

## SUMMARY OF THE RESEARCH “HOBBY EDUCATION, HOBBY ACTIVITY AND YOUTH WORKERS IN LOCAL MUNICIPALITIES”

### *Introduction*

Guaranteeing the diversity and availability of hobby activity and hobby education is an important way of giving the social environment a higher quality and ensuring the socio-economic durability of the region. Both hobby education and hobby activity play an important role in the Estonian social and cultural context by promoting the socialisation process of children and young people.

In order to map the hobby activity and hobby education the Centre for Applied Social Sciences of the University of Tartu conducted a research entitled “Hobby education, hobby activity, and youth workers in local municipalities” in 2016. The research was commissioned by the Estonian Ministry of Education and Research. The main aim of the research was to find out the possibilities of participating in hobby education and hobby activity, as well as their diversity and availability in local governments, to map the participation of the young people in hobby education and hobby activity, and to make an overview of youth workers.

### *Methodology*

In order to collect necessary data for conducting the research, extracts were taken from various thematic registers and two web-based questionnaires were drawn up. Hobby education is only provided in hobby schools, this data is available in the Estonian Education Information System and therefore there was no need to collect them separately via a questionnaire in the web. For the analysis of the situation of hobby activity and youth workers, data was collected both from the registers and from the web-based questionnaire as follows:

- 1) *Questionnaire on hobby activity* – the web questionnaire for mapping the possibilities of hobby activity was sent for completing to all the Estonian local governments (213 in total). The questionnaire on hobby activity was divided in two parts: 1) general information on the local government; 2) mapping the institutions providing the hobby activity in the local government.
- 2) *Questionnaire on youth workers* – in order to map the youth workers, web questionnaires were used too. A questionnaire was e-mailed to 2941 institutions to be completed about their youth workers. The questions in the questionnaire on youth workers concerned the data about the local government’s area, the type, legal nature and main working language of the institution. In addition to this, the institution was asked to indicate the number of youth workers working for them and the following details about every youth worker: age, level of education, native language, main working language, field of activity (up to two different activities), area of interest, work load, amount of the basic salary and duration of annual leave.
- 3) *Analysis of data from the register and data previously collected* – the existing data was collected mainly from five databases by data request according to the agreement with the manager of the database. The databases and registers used were as follows: Folk Culture Database, Register of Estonian Song and Dance Celebration Foundation, Sports Register, data gathered from general education schools by the Estonian Research Council, Estonian Education Information System and Estonian Business Register.

The results from the questionnaires and the data from registers were analysed. The result of the analysis was displayed by local governments, counties and was generalised for Estonia. Results for hobby education and hobby activity were regarded separately from the results for youth workers.

### *Overview of the hobby education and hobby activity*

#### 1. Participants in hobby education and hobby activity

The number of young people participating in hobby education and hobby activity was analysed through the data of the Estonian Education Information System (EHIS), Estonian Research Council, Register of Estonian Song and Dance Celebration Foundation and Sports Register, and compared to the figures presented by the local governments in the questionnaires.

According to Statistics Estonia, at the beginning of 2016, the number of young people from age 7 to 26 in Estonia was 283 207. Taking into account the data collected from the questionnaires to the local governments, an estimated 40% of all the Estonian young people from age 7 to 26 or 106 658 people are involved in the hobby activity and hobby education. The estimation took into account the selection mistake at the trust level of 95%, which was 6.8%, meaning that the number of the young people can vary between 99,405 and 113,911.

According to the Estonian education Information System, in 2015/2016 study year (as of 23 November 2015) 66 803 students were involved in hobby education, of whom approximately 76% were studying in hobby schools located in the territory of the local government of their place of residence, and 20% were studying in hobby schools located in other local governments. 71,679 young people participated in hobby activity according to EHIS. The mapping made by the Estonian Research Council identified 76,866 children involved in the hobby activity.

The Register of Estonian Song and Dance Celebration Foundation has a record of 50,196 members of groups, aged 7 to 26; the number of individuals of the same age group is 37,722, which means that the Register has a record of 13% of Estonian young people. In the age group from 7 to 19, the Register has a record of 21% of all Estonian young people.

