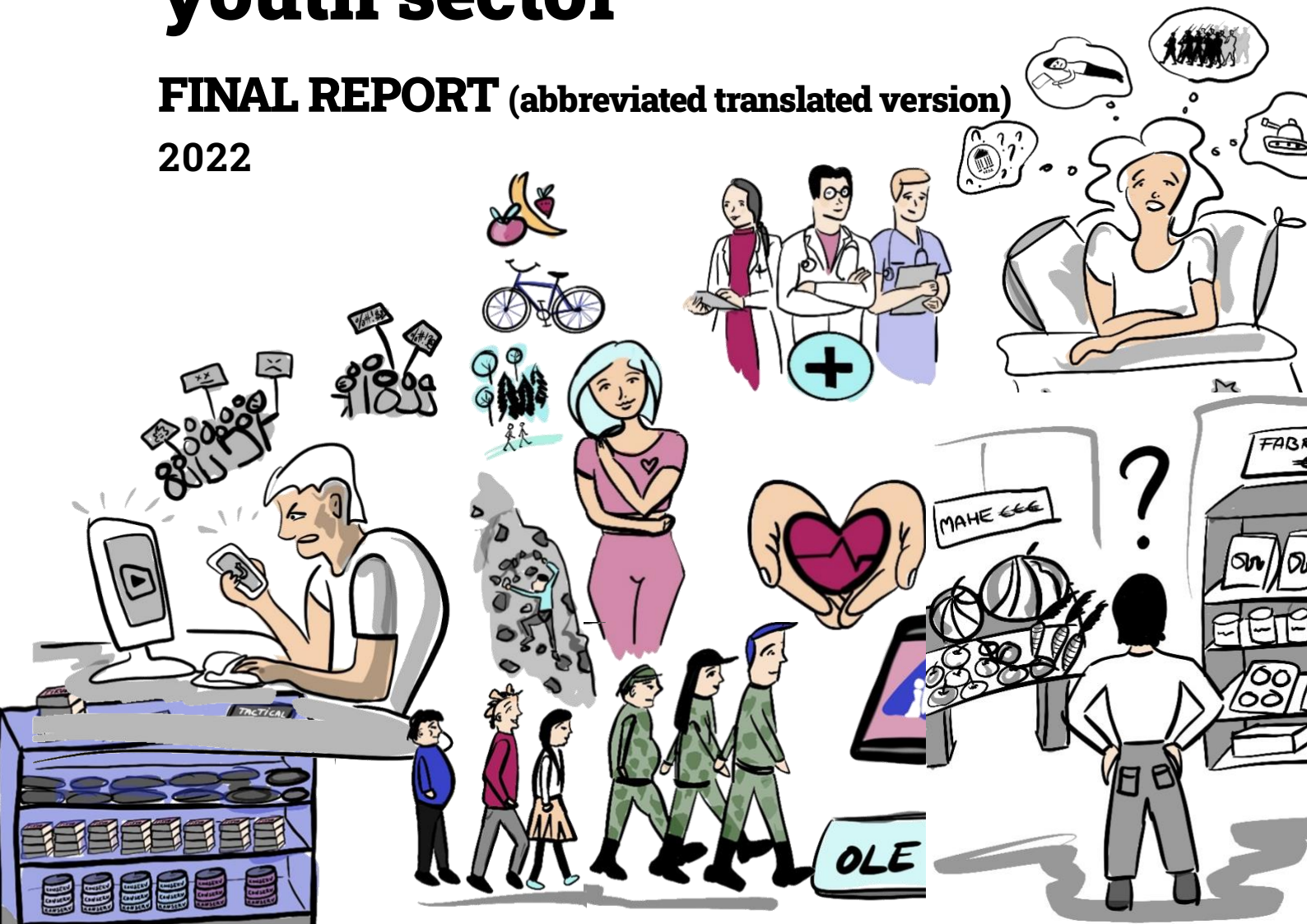


The future scenarios of Estonia's youth sector

FINAL REPORT (abbreviated translated version)

2022





REPUBLIC OF ESTONIA
EDUCATION AND YOUTH BOARD



REPUBLIC OF ESTONIA
MINISTRY OF EDUCATION
AND RESEARCH



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Introduction

In order to ensure young people's personal well-being and the progress of society, it is important that young people's position within that society is valued and that opportunities for their development are supported. Activities in Estonia's youth sector are guided by the Youth Sector Development Plan, the most recent of which is for 2021–2035. Thus, Estonia's youth sector is currently at the threshold of a new development phase, whilst still in the middle of the ongoing global COVID-19 crisis. In addition to this, young people, youth sector policy, institutions, policymakers and practitioners in Estonia and beyond are also faced with major developments (megatrends), such as demographic change, the climate crisis and the changing labour market. The outbreak of war in Ukraine earlier this year has created additional challenges.

The present study was born from the need to understand how young people in Estonia are affected by the above-mentioned challenges, as well as other important national and global developments, and how the youth sector and its related sectors (education, labour market and healthcare sectors) should adapt to these changes in order to be able to respond to young people's needs and support opportunities for their development. This study is future-oriented – in addition to looking at the implications that the above trends and challenges have already had for young people and the youth sector, it will also analyse what their impact may be in future.

The **aim** of the study was to create four alternatives, i.e. contrasting future scenarios of the youth sector by 2030.

The main **research question** was:

What kinds of changes will occur in the interests, needs, skills and challenges of young people due to the various global and national developments, and how does the youth sector need to adapt and change in light of these developments in order to achieve the strategic objectives of the development plan?

The youth sector in Estonia encompasses hobby activities and hobby education for young people, open youth work, youth camps, youth organisations, youth projects, youth participatory structures (such as youth and student councils) and work camps for young people, as well as support for young people who are not studying, the labour market or further education (Ministry of Education and Research, 2021). For the purposes of this report, we have used the general term 'youth work' to refer to all of the above, unless reference is given to any of these specifically, in which case it will be phrased accordingly. Youth work in Estonia is carried out by recreational supervisors, hobby education specialists, youth workers, etc., who in the report are collectively referred to as 'youth workers', unless reference is given to a specific group of workers, in which case it will be phrased accordingly.

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1. Methodology

The study is based on a **participatory research** methodology, which entails an in-depth and meaningful involvement of the target groups that are most directly affected by the topic or issue under study (Burns et al., 2021). Participatory approaches work towards a meaningful participation of the target group, where participants are regarded as co-investigators.

To ensure that the target group of this study – young people – were involved in as meaningful a way as possible, we set up a **youth work group** at the start of the project, whose members we regarded as co-researchers. To achieve this, we launched a 'Become a futurologist' campaign in January 2022 and invited young people aged 15–29 to apply. The call was announced by Praxis social media and newsletter. It was further disseminated by the channels of the Education and Youth Board. 23 young individuals across Estonia joined the campaign. In early February, we shortlisted six candidates. The selection process followed two main criteria: (1) gender, age, linguistic and regional diversity within the working group, and (2) the candidates' motivation in taking part. In the selection process, we therefore took into account both the personal profile of the young individual as stated in their application, as well as a short motivation letter. The working group consisted of young individuals aged 17–28 years, two of them male and four female (a strict gender balance could not be achieved due to the high predominance of women among applicants and the need to monitor gender representation in other categories as well), including one young individual from the Ida-Viru County (a native Russian speaker), one from a small town in South Estonia, and the rest from Tallinn and Tartu. All six members confirmed their participation in the project; however, one member later withdrew due to the difficult social and political situation (pandemic and war)¹. The members of the youth work group were involved with preparing and implementing the focus group interviews and the workshop, and several work meetings were held, including brief training on the research methods. The study also involved a trainee who participated in several data collection activities and work meetings.

We used the following data collection methods in the study: secondary source pooling, focus group interviews, individual interviews, a scenario-building workshop, and a validation seminar. The study began with the **analysis of secondary sources**, which was

¹ The young native Russian speaker withdrew. Since only two Russian speakers applied and we were unable to contact the other candidate, Russian speakers were not represented in the co-researchers' group. Although the non-representation of young people with Russian as their mother tongue may have had some impact on the topics or issues raised by the members of the youth work group during the study, we believe that this did not have a significant impact on the results. Individuals with a Russian-language background, including young people, were present in the focus group interviews and the workshop.

aimed at mapping the situation of the youth sector in Estonia and the situation of young people in related fields (education, labour market and healthcare sector), the megatrends affecting Estonia's young people and the youth sector, and their impact. The aim was also to provide some input for the following steps of the study, including designing interview schedules and developing a methodology for the scenario-building workshop. The purpose of the **focus group and individual interviews** was to complement and refine the analysis of the secondary sources and to provide input into the design and methodology of the scenario-building workshop. We conducted three focus group interviews (one with young people, one with professionals working with young people, and one with experts and researchers in the youth sector and its related fields) and five individual interviews. The aim of the **scenario-building workshop** was to provide further detailed information about the megatrends and their impact, and to develop future scenarios and recommendations on what should be done in each scenario to best support the well-being and development opportunities of young people. Thus, the workshop comprised two main parts: analysing megatrends and creating future scenarios. While the focus group interviews were carried out on a profile basis (i.e. group interviews with young people were separate from those with professionals who work with young people, etc.), group work in the workshop was performed in mixed groups in order to bring together different experiences and perspectives when finding solutions. Bringing participants from different roles together in such a way promotes an understanding of each other's perspectives and facilitates agreement on shared ideas, vocabulary and courses of action regarding the research topic (Kemmis et al., 2014). The aim of the **validation seminar** was to validate and refine the findings of the study, including obtaining further input into the formulation of policy proposals.

The focus group and individual interviews, as well as the validation seminar, were conducted online (Zoom and Teams), while the workshop was conducted face-to-face in Praxis's office in Tallinn, although three people attended online as they wished to contribute to the study, but were unable to attend in person. In addition to the organising team, a total of 34 people, including two external experts, took part in the focus group's individual interviews and workshop. 16 people participated in the validation seminar; 9 of those did not participate in the interviews or the workshop. This means that, **in addition to the research team** (Praxis analysts, youth working group, trainee, designers), **a total of 43 people contributed to the study**. The list of participants was put together in such a way as to have more or less equal representation of (a) young people, (b) professionals working with young people (e.g. youth workers, career counsellors), and (c) experts and researchers from both the youth sector and related fields (including education, labour market, healthcare, but also the economy and environment). Invitations were sent to participants via direct email. The list of participants is attached at the beginning of this

report, although it is not exhaustive, as it omits the names of those who wished to remain anonymous.

