;

- The tasks of state and local governments in administrating and developing of the educational system (institutions) are clearly defined;
- The infrastructure of schools supports the overall improvement of all pupils;
- The novelties in educational system are based on best quality research and databases;
- The share of educational expenditures of GDP will be on the same level as in Nordic Countries;
- The optimal school network is using the provided recourses to provide the high quality education.

As outlined in the introduction, **the number of those who leave school before completing even basic education is increasing** and there is the lack of research to explain why. From statistics of general education one can find the total number of those discontinuing studies before completing the 9th grade (compulsory according to the Law of Education), but to find out all the real reasons has been impossible thus far. According to the statistics, the dropout rate of pupils with diagnosis of medical or developmental disabilities is higher than the overall dropout rate (Table 1).

Table 1 Pupils with special educational needs in diurnal general education 1998/99-2002/2003

		1998/1999	1999/2000	2000/2001	2001/2002	2002/2003
In special schools		5185	5222	5220	5182	5166
In mainstream school	integrated into regular classes	14966	15511	18559	18967	19785
	separate classes	1315	1317	1670	1992	1880
Number of pupils with special need		21466	22050	25449	26141	26831
Total number of pupils in general education		217577	215841	212184	207612	200478
Share of pupils with special needs of total number of pupils						
...in special schools		2,38%	2,42%	2,46%	2,50%	2,58%
...in mainstream school	integrated into regular classes	6,88%	7,19%	8,75%	9,14%	9,87%
	separate classes	0,60%	0,61%	0,79%	0,96%	0,94%
Number of pupils with special needs discontinuing studies during the school year		120	205	190	170	na
Share of pupils with special needs discontinuing studies of total number of pupils with special needs		0,56%	0,93%	0,75%	0,65%	na

Rising Dropouts in Estonia

Over the last 5 years around 1,000 (Table 2) young people annually interrupted their studies in basic school, with a cumulative impact.

Table 2 The number of pupils discontinuing studies at diurnal basic school grades 1 – 9 (source: Database of National Observatory)

School year	The number of pupils at the beginning of school year	Number of pupils discontinuing studies during the school year		
		Total	%	incl. pupils with educational special need
1998/99	185 398	899	0,48%	120
1999/00	183 452	998	0,54%	205
2000/01	179 230	1 025	0,57%	190
2001/02	173 060	907	0,52%	170

When analyzing the drop-outs issue the important question is if we have an accurate sense of how many young people are dropping out of basic education and the reasons why. The drop-out levels can be measured through the difference between the enrolment ratio at specific age and the cohort size. Another way is to calculate the share of pupils who don't complete lower secondary schools (basic education) or have completed less than an ISCED 3 level.

The first comparison produces confusing results. For example, in the case of some age groups there are more children at school compared to the cohort size according to the population statistics (Table 3). This situation is partly caused by inaccurate registration procedures, which do not yield the exact figures. The regulations for enrolment and registration are not very strict and there is the possibilities for people bypass registration all together.

Table 3 Enrolment ratio for Educational Institutions by Age and Gender (% at the beginning of the academic year, source: database of Statistical Office of Estonia)

Age group	2001			2002		
	Total	Males	Females	Total	Males	Females
8	100,8	101,4	100,3	99,6	98,7	100,6
9	100,3	100,9	99,7	100,5	101,2	99,7
10	101,2	101,1	101,3	100,2	99,7	100,8
11	101	101,5	100,6	99,8	99,9	99,6
12	98,6	97,7	99,6	100,6	101,1	100
13	101,7	102,3	101	99,6	98,9	100,4
14	100,5	100,6	100,5	100,5	100,6	100,5

General school statistics were also used as an indicator of drop-out rates as they show: (1) how many of students were enrolled in the beginning of the school year; and (2) how many left school during the year and did not continue the same or following year. According to the statistics, the overall share of pupils who discontinued studies at basic school level during the 1998/99 school year to the percent of student who discontinued was 0.48%. During the 2000/01 school year the percent of student that discontinued was up to 0.57%. During 2001/02 there was light improvement – “only” 0.52% of at basic school enrolled pupils discontinued studies during the year. Even

though the percentage is low, the national total for a given year is equivalent to the student body at an average city school in Estonia.

Reasons for Discontinuing Studies

Over the last three years, two main reasons (total from 65.4% to 70.7% of all) for discontinuing studies during the school year emerged: (1) expulsion due to the pupil's inappropriate behaviour or poor achievements in studies and (2) other reasons (See table 4).

Table 4 Reasons for discontinuing studies during the school year at basic school grades 1 - 9

grade	Share of specific reason of all pupils discontinuing the studies											
	Share of pupils discontinued the studies of all pupils			Share of pupils expelled			Share of pupils employed			Share of pupils discontinued the studies because of other reasons		
	2001	2000	1999	2001	2000	1999	2001	2000	1999	2001	2000	1999
1	0,1%	0,1%	0,1%	5,9%	8,3%	4,3%				52,9%	75,0%	65,2%
2	0,1%	0,0%	0,0%							70,6%		22,2%
3	0,1%	0,0%	0,0%							75,0%	40,0%	30,0%
4	0,1%	0,1%	0,1%		25,0%					73,3%	41,7%	73,3%
5	0,1%	0,1%	0,1%	18,2%	27,3%	16,1%			16,1%	54,5%	50,0%	51,6%
6	0,3%	0,3%	0,3%	13,6%	25,4%	33,3%	15,2%	26,9%	25,0%	56,1%	38,8%	33,3%
7	0,6%	0,7%	0,7%	30,8%	33,3%	27,0%	26,9%	32,0%	25,5%	38,5%	32,0%	41,1%
8	1,2%	1,4%	1,3%	27,2%	35,2%	36,2%	29,2%	22,2%	24,8%	41,2%	39,1%	35,8%
9	1,9%	2,4%	2,4%	23,5%	41,5%	34,5%	33,2%	25,1%	25,7%	36,7%	30,4%	36,0%
Total	0,52%	0,57%	0,54%	23,3%	36,2%	31,4%	26,8%	24,0%	23,6%	42,1%	34,5%	38,1%

Using statistics from the school year 2002/03 (not available in the end of November 2003) it is possible to learn more about the 'other reasons' as the scale of collecting data was modified. The reason of expulsion named above, and the other reasons are indicated as: reaching the end of compulsory school age (17 years) and family reasons (marriage, pregnancy). The information about the share of dropouts because of fulfilling the compulsory school age (17 years) is directly linked to the grade repetition problems analyzed in the section Agenda for Further Reform (table in annex VI).

It is estimated that in 2001 more than 20,000 people (in the 17-25 age group) still have not completed basic education; or, they have a basic education but do not continue their studies to acquire skills required to enter

labour market. This problem is especially serious for boys, which leads to increasing gender differences at higher levels of education.¹¹ The result of stratification among young people is described on graph 2, where according to the census in year 2000, the share of people with basic education or less among the age group 20 – 24 is 22,9% compared to the 13.7% of age group 25 – 29.

