



INFORMATION TEMPLATE ON SOCIAL INCLUSION OF YOUNG PEOPLE

ESTONIA



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1. The socio-economic situation of young people

1.1 Please inform which groups of the young people are perceived as being socially excluded. What are the main factors for being socially excluded as a young person in your country?

There is no single criteria which would define the group of socially excluded young people as subject to policy measures. Different organisations and institutions base their activities on different criteria.

Youth in Action national agency follows European and national priorities. For 2013, the top priority target groups were young unemployed, school dropouts, young people with disabilities, ethnic minorities and young people from rural areas.¹

Local municipalities provide some financial support to children and young people with fewer opportunities in order to make hobby education and recreational camps available to them. The aid is directed mainly to children and young people from families with many children, but not only.

National Youth Work Centre published a volume dedicated to youth social inclusion and exclusion in 2013 (see section 2.1). The book analysed mainly the situation of NEET-youth, which was defined as those not in education, employment or training. The category of socially excluded young people was defined as young people living under the NEET-condition plus simultaneously living under the condition of at-risk-of-poverty (for definition of at-risk-of-poverty, see section 1.2).

The youth monitoring system (www.noorteseire.ee) uses indicators of poverty and unemployment which are defined by Statistics Estonia. Description of concrete measures and poverty rates are given in section 1.2 of this report.

A national program **Supporting wellbeing of risk youth and children** (2013-2016) focuses on young people who (repeatedly) have committed a crime or who live in an increased risk of committing a crime, to former pupils of special schools, to socially excluded young people and to vulnerable children and young people. More detailed definition of those categories is not given.²

Annual support to youth organisations from national budget is allocated so as to support participation of young people with fewer opportunities.

¹ Homepage of the Youth in Action national agency Estonia, <http://euroopa.noored.ee/node/2111>

² Homepage of Estonian Youth Work Centre, <http://www.entk.ee/riskilapsedjanoored/>

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In 2013, the Ministry of Education and Research supported 709 places in student homes³ which is a policy measure to support children from families who experience hardships with adequately supporting their offsprings' educational pursuits of compulsory education.

Third sector organisations target their activities and support to people living in need and also address families with a high number of children and single parents. Children and young people living at the risk of exclusion appear among their target groups but not as a specific target group.

1.2 Please provide the percentage representing the share of young people (18-24) who are at risk of poverty (and/or severely materially deprived and/or living in a household with very low work intensity).

Please compare it to the general population risk of poverty rate. What is the trend in your country – is the rate growing etc.?

At-risk-of-poverty rate is the share of persons with an equalised yearly disposable income lower than the at-risk-of-poverty threshold. At-risk-of-poverty threshold equals to 60% of the median equalised yearly disposable income of household members. Equalised income is the total household income, which is divided by a sum of equivalence scales of all household members.

Absolute poverty rate is the share of persons with an equalised yearly disposable income lower than the absolute poverty threshold. Absolute poverty threshold is the estimated subsistence minimum (established in and in use since 2004).

Table 1. Poverty rates, %

		At-risk-of-poverty rate, %	Absolute poverty rate, %
2000	0-17	21,4	28,5
	18-24	21,5	25
	25-49	18,5	23,3
	50-64	13,9	17,3
	65 and older	16	17,7
2001	0-17	19,4	26,3
	18-24	19,9	21,6
	25-49	17,6	22,4
	50-64	17,1	19
	65 and older	18,1	20,1

³ Regulation by the Minister of Education and Research RTI01.03.2013, 1, <https://www.riigiteataja.ee/akt/101032013001>.

2002	0-17	18,7	23,2
	18-24	20,2	20,7
	25-49	17,1	19,3
	50-64	19	18,2
	65 and older	15,8	14
2003	0-17	20,6	19,4
	18-24	19,8	16,6
	25-49	18,3	17,1
	50-64	16,1	12,8
	65 and older	16,7	7,8
2004	0-17	21,3	20,7
	18-24	17,1	16,0
	25-49	16,2	14,8
	50-64	18	12,4
	65 and older	20,3	6,2
2005	0-17	20,1	15,0
	18-24	16,9	10,4
	25-49	14,3	9,8
	50-64	18,6	9,4
	65 and older	25,1	3,8
2006	0-17	18,2	9,7
	18-24	17,4	8,0
	25-49	13,8	6,8
	50-64	19,9	7,1
	65 and older	33,1	3,2
2007	0-17	17,1	6,5
	18-24	15,3	6,1
	25-49	12,5	5,0
	50-64	19,5	4,7
	65 and older	39	1,6
2008	0-17	20,6	7,0
	18-24	15,6	5,6
	25-49	14,1	4,8
	50-64	19	4,9
	65 and older	33,9	1,2
2009	0-17	17,3	10,0
	18-24	18,7	7,7
	25-49	13,1	6,3
	50-64	18,5	6,7
	65 and older	15,1	0,9
2010	0-17	19,5	11,4
	18-24	22,4	12,8
	25-49	15,9	9,1
	50-64	19,5	9,7
	65 and older	13,1	1,1
2011	0-17	17	9,4

