



Results of integration piloting and guidelines produced by the co-creation working group on implementing policy recommendations for integration

Supporting young people to succeed – building capacities to better integrate non-formal and formal learning (REFORM/SC2021/066)

A report prepared by ICF, Praxis, Tallinn University and Civitta Estonia¹

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1 Introduction

The aim of the project “Supporting young people to succeed – building capacities to better integrate non-formal and formal learning” is to develop a solution for integrating non-formal and formal learning in Estonian general and vocational education (with a focus on young people aged 7-19), taking into consideration the local context and the needs of stakeholders as well as international practices. The project started in autumn 2021 and will run until autumn 2023.

The aim of integrating non-formal and formal learning is to create a situation where there is an awareness of the knowledge and skills acquired by students through non-formal learning and these are accepted and taken into consideration in the completion of the curriculum in formal learning. This contributes to the wider goal of supporting the talents, strengths and all-round development opportunities of all students. Therefore, students benefit the most from the integration of non-formal and formal learning, but systematic integration also contributes to the optimal use of resources (time, funds, staff, infrastructure) in the education system.

The following measures have been taken earlier in the project:

1. analysis of the current practice of integration of the integration of non-formal and formal learning and the problems related to it in Estonia;
2. analysis of examples of the integration of non-formal and formal learning from other countries;
3. exchange of experiences with leaders of integration initiatives in the United States, Finland and Malta; a study visit to Finland took place;
4. on the basis of the three previous analyses, appropriate policy interventions to implement integration were identified and a preliminary assessment of their impact was carried out;
5. initial policy recommendations (19 policy recommendations) were prepared for the stakeholders promoting and organising the integration of non-formal and formal learning;
6. a co-creation working group was set up and its work was used to prepare initial practical guidelines for implementing policy recommendations.

The ex-ante impact assessment carried out with regards to policy changes revealed that it is important to systematically implement **three policy interventions** to achieve the objective of the change in policy (Annex 1. Policy interventions or solutions):

1. Recognition of non-formal learning as part of a compulsory subject or module;
2. Recognition of non-formal learning as an elective subject, module or course;
3. Recognition of non-formal learning as an optional subject.

These policy interventions or solutions are to be treated as complementary and these options must be combined to achieve optimal integration.

On the basis of the selected interventions, 19 policy recommendations were prepared for the state, local governments (hereinafter LGs), providers of non-formal learning (hereinafter NFL) and formal learning (hereinafter FL) (Annex 2. Policy recommendations to promote integration).

In October 2022, a co-creation working group was set up with the aim of producing guidelines to support the implementation of these policy recommendations

(hereafter also referred to as guidelines or activities) and to pilot the selected guidelines. The guidelines were prepared strictly on the basis of previously proposed interventions and policy recommendations. The co-creation working group (hereinafter also referred to as the taskforce) consisted of representatives of the Ministry of Education and Research, i.e. the state, local governments, general education schools, providers of non-formal learning, parents and students (about 75 participants in total). The taskforce held meetings to develop the guidelines, and selected members of the taskforce piloted key activities to test the applicability of the guidelines.

To identify suitable cases for piloting, the first co-creation working group meeting selected activities/guidelines which the taskforce considers to be of particular importance for the implementation of the policy recommendations. To select suitable cases for piloting, the selected activities/guidelines were structured according to recurrent topics, as the guidelines needed to implement different policy recommendations are partly overlapping, interdependent or require close cooperation between the stakeholders.

The analysis yielded 14 topics, of which nine were selected and activities related to these topics were addressed by all the taskforces and/or were deemed as the most important and in the assessment of the taskforce, the piloting of these actions is feasible within the timeframe and conditions set.