¹¹ Social Trends in Estonia 2001; Estonian Human Development Report 2001

Section 4: Underserved Areas of Educational Reform

Current Areas of Educational Reform

The goal for reform in the Estonian educational system is to create preconditions that allow all students—throughout their lives—to acquire the knowledge, skills and experience that will help them succeed in society, their personal life and career. During the first half of 2001, the Development Strategy “Knowledge-based Estonia”, the Action Plan for Developing the Vocation Education, the Higher Education Reform Strategy and the National Development Strategy on Youth Work were approved by the Government.

In the general education sector the biggest developments are tied to curriculum development efforts. The Center of Curriculum Development in the University of Tartu was established on 2000 in order to continue the development of the national curriculum on basic and general secondary education. A curriculum with more extensive changes will be prepared for the school year of 2004/05. Curricula for pre-primary education and general secondary education, national curriculum for students with moderate and severe learning disabilities and supplementary learning curriculum will be developed further in the 2003/04.

The Action Plan for the Development of Vocational Education outlines comprehensive measures for improving the quality of vocational education—ensuring it’s relevance to the labour market and broadening access to all age groups. Under the Action Plan, special emphasis is put on the development of the Regional Training Centers that provide primary training for students, retraining for adults, pre-training for students in general secondary education, and vocational education and training for people with special needs¹². The development of training centers is especially important as they fulfill the role of incubators for other vocational education schools address a

¹² People with special needs in educational context are people with medical diagnoses (delayed development, intellectual disabilities, physical disabilities, neurological defect or development disorder, speech, reading or writing disorders), as well as people who need special treatment due to behavioural problems. Conditions should be established so that children with special needs can be educated in a mediation group together with healthy children. If not, there is the right to organise separate groups at mainstream schools or special schools.

number of areas such as curriculum development and teachers training. Financial support for the implementation of Action Plan comes from the Estonian State budget as well as by the EU PHARE Program¹³. Other initiatives under the Action Plan include supporting the integration of practical application and theory, pursuing the development of curriculum modules in vocational education and training, consolidation of the administration of vocational education institutions, optimizing resource utilization and developing stronger links between vocational education institutions and social partners. Special emphasis are put on the training of supervisors for practical training in enterprises.

In the higher education sphere, multiple developments are being carried out to adopt a system that is easily comparable with degrees in the European system of higher education. Under the proposal concerning the so-called Bologna process, the Estonian Government took the position that all higher education institutions would have the discretion for determining the length of the studies in the undergraduate and postgraduate study circles. Depending of the field, bachelor studies may take 3-4, master studies 1-2 years. However, the total length of studying to earn a master degree cannot be longer than 5 years (this does not apply to professions such as physicians and veterinarians).

Other issues in the Governments higher education reform package include changes in the principles of financing and the development of the non-university sector. The system of allocating resources for the state-commissioned study places will focus on preparing master level students. Estonia has offered the government guaranteed study loan for students already since 1993. Under the higher education reform proposal, the types of available social guarantees will be increased and the conditions of application will be specified more precisely. All social benefits such as the right to a

¹³ EU PHARE program is financial support and practical cooperation for preparation of accession countries to join the EU. It was established in 1989 to support reforms in Poland and Hungary, but has spread over 13 partner countries in Central and Eastern Europe at the moment.

study loan (õppelaen), tuition loan (õppemaksulaen) and study assistance (õppetõetus) will be available only to the full time students.

Other major changes have taken place in developing the non-university sector. Currently instruction in the non-university sector is offered only after a diploma and vocational higher education curricula. This practice has proven to be unreasonable because it is difficult to make a difference between requirements for diploma studies and vocational higher education studies especially on regards to the labor market outputs. Under the higher education reform plan unified regulations will be created for all curricula in a non-university sector. In order to maintain the transparency of the higher education system, instruction will follow an applied higher education curricula that will be mainly concentrated to the applied higher education institutions. These are the major reform areas the Estonian Education System. Many of the reforms, especially in Vocational Education, were caused by changes on Labour Market and technology.

Section 5: Agenda for Further Reform

Drop-outs in Basic Education

The objective of a basic education is to develop the knowledge, skills and abilities of the children—shaping self-supporting individuals who will contribute to society. Over the years a number of action plans, studies and international research papers addressed issues around dropouts and class repetition. While in most countries the number of pupils leaving compulsory education at primary or lower secondary levels have decreased, in Estonia **dropouts in this early stage of education still exists**. These findings are alarming as Estonia is moving towards a knowledge-based economy and the number of jobs based on low educational performance is decreasing.

The PISA report¹⁴ concludes that differences in the learning results can be caused by the following: socio-economic background of the students and schools; existence of the financial and human resources in the schools; study programmes differences; organisation of teaching; and, actual teaching. It is often thought that the primary reason for unsatisfactory performance in school is caused by the situation at home. The PISA 2000 report states that **the situation at home is only a part of the reason**¹⁵ and in many countries the influence is rather small. The importance of this finding is that education policy and schools can have an impact on reducing the negative impact of the social features that negatively influence the students' success at school.

Use of the available resources at school and existence of highly qualified teachers significantly influence the learning results of the students, no matter their different socio-economic background. PISA 2000 report¹⁶ states that there is positive correlation between the learning results and teacher-student relationship and class discipline. According to the PISA report the following factors influence the students' learning results: **learning materials and equipment** (their quality); **education policy and reality** (existence of

¹⁴ OECD, Knowledge and Skills for Life; First Results from PISA 2000, 2001, p.66

¹⁵ OECD, p.210, as Estonia did not participated in PISA 2000, we can only generate the results of PISA 2000 here

¹⁶ OECD, p.212

teachers their professional development, moral and devotion, grading the students); and, **actual situation in the classroom** (teacher-student relations, discipline, pressure for achievements, teachers' readiness for additional work with students).

For young people who have either had to repeat a class or have poor achievements, the choice to continue their education at the upper secondary level is very limited. They often end up in vocational tracks or short programmes with lower opportunities for stable, rewarding or well-paid jobs. Only rapid **improvement in the quality of basic education** can support and help young people gain the skill required for a bright future with prospects in Labour Market.

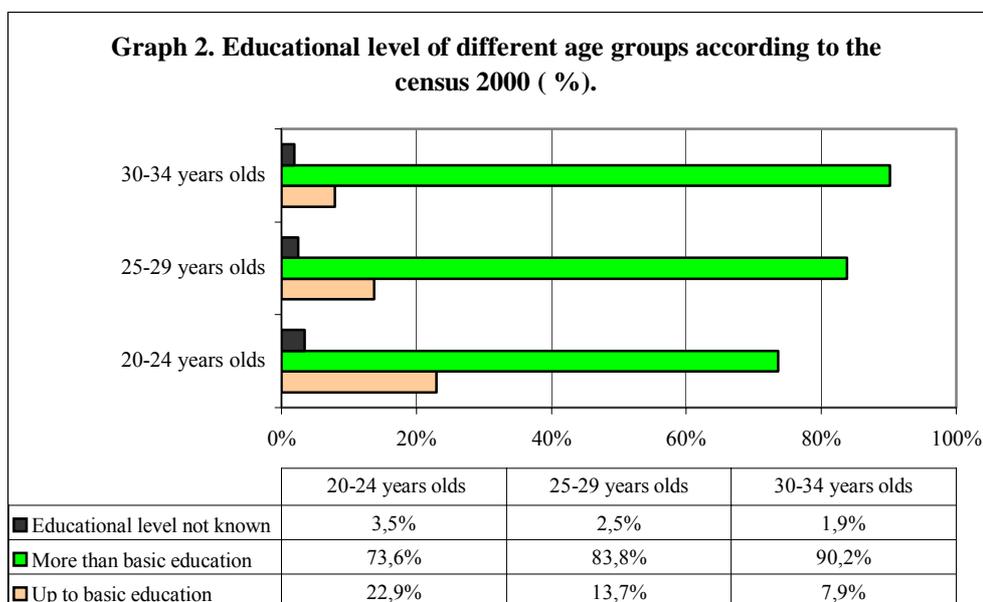
Estonia's grade repetition rate, relative to Lithuania, is extremely high – in the school year 2000/2001 6104 students¹⁷ (3.0% of all students at general school, being highest in the grades 5 – 10 as 4.1%) remained in the same grade for a second or third year. There are several reasons for repeating the school year, or for dropping out. For example, the practices of teachers working with homogeneous groups, the worsening of the economic situation at home, the lack of counseling at school and so forth.