	18-24	20,9	13,8
	25-49	14,4	8,4
	50-64	22,1	9,2
	65 and older	17,2	1,6

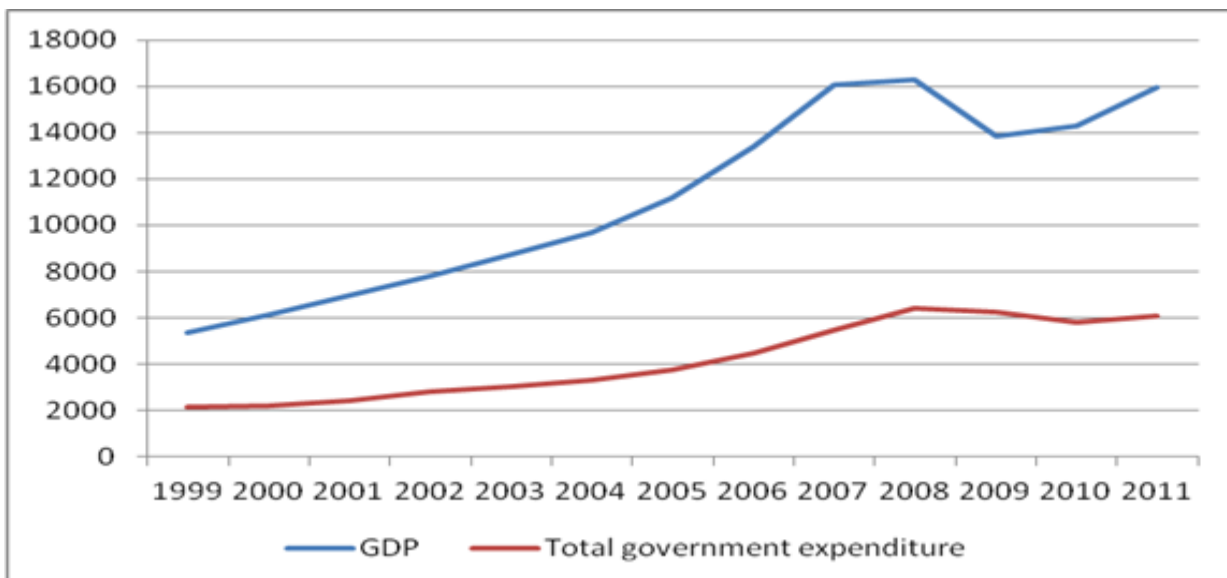
Source: Statistics Estonia www.stat.ee, table HHS01

Over the period 2000-2011, the percentage of individuals living at risk of poverty was the highest in the age group 65+ years olds. The percentage was second highest in the age group 0-17 years olds and third highest in the age group 18-24 years olds. The percentage of individuals living in poverty was the highest in the age group 0-17 years olds and second highest in the age group 18-24 years olds. When we consider the average of the two measures of poverty, then the percentage experiencing poverty was the highest in the age group 0-17 years olds and second highest in the age group 18-24 years olds.

1.3 Has an impact of the current financial crisis on young people been observed in your country?

No theoretically informed and methodologically sound thorough analysis of the impact of financial crises on young people has been carried out.

The global and European financial crises in Estonia was most serious in years 2009 and 2010 (see the graph below).