1.1. Megatrends

An important component of this study is megatrends, i.e. large-scale developments that affect many people and countries, in many cases the entire world, that will last for at least a decade, and that are already present, but will also have an impact in the future. Due to their long duration and quantifiable nature, megatrends provide an excellent opportunity to analyse the otherwise uncertain future. (Gaub, 2019) Analysing megatrends, including mapping them and assessing their impact, is a common method in studies of the future, and this is why we also used it in this study to contextualise the future scenarios. Analysing megatrends helped us identify the main risks and opportunities for young people and the youth sector in Estonia in 2030. Based on these (and on the analysis of future scenarios), we were able to develop proposals on how the youth sector and related fields should prepare for the risks and opportunities in issues related to young people.

The first step in analysing megatrends was the analysis of secondary sources. We reviewed a number of previous studies on megatrends and mapped the most important megatrends that might impact young people and the youth sector in Estonia by 2030 the most. We based our analysis on which megatrends were the most recurrent, or relevant, in the studies, and which megatrends were addressed more than others in analyses on young people, and in the fields of youth, education or social affairs. The analysis of secondary sources, in addition to mapping megatrends, helped us provide a preliminary outline of the possible universal (i.e. across many countries) risks and opportunities of megatrends for young people and the youth sector. By means of the focus group and individual interviews and the scenario-building workshop we were able to make our analysis of megatrends more context-specific, i.e. to finalise the list of megatrends and to specify and complement the risks and opportunities presented by megatrends in the Estonian context. The interviews included questions about megatrends, and the scenario-building workshop required the participants, following group discussion, to complete a megatrend analysis table (highlighting the risks and opportunities of a given megatrend and, optionally, supplementing the table with other megatrends and their associated risks and opportunities) – both types of collected data were taken into consideration in the next stage of megatrend analysis.

Five megatrends emerged as a result, along with the risks and opportunities they might entail by 2030. The results were presented at the validation seminar and participants were asked for feedback on each megatrend and its potential impact in a group discussion. The validation seminar provided further valuable material to nuance the

analysis of megatrends. As such, the analysis of megatrends was born from a joint creation process, in line with participatory methodology. Conducting megatrend analysis in such a way proved highly valuable, since secondary source analysis did not provide in-depth context-specific results for certain trends, whereas participatory data collection methods did.

1.2. Future scenarios

Participatory methods are also used increasingly in the analysis of future scenarios where target groups that are affected by the issues under study most directly are involved in the research process (Nilsson, 2019). Considering that the present study is based on the objectives of the Youth Sector Development Plan – understanding and involving young people as equal partners, supporting and empowering young people in decision-making and implementation – it was only appropriate that we also followed participatory methodology when designing the future scenarios in the youth sector. For the purpose of this study, we defined a scenario as a rich and detailed snapshot of a likely future situation. Scenarios are a useful tool for policymakers, helping them to understand problems clearly and comprehensively, and to address related challenges and opportunities. A scenario is not a prediction of a specific future situation, but rather a plausible description of what *might* happen, or what events and developments *might* occur. (Moniz, 2005) We do not, however, conceptualise the probability of the future scenarios in a quantitative sense, but rather in the sense that each developed scenario is possible, although none of these will be realised with 100% accuracy (Sikkut et al., 2012).

In the present scenario analysis, we followed the concept of the renowned scenario researcher, Peter Schwartz (Moniz, 2005). According to his concept the process of scenario building consists of the following steps:

- 1) Description of the existing situation/problems;
- 2) Identifying the key forces and trends;
- 3) Evaluation of the key forces and trends (based on criteria of significance and uncertainty); selection of scenario logic;
- 4) Scenario building;
- 5) Assessing conclusions.

Thus, the research process began with a **description of the existing situation**. Based on the analysis of secondary sources, the focus group and individual interviews, we outlined the main problems that young people in Estonia face, whilst focusing on youth, education, labour market and health, with inequality as a horizontal theme. From problem mapping,

we filtered out the **key forces** (ibid), or critical influencing forces (Sikkut et al., 2012), i.e. the forces that will impact the situation of Estonian youth and the youth sector in 2030 the most. In our selection of the key forces, we relied on Schwarz's above-mentioned concept, using the criteria of **importance** and **uncertainty**. In other words, we assessed which problems are *most important* in light of the well-being and development opportunities of young people in Estonia during the current decade (i.e. what has been repeatedly and emphatically raised in previous studies as concerns that strongly affect young people's well-being and opportunities for development, and whose relevance was also confirmed in the interviews), and for which problems there is a degree of *uncertainty* (i.e. it is unclear in which direction the problem will develop by 2030). We therefore regard the key forces as shorter-term trends (Gaub, 2019), whose direction is less clear-cut than that of long-term trends, or megatrends, and whose direction is more easily influenced by people than that of megatrends. Here lies the main value of the future scenario methodology – constructing plausible visions of the future allows us to take a look at what the future might bring, so that we can then take appropriate steps to prepare for the future, including preventing undesirable scenarios from materialising.

The following have been selected as key forces for the future scenarios in the present analysis:

- Adequate supply of qualified education and youth workers
- The impact of regional inequality on the well-being and development opportunities of young people

Based on these key forces, we designed **axes for the future scenarios** (adequate number of workers *vs* inadequate number of workers; low impact of inequality *vs* high impact of inequality), which intersect to form four alternative or distinct scenarios. To build on these scenarios, we held a **workshop**. The scenarios were based on the **framework** that we had created, with the axes and fields to be included in the scenario, based on the previously selected key forces. The scenario-building group work was preceded by the analysis of megatrends in groups, which meant that the scenarios were shaped beforehand to reflect the broader context of megatrends, followed by a presentation of the scenarios to all workshop participants. In the next group task of the same workshop, the same groups, i.e. the previously formed groups, focused on formulating policy proposals for the scenario they had created. The future scenarios were thus born from **collaboration** of a group of people with diverse backgrounds (young people, professionals working with young people, the youth sector and its related experts and researchers). Conditions for the realisation of each scenario were developed after the workshop using a *desk research* method, i.e. using the notes of workshop discussions, recordings of the presentations, and results of the secondary sources analysis.

2. Megatrends that shape the future of Estonia's young people and the youth sector

Megatrends are wide-ranging developments that affect many people and countries, in many cases the entire world (Gaub, 2019). Megatrends are not short term – they unfold over at least a decade, and often much longer. It is important to remember that although megatrends will take place in and influence the future, they are already present and observable now. Since megatrends are quantifiable, they provide a great window into the otherwise unknown future. However, even though they are quantifiable, megatrends nevertheless remain open to interpretation. For example, it may be easy to predict how many people will have internet access at some point in the future, but it still needs to be interpreted what exactly this entails. (Ibid) In this chapter, we will describe five megatrends that will have the greatest impact on the future of Estonia's young people and the youth sector: ageing, digitalisation, labour market change, climate change and shifts in security situation. We will also map out the main risks and opportunities that megatrends bring for Estonia's young people and the youth sector.

2.1. Population ageing

Higher life expectancy and falling fertility rates increase the proportion of older people in the world (PWC, 2016). One in eleven people in the world were over 65 in 2019 (9%), rising to one in six by 2050 (16%). In Europe and North America, one in four people will be aged 65+ by 2050. (United Nations, 2019) Population ageing poses a challenge to the sustainability of healthcare and social systems. IMF calculations show that while pension expenditure currently accounts for 1.3% of GDP in developed countries, it will rise to 2.2% by 2030 (KPMG, 2016). Population ageing is also accelerating in Estonia. By 2035, the proportion of people aged 65 and over will be 25% of the entire Estonian population and by 2060 30%. While in the past 20 years there have been on average more than two employees per retirement pension holder in Estonia, the figure will fall below 1.3 by 2060. The burden of the working population will therefore increase significantly. (Estonia 2035 work documents: DEVELOPMENT NEEDS, 2019)

2.1.1. Risks for young people and the youth sector

- As a result of population ageing, healthcare and social expenditure or meeting the needs of the elderly will become a priority for the national budget (PWC, 2016). **The**

scope of resources targeted towards young people and the youth sector will consequently shrink.

- Against the backdrop of a growing elderly population and a shrinking proportion of young people among the electorate, young people may increasingly feel that their 'voice' has no weight. Young people are in a minority within the electorate, so it is often older generations who, with the greater quantity of their votes, make decisions, while the young people of today have to live with the long-term consequences. Young people's opportunities to influence decisions about their future in elections will be limited. This could further exacerbate the alienation from politics that is already taking place among younger generations. (Jüristo, 2021) Moreover, this can be fertile ground for violent radicalisation. **The question of how to prevent political alienation and violent radicalisation among young people is therefore a growing challenge for the youth sector.**



- Postponed retirement age will increasingly lead to young people working side by side with older people in the same organisations (OSKA, 2021). There is also an increasing

tendency for employers to belong to an older generation while employees are younger, which means that employer-employee perceptions of the nature of work (what working days should be like, where work is done, how to motivate employees, etc.) may not match. **Intergenerational differences can lead to disagreements and make collaboration difficult.**