Repetition can lead to high drop-out rates, as the schooling in basic education is compulsory until the graduation or until the age of 17. There is no legal instrument to keep a young person who has passed the compulsory schooling age (17 years) in a basic school until the successful finish of the school year. As shown in Table 4 page 22, we can conclude that it is almost impossible to find out the real reasons why young people discontinue studies at basic school. From legislation the reasons the teachers' council can propose to Juvenile Committee to expel the pupil from basic school are the following: (1) violation of the rules of the procedures at school; (2) disregard the rules of general conduct; or, (3) a criminal conviction. To understand the scope of "other reasons" needs further research.

¹⁷ Tables in annex V and VI

In Estonia, legal acts define the responsibilities and obligations of different stakeholders in ensuring the fulfillment of compulsory education requirement¹⁸. It is not possible, however, to follow the legislation without any penalties. The social problems of families empower the young people and schools for pure performance in studies, which can lead to the repetition of the class which results in rising dropouts from basic school before graduation.

The results of stratification among young people in graph 2, according to the census in year 2000, show the share of people with basic education or less among the age group 20 - 24 is 22,9% compared to the 13.7% of age group 25 - 29.



As the social divide based on low educational achievements is rising, education policy must introduce new programmes and measures to prevent low achievements which conclude with the dropout from basic school. In society, every member must ensure that basic education is acquired by 100% of the population. We need to learn from our own best practice compared

¹⁸ The Law on Education (1992) §4(1) stipulates that state and local government ensure everybody in Estonia the conditions for fulfilling the compulsory education requirement and consistent studies, according to the rules set in legal acts.

with countries that have made attempts to change the situation and achieved better results.

Best Practices: Reducing Drop-out Rates

Lithuania

It became clear to the Lithuanian government that it was a necessity to create conditions that enable pupils, who did not complete a basic school level of general education, to choose a way to complete their studies. High levels of children leaving school without a basic general schooling, was a detrimental phenomenon for Lithuanian culture. Under the conditions of a market economy, these persons can only become an unqualified labour force.

Research by the Lithuanian Ministry of Education¹⁹ found a direct correlation between lower numbers of pupils repeating courses and lower dropout levels. In the period from 1995 – 2001 38.3 thousand pupils remained in the same grade for a second or third year. The number of pupils repeating the course was gradually decreasing in 1995-2001 (from 8.1 thousand in 1995/6 to 3.5 thousand in 2001/02). The majority of those repeating courses were first-graders—approximately 24% of the total number of pupils, 15% were grade 8, 14% grade 7 and 12% grade 6. Investigation shows that pupils repeating the course in basic education tend to play truant from school or skip school for months on end. Repeating courses is not only a failure of a pupil or his/her school, it is a failure of the whole system of education. In addressing this complex problem Lithuania implemented an alternative school model, 'Youth Schools' (Annex VIII, Concept of Youth School in Lithuania) from Denmark. The goal of Youth School is to help adolescents and teenagers that have no motivation for learning to be raised under conditions optimal for their self-actualization, as well as a productive and socially reasonable self-expression.

¹⁹ The cost of pupils non-attendance and school year repetition, Dr. Violeta Rimkevičienė, The study was commissioned by the DCentre for Educational Studies of the Open Society Fund Lithuania Vilnius, 2001

Denmark

In Denmark²⁰ it is possible to study, train and improve one's skills throughout life. Education (Annex IX The Danish Education System) is compulsory for children from the age of 7 to 16 years; i.e. primary and lower secondary school. 89% attend the public Folkeskole with the remaining 11% attending private schools. 83% of young people continue their education and attend a youth education programme with 40% of young people going on to higher education. However, 1/3 of the labour force has only completed primary and lower secondary education.

Vocational basic training (erhvervsgrunduddannelse, EGU) takes two years, but can be extended with practical training for up to one year. EGU is designed to give the young person technical skills and to develop maturity so that it becomes easier to find a job or start on an ordinary vocational training programme. The training alternates between theoretical teaching at a vocational college, production school or similar, and practical training on the job. This training programme can consist of individually chosen subjects, but may also be offered as a training programme for a particular industrial sector in co-operation with an educational institution. There are approx. 110 production schools distributed all over the country. This school form emerged from an experiment combining education and production, which was carried out at the end of the 1970s, mainly for unemployed young people with a low level of educational attainment. The schools were and are still established on a municipal initiative, and in several places, two or more municipalities cooperate on the operation of a production school. The production schools distinguish themselves from most other school forms in that they have a continuous intake and very big variations in the duration of the stay of the individual participants. A typical stay is of approx. six months' duration, but 25% stay at the production school for less than a month and 25% for more than six months. The Act on production schools stipulates that the stay must not exceed one year.

²⁰ http://www.r-u-e.dk/guidance_in_dk/kap3_education.asp; <http://pub.uvm.dk/2000/prod/16.htm>

The basis for the learning processes at the schools is a number of workshops with practical work. From the start, the focus has been on the traditional crafts such as wood, metal, construction and agriculture, but the schools have increasingly taken in new lines such as music/drama, multimedia and nature and agriculture. These "new" subjects now make up approx. 50% of the offer. In addition to the work in the workshop, the school must also offer teaching in general subjects. The results of the study group themselves around the two main areas: school profiles and participant profiles. Here, we will account for the most important features of the two areas, including the special pedagogical effects used within the school form and the benefit experienced by the participants.

United States of America

In USA The National Dropout Prevention Center²¹ has identified 15 effective strategies (annex X) that have the most positive impact on the dropout rate. These strategies have been implemented successfully at all education levels and environments throughout the USA. Strategies cover following four intervention areas:

Early Interventions:

Family Involvement, Early Childhood Education, Reading/Writing Programs;

Basic Core Strategies:

Mentoring/Tutoring, Service Learning, Alternative Schools, Out-of-School Experiences;

Making the Most of Instruction:

Professional Development, Learning Styles/Multiple Intelligences, Instructional Technologies, Individualized Instruction;

Making the Most of the Wider School Community:

Systemic Renewal, Community Collaboration, Career Education/Workforce Readiness,- Violence Prevention/Conflict Resolution.