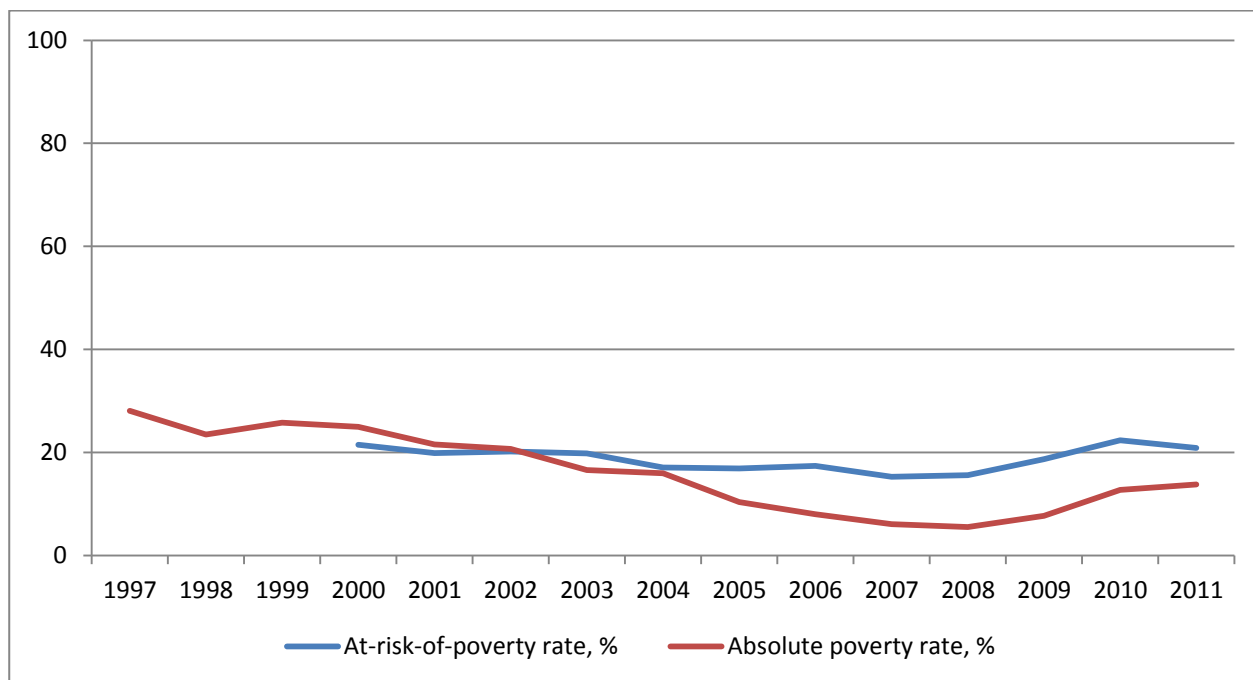


Graph 1. GDP and total government expenditure, 1999-2011 (millions of EUR)⁴

⁴ Bank of Estonia 2012. Annual economic indicators for Estonia. Updated 22/06/2012. <http://statistika.eestipank.ee/?lng=en#listMenu/1017/treeMenu/MAJANDUSKOOND>.

A report prepared for project Myplace showed that in the period of economic depression, the percentage of 16-24 years olds in the lowest **income quintile** increased and in the highest income quintile decreased more than in older age groups. In other words, the age group 16-24 year olds suffered more significant loss of income than other age groups.

Poverty rates of young people 18-24 years old increased in years 2009 and 2010 (see Table 1 and the graph below).



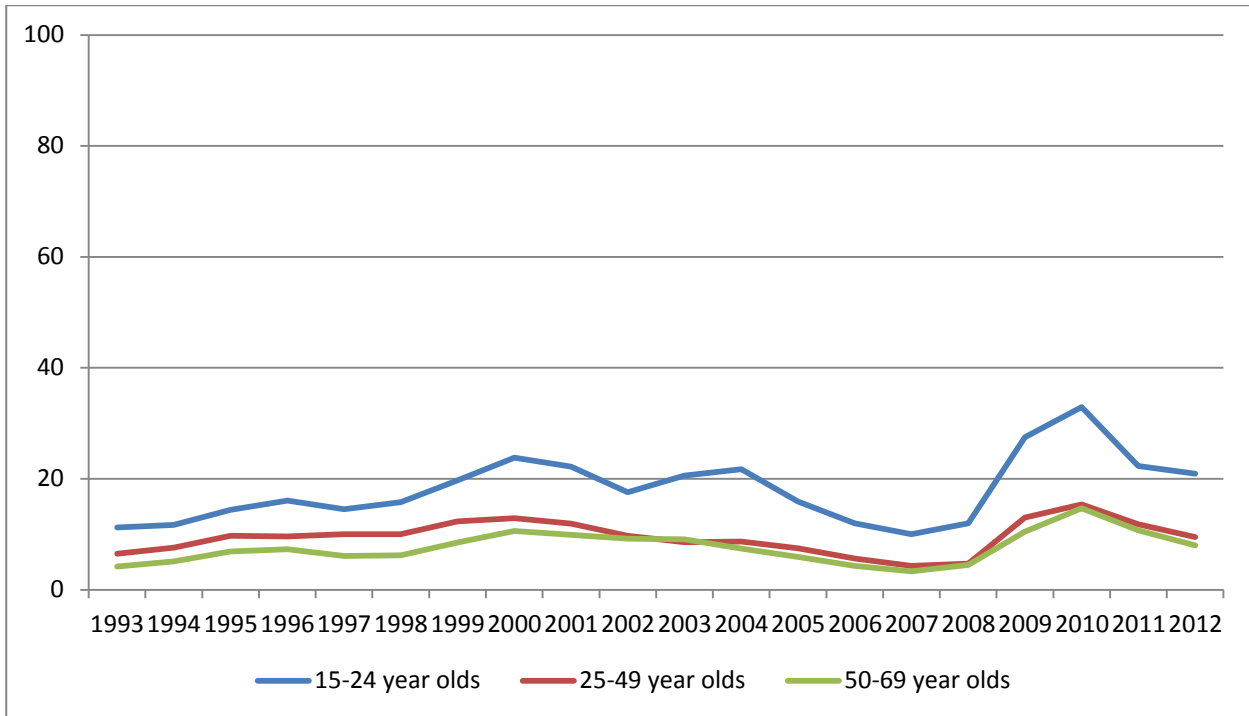
Graph 2. Poverty rates of 18-24 year olds⁵

When we compare the two poverty rates of 18-24 year olds to the younger or older age groups (Table 1), we see that both poverty rates decreased relatively more and became lower than in other age groups until the start of economic recession. Then both poverty rates started to increase more quickly than in other age groups. The poverty rates in the group of 18-24 year olds became higher than in other age groups.