Estimating the participation of young people on the data of the Sports Register is the most complicated since the register classifies some of the practising young people as adults (age groups are 19 and younger, and 20 and older). The Sport Register can help to estimate the number of young people aged 19 and less participating in some kind of sports. Taking into account the division of the participants in the sports schools and sports clubs between the two age groups, there are 119,342 young people aged 19 and less there.

It is difficult to calculate the total number of young people participating in a hobby activity, on the basis of different data bases, since some of the data bases include personalised data, some not, therefore complicating identifying the coincidence of persons.

According to both data from registers and results from the questionnaires, young people participate the most in sports and music, and the least in mathematics and mind games, and technology. Putting the number of young people participating in hobby education and hobby activity in correlation with the index of the capability of the local government, we can see trends connected with the two main fields of hobbies:

- In areas with a higher local government index rate, a relatively higher share of young people of all the young people practise music.
- In local governments with a better capability, a bigger share of young people participates in sports activities; in local governments where more funds are dedicated to the leisure activities, there is likely a slightly bigger share of young people participating in sports activities.

## 2. Institutions of hobby education and hobby activity

The local governments pointed out that there are 2,573 institutions in their territories providing hobby education and hobby activity to the young people. Since not all the local governments responded to the questionnaire and taking into account the number of young people in Estonia, it is estimated that the number of institutions providing hobby education and hobby activity to young people, is 3,458. The mistake of this selection at the trust level of 95% was 1.7%. From this can be concluded that the number of institutions in Estonia providing hobby education and hobby activity to the young people can vary between 3,516 and 3,399.

Data collected from the Estonian Research Council, Folk Culture Register, Sports Register and EHIS shows that there are around 3,500 different institutions or organisations in Estonia providing hobby education and/or hobby activity. The registers show that the most common type is sports clubs but this can be the result of the imperfection of the Sports Register which does not allow to distinguish institutions providing activities to young people and adults. There are 1,749 sports clubs, 328 sports schools and 20 sports associations. According to the data from the questionnaires, there are around 1,051 sports clubs in Estonia providing hobby activity to young people. The most numerous institutions providing hobby education and hobby activity in local governments are hobby schools, including sports schools. There are altogether 711 institutions in Estonia providing hobby education.

According to the data from the registers, every Estonian school has some kind of hobby activity opportunities to the young people. The data from the Folk Culture Register shows that 413 general education schools or vocational educational institutions have hobby groups; the data of the Research Council considered 398 schools, out of which five did not have any hobby groups. The estimated calculations of the results of the questionnaire show that there are 470 general education schools in Estonia that offer hobby activity to young people. The same calculations indicate that young people can participate in hobby education or hobby activity in 571 culture centres and 924 civil or youth associations.

In terms of field of hobbies, most of the institutions are active in the field of sports (18% of responding institutions), which is also logical taking into account the high number of practitioners. There are also a lot of institutions active in music and arts (both 15% of responding institutions) and dance (12% of responding institutions). When correlating the number of institutions of certain fields and the capability index of the local governments, the following trends emerged:

- In local governments with a higher capability index, there are less institutions providing musical, dance or arts activities.
- In local governments with a better financial capability, there are likely more institutions providing hobby education and hobby activity per 100 young people.
- In local governments with a better financial capability there is likely to be slightly more institutions providing sports activities.
- In economically more capable local governments there are slightly more sports institutions than in economically less capable local governments.
- In local governments with a lower capability there is likely slightly more institutions providing hobby education or hobby activity in technology and exact sciences per 100 young people.

The questionnaire revealed the number of the young people connected to some kind of hobby education and hobby activity is the biggest in the case of general education schools, namely 33.7% of the young people mentioned in the questionnaire. 25% practises hobby activity in a youth centre, 15% practises hobby education or hobby activity in a hobby school, and 11% practises hobby activity in another cultural or social institution. Less than 10% of the responding young people practises hobby education or hobby activity in an association (6%), culture centre (2.4%) or sports club (6.9%).