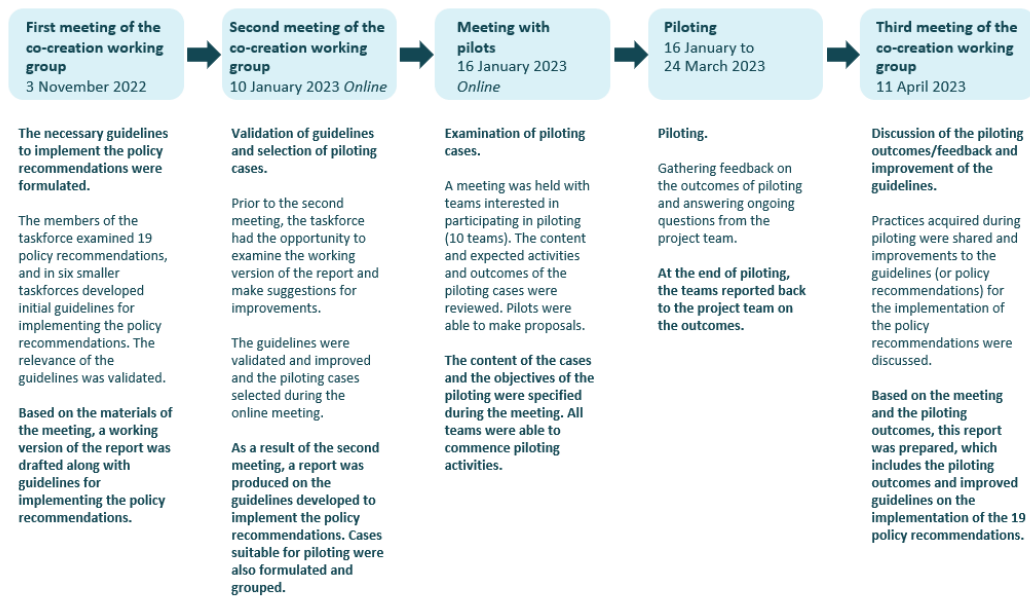
The final selection of cases was settled during discussions held as part of the second meeting of the co-creation working group on 10 January 2023, where the nine selected topics were consolidated to select 3-4 suitable cases for piloting. This resulted in three piloting cases:

1) Comparison of FL and NFL curricula 2) Supporting students in designing an individual curriculum 3) Improving cooperation between FL and NFL.

A more detailed description of each piloting case was prepared to ensure a shared understanding of the substance, expectations for activities and outcomes of the case. The descriptions were used as input for the teams involved in the piloting to plan the necessary activities. A description of how piloting cases were selected and the methodology used for carrying out piloting can be found in Annex 4. Piloting methodology.

Figure 1 provides an overview of the meetings, activities and piloting of the co-creation working group. A more detailed description of the taskforce's methodology, practical organisation of activities, etc., is provided in Annex 3. Methodology of the co-creation working group.

Figure 1: Overview of the activities of the co-creation working group



This report features a summary of the piloting outcomes (Chapter 2), the piloting outcomes and a description of the experience of the teams involved in the piloting (Chapter 3). In addition, the report includes the guidelines for implementing policy recommendations (Chapter 4) prepared by the co-creation working group and improved based on the piloting outcomes and the discussions of the taskforce. The report is based on the results of the work of the co-creation working group and expresses the views and opinions of the participants.

2 Summary of piloting outcomes

Three cases were piloted by members of the selected co-creation working group:

1. Comparison of FL and NFL curricula
2. Supporting students in designing an individual curriculum
3. Improving cooperation between FL and NFL.

The main findings of the piloting are presented below:

1. Awareness of **the purpose, benefits and content of integration is low** among the representatives of FL and NFL as well as among LGs. Consequently, to facilitate the integration of FL and NFL, it is necessary to determine a common definition of integration, the general principles of integration, i.e. a system of how integration takes place (including if people change), the roles of the stakeholders in the process (e.g. the role of the integration coordinator at the LG level, at school, etc.) at the national level. The definition of roles is necessary to define the responsibilities of the stakeholders as well as to ensure that those implementing integration have sufficient powers and authority to carry out the integration activities. It is important to emphasise the benefits of integration for the different stakeholders (student, parent, FL, NFL and LG).
2. In **today's legal framework and system, it is possible to compare and integrate the content and learning outcomes of FL and NFL curricula** without major legislative or technical changes (good examples are Pärnu, Viimsi, etc.). However, **there are a number of practical obstacles** that make it difficult and time-consuming for the stakeholders involved. Key problems include the different structures of the FL and NFL curricula, the fact that NFL learning outcomes are spread across different FL subject syllabi and/or that NFL covers the FL learning outcomes of several school stages. In addition, FL and NFL curricula use different terms and wording. In the future, it would be **expedient to align the structure of the FL and NFL curricula on similar bases**, to provide FL and NFL stakeholders with common guidelines for curricula design, and to clearly distinguish in the curricula structure the parts that are suitable for integration. The parts that enable integration should be determined at ministerial level. Curricula should be available in **a single format and in an electronic environment accessible to all stakeholders (digital register)**.
3. In particular, **at the basic school level, it is practically impossible to reduce the workload of students without major interventions in the national curriculum**. At upper secondary level, students can transfer a certain number of NFL subjects under FL electives, but this option is not available in the national curriculum for basic schools. The 'overburdened' **students** in basic school **do not see a problem with their heavy weekly workloads** and are generally not ready to give up anything in FL. Based on information gathered from parents, they **lack experience and understanding of how integration might reduce the workload of students, and would rather see a reduction in homework as a solution to reducing the workload**.
4. **Students themselves do not show much interest in individual curricula**, which may be due to a number of factors: a) students are satisfied with their choices and not wishing to make changes to their schedules, b) low awareness of integration and its possibilities, including of individual curricula, and c) a lack of desire to stand out from other students. **The implementation of individual curricula is much easier in schools** where specialised curricula are already in

place (e.g. Tallinn School of Music and Ballet, upper secondary sports schools, etc.).

5. **Supporting students in the design of their individual curricula is crucial.** Depending on the size of the school and the possibilities of the digital register to be created, the most expedient position and institution must be decided on for creating the role of integration coordinator and/or whether to share the coordinator's tasks between existing positions.
6. The LG has a crucial and leading role to play in prioritising integration and it should include integration objectives in its **LG development plans and strategies**. LGs should consider the **funding model** for integration, which should be flexible and adjustable over time. It should be the responsibility of the LG to **bring together FL and NFL stakeholders** (by the LG coordinator or other LG employees) and to share good **integration practices** within their own LG and with other LGs. The pilots were able to highlight several good examples of integration systems that already work successfully (e.g. Pärnu Pernova, Antsla).
7. **General education schools and LGs take a more modest interest in integration compared to NFL** The low level of experience and activity of LGs in integrating FL and NFL and their insufficient knowledge of integration issues likely play a role here. At the LG level, there is **still a lack of appreciation of hobby education and activities** and the benefits they offer. To clarify integration and keep it up-to-date, it is important to create a **common platform** where all current information related to integration (networking, cooperation opportunities, offers, etc.) is gathered.
8. To improve cooperation between FL and NFL, it is necessary to step out of **the comfort zone** and think about **FL and NFL teaching in the context of integration**. This requires updates to the curricula of general education schools so that anything learned outside the FL classroom can be recognised throughout the student's learning pathway. **The FL and NFL subjects completed by the student should be reflected in the digital register and on the leaving certificate** that is more or less the first resume of any young person.
9. While integration provides a good opportunity to discover talents and develop their inherent strengths, it **should be accessible to all and involve all students, not just those from larger regions or with special interests**. Solving problems related to long distances is difficult but not impossible. Some solutions are already in place, such as setting up hobby groups directly in the general education school, outsourcing hobby group services, mobile hobby groups.

3 Piloting outcomes

Piloting activities took place between 16 January and 24 March 2023. Some teams started immediately after receiving the guidelines, while others took longer to find partners and agree on an action plan. Depending on this and the scope of piloting and the resources involved, the teams were able to carry out activities at different levels, but all teams managed to achieve substantial results in the selected cases. Some teams continued their activities after the end of the piloting period.