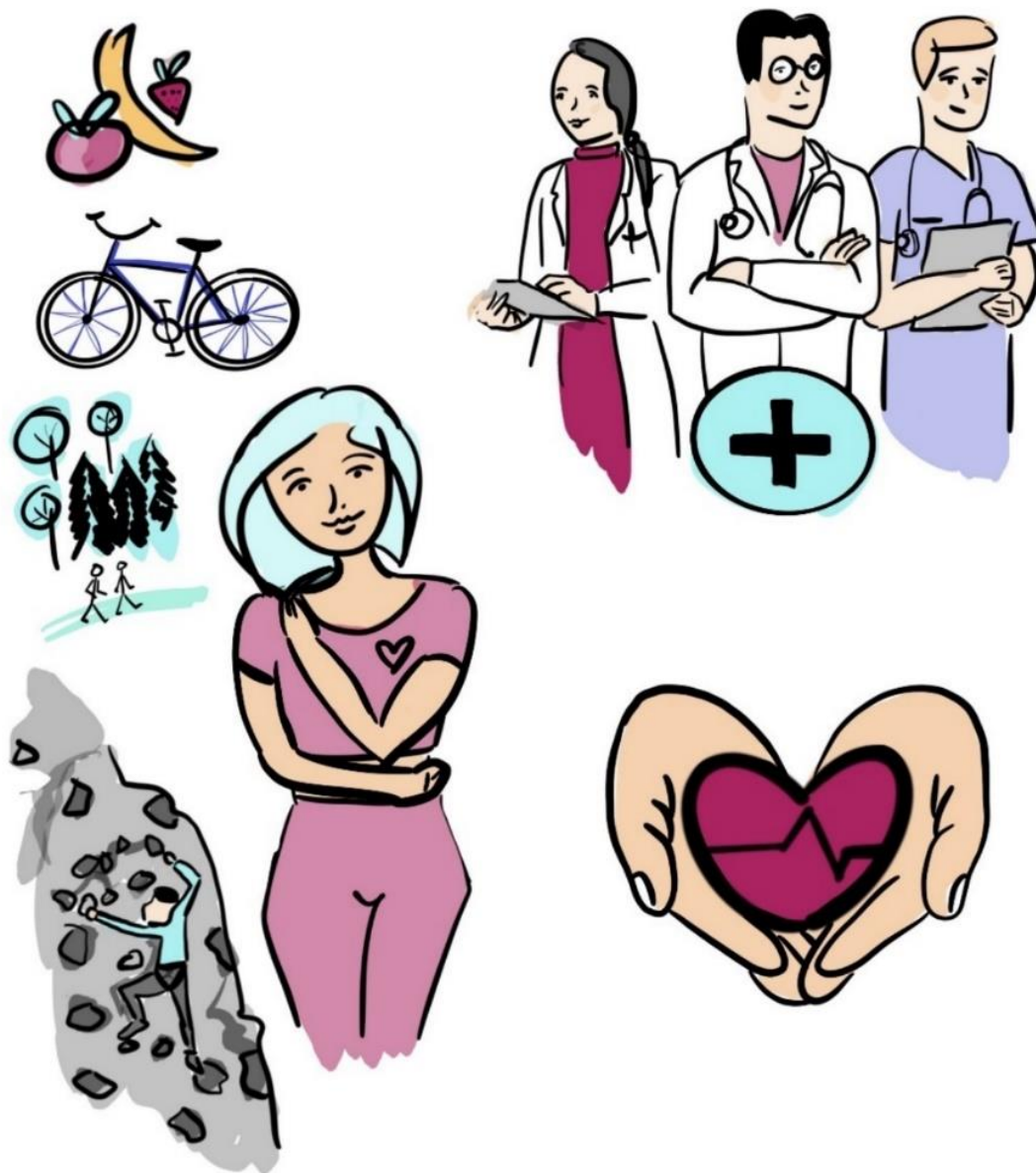
- Increasingly tight public budgets and growing demands on the working-age population are putting pressure on young people to cope in the labour market independently (entering the labour market without assistance, working under heavy workloads, adapting to changes in the labour market, including apprenticeships and retraining if necessary), but this can lead to **greater inequality**, since not all young people may be able to cope with it.

2.1.2. Opportunities for young people and the youth sector

- Growth in healthcare and social sectors will ensure jobs in the public sector. According to Cedefop's estimate, the healthcare sector in Estonia will grow around 1.2% between 2022 and 2030 due to the ageing population (Cedefop, 2020). Also according to a study by OSKA, the need for workforce in the healthcare sector (especially mental health) is also increasing (Rosenblad et al., 2020). There is thus at least the certainty that a number of essential healthcare and social sector jobs (doctors, nurses, carers) will be retained (Bakhshi et al., 2017) in the otherwise rapidly changing labour market, ensuring future employment opportunities for today's youth. Youth workers can introduce these opportunities to young people. At the same time, as the participants in the validation seminar pointed out, working in the public sector carries with it the risk of a lower living standard for young people, as the aforementioned jobs are currently not appropriately valued in Estonia.

'What is left, is the public sector jobs... which are the most important jobs in the world – the jobs of the heart, one might say: nursing, teaching, nursery and carer jobs. Yet these heartfelt jobs are not valued in our society! ... It would be sad if young people devoted themselves to these less paid jobs of the heart, which are indeed the most important jobs in the world... but which are barely enough to make ends meet.'

Researcher



- While young people's representation in the electorate and their voice in representative democratic decision-making processes is declining, they **can nevertheless advocate for their interests through other forms of participation**, such as signing petitions, posting on social media, organising demonstrations, etc. Such innovative forms of participation have been increasingly used among young people in recent years. (Crowley & Moxon, 2017) In order to support young people's involvement in politics, professionals working with young people can introduce these alternative forms of participation and the opportunities they can offer; this potential should be increasingly realised. However, it is important to adopt an approach that is evidence-based, as current civic education may not support young people's civic engagement sufficiently: young people in Estonia may have great awareness of

societal processes, but they do not necessarily apply that knowledge in civic life. Young people's civic engagement has remained low for years. (IEA International Civic and Citizenship Education Survey ICCS 2016, Estonia's main results, s.d.) Additionally, youth workers perceive their competences in supporting civic education for young people as rather low. (Käger et al., 2017)

- Professionals working with young people can, and should, increasingly **foster a sense of values in young people** that supports understanding and caring between generations (Estonia 2035 work documents: DEVELOPMENTAL SKILLS, 2019) and working as part of a team, through various joint activities or projects. They can show initiative in bringing the younger and older generations together. One participant in the validation seminar proposed the following idea for resolving disputes between young and elderly people in the workplace.

'Perhaps the chasm between them can be overcome by organising a kind of civic hackathon, as the initial step – we let people come together, then discuss! Employers need young people. And young people in turn need jobs. In effect it is a win-win situation.'

Researcher

2.2. Digitalisation

Over the last 30 years, digitalisation has taken place on a global scale. 75% of the global population has access to a mobile phone, and in some countries a mobile phone is more readily available than a bank account, or access to electricity or clean water. While in the year 2000 there were 360 million internet users worldwide, in 2012 the figure had risen to 2.4 billion, approximately 34% of the world's population. It is predicted that 50% of the global population will have internet access by 2030. (KPMG, 2016) According to a study undertaken in the United States, adolescents and adults use their phones around 150 times a day on average (Seema & Vinter-Nemvalts, 2020). A study carried out in Estonia a few years ago showed that the majority (97%) of Estonian children and young people aged 9–17 use the internet every day. 67% of children and adolescents say they that they spend more than two hours online during a school day, 8% of these six hours or more. 78% of children and young people in Estonia spend more than two hours online at weekends and during school holidays, while 20% spend at least six hours online. (Sukk & Soo, 2018)

2.2.1. Risks for young people and the youth sector

- Polarisation, intensification of irrational behaviour on social media, the emergence of echo chambers,² the spread of hate speech, violent radicalisation. The consumption of traditional media is decreasing, while that of social media is increasing. Social media cultivates what is known as the attention economy, which focuses on stimulating emotional responses at the expense of rational ones. Fake news and manipulation contribute to social polarisation. (Oxfam, 2020) The greatest challenge for the youth sector is, therefore, how to equip young people with the skills to engage with social media in a critical and dispassionate way.

'If we consider the current political situation in relation to the ongoing war or the climate debate, then polarisation is actually a major concern. Teaching and supporting critical thinking is certainly crucial in youth work, so that we do not rely solely on echo chambers and TikTok videos. ... This needs to be supported and developed, it is a real challenge.
youth sector's expert

² An echo chamber is an environment where only the views that reflect and confirm those of the person already in the environment are listened to and taken into account. Echo chambers can facilitate the spread of false information and influence the way people see things, making it increasingly difficult for them to consider opposing perspectives and discuss difficult issues. Echo chambers can be found wherever information is shared, but they are most prevalent on the internet (e.g. social media, online news feeds) where like-minded people can be found easily and quickly by almost anyone. (GCF Global, s.d.)



- **Undermining democracy, human rights and civil society as core values of youth work.** One interviewed researcher underlined that digitalisation has significantly weakened democracy, pointing to research reports such as Freedom House reports and others that have addressed the issue. The above-mentioned studies highlight that while at the turn of the millennium optimism prevailed that digitalisation could strengthen democracy and increase social openness, there is now a growing perception that digitalisation, including the triumph of social media, tends to give rise to illiberal tendencies, to serve authoritarian governments and to have an undermining effect on democracy (Freedom House, 2019). Democracy presupposes open and pluralistic discourse, but digital spaces are usually controlled by a small number of actors with insufficient monitoring. Digital spaces covertly frame and

constrain debates and make it very easy to manipulate people. (Lewandowsky et al., 2020) Since democracy, human rights and active citizenship are central elements of youth work, the researcher therefore considers digitalisation to be at odds with the core values of youth work. For the youth sector, it is important to be aware of the risks that digitalisation can bring, find ways to get young people more involved in youth work, instead of spending time excessively in the digital world, and to know how to guide young people in using digital tools in a way that would prevent these risks from materialising.

'For youth work... democracy, human rights and active citizenship are vital. Digitalisation, however, has severely eroded democracy over the past decade. Democracy has been deeply undermined. For example, violations against human rights related to digitalisation are increasingly common. We also know that civil society is in decline – a trend that is Europe-wide and also partly due to digitalisation. ... All the key elements of youth work are under threat from digitalisation. "

Researcher

- **The emergence of digital addiction (including to computer games and social media), and its negative consequences for mental and physical health.** According to researchers, children and young people are more at risk of digital addiction than adults because they lack sufficient self-control skills. In England, 63% of parents think their child already has a digital addiction, as do half of the adolescents themselves. In a study a few years ago about children's digital behaviour in Estonia, nearly half of the children who took part said they had tried to spend less time online but had failed. (Seema & Vinter-Nemvalts, 2020) The study entitled DIGILAPS conducted in Estonia in 2015 showed that 6% of children in year 2 and 22% of children in year 8 showed signs of addiction (Konstabel, 2015). Ever-intensifying digitalisation can be expected to increase the proportion of digitally dependent children and young people around the world, including in Estonia. Digital addiction can lead to eye and musculoskeletal disorders, communication difficulties, school and learning related problems, brain development disorders (negatively affecting thinking and impulse control), lower psychological well-being, as well as cyberbullying, lying and crime (Seema & Vinter-Nemvalts, 2020). The validation seminar thus also drew attention to the risks associated with social media, such as its negative effects on body image and self-esteem. It was also noted that the psychological aftermath of digitalisation is an ambivalent one: what is an opportunity for one can be a great risk for another. The winners will be those with excellent self-leadership skills, i.e. those who know how to make digital opportunities work for them. **For the youth sector, it is a growing**

challenge to provide guidance for young people on how to engage with the digital environment in a way that protects their physical and mental health and retains their sense of self-esteem and self-confidence. Youth workers who participated in the focus group interviews addressed the risks of digitalisation repeatedly, noting that they are already facing the challenge of how to support young people in the context of these risks. From the youth workers' statements it is clear that they are not always sure how to go about this, which means that **youth workers themselves may need further training.**

'With the rapid exchange of information and all that – young people often hop from one thing to another... Their lack of focus is a problem...or they want to get some quick snapshots. ... I cannot put my finger on it exactly, but I can see that it affects their nervous system. This is a point of concern in my work. How to teach young people to regulate their nervous system, e.g. with breathing exercises. How to make it part of their daily routine. ... It is easy to become overwhelmed when things are so interesting that you simply lose control of yourself... You become so focused that your nervous system is thrown off balance. How, then, can we restore their tranquility?'