²¹ <http://www.dropoutprevention.org/default.htm>

Lessons Learned for Estonia

One can find the Lithuanian Youth School initiative under the Basic Core Strategies as an alternative school. In Estonia we cannot point any of them as a success story even there are the attempts to implement pieces of different strategies thru the legislation and real school life.

Estonian experience

The adopted vocational standards state that the lowest education level of the qualified labour force in Estonia is basic education. Not having basic, compulsory, education limits the choices, both for studying and for work. Labour market research indicates that the number of people with only primary or basic education has been increasing among the unemployed, bringing along increasing social tension. The need for financial resources for social welfare is increasing, however, more resources does not solve the problem of a young unemployed and under-qualified labour force. The criminal aspect intensifies as it becomes even more difficult to win control over the situation while more resources are necessary.

To find the solutions for young people without basic education and to create the possibilities for acquiring the basic vocational education, the Action Plan for Developing Estonian VET System in 2001 – 2004 stressed the following: The main emphasis should be on prevention, as there is a full legal framework including the opportunities to apply even administrative influencing methods. It is necessary to eliminate the reasons not to focus on dealing with the consequences.

In order to provide the opportunity to acquire basic work skills (basic VET) for the young people who have not acquired the basic education, the first and the most important task is to provide them with the opportunity to acquire a basic education. It can be organized at the adult education institutions in the evening or distance study forum. At the same time basic VET is organized at the VET schools, parallel to acquiring the basic education. The objective of basic VET, in addition to providing work-related skills, is to develop attitudes towards further studies. The local municipalities in cooperation with the Employment Offices provide information on the training opportunities, direct and control. The one who orders it finances work-related training. There is the possibility to have contract and financing from the local municipality, Ministry of Education, employers, or individuals. Work-related training includes aspects on finding a job, on planning one's life, on communicating with surrounding environment, etc, necessary for being successful in life. In

2001 about 141 students could benefit from this new pathway, offered by 7 VET schools (on average 20 students per school).

To raise the awareness about future careers and to support young people during the studies at Gymnasium in Estonia additional optional possibilities as basic VET have opened lately too, in particular for rural areas. If a gymnasium student has covered basic VET in gymnasium, it enables him/her to acquire the whole VET programme after gymnasium in less time;²² in 2001 7 VET schools provided basic VET for 246 gymnasium students. To support the future choices of young people there is the possibility in many Gümnasiums to study among other subjects the basic entrepreneurial knowledge or even to set up a pupil's enterprise.

The following models within Estonian education system have been introduced to prevent the dropout and support pupils with special educational needs:

Total integration (pupil attends mainstream school, receives teaching support and has an individual learning plan);

Partial integration (pupil attends special class in mainstream school, and has music, physical education and handwork classes and out-of-school activities together with all the other students);

Segregation (special schools, pupils with special needs take part in joint activities with pupils from mainstream schools);

On secondary education level there are no special vocational schools. All pupils continue their studies in mainstream vocational schools, as stated in the regulations. For a pupil with special needs an instructional plan is designed according to an individual learning plan.

The school is obliged to adapt the learning environment and provide appropriate learning aids for the pupil. Ministry of Education has doubled finances of the study place for a pupil with special needs. According to the

²² Basic VET for gymnasium pupils is provided in the scope of the elective subjects, and teaching is organised in cycles and can take place both in the gymnasium or VET school. The length of study cycles is 5 study weeks

regulations, in mainstream school it is possible to use remedial teaching, services of a personal assistant, learning aids, toys contributing to development, IT-facilities and IT-programmes (90% of which is financed by Ministry of Social Affairs).

Recommendations

There are preconditions to turn the ambitious desire to achieve that every person obtains the basic education:

- Every single inhabitant in Estonia must understand that the future well-being depends on the educated youth;
- Teacher training and retraining is the crucial leaving point for the better relations in the classroom;
- Schools must have necessary and sufficient resources to provide high quality teaching;
- Close attention and monitoring of the evidences of expulsion from school at compulsory age level must end the structural weakness of educational system.

Taking into account the lessons learned from neighbors and from international experience, there is no single measurement to prevent dropouts from occurring during the compulsory schooling years. Measures to determine all the possible reasons for leaving compulsory education reasons must be worked out. The starting point should be the prevention and building the safety networks supported by comprehensive statistics measuring the size of evidence.

Strategy	Activities	Responsive Institutions
To improve the quality of Basic education		
Provide the good condition teaching/learning environment in every school	Follow the standards of school buildings, equip school with teaching materials according to the curriculum provided	Owner of the school
Teachers must be highly qualified, motivated and paid according to the importance of the duties they are fulfilling	Train the teachers of teachers, submit teacher competence requirements, provide career guidance for students at pedagogical institutions, provide necessary recourses	Universities, Teachers Unions, Parliament
Inclusive measures for pupils with special needs		
Every pupil has the right to have the study plan according to the abilities	Submit individual plan if needed, conduct performance appraisal interviews	School, team of teachers
Programme "Back to school" for those over 17 and without basic education	Re-integration classes at VET schools in every county, guidance services,	Local government, Juvenile committees, VET schools
Safety –net and mentoring programmes		
Make the legislation work	Dissemination of relevant legislation, acts to the community members	Local government, supervision authorities
Establish the comprehensive monitoring system of compulsory school age children	Establish the online database with access from every single school and to the owner	School, local government, MoE
The school network and the access to school of every single pupil must be carefully premeditated	Work as the network with all community members	Local government and the local community, parents
Parents must be active partners of teachers and pupils in the learning process –	Establish Parents schools	Parents, adult education institutions

The agenda for actions before school year 2004/2005 proposed by the international team of the review is as following:

1. Hold a Round Table with County Governors to raise the awareness about dropout issues and to stress the need to ensure that every person in county has the possibility to obtain at least basic education. - **February 2004, PRAXIS, MOE**
2. Work with existing statistics, comparison of sources of statistics – educational institutions, Juvenile Committees and information from the Counties with lowest performance. - **I quarter 2004, National Observatory, MOE**
3. Proposals for joint Programmes for General and Vocational streams of Secondary Education to support pupils of low achievements - **April 2004, Pedagogical University, MOE .**

4. Training with educational statistics, to achieve the coherence with the educational Information System. – April/May 2004, **MOE, Statistical Department of Estonia, National Observatory**
5. Teacher training to learn the prevention methods and rising awareness of recognizing the children with problems – **June/July 2004 MOE, (Donor support needed)**
6. Partnership programmes within community – starting September 2004 **Educational Forum, Local governments, NGO's (donor support needed)**
7. Parents schools – **September 2004, Education Forum, Local Governments, Foundation INNOVE**
8. Establishing the monitoring system of fulfillment the regulations of compulsory education – **April – August 2004, MOE, National Observatory, Local governments**

The implementation of positive programmes that will prevent failure at school depends on the ability school headmasters to support the local government, MOE and the experts mentioned in Agenda. It will be wise for the Policy studies Center PRAXIS to follow it's "watchdog" role and start systematic analyses of fulfillment compulsory educations issues and support the implementation of agenda proposed above.