Description templates were sent to the teams to report on piloting outcomes. The templates provided a general framework, but specific feedback was dependent on the case chosen and the activities carried out. The team leader (main driver) coordinated the preparation of the feedback report. Each team (region) prepared one report. Feedback was provided in writing by the end of March 2023 at the latest.²

Piloting outcomes were discussed and improved at the third meeting of the co-creation working group (for more details, see Annex 3. Co-creation working group methodology and Annex 3.3. Third meeting of the co-creation working group). Although the teams' approaches varied at times, they largely achieved the same results. The piloting outcomes recorded in the following sub-chapters are based on the reports submitted by the teams by 24 March 2023 at the latest and on the discussion of the co-creation working group during its third meeting.

3.1 Overall piloting outcomes

Based on the feedback from all teams, the piloting process and outcomes were influenced by the same factors across the board, irrespective of the region or the cases (see Figure 2 for details). All teams noted that at the start of the piloting, it was very difficult to motivate potential partners (i.e. other institutions in the same region) or other employees of their own organisation to participate due to **low awareness and different understanding of integration**. Thus, the high motivation of the team leaders and knowledge of the possibilities of integration gained from taking part in the project benefited the formation of the teams and the planning of activities.

Low awareness was also seen among students and parents. For example, several teams initially planned to approach the case from a student's perspective, i.e. to select specific students and analyse their daily schedules to draw up a comparison of curricula or design an individual curriculum. It was subsequently revealed that students' motivation to integrate subjects and to change their schedule is very low and this approach was generally abandoned. The pilot cases involving parents revealed a low level of awareness and understanding of the opportunities and impact of integration.

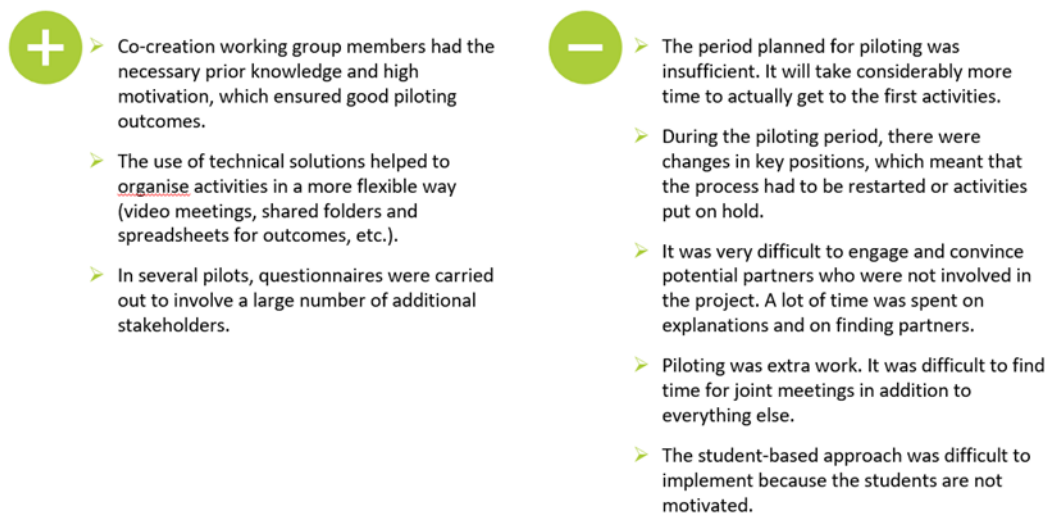
It was also clear from the discussions held during the third meeting of the co-creation working group that participants themselves display confusion and different understandings of the meaning of integration despite their long-time involvement in the project. For example, there was a lively discussion at the meeting about whether integration is merely the recognition of NFL outcomes in FL (i.e. the recognition of

² In addition, a feedback questionnaire was conducted among all piloting participants, which team leaders were asked to distribute to all participants. Given that only 12 participants responded to the questionnaire, the results thereof will not be presented separately, but they have been taken into account when describing the results of specific cases in Chapter 3.

