

Inclusive VET for the young at risk of early leaving

POLICY DEVELOPMENT	PRACTICAL MEASURE/INITIATIVE	 LATVIA
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Timeline

2017 Implementation	2018 Implementation	2019 Implementation
2020 Implementation	2021 Implementation	2022 Implementation
2023 Implementation	2024 Implementation	2025 Implementation

ID number 43452

Background

In 2015, one in 10 learners left education and training early. The government secured funding, including ESF, to implement measures for reducing early school leaving through preventive and remedy measures.

Objectives

To implement a system preventing early school leaving and rendering timely and individualised support to young people at risk of dropping out.

Description

The ESF project Support for reducing early school leaving (PUMPURS) aims at reducing the number of learners leaving education and training early. The project promotes the creation of a sustainable cooperation system between the municipality, educational institutions, educators, support staff and parents or representatives of the learners, in order to identify learners at risk of interrupting their studies and provide them with personalised support.

Educators are given the opportunity to improve professionally and strengthen their skills in working with students. Methodological aids have been developed. A unified database has been created, which ensures regular exchange of information at the levels of the State, municipality and education institution about learners who are identified as being at risk of dropping out of school, the preventive measures taken and their results. It provides full statistics and allows long-term evaluation of the effectiveness of the measures.

Initiatives by youth NGOs are also supported to raise the problem of dropping out from school among young people themselves, address learners through the help of peers and involve them in activities. Measures are aimed at early diagnosis of problems and solutions.

Local governments currently provide individual support to learners who might drop out from VET due to lack of financial resources. They cover transportation, meals, and service hotel costs. However, their focus needs to shift towards creating a sustainable and

comprehensive mechanism for a supportive and inclusive environment for every learner.

2017 Implementation

The project implementation started in 2017. VET learners were provided with preventive and intervention support measures to reduce early school leaving.

At the beginning of the semester, each pedagogue/teacher involved in working with at-risk students created an individual support plan which assessed the risks of dropping out of school and provided the necessary support measures for young people to mitigate these risks.

Young people were offered consultations and assistance from pedagogues, psychologists and other support staff as well as financial support for transport, accommodation, food, and teaching aids.

Educators received support and resources to work individually with learners, professional competence development opportunities (in all regions), tools for identifying and preventing early school leaving risks, and supervision.

A special television broadcast, Class, offered discussions with learners and included a broad spectrum of topics, including bullying, failure, pregnancy and many more.

2018 Implementation

In 2018, in addition to mainstream activities, 78 youth initiative projects were supported in 36 municipalities.

2019 Implementation

In 2019, in addition to mainstream activities, 97 youth initiative projects were supported in 50 municipalities.

2020 Implementation

In 2020, in addition to mainstream activities, 192 youth initiative projects were supported in 63 municipalities.

2021 Implementation

In 2021, in addition to mainstream activities, 126 youth initiative projects were supported in 63 municipalities.

2022 Implementation

In July 2022, young people at risk of dropping out of school participated in the first motivational summer camp, Pumpurs. They had an opportunity to go through a specially designed programme to improve their psycho-emotional health, learn life skills and increase their motivation to study. The programme was developed by specialists in work with teenagers, based on the latest research on the education and health of children and young people, as well as considering international experience.

2023 Implementation

The project SAM 8.3.4 'Reducing early school leaving through prevention and intervention measures' or PuMPuRS was completed.

During the project implementation in 2017-23, 41 municipalities have become partners, and successfully supported around 50 000 pupils, providing individual and economic support in 665 educational institutions. More than 94 000 individual risk reduction plans were developed and implemented during the project. To support

teachers and support staff, 1 052 supervisions were provided, 10 professional development programmes and 7 methodological support tools were developed, and 10 conferences and 469 workshops organised in education institutions. More than 131 000 individual counselling sessions have been provided to pupils at risk of early school leaving. The project supported 2 724 pupils with reimbursement of transport costs, 2 581 pupils with accommodation in a dormitory or boarding school and 8 740 pupils with catering services. Individual learning materials were provided to 191 VET students and essential personal products were provided to 59 learners at risk of early school leaving.

The project has succeeded in raising awareness of the importance of cooperation in addressing early school leaving issues among all parties, but work on meaningful and systematic involvement and motivation to act by all parties continued, building comprehensive and result-oriented cooperation mechanisms.

The PuMPuRS project activities raised public awareness of the problems of children and young people that can lead to early school leaving.

The final report on the project outcomes, impact, results, evaluation and evidence-based recommendations for the fulfilment of the ex-post conditions of the project was published.

2024 Implementation

In May 2024, the Parliament Committee on Education, Culture and Science discussed the possibility and conceptually supported continuing the project and introducing to the education and training system an additional one-year support programme for learners. As a result, a new project was launched with a focus on collaboration between stakeholders.

2025 Implementation

Since July 2025, individuals who had completed nine years of primary education with satisfactory grades in all subjects (at least 4 out of 10) and had failed no more than one state examination have become eligible to enrol in VET.

The new legal framework enabled learners to undertake a three-year vocational programme to obtain a third-level professional qualification, as well as prepare them for the state examination in any general primary education subject they previously failed.

Each learner was offered an individual education programme plan, including information about the learner, the risks of exclusion, the support measures in place, and the staff involved.

As vocational institutions at the time did not offer general primary education programmes, learners remained external students at their former general education school. This arrangement enabled them to retake the failed state examination at the end of the academic year, obtain a grade and receive a diploma, which is necessary to continue on the VET programme.

In 2024/25, 441 learners did not complete Grade 9. This figure is almost half that of 2022/23. Most (376) had failed only one exam.

According to the Ministry of Education and Science, 26 out of the 441 students started a vocational education programme in September 2025, while the remainder chose to repeat Grade 9.

Bodies responsible

- State Education Quality Service (IKVD)

- VET providers
- State Education Development Agency (VIAA)

Target group

Learners

Learners in upper secondary, including apprentices
Learners at risk of early leaving or/and early leavers

Education professionals

Teachers
Trainers

Entities providing VET

VET providers (all kinds)

Thematic categories

Supporting lifelong learning culture and increasing participation

Providing for individuals' re- and upskilling needs
Ensuring equal opportunities and inclusiveness in education and training

European priorities in VET

VET Recommendation

VET promoting equality of opportunities

Subsystem

IVET

Further reading

[Project Support for reducing early school leaving \(PUMPURS\)](#)

[Project Support for reducing early school leaving \(PUMPURS\) - final report](#)

[ReferNet Lavia, & Cedefop \(2025, October 14\). Latvia extends access to VET for at-risk learners. National news on VET.](#)

Related policy developments

2021 Completed

Regulations on scholarships

Regulations on scholarships have been amended to ensure the principle of equality and provide for a clear procedure for awarding scholarships, thus ensuring that all VET providers apply common basic criteria for eligibility and amount of scholarships.

Type of development

Regulation/Legislation

Subsystem

IVET

“ ... ” **Cite as**

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<https://www.cedefop.europa.eu/en/tools/timeline-vet-policies-europe/search/43452>