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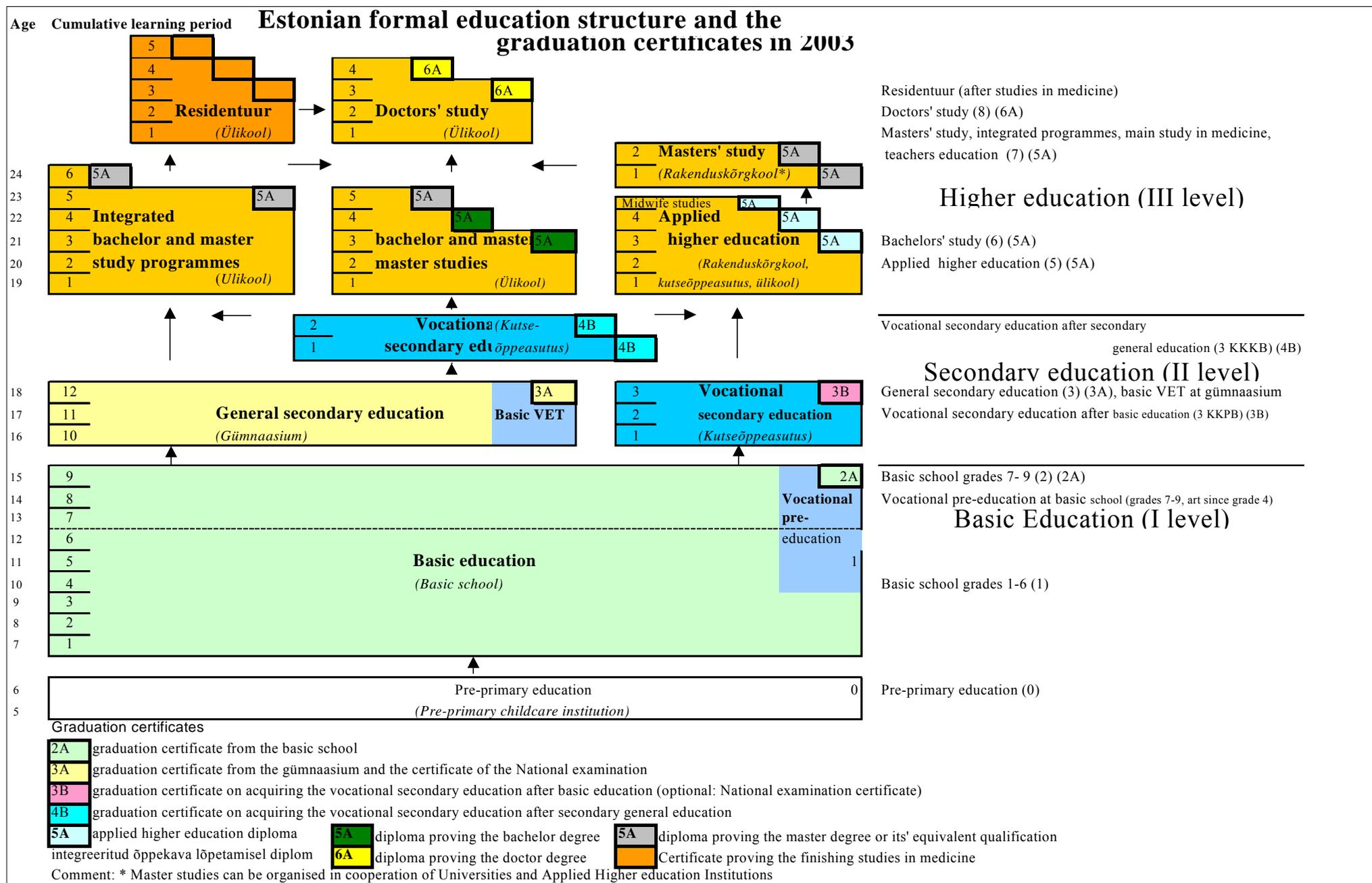
Annex I. Labour market and wages (Bank of Estonia)

	1994	1995	1996	1997	1998	1999	2000	2001	2002
Employment rate (employed persons/working-age population, %; based on the Labour Force Survey)***	64.6	61.7	61.2	61.3	60.6	58.2	57.6	58.1	
Unemployment rate (unemployed/labour force %; based on the Labour Force Survey)***	7.6	9.7	9.9	9.7	9.9	12.3	13.7	12.7	
Average monthly gross wages and salaries (EEK)**	1734	2375	2985	3573	4125 (4021)**	4440	4907	5510	6144

Annex II. Employment by economic activity (based on Labour Force Survey)

	1999	2000	2001	2002
PRIMARY SECTOR	8,3	7,4	7,0	6,9
Fishing	0,5	0,5	0,5	0,3
Agriculture, hunting and forestry	7,8	6,9	6,5	6,6
SECONDARY SECTOR	32,2	33,5	32,9	31,3
Manufacturing	21,2	22,6	23,2	21,9
Construction	6,8	7	6,8	6,6
Electricity, gas and water supply	2,8	2,6	2,0	1,8
Mining and quarrying	1,4	1,3	1,0	1,0
TERTIARY SECTOR	59,5	59,1	60,0	61,7
Transport, storage and communication	10,2	9,9	9,3	9,3
Real estate, renting and business activities	6,4	6,9	6,6	7,6
Financial intermediation	1,5	1,3	1,2	1,3
Health and social work	5,3	4,9	5,3	5,4
Education	8,6	7,7	8,8	9,5
Wholesale and retail trade	14,1	13,9	14,5	14,7
Hotels and restaurant	2,3	3,5	3,0	3,1
Public administration and others	11,1	11	11,3	10,9

Annex III. Estonian Formal Education Structure and the Graduation Certificates in 2003



Annex IV. Estonian Educational Structure

Preprimary education (ISCED 0)

Pre-school education is not part of the formal school system. It includes all public and private pre-school childcare institutions (*koolieelne lasteasutus*) that cater and provide pre-primary education for children aged 1 or over until they attend the primary school (*Algkool*). The role of these institutions is to support and complement the family's contribution in raising children by promoting their growth, development and individuality. Based on the frame of the national preprimary education programme every institution providing preprimary education has to submit their own programme. If a child does not attend kindergarten, the parents must ensure the readiness of that child for school.

Basic education (ISCED 1-2)

Basic education in Estonia is the minimum compulsory general education that everyone has to acquire. According to the Law on Education, a child is obliged to enroll at school when s/he has turned seven, or will turn by October 1st, of the current year. The obligation to attend school – compulsory education – lasts until s/he has graduated from the basic school (*Põhikool* – grades 1. – 9.), or until s/he has turned 17, even if they have not graduated from the 9th grade. Curriculum at the basic school is based on school programme, which has to be based on national the programme. To graduate from basic school pupils must pass school exams. Basic education is the pre condition to continue studies and graduates of this level of education are not ready to enter the Labour Market.

Secondary education (ISCED 3,4)

After graduation from the basic school a young person has the opportunity to either continue studies at a ***Gümnaasium*** (grades 10. – 12.) to acquire general secondary education or at a Vocational Education and Training **VET school** to acquire vocational secondary education that is based on basic education.