clearly overlapping parts in FL, releasing the student from FL to a certain extent, potentially reducing their workload) or whether it can also be considered integration if the student, in addition to studying the subject as part of FL, also studies it in depth in NFL (whereby NFL essentially complements the learning outcomes of FL and the student's workload might not be reduced) and NFL results are also shown on the student's leaving certificate. There was also some disagreement about situations where general education schools introduce classes with a specific focus (e.g. a football class) and where lessons taught by NFL teachers or coaches are strongly integrated into the FL curriculum. Some taskforce participants considered such integrated lessons to be FL simply conducted by an NFL teacher or coach. The above discussions and piloting outcomes clearly show that the wider implementation of integration requires the harmonisation of common principles of integration and the coordinated sharing of practices across the country.³

The piloting process was also negatively affected by the **short timeframe and lack of resources for necessary preparations to implement integration**. Most teams were forced to cut back their original action plan. Obstacles and stoppages occurred because people changed or it was impossible to find suitable meeting times for everyone. Piloting confirmed that achieving real integration requires various preparations (e.g. meetings, analysis and harmonisation of documents, data collection, etc.) for which time, finances and human resources must be allocated. To a certain extent, highly motivated stakeholders are able to coordinate activities between them on a short-term and *ad hoc* basis, but systematic integration requires a clear plan of action and allocation of resources.

Figure 2: Factors having a positive or negative impact on the piloting PROCESS AND outcomes



³ Since piloting results showed that the concept and content of integration remains confusing, all participants were asked to describe integration in their own words at a taskforce meeting and then settle on a common wording within the group. While there is some variation in individual phrasing, the versions used across different groups reflect a similar understanding of integration. Integration descriptions prepared by taskforce participants are presented in Annex 6.

Despite the obstacles described, all the teams achieved positive results, i.e. they found that it is possible to use integration to a certain extent in the current situation, without any major legislative or technical changes. A major added value highlighted by the teams was that piloting activities helped bring stakeholders together in a specific area to initiate a discussion. There is a clear vision for follow-up actions. Some changes were already introduced as part of the piloting (e.g. curricula were changed in some areas or FI and NFL schedules harmonised).

The piloting outcomes are presented below for selected cases.

3.2 Case I: Comparison of FL and NFL curricula

The aim of piloting was to compare the curricula and learning outcomes of FL and NFL, to identify commonalities and to discuss ways to better harmonise curricula and outcomes. There were two approaches:

1. **Student-based approach:** analysis of the FL and NFL curricula, including their common components and expected learning outcomes, for specific students; design of an individual curriculum and a schedule for the specific student(s).
2. **In the context of NFL and FL:** the selected NFL and FL curricula were compared and the common elements in the learning outcomes were mapped.

3.2.1 Teams that piloted the case

The following teams (regions) and institutions participated in piloting the approach:

1. Nõo rural municipality – Nõo Basic School, Nõo Music School, Nõo Sports School
2. Tallinn/Harju county – Estonian Dance Agency’s Dance School (Tallinn), Püünsi School, Ruila Basic School (Harju county)
3. City of Tartu – Tartu Karlova School, Tartu Nature House, Tartu City Government
4. Viljandi city and rural municipality – Heimtali Basic School, Viljandi Art School, Viljandi City Government, Viljandi Rural Municipality Government, heads of the regional general education schools and hobby and sports schools

Piloting participants included education and/or culture or other specialists from local governments, school management representatives, directors of studies and teachers, heads of hobby and sports schools, coaches and supervisors. The Viljandi team also involved parents in the piloting.

The leaders of every team were themselves part of the co-creation working group for this project. They approached a number of FL and NFL providers to find suitable teams for piloting. All team leaders acknowledged that finding partners was difficult due to the lack of a common understanding of the content and objectives of integration and therefore the lack of motivation to contribute to the piloting activities alongside their regular work. The Estonian Dance Agency’s Dance School, which led the Tallinn team and approached a number of general education schools in Tallinn found it particularly difficult to find partners. Another reason for the low interest of the general education schools in Tallinn is that several of them are already practising integration (e.g. through the project “Kogupäevakool” or “All-Day-School” in Estonian⁴). Therefore, the Tallinn/Harju county team was formed in cooperation with the general education schools of Harju county.