Another indicator of youth socio-economic situation is **youth unemployment rate**.⁶ Unemployment rate of 15-24 years olds has been consistently higher than in older age groups (see the next graph).

⁵ Statistics Estonia, www.stat.ee.

⁶ Unemployment rate is the share of the unemployed in the labour force. Unemployed is a person who fulfils the following three conditions: a) he or she is without work (does not work anywhere at the moment and is

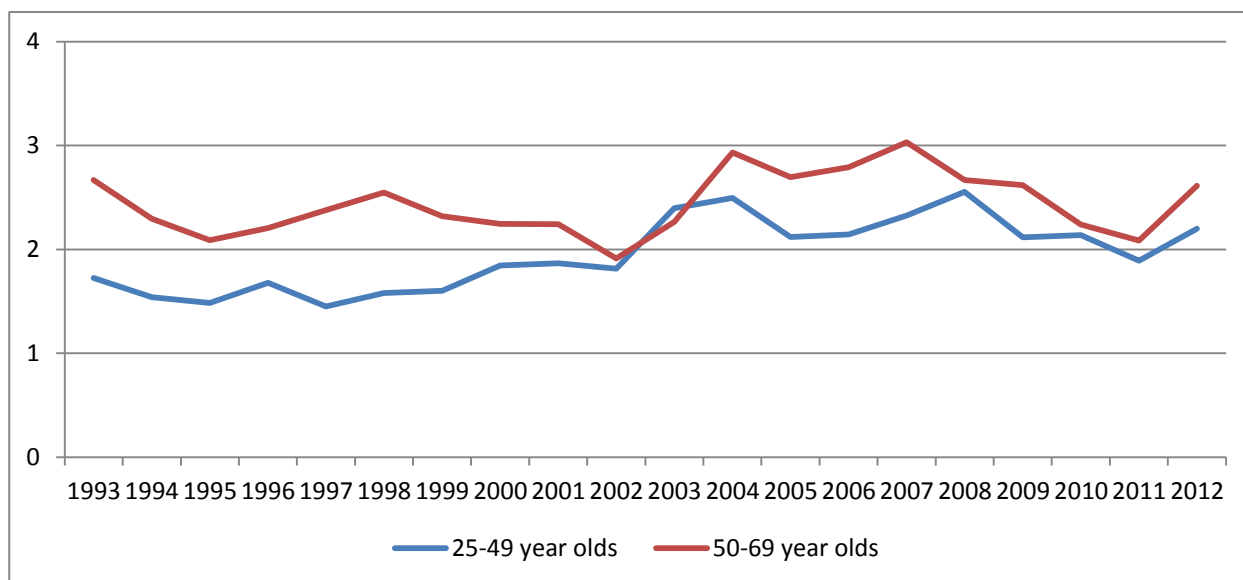


Graph 3. Unemployment rates of three age groups (%)⁷

Unemployment rate of the 15-24 years old compared to unemployment rate of 25-49 years olds and 50-69 year olds has been one and a half to three times higher (Graph 4). The ratio was higher in years 2004-2007, that is during years of economic growth, but then decreased in the years of economic recession. Thus, here we see no direct connection between economic crises and unemployment rate of young people. Graphs 3 and Graph 4 suggest that the unemployment rate of 15-24 year olds decreased less than unemployment rate of older age groups during the years of economic boom.

not temporarily absent from work); b) he or she is currently (in the course of two weeks) available for work if there should be work; c) he or she is actively seeking work, Statistics Estonia, www.stat.ee.

⁷ Statistics Estonia, www.stat.ee, table TT35.



Graph 4. Ratio of unemployment rate of 15-24 year olds to unemployment rate of two older age groups⁸

In field of **non-formal education and youth work**, no major drawbacks occurred. The programs that were started prior to the crises, were carried out without major changes. There were no major cuts in public spendings on youth work and non-formal learning.

2. Policy measures for young people at risk of social exclusion

2.1 Social subsistence/ protection and health cover for young people living in poverty

An acknowledged principle in modern society says that a country shall secure social security for its citizens, which offers confidence in the future and the opportunity to live all one's life in accordance with human dignity. The measures of social security are divided into social security and welfare. Social security is a guarantee granted by the state in case of realisation of certain social risks (death, loss of a provider, old age, professional incapacity, birth of a child) with which additional income or continuity of sources of income shall be secured at least at the level that enables life acceptable with regard to human dignity. Social security is financed out of compulsory taxes or payments as well as voluntary payments. Welfare is a system of procedures the objective of which is to secure different liberties to people and create better opportunities for development of the economy through the development of human resources. At the same time social involvement is

⁸ Author's computations.

increased, poverty and social exclusion are prevented and alleviated more efficiently and on a larger scale. The source document of development policy of social services drawn up in the Ministry of Social Affairs in 1999 is already engaged in implementation of social policy measures as an investment in people and through people in the economy and society as a whole. The welfare instruments (procedures) may be both social benefits as well as services. The benefits paid as social assistance differ from the social security benefits in such a way that they are paid only when the person being assisted is in need. The right for benefit and the amount of the benefit depend on the individual need.