### 3. Ownership of hobby education and hobby activity

According to the data from registers and existing data, there are the most non-profit associations per 100 young people in local governments in average (1.2 institutions/young people), contributed foremost by sports institutions and hobby schools, which are mostly non-profit associations (about 99% of sports clubs and 68% of hobby schools are non-profit associations). There are twice as less institutions per 100 young people providing hobby education and hobby activity managed by the local government, namely 0.7 institutions per 100 young people. None of the sports clubs is managed by a local government; 19% of the hobby schools and 75% of institutions of the folk culture are managed by the local government. In the case of the Folk Culture Register, the data is undoubtedly affected by the domination of culture centres and general education schools among the institutions.

According to the register data, business associations constitute about 4% of all the institutions and mostly they are hobby schools by type, 13% of all the hobby schools function as business associations. All over Estonia, there are about 1.9 institutions per 100 young people in the local government in average. When evaluating the correlation between the ownership of the hobby education and hobby activity institution and the index of the capability of the local governments, the following trends emerged:

- The bigger is the population's reproduction potential, the smaller the number of institutions managed by the local government per 100 young people.
- In the case of towns or communes with a bigger population, the number of institutions managed by the local government per 100 young people is somewhat smaller.
- In the local governments with a better economic state or more positive welfare of the population, there are likely more non-profit associations per 100 young people.
- Better financial opportunities or higher capability of providing services does not affect the number of institutions by type per 100 young people.
- In the case of local governments with a better economic situation, the services of hobby education and hobby activity are more likely provided by institutions outside the area of responsibility of the local government.

The data from the questionnaires indicated that 59% of the institutions of the hobby educations are, on the contrary, managed by the local governments and 38% are non-profit associations. At the same time, it can be presumed that not all the 2,056 institutions involved in the hobby activity in the local governments are managed by the local government; it is more likely that the local government mostly entered only information about the institutions directly associated with the local government, which also incurred the big share of institutions managed by the local government (the local governments only answered about 301 institutions)

#### *Overview of the youth workers*

According to the data of EHIS, 4,775 people are working as teachers in hobby schools. In all hobby schools the total number of teacher posts enlisted is 5,264. That means that some of the teachers work with partial workload in several hobby schools at the same time. The Folk Culture Database has, according to the extract made in July 2016, data on 2,279 people involved in instruction, all of them actively involved in conducting a hobby activity group. The Sports Register has personal data on 4,285 trainers.

The questionnaire on youth workers was completed by 484 institutions across Estonia, mainly general education schools, youth centres or "youth clubs", or hobby schools. The institutions were mainly managed by the local government (69% of the respondents) or non-profit associations (21% of the respondents). The working language of the institutions was mostly Estonian. According to the institutions which completed the questionnaire, a total of 2,482 youth workers work at their institutions. An estimated 2,770 youth

workers work in Estonia, based on the questionnaires on youth workers (selection mistake 1.9% meaning that the number of the workers is between 2,717 and 2,822). According to the questionnaire completed by the local governments there is an estimation of 5,049 youth workers (selection mistake 1.4% meaning the number is between 4,978 and 5,120 workers). The numbers found on youth workers vary greatly, and it is not possible to state the exact number of youth workers in Estonia on the basis of the two questionnaires.

Youth workers in the responding institutions work mostly in hobby activity, in sports the most. More than 200 workers over Estonia are also involved in the fields of music, arts, media and design. Less than 100 workers are active in the fields of society and history, natural sciences, mathematics and mind games. It is therefore estimated that in Estonia, there are the most youth workers in the fields of sports and music (accordingly 1,361 and 1,039 workers) and the least in the fields of mathematics, mind games and natural sciences (accordingly 621 and 784 workers).

In the questionnaire, the institutions described the youth workers by their sex, age, education, native language, working language, main activity, work load, basic salary and annual leave. Most of the workers described were women (79% women, 21% men) and they could be quite evenly distributed into three age groups. There were less workers in the youngest age group, namely 27-36 years, and in the oldest group, namely over 57 years old. The average age in the described institutions is therefore rather high. Almost 75% of the workers have a higher education (applied higher education, Bachelor's or Master's degree), the Bachelor's degree being the most common. Most of the workers have Estonian as their native and working language.