Youth worker

One of the researchers we interviewed stressed that in order to prevent the risks of digitalisation from materialising, policymakers and practitioners must be fully aware of these risks and appreciate their severity. This, however, is according to the researcher often not the case – **neither European nor Estonian policy documents prioritise this issue, and youth workers are not sufficiently aware of the risks of digitalisation.** It is therefore important that the youth sector understands the serious nature of the risks of digitalisation and design policies that take these risks into account. Youth workers must have a high level of understanding of the risks, as well as the knowledge and skills to prevent such risks from materialising. For example, youth workers should be able to recognise the symptoms of digital addiction in young people and be able to offer them appropriate support or advise them on where to get help if they experience problems.

'The positive side of digitalisation is well-known, it is practically common knowledge as everyone is aware of it. Risks, on the other hand, are recognised less often. ... It has been documented that youth workers are unaware of the dark side of digitalisation. ... Another problem is that Europe's youth policies have been left lagging behind. Digitalisation does not feature prominently in any European Youth

Strategy initiative. ... The strategies of Estonia's youth sector do not mention digitalisation either... it is as if the major private tech companies that constantly exploit people for their own profit did not exist.'

Researcher

2.2.2. Opportunities for young people and the youth sector

- **An opportunity to develop digital alertness, critical thinking, digital literacy and self-regulation skills.** Digital alertness is a practice of metacognition, which means acknowledging one's subconscious impulses and thoughts and aligning one's behaviour in the digital environment with personal values and goals. In order to be able to regulate oneself in relation to digital technology, a person must have sufficient self-regulatory capacity, based on awareness of their own psyche. (Seema & Vinter-Nemvalts, 2020) The development of digital alertness in children and young people therefore requires the development of self-regulation capacities more generally. In order to avoid falling victim to manipulation in the digital environment, it is crucial to develop the ability to distinguish false information from the truth. Increasing digital literacy, including awareness of cyber hygiene, will help ensure that digital solutions are consumed profitably and safely. (OSKA, 2021) Youth workers are able to and should help young people develop these skills; however, this requires the development of competences among the youth workers themselves first.



- **Digitalisation has fostered the democratisation of technology**, which includes more equal opportunities for young people from different backgrounds to engage in, for example, entrepreneurship or science, but also in terms of access to services (Oxfam, 2020). Previous studies (Haugas et al., 2021) have shown that young people's digital skills are often rather poor (e.g. they use digital tools a lot to play games and watch videos, but may struggle to send emails or provide digital signatures), which is why youth workers should help young people learn how to make better use of digital tools, e.g. how to do things online when starting a business or use public e-services.
- **New opportunities for political involvement and the development of civil society** (see also section 2.1.2). Digitalisation allows young people, a minority of the population, to make their voices heard in alternative ways, e.g. a number of major political

movements (e.g. *Occupy Wall Street*, *Black Lives Matter*) have their origin in social media. (Ibid) At the same time, as one researcher who was interviewed in the present study stressed, digitalisation is not a silver bullet for increasing young people's involvement in politics, since the main reason for their poor participation lies elsewhere – lack of motivation. It is therefore critical for youth workers to support young people in developing the motivation to participate in politics.

'It is important to have the motivation to vote for someone, to be politically active. Digitalisation is just an intermediary, an instrument. If there is no motivation to actively participate in politics, it makes no difference whether or not there is a means to do so. ... The solution to the lack of young people's political participation is not more tech apps, youth representative assemblies or election campaigns, but a genuine interest in alternative forms of youth agency and political activism.'

Researcher

- **Availability and rapid dissemination of information, new forms of learning, increased awareness.** Social media has helped raise young people's awareness of issues such as gender equality, including control of one's own body, sexual violence, structural inequality in society and difficulties in reconciling work and family life. It has been suggested that these topics have through social media become part of global pop culture. (Ibid) It is at the same time important to remember that social media can harbour great risks and that raising one's awareness through social media requires the ability to filter information and to think critically – youth workers can introduce these risks to young people and teach them critical thinking.
- **Opportunities for networking outside your home.** It was pointed out during the validation seminar that digital tools and social media make it possible to find useful contacts, other like-minded people, communities, and even relationships, if a partner cannot be found in one's home area.

2.3. The changing labour market

The world of work is changing rapidly. Technological progress, globalisation and an ageing population are reshaping the labour market. New business models and work preferences are paving the way for new work arrangements. (OECD, 2019) Traditional organisational models are disappearing, with rigid organisational structures and hierarchies becoming a thing of the past. Work is becoming more flexible and project-based, and different types of employment relationships emerge (e.g. self-employment is growing, employee vs employer relationship is increasingly replaced by service provider vs client relationship). As a result of the growth of remote and hybrid work, the workplace

is becoming less and less location-dependent, opening up more opportunities for people living outside centres of attraction, as well as for cross-border work. (Rosenblad et al., 2020) Some jobs will disappear, others will be created, so there will be no overall decline in employment. (OECD, 2019) A study from a few years ago (Bakhshi et al., 2017) estimates that seven out of ten people are currently working in a job with an uncertain future, i.e. it is not known whether the job and the industry will survive. Employment is estimated to fall particularly in jobs that require low or medium skills and can therefore be automated. (Ibid) According to the OECD estimate around 6% of all jobs in Estonia are automatable (vs OECD mean 9%) (Arntz et al., 2016). Against the backdrop of the fast-changing labour market, the constant need to learn or relearn throughout one's life is growing (Rosenblad et al., 2020). 21st century skills such as communication, collaboration, self-regulation, etc., are increasingly valued in the future job market.

2.3.1. Risks for young people and the youth sector

- **Skills mismatch between what the labour market needs and what young people can acquire from education** (Choudaha & van Rest, 2018). Education should prepare young people for the labour market, but as it goes through rapid changes, there is no way of knowing which skills will be needed most in the future. On the one hand, we know that there is a future shift from a manufacturing-based to a service-based economy. The relevance of the information and communication sector, which used to be a niche sector in Estonia, is growing, and according to one expert who was interviewed, it will soon become dominant in Estonia. The need for a qualified workforce is thus growing – higher education is becoming more important, while vocational education is in decline. In addition to career counsellors, youth workers have the potential to support young people in making career choices, which is why youth workers' awareness of these developments is essential. At the same time, labour market changes are so rapid that it is difficult to anticipate the skills that will be needed in the future. This was underlined by a number of experts interviewed who, in the context of all the bewilderment and turbulence, highlight above all the need to teach young people the ability to cope with change, to learn and adapt constantly, and to be open and resilient. In other words, in the rapidly changing labour market and society, focus should be directed to equipping young people with 21st century skills – both formal education and youth work have the potential to successfully do this.

'We need to ensure that as many young people as possible have a wide range of learning opportunities. To learn about the world, the society, and the community they live in. The culture around them. ... Schools and informal learning should focus on broadening young people's

horizons – help them develop the capacity to navigate in life successfully. This is the best thing we can do. In the past, there was far more certainty about the future – young people then could be prepared for the labour market. Right now, we do not know what is coming our way... Therefore, we need to equip young people with the competences and self-confidence that they need to help them navigate their own lives, their social lives and the labour market.'

Researcher

'Younger generations are wanting more and more to do everything at once. ... I want to study, then I want to work, I will start a family, have a bigger family, have a smaller family, live here, live simultaneously in different countries... And at the same time cope with everything... It is a fact that skills that would enable a person to cope with such turbulence are increasingly needed. ... The risk of automation in the labour market... It puts a lot of pressure on our education system, which is supposed to prepare for the labour market, but if we cannot anticipate tomorrow, let alone five years from now, then the education system is also faced with a difficulty. The best thing we can do is prepare our youth to cope with turbulence.'

Researcher



One researcher we interviewed underlined the importance of prioritising the teaching of 21st century skills, recognising which skills are more important than others, so that in a resource-constrained world, it is the most important skills that are prioritised.

‘Critical digital literacy is important – this is not merely technical digital literacy. Most youth work at the moment is focused on teaching technical digital skills, when in fact what is needed most is an understanding of, for example, who has the power in the system, do we know what the tech industry is doing and how it might exploit us, whether we understand the logic of how the industry makes a profit. All that is part of critical digital competence that needs strengthening.’
Researcher

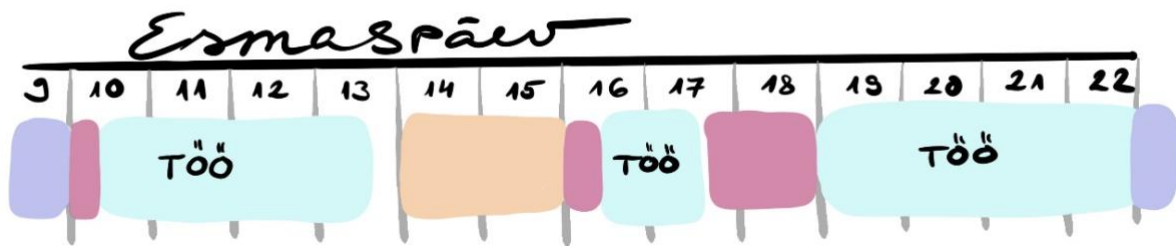
- **The exacerbation of inequality**, as labour market changes hit some people harder than others. Low- and middle-skilled people will suffer the most, as the jobs they hold are at the greatest risk of disappearing due to automation. (OECD, 2019; Arntz et al.,

2016) Increased platform work and acting as an independent contractor in the labour market transfers social risks from the employer to the employee (Rosenblad et al., 2020) and thus to young people who are more likely to use new forms of work than older generations, and who may find it increasingly difficult to maintain their social well-being and security. This is an area where the youth sector can support young people, by encouraging young people to demand changes from politicians that will provide more social protection for people working under modern forms of employment.

- Growing insecurity in the labour market can increase **the risk of mental health problems** (Rosenblad et al., 2020), which requires youth workers to pay increasing attention to mental health issues. Expert mental health support for young people, however, requires youth workers to build and develop the relevant competences.