Studies at Gymnasium are based on the school programme which has to meet the requirements of national programme. Graduates of Gymnasium are not prepared to enter the Labour Market directly; they should continue the studies in higher education institutions or in VET schools (programmes after secondary education). The **VET programme after gymnasium** (ISCED 4B) lasts 1-2.5 years (40-100 study weeks), and VET related training must account for at least 85% and general education subjects for 6 study weeks. In some sectors (healthcare, police), vocational secondary education is not offered for basic school graduates, as it requires maturity and general education background from the entrants.

Those who have covered a VET programme after *Gümnaasium* receive the Graduation Certificate on Acquiring the Vocational Secondary Education After Secondary General Education (*lõputunnistus keskhariduse baasil kutsekeskhariduse omandamise kohta*).

At VET school the studies are conducted according to the school programme that are included in the register of programmes at the Ministry of Education.

National programmes on every study field had to be based on vocational standards that were submitted by the Qualification Authority in cooperation of employers and providers of vocational education. No national VET programmes are approved, even though there have been attempts to submit the first 14 since 2001

The **VET programme after basic school** (ISCED 3B) has a minimum period of 3 years (120 study weeks), of which the VET related dimension (including practical training) must account for at least 50%. At the same time, at least 50 study weeks must be devoted to general education subjects, of which 32 are compulsory, and 18 weeks are recommended to best complement and support VET subjects.

To complete the general secondary education, students must pass five school-leaving examinations (*gümnaasiumi lõpueksamid*). Three of them have to be external national examinations (*riigieksam*) one of which, the mother tongue, is compulsory, while the other two are chosen by the students from a list of subjects. Two optional examinations can be internal examinations or external national examinations. Students who pass the examinations receive the Graduation Certificate from the *Gümnaasium* (*gümnaasiumi lõputunnistus*) and the Certificate of the National Examination (*riigieksamitunnistus*), from the National Examination and Qualification Centre. These two credentials are valid together and qualify the student for all types of higher education.

To finish a programme at a VET school, students must pass final school examinations. Those who have covered a VET programme after basic education receive the Graduation Certificate on Acquiring The Vocational Secondary Education After Basic Education (*lõputunnistus põhihariduse baasil kutsekeskhariduse omandamise kohta*). It is optional for the students to take the national general secondary education examinations, which are required at the admission to the universities. The graduation certificates from the VET schools do not prove an acquired vocational qualification, but confirm that a certain programme has been covered at a certain level at a certain VET school.

In September of 1996 the government approved the **National Curriculum for basic and secondary general education**. The overall aim was to increase local influence on decision-making within the school organization, as well as on teaching methods (teacher's transformation from a reproducer of material to counselor, activating of students by problem-solving tasks, integration of different subjects) and financing, and to make schools more open. In compliance with the national curriculum the school curriculum is drafted as the basis for its teaching. It specifies the school objectives, lesson plans, content of subjects and elective courses. The content of the curriculum is open to proposals and, in some cases, possible input not only from school staff, but pupils, parents, local authorities, enterprises and other stakeholders.

Changes in the national curricula for general education are planned for 2004/05 and the preparation of changes is contracted to the Centre of Curriculum Development at Tartu University.

Higher education (ISCED 5,6)

In Estonia there are two types of higher education establishments: those offering university level academic and professional programmes (universities and other university-level institutions), and those offering non-university professional (applied) programmes. The control over the quality in higher education is set up thru accreditation.

The standard of higher education (approved by the governmental degree nr. 258, August 13, 2002) finished all the confusions within higher education. The major change after adopting the new standard is in the area of applied higher education. As of the 2003/2003 school year, there will be only courses of applied higher education instead of diploma courses and vocational higher education courses.

On the **1st level of higher education** studies are conducted according to the bachelor or applied higher education curriculums. There are two general **requirements for access** to higher education: a secondary school leaving certificate and a certificate of a national state exam. Specific requirements (number of entrance examinations, average grade in a given subject etc.) depend much on the institution itself and the study field. Graduates from VET schools who would like to continue at university level must pass the national examination for secondary general schools (gymnasium). The duration of studies on first level of higher education is 3-4 years (120 - 160 credits).

During the studies of **applied higher education** courses the student acquires the competences of specific vocation to work in the field as a specialist or can continue the studies on relevant master courses. The major difference with bachelor courses is the share of practical studies (at least 30% of the whole programme and 50% of it has to be conducted in the real working environment). The teachers of practical subjects must have higher education or the equivalent qualification and the working experience of the same vocational field for 3 years. To finish the studies of applied higher education the student has to pass the final exam or to defend the study. The graduate has to be prepared to enter the labour market or continue the studies on the 2nd level of higher education – enter the master studies (the entry requirements are set up by the council/board of institution (university) providing master courses). Bachelor studies are provided by universities and student receive a deeper knowledge of general education and acquires basic knowledge and competences of specialty and for studies on master studies level. To finish the bachelor studies one has to pass the bachelor exam or defend the study. As a rule the graduate of bachelor studies has to continue the studies on master level. The entry requirements are set up by the council/board of institution (university) providing master courses. The evaluation of the outcomes of bachelor studies according to the new higher education standard is possible within 3-4 years after the graduates have entered the labour market.

During the studies **on 2nd level of higher education** (master studies), the students are deepening the knowledge and competences in area of specialty and acquiring the competences for doctoral studies. Master studies are provided by universities and the nominal duration is 1-2 years (40 - 80 credits). The entering requirements are bachelor degree or higher education obtained during the studies after applied higher education programme. To finish the master studies student has to defend the master study and pass

the master exam. The graduate of master studies has the right to continue the studies on 3rd level of higher education (doctoral studies) according to the entry requirements set by the council/board of institution (university) providing doctor courses.

For medical, veterinary, architecture and engineering studies there are special conditions in standard of higher education. The difference is in the duration of studies 5 - 6 years (200 - 240 credits). The graduate is awarded by the equal qualification of master studies and university can provide the graduate with the master degree.

Doctor studies is the highest, **3rd level studies in higher education** and during the studies the student obtains the knowledge and competences for individual scientific research or development work. Doctor studies consist of studies and scientific research. The nominal duration of doctor studies is 3 - 4 years (120 - 160 credits). To enter the doctor studies one must have master degree or the qualification equal to it. To complete the studies student has to defend the doctor study and will be awarded with the doctor degree and the diploma approving it.