Welfare services financed by the state include technical aids. Technical aids are sold or rented out by specialised organisations or companies and the corresponding costs are reimbursed by the state, following a predetermined procedure.

Local government services include counselling on a range of topics, home care services, personal assistant, social housing, adapting a dwelling, social transport, general care homes. Provision of the services is on individual, case-by-case basis.

The subsistence benefit is a form of state assistance for those in difficulty which is paid by the local government. In order to alleviate a person's situation the local government employs both social services and other forms of social assistance, depending on the situation in question. The benefit is paid if all other measures for the alleviation of poverty and difficulty have proven ineffectual. The subsistence level is set by the Riigikogu (the national parliament) in the state budget. It is calculated for people living alone or the first member of a family for every budgetary year. The subsistence level of the second and each subsequent member of the family is 80% of the subsistence level of the first member of the family.

The State Budget Act for 2013 sets the subsistence level as 76,70 € per month for a person living alone or the first member of a family and 61,36 € for the second and each subsequent member of the family. The subsistence level is established on the basis of minimum expenses incurred in the consumption of food, clothing, footwear and other goods and services satisfying primary needs.

Estonia's **family benefits**⁹ are designed to partly cover the costs families incur in caring for, raising and educating their children. There are a number of ways in which families with children are supported, the two most common of which are family allowances and tax incentives. There are ten types of family benefits: childbirth allowance; child allowance;

⁹ Ministry of Social Affairs, Family benefits, <http://www.sm.ee/eng/activity/benefits-and-support/family-benefits.html>.

child care allowance; single parent's child allowance; conscript's child allowance; child's school allowance, child allowance for a child under guardianship or foster care; start in independent life allowance; adoption allowance; and parent's allowance for families with seven or more children. The state pays family benefits to all children until they reach the age of 16. Children enrolled in basic or secondary schools or vocational education institutions operating on the basis of basic education have the right to receive family benefits until the age of 19.

Tax incentives are offered to families with children in two different ways. The first is that people living in Estonia can deduct the costs of educating their children or children in their care up to the age of 26 from their annual income (including interest on study loans). The second is that one of the parents of a child (or a person providing for a child) can deduct additional tax-free income from income for the period of taxation for every child up to the age of 17 starting from the second child in the family. As one of its measures promoting the national birth rate, the state partially annuls the study loans of graduates of vocational and higher education institutions who are raising small children.

Table 2. Types of family benefits¹⁰

Type of benefit	Amount of benefit in EUR
Childbirth allowance	320
Child allowance (paid until children turn 16 or, if they continue studying, until they turn 19 and until the end of the academic year in which they turn 19)	
• for the first and second child	19,18
• starting from the third child	57,54
Child care allowance (will not be payed during parental benefit receiving period); (amounts per child)	
• to the parent of a child up to 1 year of age	44,78
• to the parent of a child between 1 and 3 years of age	38,35
• to the parent of a child between 3 and 8 years of age (paid if there are other children in the family up to the age of 3)	19,18
• to the parent of a child between 3 and 8 years of age if there are three or more children in the family (paid in the event that there are at least three children in the family receiving child allowances for children over the age of 3)	19,18
Single parent's child allowance (paid if a child's birth certificate contains no details about the child's father or if the details provided by the mother remain unconfirmed or if the other parent is wanted by the police)	19,18

¹⁰ Ministry of Social Affairs, Types of family benefits, <http://www.sm.ee/eng/activity/working-and-managing/social-insurance/family-benefits/types-of-family-benefits.html>.

Conscript's child allowance	47,94
Child allowance for a child under guardianship or foster care	191,8
Start in independent life allowance (paid to young people who grew up in an orphanage, under guardianship or in foster care when they start living independently)	383,6
Parents allowance for families with seven or more children (paid to one parent once a month in a family where there are seven or more children who have the right to receive a child allowance)	168,74
Adoption allowance (single payment)	320

In addition to the family benefits, families with children have the right to apply for **need-based family benefit**. In 2013 and 2014, the benefit amounts to 9,59 EUR/month for a family with one child and to 19,18 for a family with two or more children. The benefit is administered by local municipalities and financed from national budget.

Since unemployment appears to be the main determinant of social exclusion, unemployment benefits play major role in prevention of social exclusion and provision of social welfare. There are no special social welfare or social protection provisions for young people living in poverty except general social security and social welfare provisions described below.