2.3.2. Opportunities for young people and the youth sector

- **The new arrangement of the labour market (flexibility, remote work, digital economy, etc.) appeals to young people and gives them an advantage in the labour market** because they can adapt to change more quickly (Oxfam, 2020). Young people tend to be more digitally literate (regardless of some gaps in their digital skills, which were noted above, young people are generally more comfortable in the digital world than older people) and have a better understanding of social media. However, as was stressed at the validation seminar, it is nevertheless important not to treat all young people as a homogeneous group, as this obviously does not apply to all young people – e.g. digital skills may vary greatly from one young person to another, not every young person is comfortable with remote work, but might prefer a more traditional form of work.
- The green revolution will lead to an **increasing demand for jobs** (Rosenblad et al., 2020) **whose content matches young people's values on environmental protection.** This is expected to lead to the emergence of new jobs, as well as an increase in the demand for environmental specialists in sectors which have not been at the heart of the green economy until now – e.g. trade, real estate (ibid).



2.4. Climate change

Climate change will affect many aspects of people's lives in the coming decades, from health and income to access to water and food. In the absence of major policy changes, the average annual global temperature will rise more in the next 50 years than it has in the last 6000 years. (Xu et al., 2019) If this continues, around a billion more people will live in water scarcity by 2030 than today. A 2–3°C warming of the climate could lead to the extinction of 20–50% of species. However, a warming of 3–4°C could lead to the permanent displacement of 200 million people due to floods, droughts and other extreme weather events (KPMG, 2016).

2.4.1. Risks for young people and the youth sector

- **Economic difficulties.** Economic constraints are making it harder for young people to become independent and consumption choices are becoming increasingly complex. Climate change could impose a significant economic burden on today's young people and future generations. Adapting to the impacts of climate change could cost 0.7% of

global GDP. In order to find sufficient resources, the children of today might have to, for example, pay higher taxes as adults in the future. (UNICEF UK, 2013) The participants of our workshop also drew attention to young people's consumption choices. On the one hand, young people who are accustomed to consuming a lot may feel uncomfortable, as they realise that their consumption behaviour has to change. On the other hand, preferred ethical consumption choices may be constrained by the low income of young people. The result of this is frustration: people want to buy environmentally friendly products, but cannot afford them. Here, the challenge for the youth sector is how to inform and support young people in facing these dilemmas and frustrations, e.g. how to explain that while everyone's contribution to saving the planet is important, young people should not push themselves too hard on environmentally friendly consumption choices, but rather channel their energy into demanding policy changes from politicians in order to support environmental welfare.

- **Anxiety, fear, anger, feelings of helplessness among young people** (Sanson et al., 2019). A study of people aged 7–24 in Australia found that 96% of them consider climate change to be a serious problem, and 89% are concerned about its consequences. Feelings of helplessness are prevalent, with more than 70% feeling that their voice is not being heard on the importance of climate change. (Chiw & Ling, 2019) A study of 11–16-year olds in the United Kingdom, on the other hand, found that 74% are worried about how climate change will affect their future and 63% are concerned about the impact of climate change on children and families in developing countries (UNICEF UK, 2013). A recent global survey found that two thirds of the young people who took part felt sadness, fear and anxiety regarding climate change. Many feel anger and shame too. More than 45% say that their feelings about climate change affect their daily lives. (Harrabin, 2021) We can expect climate change to have a similar impact on young people in Estonia. This was also highlighted in the focus group interviews, workshop and validation seminar of the present study.

'This strong sense of helplessness is especially exacerbated among young people who are aware, who care and who make an effort. The feeling that I am doing all I can, but it is just a drop in the ocean. ... Starting a family can cause insecurity. What kind of a world am I bringing children into? So, climate issues can also bring uncertainty in a broader sense of planning for the future.'

Mental health expert



It is a growing challenge for the youth sector to reduce insecurity, helplessness and fear among young people about climate issues and how to encourage them to act within their means rather than worrying.

- **Growing conflicts.** Climate disasters and their aftermath can lead young people to look for a culprit. The consequences can be (intergenerational) conflicts, increased toxicity, violent radicalisation (United Nations, 2021). It was pointed out at the validation seminar that a scarcity of natural resources could lead to climate wars, which could also have an indirect effect on young people in Estonia (e.g. economic repercussions).
- Migration-related challenges can lead to social tensions. The participants in our interviews and the validation seminar emphasised that this is particularly the case

when immigrants are from very different cultural backgrounds. **How to support young people from different cultural backgrounds and how to contribute to social cohesion is therefore also an increasing challenge for the youth sector.** As the skills of Estonian youth workers in supporting young people from other cultures are currently rather low, it is necessary to increase their competence.

2.4.2. Opportunities for young people and the youth sector

- The participants of our workshop highlighted the following key points: increased sense of worth, raising awareness, healthy lifestyles, developing climate sensitivity, mission-driven entrepreneurship, innovation. By acknowledging the effects of climate change and everyone's shared responsibility to contribute to curbing it, young people can adopt more informed, environmentally friendly and healthy habits, e.g. walking or cycling instead of driving, eating local food instead of imported food, etc. By being socially active, young people can advocate for policy changes that aim to protect the planet (e.g. creating green urban spaces). Youth workers can support climate awareness among young people. They can also listen to young people who are concerned about climate change, strive to understand them and encourage them to act politically on their concerns. One researcher we interviewed was, however, extremely critical of the youth sector, arguing that youth policies in Estonia and elsewhere have failed to play their role. While young people themselves can keep up with change and adapt, youth policies tend to lag behind. The youth sector therefore needs to be more proactive and adaptable in its learning – and it is from young people that it ought to learn. According to the researcher, the youth sector needs to undergo profound changes in order to better understand young people and their needs and to move in the same direction as they do. Youth workers, unlike researchers, have the potential to identify necessary changes because they work directly with young people. Participatory research that brings together young people, youth workers and researchers may be helpful; however, it should include an educational element in order to provide a broader perspective, as the existing knowledge and insights of both young people and youth workers (e.g. on the threats of climate change and digitalisation) may be limited.



'Interestingly, the Estonian Youth Sector Development Plan does not put much emphasis on climate change. This is rather curious, since when the document was drafted, it was well-known that the problem existed. It was known that eight million young people went on the streets to become active citizens to somehow curb climate change. And the youth sector acted as if nothing had happened. Neither European nor Estonian youth strategies emphasise this – as if these eight million young people did not really exist. ... Youth policies are slow on the uptake. They are trapped in history and utterly incapable of confronting the problems that arise. I find this surprising. ... The most impressive manifestation of civic activism has been the Fridays for Future movement. Eight million young people – and this was done completely outside youth work and youth policy structures! Much time has passed

since then and the youth sector should have been able to adapt to what is happening. This is a real obstacle in meeting the needs of young people in Estonia and elsewhere. ... A radical change is needed in the youth policy that guides youth workers... Youth workers are hostages to their own history: we have the same structures, the same goals that we have had for 50 years and we fail to understand what is really happening in the world around us. It is a great challenge for the youth sector to reorganise so that youth policy, youth work education, youth workers and young people would all move in the same direction – then we would get somewhere.'

Researcher

2.5. Changes in security situation

The war in Ukraine has led to a substantial humanitarian and refugee crisis. A total of 5.6 million people have fled Ukraine, and a further 7.7 million Ukrainians have left their homes to seek shelter in Ukraine. The war has forced almost 30% of people in Ukraine to leave their homes. The world has not seen so many refugees since World War II. Changes in the security situation in many countries have led to significant inflation in areas that cover people's basic needs (including food, shelter, transport), thus putting an even greater strain on the already vulnerable groups in society, increasing insecurity, poverty and inequality. (White et al., 2022; Wight, 2022)

2.5.1. Risks for young people and the youth sector

- **Mental health problems.** The war is having a profoundly negative impact on the mental health of Ukrainian children and young people. War can also create anxiety and tension in children and young people in other countries. (Abrams, 2022) It was pointed out at the validation seminar, among other things, that the mental health of young people in Estonia could also deteriorate as a result of the war, due to the lack of resources to help them – the already under-financed mental health support system in Estonia now also needs to provide assistance to war refugees. Therefore, the question of how to support the mental health of young people (including Estonia's own youth as well as young Ukrainian refugees), is an increasing challenge for the youth sector. In a situation where mental health professionals are overburdened, the youth sector can and should make a valuable contribution; however, this requires upskilling youth workers.
- **Economic difficulties** caused by inflation are more acute for young people who are just starting out in their independent lives and thus lack a secure source of income and financial security.

- Economic difficulties can lead **young people to distrust the state and generate a feeling that the state does not care**, which in turn can exacerbate young people's alienation from politics, passiveness and bitterness. The level of confidence young people have in the state is the main indicator through which the Estonian state assesses the effectiveness of its youth policy.



'Students, for example, are already facing a difficult economic situation. When will it reach the point where people become so resentful of the way the state and society is run that they no longer want to do anything? ... At the moment, the economic complexity is linked to high inflation and the war in Ukraine. ... If we add to that the new economic issues arising from the climate crisis, it is frankly rather alarming. I cannot imagine for how long the generation that is eager to speak out

on environmental issues today and create change, will retain its selfless power, considering that the consequence could be that they are simply no longer able to cope themselves.

Young person

- Another young person backed up this idea at the validation seminar, adding that many young people feel bitter already and that in a difficult situation such as this, they will think more and more about leaving Estonia.

'I fully understand that Ukraine needs support, but as much as I have spoken to other young people over the past few months, there is a real sense of bitterness present. Students are short of money, retired people are short of money, there is a lack of money everywhere. And we get no support. But when war breaks out somewhere else, all of a sudden, huge sums are found – no other country has given them so much. ... I am not saying that Ukraine should not be supported, not at all. However, it feels as if Estonian people are being overlooked and we, the young people, feel that we no longer see our future in Estonia.'

Young person

In line with this, it is a great challenge for the youth sector to reduce the growing mistrust and bitterness present in young people, to encourage them to demand change from politicians, or to contribute to politics themselves (at the local, regional, national or EU level), instead of becoming alienated from politics or leaving the country when they feel frustrated.

- **Challenges related to migration, and the deepening complexities of integrating young Russian-speakers living in Estonia.** One researcher who was interviewed was highly critical of the fact that not enough attention has been paid to the integration of young Russian-speakers living in Estonia, noting that now – in the context of the war in Ukraine – the problematic nature of this issue has become particularly apparent.