Annex V. Number of pupils, graduation, repetition and breaking off studies (without pupils with special needs)

	1.grade	2.grade	3.grade	4.grade	5.grade	6.grade	7.grade	8.grade	9.grade
1995/96									
Number of pupils	22447	21188	20492	19485	19218	19643	17391	19159	18708
Compelled to repetition	529	321	508	585	549	939	986	1311	1197
	2,36%	1,52%	2,48%	3,00%	2,86%	4,78%	5,67%	6,84%	6,40%
Graduation	21695	20641	19845	18773	18481	18568	16108	17583	16898
	96,65%	97,42%	96,84%	96,35%	96,17%	94,53%	92,62%	91,77%	90,32%
Discontinuing	38	15	4	15	17	55	90	169	220
	0,17%	0,07%	0,02%	0,08%	0,09%	0,28%	0,52%	0,88%	1,18%
1996/97									
Number of pupils	21566	21954	21079	20351	19262	19284	19363	17147	18198
Compelled to repetition	457	310	537	594	544	893	874	1134	1127
	2,12%	1,41%	2,55%	2,92%	2,82%	4,63%	4,51%	6,61%	6,19%
Graduation	20870	21441	20419	19642	18595	18204	18305	15690	16536
	96,77%	97,66%	96,87%	96,52%	96,54%	94,40%	94,54%	91,50%	90,87%
Discontinuing	48	10	17	13	31	43	103	180	225
	0,22%	0,05%	0,08%	0,06%	0,16%	0,22%	0,53%	1,05%	1,24%
1997/98									
Number of pupils	20859	21212	21930	20948	20166	19431	19042	19226	16528
Compelled to repetition	491	320	462	551	488	896	960	1283	1151
	2,35%	1,51%	2,11%	2,63%	2,42%	4,61%	5,04%	6,67%	6,96%
Graduation	20198	20746	21383	20357	19558	18455	17917	17659	14891
	96,83%	97,80%	97,51%	97,18%	96,99%	94,98%	94,09%	91,85%	90,10%
Discontinuing	36	5	10	14	26	45	117	179	231
	0,17%	0,02%	0,05%	0,07%	0,13%	0,23%	0,61%	0,93%	1,40%
1998/99									
Number of pupils	18505	20485	21228	21865	20831	20326	19278	18953	18442
Compelled to repetition	341	287	463	471	571	904	961	1215	1311
	1,84%	1,40%	2,18%	2,15%	2,74%	4,45%	4,98%	6,41%	7,11%
Graduation	18032	20117	20657	21272	20191	19296	18171	17496	16580
	97,44%	98,20%	97,31%	97,29%	96,93%	94,93%	94,26%	92,31%	89,90%
Discontinuing	25	12	8	18	30	73	117	191	305
	0,14%	0,06%	0,04%	0,08%	0,14%	0,36%	0,61%	1,01%	1,65%
1999/00									
Number of pupils	17120	18309	20555	21101	21894	21001	20202	19203	18472
Compelled to repetition	152	226	343	459	584	870	1149	1290	1380
	0,89%	1,23%	1,67%	2,18%	2,67%	4,14%	5,69%	6,72%	7,47%
Graduation	16867	17940	20080	20499	21094	19994	18950	17688	16356
	98,52%	97,98%	97,69%	97,15%	96,35%	95,20%	93,80%	92,11%	88,54%
Discontinuing	16	8	8	9	23	48	111	192	378
	0,09%	0,04%	0,04%	0,04%	0,11%	0,23%	0,55%	1,00%	2,05%
2000/01									
Number of pupils	14820	17111	18275	20526	21103	21991	21078	20024	18637
Compelled to repetition	203	241	307	409	479	734	1052	1124	1110
	1,37%	1,41%	1,68%	1,99%	2,27%	3,34%	4,99%	5,61%	5,96%
Graduation	14560	16739	17874	20022	20513	21097	19870	18545	16856
	98,25%	97,83%	97,81%	97,54%	97,20%	95,93%	94,27%	92,61%	90,44%
Discontinuing	6	3	2	12	15	55	114	231	397
	0,04%	0,02%	0,01%	0,06%	0,07%	0,25%	0,54%	1,15%	2,13%
2001/02									
Number of pupils	13531	14756	17009	18169	20491	21195	22041	20832	19289
Compelled to repetition	171	127	275	331	458	686	1074	1136	1055

	1,26%	0,86%	1,62%	1,82%	2,24%	3,24%	4,87%	5,45%	5,47%
Graduation	13286	14460	16595	17742	19869	20347	20762	19261	17585
	98,19%	97,99%	97,57%	97,65%	96,96%	96,00%	94,20%	92,46%	91,17%
Discontinuing	12	4	4	10	17	51	96	215	328
	0,09%	0,03%	0,02%	0,06%	0,08%	0,24%	0,44%	1,03%	1,70%

Annex VI. Comparison of repetition the class for the second or third year in Lithuania and Estonia (share of pupils repeating the course in comparison with the total number of pupils (%)²³)

	1995-1996		1996-1997		1997-1998		1998-1999		1999-2000		2000-2001	
	Lithuania	Estonia										
On average	1.6	3.5	1.4	3.2	1.2	3.3	0.9	3.3	0.7	3.3	0.6	3.0
Grade 1-4	1.4	2.3	1.4	2.2	1.1	2.1	0.9	1.9	0.8	1.5	0.7	1.6
Grade 5-10	2.1	4.9	1.9	4.5	1.5	4.7	1.1	4.8	0.8	4.9	0.7	4.1
Grade 11-12	0.3	0.8	0.2	0.9	0.2	0.9	0.1	1.0	0.1	1.1	0.1	0.9

Annex VII. – Number and share of pupils and students in the Estonian education system in 1995/96 and 2002/03 on different education levels (Source Statistical Yearbook, 2003)

	1995/96	1999/00	2001/02	2002/03
Total number of students in the formal education system	277,4	302,7	304,	298,4
Primary and basic education	66.3%	61%	57.4%	55.9%
General secondary education	13.3%	12.45	12.9%	13.4%
VET	10.6%	10.3%	9.8%	9.4%
Higher education	9.8%	16.4%	19.9%	21.3%

²³ The cost of pupils non-attendance and school year repetition, Dr. Violeta Rimkevičienė, The study was commissioned by the Centre for Educational Studies of the Open Society Fund Lithuania Vilnius, 2001, Estonian Ministry of Education, 2001

Annex VIII – Number of pupils in general education in the beginning of school year in Estonian in 1995/96 - 2002/03 on different grades (Source Statistical Department, 2003)

	1995	1996	1997	1998	1999	2000	2001	2002
Grade 0	89	79	57	40	0	0	0	0
Grade 1	22816	21957	21209	18914	17573	15161	13832	13343
Grade 2	21648	22385	21698	20946	18808	17632	15159	13793
Grade 3	21000	21633	22432	21791	21085	18882	17574	15215
Grade 4	20033	20927	21557	22479	21727	21133	18903	17525
Grade 5	19831	19817	20763	21463	22503	21780	21205	18966
Grade 6	20273	19970	20087	21024	21692	22692	21950	21300
Grade 7	17954	20017	19763	19986	20958	21823	22835	22134
Grade 8	19775	17696	19866	19684	19938	20818	21583	22460
Grade 9	19295	18778	17054	19071	19167	19309	20019	20669
Grade 10	11455	12327	12179	10859	12372	12585	12668	12851
Grade 11	10488	10166	11171	10819	9786	11155	11291	11467
Grade 12	9891	9898	9650	10495	10227	9213	10581	10753
Grade 13	14	11	15	6	5	1	12	2
Total	214562	215661	217501	217577	215841	212184	207612	200478

Annex IX. Concept of Youth School in Lithuania

The Youth School is an institution with an orientation towards general education, initial work and occupation acquirements. After completion of the youth school, a corresponding document—a certificate is given. The goal of YS is to help adolescents and teenagers having no motivation for teaching to be raised under conditions optimal for their self-actualization, as well as a productive and socially reasonable self-expression. The activities of YS is based on the Lithuanian Law of Education goals, principles and tasks given in the General concept of Education in Lithuania and specific objectives for this type of a school. To help adolescents and teenagers, the objectives are the following:

- to perceive him/herself, his/her demands, interests and abilities, to learn how to solve personal problems;
- to develop self-confidence, necessity for self-creation, optimal self-realization, resistance to negative social impact;
- to develop motivation for learning; to promote demand for getting basic secondary education, at least;
- to enrich personal experience by a practical and theoretical activities corresponding to demands, interests and abilities of pupils, to help them to prepare themselves to further learning, as well as cultural and social life.