Unemployment benefits

At national level, Estonian Unemployment Insurance Fund is the key player. Currently the fund offers a range of active labour market measures, the number of different measures increased from 5 in 2005 to approximately 20 in 2012, but there are nearly no special measures targeted to fight unemployment of young people.¹¹ However, even if the measures aimed to support and help unemployed people are accessible to all people, young people are amongst most active users of the service. Unemployment fund offers several measures that help young people in hard times at labour market:

- Career counselling,
- Work practice and internship,
- Subsidised salary (paid to young people). Certain amount is paid to employers so that they could employ young unemployed people.
- Professional training

Unemployment allowance

Unemployment allowance is 50% of salary before start of unemployment period and this rate lasts for 100 days, after which it reduces to 40% of previous salary. However, to

¹¹ Estonian Unemployment Insurance Fund, <http://www.tootukassa.ee/index.php?id=13066>.

qualify for unemployment allowance, one needs to have had paid unemployment tax for 12 months during the period of previous 36 months. Percentage of young people under 25 amongst all people receiving unemployment allowance increased from approximately 5% in 2003-2007 to 10% in 2010.

Unemployment transfer

Unemployment transfer is a fixed sum per day (2.11 EUR in 2011) and it is paid over the period of 270 days. Qualification criteria are more relaxed – everyone who has worked or studied for at least 180 days during last 12 months qualifies. In 2010, 12 557 young people received unemployment transfer, it constituted 28% of all people receiving unemployment transfer.¹²

2.2 Measures to meeting the medical Care needs of Young people at risk of social exclusion

There is no special provision of medical care needs for young people at risk of social exclusion. Medical care is available on an universal basis to all who either pay social security tax themselves or who are paid for by the state.

Immediate medical care is available to all persons, irrespectful of their social security tax payments.

Health care services are provided by specialised institutions. If the provider of health care service has a contract with Estonian Health Insurance Fund, then the costs of medical care is financed by the Fund, partly or fully (it depends on treatments and medications). If the provider does not have a contract with the Fund, then everything has to be paid by the patient/client. There are no direct support measures on the bases of economic situation of a person. However, there are indirect measures of support which also carry relevance for young people. The list of insured persons includes also:

- a person registred at Estonian Unemployment Insurance Fund;
- a conscript;
- the curator of a disabled person;
- a person receiving child care allowance;
- a person receiving social allowance.

¹² Nurmela, K. (2011) Noortele suunatud tööturuteenused. In Noorteseire aastaraamat 2010 / Youth targeted labor market integration support measures. In Youth Monitoring Yearbook 2010.

According to the Health Insurance Act persons for whom no social tax is paid are considered as having equal status to the insured person. The persons having equal status include:

- a pregnant woman;
- a person under 19 years of age;
- pupils (there are age limits);
- a student, who is permanent resident.¹³

2.3 Measures to re-engage the young people not in employment, education or training (NEET)

There is no such strategy. The very of concept of NEET-youth was introduced into youth field and into public space in Estonia in 2013, with the publication of Youth Monitoring Yearbook 2012. However, this does not mean that the problems related to poverty, social inequalities, social exclusion have not been addressed earlier. On the contrary, these issues have been at the heart of many social policy initiatives and public administration measures in Estonia since restoration of independence more than 20 years ago; only the concept of NEET was introduced in Youth Monitoring Yearbook 2012.

Youth work measures described in section 1.6 of this report describe initiatives which aim to (re-)engage young people with fewer opportunities.

2.4 Measures to ensure access to decent housing for young people at risk of social exclusion

There are no such programs for young people at the risk of social exclusion. Housing in Estonia is relatively loosely regulated in general. Situation of vulnerable youth was not mentioned and not addressed in the Estonian Housing Development Plan 2008-2013.¹⁴ Municipalities provide social housing service. The social housing service is designed to provide housing to individuals and families who are unable or incapable of providing it for themselves. The service may (but will not necessarily) incorporate services supporting people's ability to manage and lead an independent life. Social housing should not be considered a final accommodation solution for individuals or families, which is why the contracts entered into with recipients are reviewed by local governments after a certain

¹³ Estonian Health Insurance Fund, Health insurance, <http://www.haigekassa.ee/eng/health-insurance>.

¹⁴ Estonian Housing Development Plan 2008-2013, https://valitsus.ee/UserFiles/valitsus/et/valitsus/arengukavad/majandus-ja-kommunikatsiooniministeerium/eluasemevaldkonna_arengukava_2008_2013.pdf.

period of time has elapsed. Individuals or families whose socio-economic situation or other circumstances do not allow them to independently provide themselves or their family with accommodation are eligible for the social housing service.¹⁵

The service is targeted to elderly mainly although young people at risk of social exclusion might use the opportunity too. Data on how many young people have used the service in recent years is not available but data from 2006¹⁶ suggests that people in age range 18-24 years old constituted less than 5% of the total number of service users.