⁴ the website of the “All-Day-School” project. Retrieved from: <https://www.tallinn.ee/et/kogupaevakool>

3.2.2 Activities carried out during piloting

All teams started the piloting with meetings between participants to first harmonise the understanding of integration and the objectives of the pilot. It was also discussed which students and curricula to choose for the piloting, so that the activities would be manageable for the piloting in a given timeframe, but at the same time give the pilots some practical experience.

The teams from Tallinn/Harju county, Nõo and Tartu chose to pursue a **comparison drawing on curricula**. After selecting the curricula, the team members analysed the shared features of the curricula and compared the learning outcomes individually. One or two mid-term meetings were then held to discuss the results and harmonise the future approach. Meetings were held both physically and virtually, lasting anything from one to three hours. Shared work tables were used to facilitate work and promote cooperation. Communication took place via e-mail. All teams also had a so-called final meeting to discuss the outcomes and review the results report.

The Viljandi team chose to pursue a **comparison drawing on students**. To identify the focus of piloting and to select specific students, in addition to the first meeting, a discussion was held with the class teachers of the general education schools, a survey was conducted among the heads of the general education schools and an extended meeting was held with representatives of the general education schools and hobby and sports schools in the region. In the end, Heimtal Basic School helped⁵ oversee the selection of three families with a total of seven students with an extremely high NFL workload from school stages I-III of Heimtal Basic School. An in-depth survey of these families was carried out to map the students' daily schedules and workloads, as well as parents' attitudes towards integration. Feedback to the survey was then analysed at a meeting between NFL and FL representatives, and the possibilities for integration were discussed. Since it took time to select the students, conduct the survey and analyse the results, there was no time left in the allocated piloting period to compare the curricula of these students and prepare individual curricula. In parallel, the Viljandi team also piloted the case "Improving cooperation between FL and NFL", the outcomes of which can be found in Chapter 3.4.

In summary, the following curricula and schedules were compared:

- The Nõo team compared the curricula of Nõo Music School and Nõo Basic School, as well as the curricula of Nõo Sports School and Nõo Basic School in school stages I-III.
- The Tallinn/Harju county team started with comparisons between the physical education subject syllabi of Püünsi School for school stage III and the Estonian Dance Agency's Dance School. During this process they concluded that it would be more appropriate to base the comparison on the new movement education subject syllabi, which was still being reviewed at the time of piloting. It was felt that since the latter is not based on specific sports but on general abilities, activity levels and general competences, it is easier to compare it with a NFL curriculum in terms of learning outcomes.
- The Tartu team compared the 5th and 6th grade science curricula of Tartu Karlova School and the "Water World" and "Earth and Science" curricula of hobby school Tartu Nature House.

⁵Based on the piloting report, Heimtal Basic School has previously already carried out independent meetings to implement integration (e.g. discussion meetings with teachers and parents), and there is already some practice (e.g. selected maths topics have been integrated with selected activities in the hobby group for brain games).

- The Viljandi team mapped the daily schedule and workload of seven students (1st grade, 2nd grade, 6th grade, 7th grade, 8th grade, 8th grade, 9th grade) at Heimtal Basic School known to have a very high NFL workload.

The main obstacle to piloting was identified by all teams as insufficient time allocated for piloting. They found it very difficult to motivate partners to participate and then also find time for meetings and content activities in addition to their day jobs. The process was made more difficult by the fact that FL and NFL classes take place at different times, making it a challenge for teachers to find a common time to have the necessary discussions to compare the curricula. School holidays also had to be taken into account. It was acknowledged that comparing curricula is in itself a very complex and time-consuming exercise due to differences in their structure and level of detail.

“In the beginning, we had to do a lot of explaining as to why we were doing this (between a sports school and a general education school). Some stakeholders needed more explanations about the reasons for such a project, what the outcome would be and how it could be used in teaching” – Nõo

The piloting reports and the second meeting of the co-creation working group, summarising the piloting outcomes, confirmed that those who finally participated were deeply interested and constructive. All the teams are planning to continue implementing integration to at least some extent or have already started some joint activities. For example, the Estonian Dance Agency’s Dance School from the Tallinn/Harju county team is interested in comparing its own curricula with other general education schools in Tallinn to validate the piloting outcomes. Representatives of the city and rural municipality of Viljandi are planning to hold further (networking) meetings at different levels to introduce integration options and identify obstacles.