'Young Russian-speakers are...the most vulnerable group in Estonia. They are not adequately recognised by the state and by policymakers. And now, in the context of the war in Ukraine, this has become an even more serious problem. Young Russian-speakers do not feel comfortable in Estonian society, they feel disappointed with the state, the government and their opportunities, and have therefore encapsulated themselves in a closed community. They are isolated from the rest of the society. This issue should be addressed in education and in youth policy. However, there is...absolutely no reference in the Youth Sector Development Plan to the fact that Estonia has a large at-risk group of

young people who are Russian-speakers – and that just seems utterly incomprehensible! ... If I were working in the youth sector in Estonia, I would try to be pragmatic and look for ways to integrate young Russian-speakers into Estonian society at once.'

Researcher

2.5.2. Opportunities for young people and the youth sector

- **The opportunity to develop empathy and compassion in young people, and the ability to avoid conflicts and resolve them peacefully.** Peace education (Aroosa et al., 2022) is one way in which young people can develop such skills and both formal and non-formal education, including youth work, can and should be responsible for addressing this issue.
- **Participants in the workshop highlighted the following key points: a sense of responsibility, awareness of and increase of national defence skills.** The changing security situation has led people, including young people, to acquire skills that would help in protecting themselves, their loved ones and their country, as well as general life skills to cope with any form of crisis. The youth sector can and should support young people in this by offering additional support for raising people's awareness and building their skills.
- One challenge highlighted during the validation seminar was a restrictive approach to patriotism, which can hinder the growth of a sense of unity, trust and security in a community. The youth sector has **great potential to promote patriotism among young people on grounds other than ethnicity.**



'Recent months have shown that patriotism has a very important place in our daily lives. Unfortunately, patriotism has been hijacked by certain political forces. I believe it is very important to acknowledge that the source of patriotism is not necessarily ethnicity. That besides ethnic patriotism, there is also cultural or everyday patriotism, which stems from living in the same country and doing fun things together. In my view, this is perhaps the biggest political challenge of all. ... How to find the triggers that will bring the new kind of patriotism we need into the public space in a more binding way. In my opinion, the political space is alarmingly empty of that at the moment.'

Researcher

3. How should the approach towards young people change in the context of megatrends and national developments?

The current approach towards young people as a target group in Estonia has previously been analysed by Dibou (2019) and Rannala and Griffith (2020). Broadly speaking, the approach towards young people can be split in two: young people as a problem vs young people as a resource. Based on youth work curricula and national youth sector development documents, young people in Estonia are primarily seen as a resource. (ibid; Dibou et al., 2019; Bart et al., 2014) In this approach, young people are regarded as agents, as individuals with their own dreams and life circumstances, in a particular position to contribute to society. In accordance with this, the aim of youth work is to bring young people together and to empower them to make change happen in their lives. This is in contrast with the approach to young people as a problem, which entails the perception that young people are immature individuals who are not fully able to conform to society's norms and need support in overcoming obstacles – e.g. entering the labour market through education. (Rannata & Griffiths, 2020; Siurala, 2017) Of course, the two approaches are not mutually exclusive and although policy documents in Estonia regard young people rather as active contributors and resources, this does not mean that the activities targeting young people fail to address their specific transitions and challenges. Furthermore, the treatment of young people in policy documents does not necessarily coincide with the vision of young people held by the wider public or experts working with young people.

The most hotly debated issue in the focus group interviews conducted with young people, youth experts, practitioners, as well as visionaries and researchers from other sectors, as part of this study, was the adequacy of age limits within the 'youth' target group.

According to the interviewees, those who fall in the younger part of the definition of 'youth' which ranges from 7–26 years, i.e. young people under the age of 10, differ from the rest in terms of their interests, skills, needs and opportunities so much that the indicators laid out in the Youth Strategy may not adequately reflect their development opportunities and well-being. For example, the strategy identifies young people as active contributors and agents of social change, and sets expectations for young people; however, for the youngest group there is a lack of appropriate activities, formats and methodologies.

Consideration should be given to raising the upper age limit when changing the age criteria in youth subgroups. The focus group interviewees noted that the tendency and

improved opportunities to enter higher education later in life means that those age groups which typically characterise young people are also more and more represented by people older than 26 years. Youth researchers elsewhere in the world point to similar trends – starting a family and moving into professional work later in life, pursuing education longer (Perovic, s.d.). Raising the upper age limit of youth subgroups would to some extent also harmonise the definitions in Estonia with those at the European level: while the European Commission's Erasmus+ programme defines young people as 13–30 years of age, the Eurobarometer survey defines them as 15–30-year olds. In response to the COVID-19 pandemic, the European Commission has also proposed raising the upper age limit e.g. for the Youth Guarantee measure to 30 years. (European Commission, 2020a) At the same time, interviewees admit that there can be no universally correct definition of age, and that more precise distinction between different subgroups of young people might be what is more important in policymaking.

Young people are not a homogeneous group – something to bear in mind when designing and reflecting on policy measures. Young people have different needs. Exactly how capable are we to provide such a diverse range of support?

Researcher

In addition to age, civic activity was also identified as a factor that further divides young people into distinct groups within the broad 'youth' target group, subsequently leading them to have different interests and needs. For example, we know from previous studies that a large proportion of socially inactive young people in Estonia come from Russian-speaking families. (Beilmann et al., 2019)

Both these issues raised during the focus group interviews point to the **need for a clearer distinction between different sub-groups of young people as a target group**. This would contribute to policymaking at the national level, including empowering young people in different circumstances, better target-setting, and planning the most appropriate courses of action. The Youth Sector Development Plan 2021–2035 identifies young people with NEET status as a specific group, which is also the only group specifically addressed in the objectives and actions related to reducing exclusion and equal opportunities. An earlier analysis of policy documents in the youth sector has already outlined that even though Estonia's youth sector policy regards young people in Estonia – at a declarative level – as a diverse group with highly individual needs, some young people, e.g. Russian-speaking minorities and LGBT+ individuals, may easily be overlooked. (Bart et al., 2014)

The need to pay special attention to young people who are in vulnerable situations due to their age, origin or identity in policymaking, something that was pointed out in the

interviews undertaken in this study and that has also been brought up in previous studies, is further increased by megatrends. The growing inequality that may accompany changes in the labour market, access to digital tools, mental health problems related to the risks of digitalisation, economic difficulties that the changing security situation could trigger, and climate change, will affect vulnerable young people the most. For example, the mental health of LGBT+ young people is already in a more challenging state (Goldsmith & Bell, 2022; Russell & Fish, 2016) and they can be severely affected by bullying in the school environment. (Ney et al., 2018) Young people with a low socio-economic background may be affected by the economic burden of keeping digital tools up to date (Serban et al, 2020). Although Estonian policy documents regard young people as a resource (Rannala & Griffith, 2020), i.e. as active leaders, vulnerable young people – especially in the context of megatrends – are faced with increasingly difficult situations every day, which makes it harder for them to advocate for social change in order to improve their situation.

In the context of mega-trends and especially climate change, the focus group interviewees in this study also raised doubts about what message the notion of young people as the creative momentum of society sends to them.

One of the strategic objectives in the Youth Sector Development Plan 2021–2035 (Ministry of Education and Research, 2021) clearly identifies young people as leaders in different life sectors. The development plan aims to support young people's participation in civic life; however, the interviewees felt that the current policies leave very limited resources for young people to drive society forward in the climate change context. The notion of young people as leaders in various life sectors was seen as placing too much responsibility on young people for the consequences of decisions made by previous generations.

According to the interviewees, the perception of young people and their role in society should be adjusted, to emphasise, above all, the need for collaboration between different generations and social groups to drive society forward.

'I think it would be wrong to impose such a heavy burden on them – you will make this world new, right? We leave them with no resources and no means to meet and satisfy their own basic needs in the cheap way that is available to us at the moment. We take much of their future away, and then say – no pressure, but good luck to you! This is rather harsh.'

Researcher

4. Future scenarios for 2030

Here, we outline four alternative future scenarios which are based on discussions and presentations by participants in the scenario-building workshop.

4.1. Low impact of regional inequality; adequate number of workers – ‘Estonia’s castle in the sky’

Well-developed digitalisation leads to lower inequality, as digital tools can alleviate the shortage of skilled education and youth workers, so that it is still possible to provide high-quality formal and non-formal education anywhere in Estonia. At the same time, the capacity of digital tools to compensate for a lack of workers is admittedly limited. For example, digital tools cannot offer young people emotional support, nor support the development and maintenance of motivation to learn – for this we still need real people.

The number of education and youth workers across Estonia will be sufficient to meet the needs of young people and these jobs are valued by society. Due to the successful adoption of professional standards for youth workers, the competences of youth workers become more uniform across regions. The role of youth workers in supporting young people’s development alongside educators is valued by the public. Participation in hobby education and activities is perceived as valuable by all age groups and the competences acquired through that and through other non-formal learning activities are recognised by formal education and in the labour market.

Digitalisation offers additional support for education and youth workers in delivering a high-quality service. Education and youth work is structured in a student-centred way. Digital tools are used widely, although not remotely, but in a shared (classroom)/learning environment and under the guidance of qualified education and youth workers or support professionals. Digitalisation increases opportunities for in-person learning, because while new skills can be acquired in part through digital means, professionals will have more opportunities to personally support young people’s motivation and understanding of what they are learning, thereby also developing young people’s cognitive and social skills. Qualified and trained professionals and their availability ensures the inclusion of young people with special needs and gives them a positive learning experience.

In this scenario, young people of all ages will have access to a wide range of jobs across Estonia. Young people from different regions are able to participate in student brigades (work camps). Enterprises in rural centres are located in business parks that are also accessible to young people from the outermost regions of the counties due to excellent public transport services. This ensures work opportunities for young people from the outermost regions and alleviates the negative effects of regional inequality.

The negative effects of regional inequality will also be alleviated in the context of healthcare: the availability of specialists and excellent transport links ensure that mental healthcare is available throughout Estonia. In this scenario, young people will remain in rural areas (e.g. when they start to work as professionals after receiving higher education) because they feel that they can make a difference there – there are youth councils in every local authority and more use is made of inclusive budgeting.

4.2. High impact of regional inequality; adequate number of workers – ‘Young people thrive on drive’

There is an adequate number of education and youth workers in Estonia; however, they are clustered in centres of attraction. Therefore, the well-being and development opportunities of young people in rural areas depend on only a few active regional promoters and professionals – the powerhouses. At the same time, the choice of high-quality formal and non-formal education is broad and accessible to young people living in the centres of attraction. In Tallinn, regional inequality is high, exacerbated by growing national migration and the subsequent housing shortage in the capital.