2.5 Measures addressing the social integration of young people with disabilities

The state pays social benefits to people with disabilities if they incur additional costs due to their disability, e.g. if they require special equipment, care or rehabilitation or if they incur costs related to transport, employment or studying. People can apply for social benefits from their local pension office. The **social benefits paid to people with disabilities** depend on the extent of their disability, which is determined in accordance with their state of health, functional capacity and living environment, the help that is available to them, their need for supervision, and the additional costs they incur related to their disability. The extent of disabilities is divided into three categories: moderate, severe and profound.

There are few social benefits that are targeted to young people specifically.

The **disabled child allowance** shall be paid monthly to a child with a moderate, severe or profound disability for compensation for the additional expenses caused by the disability and for the activities prescribed in the rehabilitation plan. Disabled child allowance shall be paid until the child attains 16 years of age. The allowance is 69,04 euros per month for moderate disabilities and 80,55 euros per month for severe and profound disabilities.

One of two disabled parents or a disabled parent raising a child or children alone is paid a **disabled parent's allowance** of up to 19,18 euros per child per month until the child or children reach the age of 16. If the child or children are enrolled in an institution of basic, secondary or vocational education, the allowance is paid until they reach the age of 19.

Disabled people between the ages of 16 and 65 can apply for a **rehabilitation allowance** of up to 51,14 euros per month, designed to partially cover costs incurred in rehabilitation.

An **education allowance** of between 6,39-25,57 euros per month is available to young disabled people enrolled in secondary school (grades 10 to 12) or an institution of

¹⁵ Ministry of Social Affairs, <http://www.sm.ee/eng/for-you/the-aged/sotsiaalteenused-eakatele/social-housing.html>.

¹⁶ Ministry of Social Affairs (2006) Social houseng service in 2006. <http://www.sm.ee/meie/statistika/sotsiaalvaldkond/sotsiaalhoolekanne/eluasemeteenus.html>.

vocational or higher education in accordance with the additional costs they incur due to their disability. This allowance is not paid in the months of July and August.¹⁷

Local municipalities support young people with disabilities on *ad hoc* basis.

There are no specific support measures in youth work. However, some youth projects may and actually do focus on children and young people with disabilities. Third sector organisations support children and young people with disabilities. For example, Lions Club International annually gives stipendiums to young people with disabilities to support their schooling.

Needs of young people with disabilities are organised and taken care for by the Estonian Chamber of Disabled People¹⁸ rather than by youth organisations or other organisations.

2.6 The contribution of youth work (and youth centres) to social inclusion of young people

A considerable part of youth work is aimed at increasing a range of competencies, skills and personal qualities of young people that are necessary for coping with demands of everyday life. These activities are most beneficial for children and young people with poor social and economic background who lack those competencies and skills most.

Developing Quality of Youth Work is a program which seeks to increase youth labour market competitiveness through increasing the quality of youth work. The program has two main strands:

- 1) providing youth worker training opportunities and developing the field of youth worker in general,
- 2) developing youth work quality assessment system at municipal level and youth monitoring system at national level.

The program is financed to a large extent from European Social Fund and runs from 2008 to 2013. Total budget of the program is 4 708 559.18 EUR and up to 85% of the sum comes from ESF.¹⁹

Youth centres were among main beneficiaries of the program, they were provided financial support to carry out a range of activities at the youth centres: hobby activities, work education, projects on youth participation in local municipality and in local community,

¹⁷ Ministry of Social Affairs, Support for people with disabilities, <http://www.sm.ee/eng/for-you/people-with-disabilities/support-for-people-with-disabilities.html>.

¹⁸ The Estonian Chamber of Disabled People, <http://www.epikoda.ee/in-english/>.

¹⁹ Program overview, <http://www.entk.ee/esf>.

youth counselling, youth recreational camps and also developing an outreach/detached/street youth work program (MoNo²⁰).

The program **Supporting wellbeing of risk youth and children** seeks to support wellbeing of children and youth in risk of social exclusion through creating institutional and legislative framework to support parenting and prevent juvenile crime. The program is to a large extent financed by three countries belonging to European Economic Area: Norway, Lichtenstein and Island. The program runs from 2013 to 2016. Total budget of the program is 7 652 941 EUR, 6 505 000 EUR comes from the three countries.²¹

The program is targeted to supporting 7-26 year olds who live in the risk of social exclusion and/or have criminal background already.

Youth in Action Estonian Bureau targets a considerable part of its activities and projects to the group of young people living at risk of social exclusion: young unemployed, school dropouts, young people with disabilities, ethnic minorities, rural youth.²²

Youth centres target the group of children and young people with poor social background through several measures. "Granary" is a program which creates supplies of equipment necessary for youth work activities. Certain items are bought and stored in some youth centres and those items can be borrowed from there for the purposes of carrying out youth work activities. As a result, not each youth work project or organisation does not need to buy all equipment but can borrow necessary things and equipment from a nearby "granary". The program started in 2006 and is financed from national budget.