3.2.3 Main outcomes

As a result of the piloting, the teams comparing the curricula pointed out that it is generally difficult to compare the content and learning outcomes of current curricula, as the **FL and NFL curricula follow a different structure**. In addition, NFL learning outcomes are spread across different FL subject syllabi and/or the NFL subject syllabus covers the learning outcomes of the corresponding FL curriculum of several school stages, as children of different ages often attend the hobby group / practice together. This implies that the respective NFL and FL curricula are not easily comparable like for like, and that a single NFL curriculum may contain elements of different FL subjects or learning outcomes at different school stages, and vice versa. The comparison of curricula was easier for the Tartu team, as the LG has already provided a similar format for FL and NFL curricula and a joint training for the representatives of FL and NFL had been conducted.

“The learning outcomes for hobby education are spread across the different subject syllabi of the FL curriculum. It’s a big undertaking to compare and contrast them.” Tallinn

To compare curricula more quickly, selected search terms were used to find commonalities. However, piloting showed that the FL and NFL **curricula use different concepts and wording**, making this approach inefficient for facilitating comparison. The use of different wording also makes it difficult for other stakeholders (e.g. students or FL teachers independently examining different NFL curricula) to understand independently what exactly the teaching or learning

outcomes are. To better compare curricula, activities with the same meaning should be grouped together and common indicator terms should be used.

“The search for commonalities in the learning outcomes was done by searching for keywords, for example the “surface mode”. If the contents of the learning outcomes were the same in both curricula, it was possible to compare them and group them under similarities. The differences were recorded separately.” Tartu

During piloting, it became apparent that FL and NFL **curricula do not always differentiate general competences in the same way or with sufficient clarity**. As an example, one team said that although the development of general competences is deliberately included in NFL activities, they are not clearly described in the respective NFL curricula. Another team pointed out that the learning outcomes of the physical education subject syllabus, for example, contains fewer general competences and study skills than the dance class curriculum at the hobby school.

“The development of general competences is the norm in hobby schools, but it is often not addressed in the curriculum and there is no indication of how a specific generic competence is addressed.” Tallinn/Harju county

In summary, it was found that in the future, it would be expedient to align the structure of the FL and NFL curricula on similar bases, to provide common guidelines for curricula design, and to clearly distinguish in the structure the parts that are suitable for integration. If curricula were structured in a coherent way, finding common ground would be much easier for FL and NFL providers, as well as for students and parents. Finding commonalities between curricula and learning outcomes, and thus facilitating the implementation of integration, would be facilitated if all curricula were made available in **a single format and in an electronic environment accessible to all stakeholders (digital register)**, where commonalities are already clearly indicated by the curriculum owners.

Both the piloting reports and the discussion at the last co-creation working group meeting suggest **two different mindsets in comparing curricula and finding common ground**. There is a partial view that it should be **compulsory** to indicate in NFL curricula the subject syllabi areas and learning outcomes of the relevant FL subject and school stage suitable for integration. It is noted that *“Hobby schools must be prepared to offer full coverage”*, and it is felt that NFL providers should align their curricula as much as possible with FL curricula. As a result, NFL and FL curricula would increasingly share common features and feel more similar. Others argue that integration should be **an option**, not an obligation, and that NFL providers should be given the opportunity to explore the subject matter at depth while using flexible approaches and learning methods. Curricula should not be made that significantly overlaps. It is said that *“recognising NFL should be a privilege for those who have achieved something in their hobby area and who have shown that they want to pursue it in depth; learning a specific topic in hobby school should then certainly be supportive of their development.”* Concerns were expressed that integration could result in NFL losing its identity and becoming less interesting for students.

Although there were challenges in the FL and NFL curricula, all the teams found that **the curricula compared in the piloting had sufficient commonalities and similar learning outcomes** to allow for integration in their current form.