The shortage of qualified staff in education and in the youth sector is very acute in small settlements. Generally, those involved in non-formal learning activities regard themselves as youth workers and identify with their values and competences, but the appreciation of youth work in local authorities varies, so that in some areas the opportunities of workers to upgrade their skills and to acquire or update their qualifications are limited. The contribution of volunteers in youth activities in the rural areas has decreased, since there are not enough active organisations, leaders and support around them.

In rural areas, schools lack diversity of education opportunities and the quality of education is lower, making it difficult for their students to continue into higher education and enter the labour market. However, since there are more professionals and more young people in the centres of attraction, there is also more competition in the provision of hobby activities and hobby education, so activities can be offered at a lower price. The integration of hobby education and activities with formal learning works well in more active municipalities and expert support enables students to shape their learning paths in an informed way. Less innovative local authorities with fewer resources have, however, not caught up and their students benefit less from such integration due to the limited choice of hobby education and activities.

In terms of the labour market, rural areas are characterised by high levels of youth unemployment and low awareness of support measures and opportunities. Access to healthcare services varies widely between regions. The high negative impact of regional inequality is also reflected in poorer sporting opportunities in the rural areas. Young people's political participation in rural areas is hampered by a lack of information and low motivation. At the same time, youth councils, for example, may seem more attractive in smaller places, due to their friendly and less elitist reputation.

Young people's interests and lifestyles in rural areas are heavily influenced by specific leaders and the activities they offer – young people will focus on what the individual leaders in the area focus on and they lack the opportunity to try different guided activities and to discover and develop their talents.

4.3. High impact of regional inequality; inadequate number of workers – ‘Invisible young people’

There is a nationwide deficit of qualified workers and profound regional inequality in all sectors, which is having a strong negative impact on young people. This is a crisis scenario in which the (over)early independence of young people and citizens' autonomy are fuelled in all sectors, because they can rely very little on the state to ensure their well-being. Deep inequality makes it hard for young people living in difficult circumstances to break free from their situation, which means that poverty and social problems are passed on to future generations. The overall sense of security in the society is low and young people

have limited opportunities to improve their future life, and this contributes to violent radicalisation. A new generation of 'invisible' young people emerges, who are not involved in youth work, have not received high-quality education and have limited opportunities to realise their potential in the labour market, to volunteer or to improve their skills.

The number of school drop-outs rises, as education, youth and mental health professionals are in short supply across the country. This also reduces the proportion of highly educated people in the society. Young people feel that their well-being and needs are not taken into account, their mental health deteriorates and feelings of loneliness and delinquency increase. As there is a steady shortage of professionals, schools in their current form and function will start to disappear and will become community centres that serve a more general function among the local population. In this scenario, the importance of mobile youth work increases and given the general trend of digitalisation, new forms of collaboration emerge in the field of education, in local communities and in youth work: e.g. people of very different ages can participate together in hobby activities due to the lack of instructors, hobby activities in digital environments gain momentum and in connection with fewer choices in hobby education and activities, young people will participate in hobby activities that rely on, for example, the resources and infrastructure of local businesses.

At the same time, young people's awareness of these opportunities in rural areas remains low due to regional inequality. Young people do not have the support they need from their mentors to stay motivated in the new alternative forms of hobby activities, because, for instance, it is not possible to involve enough specialists from non-formal education in the design of the hobby activities offered by local enterprises. In this scenario, the level of specific skills developed through hobby education and hobby activities is also reduced.

High school drop-out rates lead to shortages of skilled labour in all sectors of the labour market. This means that jobs in those sectors that are critical and necessary for the development of our society remain unfilled, while regional inequality means that unemployment in the rural areas is at the same time high. The shortage of professionals in all regions and in the critical spheres that are already experiencing a considerable deficit of workers (health, education and youth sector) is creating a dangerous negative combined effect, leading to the loss of health awareness among young people.

In this scenario, young people's political participation and civic activism changes as a result of two factors. On the one hand, young people's civic

activism is boosted because state support is minimal in every sphere of life, forcing communities to act on their own. On the other hand, it is hampered by the failure to meet young people's basic needs, leading to general feelings of hopelessness, which reduces motivation to take action in the community and to improve life. In such a situation, the voices of young people in society can take a back seat compared to other groups, even in communities that are generally more active.

4.4. Low impact of regional inequality; inadequate number of workers – ‘Oho-aha’

In this scenario, regional inequality does not have a major impact on young people's well-being and development opportunities, but there is deficit of qualified specialists in the youth, education and mental health sectors of the state. Access to general education tends to be poor. While general education typically serves to harmonise the views of society, in this scenario it cannot play such a role and this will lead to the emergence of communities whose worldviews and perceptions differ profoundly. As a result, the supply and consumption of education and health services that are based on alternative worldviews will grow. While in this scenario the negative effects of regional inequalities are largely mitigated by 2030, the general deficit of youth and education professionals will nevertheless lead society into a crisis where inequality will increase on other grounds and not necessarily only regionally.

Under these circumstances, the education and youth sector is characterised by a situation where little quality control is exercised over the opportunities offered and where quality varies. In this scenario, an increasing share of general education provision will become paid – the proportion of private schools will increase. This means that young people from more affluent families still have the opportunity to benefit from high-quality education in the overall shortage of qualified workers, as private schools have a better capacity to provide (digital) learning materials and resources, to be an attractive employer for motivated and competent staff and to develop staff competences than state and municipal schools.

Communities are also forced to create their own education alternatives and home schooling gains popularity. In this scenario, the provision of individual

learning pathways is significantly reduced and the number of study groups in general education schools, in hobby groups and activities, and in youth work increases. The youth worker profession is not seen as being motivating because local authorities will neither encourage nor recognise it. Young people do not have enough opportunities to develop their generic skills, because the number of open youth centres decreases and their opening hours are becoming shorter. Instead of raising occupational requirements in the youth sector the legislation of the education and youth sectors must increasingly allow for the recruitment of unqualified people. Hobby education and activities will gradually become subject to payment.

It is difficult for young people to break into the labour market due to the lack of providers and facilitators of support measures. The varying degrees of quality in education will lead to major emigration from Estonia and a deficit of qualified workforce. As a result of a lack of qualified professionals young people's mental and physical health will suffer. Various 'self-employed' service providers and mentors will appear on the labour market, and community-based solutions emerge in order to support each other's health.

Young people's interests are affected by the declining participation of schools in coordinated cultural events – the shortage of staff means that teachers are overworked and that schools do not have the resources to replace absent teachers. This discourages young people from attending cultural events. Social and political participation of young people becomes increasingly stratified, as the support services that promote this are only available to a small number of young people. The participation of young people with less resources cannot be supported due to the lack of professionals, and, therefore, only the most advantaged, enterprising and well-off young people will be heard. This can further marginalise the needs of young people of other backgrounds and with different opportunities in decisions that concern them. In addition, young people's lack of access to development opportunities, which is caused by the shortage of education and youth professionals, promotes the violent radicalisation of young people.

Even though in this scenario the impact of regional inequality on the development opportunities of young people is small in 2030, it is inevitable that over time a general deficit of youth and education professionals will eventually lead to major regional inequality: schools will have to be closed to cut costs, there will be a shortage of hobby education and hobby activity providers, and

competent workers will be clustered in institutions with better working conditions.

5. Key messages and policy recommendations

The lack and competences of education and youth workers

One of the most critical challenges that could jeopardise the well-being and development opportunities of Estonia's youth in 2030 is the lack of qualified education and youth workers.

Estonia's teacher demographic is ageing, with half of the teaching force aged 50+ and less than 10% under 30 years of age. Teachers' competence needs to be improved, e.g. inadequate preparation to teach young people with different needs together is sometimes a concern. Teachers would be better able to support young people and instil a sense of confidence in them.

There is also a shortage of youth workers, e.g. half of Estonia's youth centres have only one youth worker and it is difficult to find additional staff. The salaries of youth workers in Estonia are significantly lower than the national average, as well as the average salary of teachers in general education schools. One of the reasons why youth workers are not valued enough is that their professional qualifications vary. It is necessary to develop the skills of youth workers, including their ability to engage young people (especially those with problematic behaviour and those who need additional and specific support), to support young migrants and promote intercultural communication, teach social, emotional and other 21st century skills, and support young people's mental health.

In light of the above, the availability of qualified education and youth workers (adequate number of workers vs inadequate number of workers) is one of the two main factors that will affect the future of young people in Estonia in 2030 the most according to our study.

Policy recommendations:

- In order to increase staff replacement rates, it is important to raise the social profile of education and especially youth workers. This must include, as a first step, the development of a uniformly high level of competence among youth workers. This must, however, go hand in hand with a significant increase in wages, improved opportunities for further training and communication activities aimed at both the workers themselves and the public to raise the status of youth workers. The latter, in turn, has the potential to improve the value placed on youth work in the management of local authorities, which could contribute to improving working conditions and pay.
- The need and support measures for moving youth workers to a professional career need to be carefully analysed.

- There is a lack of data regarding the working conditions and well-being of youth workers. National funding is needed to research this topic.
- Basic and additional teacher training systems in general education schools need to be adapted to match teachers' skills better with the needs and expectations of young people in the context of the Estonian state's internal developments and global megatrends.

Regional inequality

Another critical issue that could threaten the well-being and development opportunities of young people in Estonia in 2030 is regional inequalities as a horizontal issue, i.e. covering inequalities in youth, education, labour market and health.

Many youth work opportunities are not readily available in rural areas. Although some services such as the Open Youth Centre are free of charge for young people everywhere, there are still differences between local authorities in the range of youth work activities available free of charge to young people. The salaries of youth workers vary from region to region, which may also entail differences in the quality of services provided for young people.

Students in different parts of Estonia receive education that varies in quality: rural areas, as well as Russian-language schools in Tallinn, underperform in many respects. The problem of teacher staff replacement is more acute in the rural areas than in Tartu and Harju counties. Young people who live in rural areas have fewer job opportunities and living in the countryside is a major risk factor for entering NEET status. Obesity among young people is more prevalent in rural areas.

Growing inequality would lead to increasingly fragmented opportunities to support the well-being and development opportunities of young people consistently and with high quality. Inequality and a sense of exclusion can in turn create a breeding ground for a number of serious social problems, including polarisation, violent radicalisation and elevated levels of crime.

In light of what has been said, regional inequality (low vs high) is according to our study one of the two main factors that will impact the future of young people in Estonia in 2030 the most, and effort needs to be made in both the youth sector and related areas to ensure that the well-being and development opportunities of young people are less dependent on which region they live in.

Policy recommendations:

- Both access to and the quality of youth work across local authorities should be aligned – a major part of this is to ensure regular monitoring of funding and organisation, as well as the quality of youth work in local authorities through evaluation and research.