The pupils are typically 12-16 years old of general education schools and other training institutions having problems in learning or coping with a system, as well as unemployed and being out of any school can attend the YS. Pupils are admitted under their own consent, as well as on approval of their parents (tutors) according to regulations of concrete YS.

Depending on a pupil's wish and YS objectives, students can strive for basic general education or to study general subjects according to his own demands, interests and abilities. General education is made of two parts: nucleus and optional parts. The list and raising contents for subjects of each part can correspond to the requirements of a second stage of a general education school; and to be adjusted taking into account the requirements.

Depending on personal features, YS raising content can be assimilated by pupils during a different time, in other forms, e.g. modules. This would enable a pupil to choose learning rate and sequence of modules according to his/her demands and abilities, thus, acquiring a desirable education. The variety not only of raising methods and contents, but also raising forms provide individualization, differentiation, flexibility and versatility is stimulated, in order to make an individual a full and equal member of pedagogical interaction possibilities for YS pupils are provided to come back, pass to or enter not only schools of general education, but also vocational or other licensed institutions. Therefore relations between YS and systems of general and vocational training should be quarantined. It is important that the entire raising system could stimulate demand for learning and that the interaction of its components was directed to rational, moral and creative activities of a person.

After completing YS, a document—a certificate can be given according to the order approved for education regulating documents. The content of assimilated general labour or prevocational education and additional raising, as well as its module and module sequence are shown in the certificate.

Annex X. The Danish Education System

This chapter gives a brief overview of the Danish education system in order to help the reader understand the complexity and variety of the many guidance services described in chapter four.

In Denmark it is possible to study, train and improve one's skills throughout life. Education is compulsory for children from the age of 7 to 16 years; i.e. primary and lower secondary school. Eighty-nine per cent attend the public *Folkeskole* with the remaining eleven per cent attending private schools. Eighty-three per cent of young people continue their education and attend a youth education programme with forty per cent of young people going on to higher education. The ordinary education system - from primary school through higher education - is free of charge. However, one third of the labour force has only completed primary and lower secondary education. Hence, the Danish Parliament recently reformed the system of adult education and continuing training, a major objective of which is to offer adult education and continuing training to all adults at all levels; from the low-skilled to university graduates.

Although there is a wide range of training and education programmes, not all young people are able to choose a course of education or start in a job

immediately after finishing the Folkeskole. Therefore, there are other possibilities of training which are more individually adjusted to the young person concerned. Some of these education and training possibilities will be mentioned in brief below.

Vocational basic training (*erhvervsgrunduddannelse, EGU*) takes two years, but can be extended with practical training for up to one year. EGU is designed to give the young person technical skills and to develop maturity so that it becomes easier to find a job or start on an ordinary vocational training programme. The training alternates between theoretical teaching at a vocational college, production school or similar, and practical training on the job. This training programme can consist of individually chosen subjects, but may also be offered as a training programme for a particular industrial sector in co-operation with an educational institution.

Open youth education (*den fri ungdomsuddannelse, FUU*) normally takes two years. It is an individual training scheme. This means that young people, together with a guidance counsellor, prepare their own personal training programme. The purpose is to develop the student both personally and vocationally, giving him or her more opportunities for continuing in education or training or for finding a job. A young person can draw up a training scheme at a recognised school, which will be responsible for the training. It could be a youth school, a youth boarding school, a school for arts and crafts, a folk high school for young people, or a production school. At least half a year must be spent at a school. The rest of the scheme may consist of e.g. practical training, project work or education abroad.

At a production school (*produktionsskole*) there is both practical and theoretical training. As a rule most of the training takes place in workshops where many different products are made. The trainees are also given the opportunity to go to classes in Danish, Arithmetic, IT and other subjects. A person (young or adult) may start at a production school at any time and continue for up to two years.

Via the "dual" (ordinary and adult) education system it is possible for every Dane - throughout life - to change between employment and education and/or to combine the two according to individual needs or wishes or in reaction to specific labour market changes. This makes educational and vocational guidance an essential tool in many people's lives, particularly when considering a change of career or a return.

Annex XI. 15 Effective strategies National Dropout Prevention Center has identified

Early Interventions

Family Involvement - research consistently finds that parent/family involvement has a direct, positive effect on children's achievement.

Early Childhood Education - the earlier a problem is identified and addressed, the greater will be the impact on students in at-risk

situations. The most effective way to reduce the number of children who will ultimately dropout is to provide the best possible classroom instruction from the beginning of their school experience.

Reading/Writing Programs to help low-achieving students recognize that focusing on reading and writing skills is the foundation for effective learning in all other subjects.

Basic Core Strategies

Mentoring/Tutoring is a one-to-one caring, supportive relationship between a mentor and a mentee that is based on trust.

Service Learning - combines community service with learning activities and is characterized by integrating the academic curriculum with a structured time for organized service experiences that meet actual community needs.

Alternative Schools - every student should have the opportunity to learn and to achieve a quality of life they desire based on their educational efforts and achievements. Alternative schooling has many forms including private schools, home schooling, charter schools, and a variety of formats for alternative schools.

Out-of-School Experiences many schools are providing after-school and summer enhancement programs designed to eliminate information loss, inspire interest in a variety of areas, expand the knowledge base and stimulate the intellectual development of disadvantaged students.

Making the Most of Instruction

Professional Development—the teachers who work with at-risk youth need to continue to develop skills, techniques, and learn about innovative strategies

Learning Styles/Multiple Intelligences—as there are different ways to learn, teachers know that they need to use a variety of activities to meet the learning styles of their students.

Instructional Technologies—technology offers the best opportunities for delivering instruction, which engages students in authentic learning, addresses multiple intelligences, and adapts to students' learning styles.

Individualized Instruction—a customized individual program allows at-risk students flexibility with the curriculum. It is a strategy that focuses on a one-to-one learning environment

Making the Most of the Wider School Community

Systemic Renewal - A continuing process of evaluating goals and objectives will provide an organizational structure that allows each school to develop a learning environment, which ensures quality education for all students.

Community Collaboration - when all groups in a community provide collective support to the school, an infrastructure is created that provides a caring supportive environment where youth can thrive and achieve.

Career Education/Workforce Readiness- these programs recognize that youth need specific skills to prepare them to measure up to the larger demands of today's workplace.

Violence Prevention/Conflict Resolution - dealing with conflict constructively is a skill that when adopted into a school's culture will provide a safe environment for learning.