

Foundation Innove, Pathfinder centres (in Estonian: Sihtasutus Innove, Rajaleidja keskused)

Description

In Estonia, Pathfinder centres provide careers information; career counselling; speech therapy; psychological guidance; socio-pedagogical guidance; and special educational guidance.

Beneficiaries

-  **Young people with disabilities and/or special educational needs (SEN)**
-  **Learners at risk of early leaving from education and training**

In the area of **counselling for special educational needs**

- children between 1 and a half and 18 years of age
- parents
- teachers
- other specialists (local government etc.)

In the area of **career guidance**

- young people between 7 and 26 years of age
- parents
- teachers
- other specialists (local government etc.)

Countries

-  **Estonia**

Education level and sector

-  **Secondary education**
-  **Lower secondary education**

Third level of basic school, upper secondary schools and Vocational Education and Training (VET) institutions.

Type of policy/initiative

Intervention

Intervention

Level of implementation / Scope

National level

National. Incorporating all regions of Estonia i.e. provision of services in all 15 counties.

Stage of implementation

On-going

On-going since 1 September 2014, (2014-20)

Aims of policy/initiative

The measure aims to achieve the following:

- reduce and prevent early school leaving
- reduce the number of young adults in the 18-24 age group with lower secondary education or less not continuing their education
- reduce the number of drop-outs from lower-secondary education

Features and types of activities implemented

Pathfinder centres provide the following career and educational guidance services:

Career information provision; career counselling; speech therapy; psychological guidance; socio-pedagogical guidance; and special educational guidance.

Services are provided for groups and individually.

Career services in the education sector are provided within formal education and are divided into two:

- career information - an overview of different career and education opportunities
- career counselling - help in finding out most suitable individual career paths either in the school system or volunteering

Counselling for special educational needs (SEN) students in Estonia is divided between state and local governments. The main purpose of Pathfinder centres is to support local municipalities and specialists working in schools and kindergartens. Pathfinder centres may provide additional psychological or medical research and appoint a counselling committee to propose a learning curriculum for a student where the state-provided service did not yield the expected results.

The development of educational support services is coordinated by Pathfinder centres (i.e. developing new methodologies, developing e-services, providing information on best practices, etc.).

Pathfinder centres coordinate the **promotion of guidance services and raising general**

awareness on educational and labour market information.

Resources

The measure is funded through the European Social Fund and co-funded by the Ministry of Education and Research.

Evaluation of the measure

An evaluation is currently underway and the first evaluation results will be presented in 2017.

Evidence of effectiveness of the measure

Although the evaluation results have yet to be published, there are some factors that point towards the measure's success.

The first 2 years of implementation show a very high number of individual services provided for parents and school staff; expected outcomes are met on educational guidance services provided to children and youth. During the first years of implementation the increase in demand for individual career services among young people has been significant.

In general there are more than 100,000 clients per year across all Pathfinder centres (~8% of the Estonian population).

To measure the quality of services the Recommendation index (www.recommmy.com) system is used. For career services the recommendation index is at 29%. For educational guidance services preliminary reports show a very high recommendation index of 70%.

Career services are also evaluated according to the young peoples' point of view. After an individual career counselling session, clients consider their capacity for decision-making to be improved (an average of 4.07 on a scale from 1-5).

Success factors

The following success factors are based on the testimonies of participants in the measure interviewed for the Cedefop study:

1. One Pathfinder centre in each county of Estonia: instead of 26 fragmented guidance centres that lacked certain specialists and whose service quality varied, there are 15 Pathfinder guidance centres – one per county covering all regions of Estonia. Each centre acts relatively autonomously and plans its annual work and activities. Each centre takes the individual county's particular characteristics into consideration and builds a solid, sustainable foundation for cooperation between a county's educational institutions and management. Every county is guaranteed all necessary services and specialists covering different target groups from pupils in basic education up to young adults who have interrupted their studies.
2. Integrated two-level services: the main idea behind this measure was to gather different career and educational guidance services under one roof and provide these in every county of Estonia. Services are the following:
 - Special educational, speech therapy, social pedagogical and psychological counselling (II level), and in addition special educational and psychological

counselling in municipal schools with less than 350 students (I level).

- Career counselling and career information exchange in the Pathfinder Centres (II level) and in addition, Pathfinder organises the work of the county counselling committee.

3. Required follow-ups: pathfinder guidance centres have a follow-up requirement that previous guidance centres/ institutions lacked. The follow-up requirement is of key importance for improving counselling, and in providing feedback for the educational staff and/or parents. Follow-ups are required in order to assess whether recommendations or the action plan made for a student encountering difficulties (e.g. proposing an optimal learning curriculum for the student) showed expected results. Progress can be analysed and adjustments implemented if necessary.
4. Individual approach, namely the provision of individual career counselling.

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Related intervention approaches



Counselling to address barriers to learning



Guidance: supporting youth to manage their careers