- Since it is not possible to establish youth work facilities in the immediate vicinity of every young person's home, local authorities need to ensure good public transport links between their homes and the youth work facilities.
- Inter-municipal transport links need improving – this has a direct impact on young people's employment opportunities in rural areas.
- In order to reduce inequality, local authorities should pay more attention to the standards proposed by professional organisations, which require that all young people in Estonia have access to a youth centre at least 25 hours a week.
- The opportunity to participate in youth work free of charge must be levelled out across municipalities. It is therefore important to stipulate in the various national youth work support measures aimed at local authorities that young people's access to the service free of charge is a precondition for funding.
- Only about a tenth of all youth centres in Estonia are able to provide a high-quality service, which shows the need for modernisation, including making youth centre premises more accessible and environmentally friendly, increasing the number of youth workers in the centres, and improving workers' competences. This will require additional investment from local authorities and the recruitment of additional youth workers (see also *The lack and competences of education and youth workers – Policy recommendations*).
- A strong emphasis should be placed on developing underperforming schools (especially rural schools and Russian-language schools in Tallinn), in which ensuring the replacement of teachers in small places plays a major role. Hence, in addition to greater appreciation of the teaching profession (see also *The lack and competences of education and youth workers – Policy recommendations*), it is necessary to assess and, if necessary, modify the measures aimed at motivating teachers to move to rural areas.
- Continue digitalisation to ensure that all young people in Estonia have access to high-speed internet and modern digital tools in order to participate in, for example, distance learning via video lectures and youth work. Most meetings, both in education and youth work, should still take place face-to-face, with remote communication remaining complementary. As digitalisation proceeds, it is important that all levels (state, local governments, schools, youth work, families) are aware of the potential risks it carries and support young people so that the opportunities that digitalisation provides can be realised and that the risks do not materialise. Evidence-based information campaigns and training aimed at different levels play an important role in raising general awareness of the opportunities and risks of digitalisation and how to support young people appropriately.

Youth influence and participation in political life

One serious risk for young people and the youth sector in Estonia, which could materialise by 2030 – against the backdrop of national and international developments (megatrends) – is young people’s increased disengagement from politics, along with bitterness, polarisation and violent radicalisation. On the one hand, this is linked to the trend of an ageing population – making up an ever-smaller share of the electorate, young people will increasingly feel that their voice has no weight, while older generations make decisions that affect the future of today’s young people. These decisions may often not be ones that young people themselves would support. For example, many young people support environmental sustainability, but current policy choices are not always in line with this. Growing economic difficulties among young people create fertile ground for alienation and bitterness, fuelled by nearly every megatrend identified in this report – an ageing population, which limits the capacity of the state to support young people in poor economic circumstances; a changing labour market, as young people find it increasingly difficult to enter and cope in the rapidly changing and demanding labour market; climate change and changes in the security situation – leading to inflation.

While the proportion of young people in the electorate is declining and therefore the chances of achieving the desired policy changes through elections are also decreasing, young people can use new forms of political participation (online petitions, social media movements, etc.) to amplify their voice alongside traditional forms of participation (elections). Although young people in Estonia have a good knowledge of how society functions, their civic engagement has not improved over the years, and youth workers also feel that their competences in supporting civic education need to be developed.

Socially vulnerable young people who do not receive sufficient support from the state to maintain their well-being may lose trust in the state and feel that the state does not care – especially in the changed security situation, which has, in some young people’s view, clearly illustrated how rapid mobilisation of resources, e.g. for defence spending, is a matter of political will (or lack thereof). In a situation where it is very difficult for young people to cope economically, their motivation to stand up for the issues that matter to them can also be undermined. In turn, resentment, polarisation and violent radicalisation can be boosted by the spread of misinformation and hate speech that digitalisation brings.

Policy recommendations:

- It is important that youth and education workers pay more attention to informing young people about the different possibilities for triggering policy changes, and to encourage them to use these possibilities.
- Sectoral organisations and the state need to ensure, through the provision of in-service training, that youth and education workers themselves are informed about

political participation and its new and more unconventional forms, so that they also have the necessary attitude to recognise and support new forms of participation.

- Both national policymaking and general education schools should, in addition to existing forms of participation (e.g. student councils, participatory cafés), broaden the range of methods and formats available for the meaningful involvement of young people: action/participatory studies within the framework of school creative/research projects, development of advocacy competences of representatives of minority groups, youth-led evaluation projects, etc (see e.g. Crowley & Moxon, 2018).
- While digitalisation provides tools for new forms of participation, it is important to acknowledge that motivation (to stand up for one's values, to vote for preferred politicians, etc.) is the key to increasing young people's political participation. It is therefore crucial for youth and education workers to support young people's motivation to engage in politics in an evidence-based way.
- Sectoral organisations, non-governmental organisations and the state need to pay more attention to the civic education competences of youth and education workers, with a particular focus on methods that support the application of young people's already good knowledge and ideas in society – voicing their views, demanding desired changes from policymakers, contributing to policy themselves. Recognising and supporting new forms of participation will contribute to this (see above).
- Due to the proliferation of misinformation that digitalisation brings with it, the development of data literacy and critical thinking among young people needs to be addressed on different levels to promote competences in this field: funding for relevant project-based activities, training activities for education and youth workers, and communication activities.
- In the context of young people's alienation from politics, it is particularly important that both the state and local authority institutions consistently involve young people in policymaking.

Matching young people's skills to labour market needs

One serious risk that could materialise by 2030 in the context of changing labour market is the growing disparity between the skills the labour market expects young people to have and the skills that they are able to obtain from the education system. As the present study has revealed, the education system is still primarily perceived as a provider of academic knowledge, whereas skills that are increasingly valued in the labour market are 21st century skills, such as social and emotional skills, self-regulation skills, study skills, critical thinking skills, digital skills. People who are already in a more vulnerable position, i.e. low- and medium-skilled workers who often happen to be young people, and whose jobs are threatened by automation, will suffer more from labour market changes.

This increases the level of inequality and makes it increasingly difficult for young people to enter and cope in the labour market.

Policy recommendations:

- The youth and education sector should place increasing focus on developing 21st century skills in young people. This must be done by prioritising the relevant topics in the terms and conditions of the funding rounds for project-based activities, as well as in curriculum development.
- The competence of both youth workers and general education teachers to develop 21st century skills needs to be developed. However, given the scope of the field and the time required to develop further training for the professionals and to thereby make actual changes in the education and youth sector, priorities should be set according to which competences are most crucial for young people. For example, developing critical digital literacy, which develops young people's critical thinking, horizons and ability to better navigate digital environments, may be more important than developing technical digital skills.
- To prevent deepening inequality, the development of 21st century skills should be supported, especially for low- and medium-skilled young people.

Mental health of young people

In recent years, especially in light of the COVID-19 pandemic, mental health problems among young people have become increasingly visible, and all the megatrends outlined earlier can contribute to their expansion and worsening by 2030. The ageing of the population may put mental health under pressure due to political and economic tensions. Digitalisation can contribute to learning difficulties, relationship problems, digital addiction, low self-esteem and violent radicalisation. Changes in the labour market add to the tensions related to the challenges of entering and coping in the fast-changing labour market. Climate change can create feelings of helplessness, anxiety, fear and anger in young people. Changes in the security situation can increase anxiety and tension, and as mental health support is also needed for war refugees who have arrived in Estonia, mental health support systems are under increasing pressure. Without significant additional investment, young people's access to mental health support will decline.

Policy recommendations:

- Youth and education workers alike need to pay more attention to the mental health of young people by developing their self-regulation skills, digital intelligence and other skills necessary to protect their mental health. Appropriate training opportunities must therefore be provided for youth and education workers.

- As young people tend to be dissatisfied with the current youth information system (which they perceive as fragmented, unreliable, underused and lacking in detailed information), it is important to examine the quality, accessibility and needs of youth information.
- Against the backdrop of the war in Ukraine and the climate crisis, migration challenges, including integration, pose a potential risk. Youth and education workers need to be increasingly prepared to work with young people with a migrant background, whilst bearing in mind that supporting the mental health of young refugees may need special attention. As workers currently lack the skills to support young people from other cultures who have experienced trauma, appropriate training opportunities must be created.
- In the context of the changed security situation, further attention should be paid to developing young people's survival skills, both in education and in the youth sector. In prioritising topics for project-based activities as well as in curriculum development, it is worth considering the concept of peace education as a starting point in developing youth. It is advisable to find ways to conceptualise patriotism on different grounds (i.e. not solely on the basis of ethnicity), both in education and in the youth sector.

Addressing young people as target group

Sub-groups of young people with different needs, origins, identities and opportunities should be distinguished more accurately in Estonia's youth policy and in monitoring developments, as vulnerable young people may need measures targeted specifically to their situation and needs, especially in the context of megatrends. The growing inequality that may accompany changes in the labour market, access to digital tools, mental health problems related to the risks of digitalisation, economic difficulties that the changing security situation could trigger, and climate change, will affect vulnerable young people the most. For example, the mental health of LGBT+ young people is already in a more complex situation and young people from low socio-economic backgrounds may be affected by the economic burden associated with the increased use of digital tools and keeping them up to date. Although Estonia's policy documents see young people as active leaders, vulnerable young people are faced with difficult situations every day, which makes it harder for them to advocate for social change in order to improve their situation. The general figures on youth civic participation do not reflect diversity within the youth target group.

The Youth Sector Development Plan 2021–2035 regards young people as the creative momentum of societal change and aims to support the civic participation of youth, however, experts feel that in the context of climate change, current policies leave very few

tools for young people to drive society forward. The approach to young people as the leading force of different life sectors was seen as placing too much responsibility on young people for the consequences of decisions taken by previous generations.

Age definitions of the 'youth' target group vary from country to country and it is not possible to draw definitive boundaries. However, the impact of megatrends (e.g. difficulties in entering the labour market, longer education span, later maternal age at first births) mean that the life stages traditionally associated with young people (higher education, first job search) increasingly include people who are older than the 7–26 age range that currently defines 'youth' in Estonia.

Policy recommendations:

- Consideration should be given to raising the upper age limit when changing the age criteria in youth subgroups. This could help to mitigate the negative effects of global megatrends on young people, and would also harmonise the Estonian and European definitions of youth as a target group.
- Different sub-groups of young people should be distinguished more clearly in the policy of the youth sector, in development of activities, and in youth sector measures.
- The perception of young people and their role in society should be modified to emphasise the need of collaboration between different generations and social groups in driving society forward.

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