

Estonia introduction

Adult education providers in Estonia continue to focus their efforts on making learning accessible and appealing to all adults, from all backgrounds. Current policies support the idea of increasing adult participation in education; however certain challenges still need to be addressed.

Recent developments in Estonia

As the current Lifelong Learning strategy in Estonia is only active until 2020, there is a need for a new and relevant national strategy for the development of the education sector. The Ministry of Education & Research and its partners have started planning a long-term strategy under the name Smart & Active Estonia 2035. Among others, the strategy will include guidelines for adult education, science, language, and youth for years 2021 - 2035. It is the beginning of a long process but discussion has begun, and stakeholders in adult education have had done vital advocacy work to protect the interests of the sector.

In addition, debates between local authorities and adult education stakeholders have started. The aim of the debates is to raise awareness of the minimal input local municipalities have in the development of adult education, and to involve them in promoting adult education.

Links to EU and international policy in Estonia

The Estonian state established its commitment to Goal 4 of the SDG through the Estonian National Strategy on Sustainable Development Sustainable development 21. The strategy encourages the development of educational system in Estonia to ensure equal access to high-quality education for all different social groups in order to foster the functionality of an information-society. The strategy emphasizes Estonias potential to develop a strong adult education structure, and in doing so points out the value of lifelong learning, soft skills and teacher capacity, and how important it is to improve the present system. However, according to our members, Estonia must still work to raise the awareness of the benefits of life-long learning among its population.

Challenges and recommendations in Estonia

According to our members, the biggest focus for the near future is achieving the desired results concerning adult education through discussions of the Smart & Active Estonia 2035 strategy. The main focus of EAEAs members in Estonia will be to increase participation in adult education among its residents and working to make it more accessible and inclusive. To deal with the issue of attracting adults to education, one of our partners will concentrate on improving the Quality Assurance System in continuing

education and in non-formal adult education network. The issue of young people dropping out of high-schools and universities remains very topical and various actions and regulations need to be adopted in order to reduce drop-out rates.