A number of youth recreational camps are organised every year by a range of youth work organisations. Admission to the camps is open to all children and young people. Local governments offer financial support to children and young people with fewer opportunities. Also other organisations offer financial support to children with fewer opportunities. Youth organisations are open to all children and young people. Youth organisations receive financial support from national budget to involve children and young people with fewer opportunities.

Local municipalities support participation in hobby activities and hobby education through providing needs based financial support to people living in poor conditions.

²⁰ Homepage of the Union of Youth Centres, http://www.ank.ee/?p=p_816&sName=mono.

²¹ Program overview, <http://www.entk.ee/riskilapsedjanoored/> (in Estonian only).

²² Youth in Action homepage, <http://euroopa.noored.ee/node/2111> (in Estonian only).

3. Research on social inclusion

3.1 Is there any national report/ national survey investigating the social exclusion of young people in your country, including issues of discrimination?

In 2012, national youth monitoring yearbook issue was dedicated to the problem of youth social exclusion and NEET. The overview consisted of 5 chapters:

- Social inclusion and exclusion of young people in Estonia and in Europe.
- Social exclusion of NEET youth.
- Social exclusion of youth, values and life satisfaction.
- Rights of youth and social inclusion.
- The role of youth work in supporting social inclusion of young people.

The volume is downloadable at homepage of Estonian youth monitoring homepage (<http://www.noorteseire.ee/et/aastaraamat/noorteseire-aastaraamat-2012-noored-ja-sotsiaalne-kaasatus> The volume is in Estonian but in 2014, a summary in English will be made available).

3.2 Is there any longitudinal research focused on the cumulative nature of disadvantage (taking place across generations of the same family).

There is no such research project or program.

3.3 Apart from national reports and surveys, are you aware of other research that is valuable for understanding the situation of young people (esp. those with fewer opportunities) in the current crisis? Please provide the title and the link, if available.

A number of students' course papers, BA and MA thesis are produced every year which focus on different aspects related to young people and their social situation. However, the papers are available mostly from the respective departments, faculties and institutes of different universities and colleges only. There is no central repository though information on the papers is available via youth monitoring homepage (www.noorteseire.ee/publications; in Estonian only).

4. Examples of policy responses and practices

4.1 What are the relevant initiatives/projects at regional/ national level promoting the social inclusion of young people?

The initiatives are described in the section 1.6 of this report.

4.2 Have young people and civil society organizations been given political and financial support to be involved in the policy making process on social inclusion?

There are no special initiatives in this direction. However, young people and other interest groups participate in policy making in the framework of two processes: youth participation and good governance which includes also stakeholder engagement in decision making. Youth participation refers to participation of youth umbrella organisations in policy making as well as to participation of unorganised youth through events arranged in the framework of structured dialogue in the youth field or to other specifically arranged methods of involvement of young people (eg “participation café”, meetings and roundtables with officials and young people around the table). Youth organisations participate in policy processes mainly through Youth Policy Council which is an advisory body to the Minister of Education and Research. Young people also participate through direct contacts with other ministries and organisations active in the youth field. At the level of local municipalities, young people have the opportunity to influence decisions through municipal youth council; at county-level, young people participate via county youth councils. Themes and topics that are discussed within youth organisations, among young people, at the meetings and in councils, include also issues related to unemployment, social exclusion of young people and other related topics.

4.3 Have youth organisations and other civil society organisations been involved in the development of the policies related to social inclusion of young people

Interest groups are involved in policy processes on the basis of implementing the principle of good governance, which includes also involvement of interest groups in decision making. Also strengthening of the youth sector and youth (umbrella) organisations play important role in increasing inclusion of young people in policy processes and decision-making. There are signs that the process heads toward increasing involvement of young people.

Development of the new youth work and youth policy strategy for the period 2014-2020 involved a range of state institutions, local governments, third sector organisations including youth organisations who could express their expectations and opinions on the aims and methods of the new strategy. The new youth strategy 2014-2020 is comprised of

five main measures to support development of young people and increase social cohesion in Estonia. Two of the measures are directly linked to youth social exclusion problem:

- Prevention of youth exclusion and reducing the effects of social inequalities on young people;
- Supporting youth employability.

In addition, two other measures contribute to social inclusion of young people too, albeit in a more indirect ways:

- Providing more opportunities for increasing creativity and initiative of young people and providing more opportunities for cooperative and collective activities of young people;
- Supporting youth participation in local communities and in decision-making.

To give another example, in November 2013, the Federation of Estonian Student Unions was dissatisfied with the plan of how the Ministry of Education and Research would like to distribute stipendiums to well-performing students and reacted to the plan by sending a protest letter to the Minister. As a result, the ministry reorganised the criteria for nominating the stipendium and now a higher number of students receive a smaller study award. The total amount allocated for the awards was not changed and this was not asked by representatives of students.

However, involvement of children and younger age groups is at an early stage of development. Young people below age 15 years (an approximate estimate) have notably less opportunities for participation than older age groups.