In responding institutions, nearly half (48%) of the workers are instructors of hobby activity and a quarter are workers of the youth centre (22%). 38% of the workers described work with a very low load, i.e. 1-5 hours/week, one fifth work with a full working load. The basic salary of the youth workers varies a lot but very few of them, namely 4% of the described workers earn more than 1,000 €. 56% of the workers have an annual leave of more than 35 days a year.

### *Problematic issues emerged from the research and solutions*

The local governments that completed the questionnaire on the hobby education and hobby activity in their local governments estimated that the most important factor influencing the availability and diversity of the hobby activity to the young people living there is transportation. Transportation was mentioned as a very important factor in almost all the responding local governments. Out of the responding local governments, 87% were parishes and 13% towns, which leads to a presumption that problems associated with transport occur mostly in parishes and rural areas, whereas in the bigger cities the public transport is generally better organised, and therefore does not hamper practising a hobby. Quite important were considered also other factors such as participation fees and the existence of study and personal equipment. As least important was considered the language of participation, which according to the respondents in several local governments does not affect the availability and diversity of hobby education and hobby activity of the young people at all.

In addition to the transport, other problems mentioned were the lack of qualified instructors, which complicates the provision of different fields of hobbies in several local governments, mostly in rural areas. The local governments found that underfinancing has created an unequal availability of hobby education and hobby activity. The representatives of local governments also mentioned that the current hobby education and hobby activity system is unclear and that every local government has its own approach to the development and support of the hobby education and activity.

The solution that was suggested was a bigger financing of the hobby education and hobby activity by the state, as well as a more systematic approach by the state, including a common financing system. Several local governments were of opinion that a higher contribution by the state to the salary of the instructors would improve the situation in the local governments. For having a better overview of the situation of hobby education and hobby activity, the participation could be reflected in a common information system, whereas at the moment data on different fields is collected by different registers and some of it is also collected by the local governments. Although the elaboration of a system for mapping all the hobby activity would need many resources, it would be possible to achieve a better harmony between the existing information systems by unifying the principles of data collection. The managers of different data bases could have an agreement on the data collection methods, which would later help to compare the data. It is also important to keep in mind the ways of motivating the people entering and updating the data, therefore motivating to submit data as exact as possible.

#### *Location and availability of hobby education and hobby activity*

The most available fields in local governments are fine arts (music, dance and arts) and sports. For music, dance and arts, the most important providers are hobby groups at the general education schools. The activities provided in the general education schools are the most available since in all Estonia there are only two local governments without any hobby groups existing by the schools, the reason being the absence of schools because the small number of young people. Therefore, one can say that the schools have a very important role in making the hobby activity available. It is therefore crucial to support the diversity of hobby activity services provided at schools. It is recommended to improve the ability of schools to provide services of good quality in order to diversify the hobby activity.

Sports is also well available since most of the habitants of the local governments have access to some sports club but it is difficult to estimate how many of these sports clubs offer activities to young people. Taking into account the health of the young people, the possibilities of practicing a sport field in their local government is crucial. Although the existence of sports clubs indicates the physical opportunities (field, area, gym, hall etc.) to practise a sport, it is recommended to enable a field of sport in a way that the young people have an opportunity to practise a sport as close to their home as possible. Here, the solution can be the regionally available sports clubs but in order to develop the services, a further mapping of how many sports clubs provide activities to the young people is necessary.

Hobby education is rather concentrated in local governments with bigger populations, and smaller rural areas may not find qualified instructors to provide the hobby education service. Some of the representatives of local governments found that insufficient financing of the hobby education and hobby activity hampers the provision of service. A great deal of the hobby education and hobby activity depends on the financing from outside the local governments and participation fees and this can affect the availability of the service in areas where the number of young people and financial capability is smaller. A cooperation of closely situated local governments is recommended, for instance the available services could be diversified by improving the transportation opportunities.