Music education

A comparison of the curricula of Nõo Music School and Nõo Basic School found that the two curricula have many common elements. For example, the music school

places strong emphasis on teaching musical notation, while the basic school (school stage I) focuses more on singing and dancing. At the same time, the music school curricula (music history) take a more in-depth approach to certain topics compared to the basic school curricula, while completely leaving out other topics that are covered in the basic school curricula.

Teachers who analysed the curricula found that it is possible to fully credit music school studies in school stage I and to a larger extent in school stages II and III. This would give students free time for music lessons to practise or take part in a hobby class.

Science

When comparing the 5th and 6th grade science curricula of Tartu Karlova School and the “Water World” and “Earth and Science” curricula of Tartu Nature House, it was found that the learning outcomes overlap significantly, yet are described very differently. Teachers who participated in the pilot identified that the learning outcomes in the curricula of hobby schools are more descriptive of experiments while the curricula in general education schools tend to focus more on theory. By integrating these curricula, the practical activities of the hobby school would thus support the theoretical material taught in the basic school.

An important conclusion was that the NFL curricula analysed cover topics in more depth, but do not overlap with what is taught in a particular class in general education schools. This means that the organisation of studies is more flexible in the hobby school and students of different ages learn together in the same group. Under the current system, a teacher in a general education school would thus need to be aware of which hobby group each student is attending to be able to recognise what they have learned there. As the curricula analysed are not synchronised across learning outcomes and grades, comparisons are time-consuming.

Physical education and movement education

Tallinn/Harju county and Nõo teams compared the physical education and/or new movement education curricula and came to somewhat different conclusions.

The Nõo team found that the physical education curricula of Nõo Basic School and the curricula of Nõo Sports School have little overlap in terms of wording and should not (partially) replace each other. It was felt that any type of movement during the day is important for children, and that *“replacing a movement lesson in a general education school with a lesson in a hobby school would not have the desired effect.”* Shortening students’ days at the expense of physical activity should not be the aim because encouraging physical activity is important for children’s health. At the same time, it was acknowledged that some integration of curricula could be possible from school stage III onwards, provided that the student is working on a specific field (including competitions, preparation for competitions).

The Tallinn/Harju county team concluded that since the physical education subject syllabus is based on specific sports (including athletics, ball games, gymnastics, etc.), it is not possible to find common ground for comparison with the curriculum of the selected dance school. Only the general objectives of the physical education subject syllabus can be compared as these cover activity levels, hygiene, health, etc. This is a hobby school focused on a particular area, meaning that a different result may be reached by comparing the physical education curriculum to the curriculum of a sports school, for example.

At the same time, potential common ground was found between the new movement education and Dance School curricula. In the new movement education curriculum,

learning outcomes are described in terms of generic physical skills (e.g. movement skills, physical activity, health and physical abilities, etc.), which are also addressed in Dance School classes, but not described as clearly in the current Dance School curriculum.

Thus, in summary, it was found that the curricula analysed have certain common elements, but the content and learning outcomes of the hobby school curricula should be better described to make it easier to detect common elements.

Considering that all teams found some commonalities in the curricula, it was also agreed that knowledge acquired in NFL should be reflected in the student's leaving certificate, certainly so in the single electronic system (digital register) to be created. The Tartu team noted that since both FL and NFL providers in their region use the Studium environment, there are already good technical prerequisites in place to allow FL and NFL teachers to track the students' learning outcomes in both schools. Reflecting results on a similar basis on the students' leaving certificates would provide a better overview of the learning outcomes achieved for all stakeholders, including the student and parents.

"I really like the idea of having the end-of-year leaving certificate of a student reflect their FL and NFL results. The certificate would then be more like a resume for young people." Viljandi

The teams discussed whether only formative assessment should be used for NFL learning outcomes when reflecting NFL and FL learning outcomes on the same certificate, or whether formative assessment should also be used for FL learning outcomes; whether it is always necessary to give a specific assessment of NFL learning outcomes or it should be described what the student is better at (i.e. where there has been improvement). In one team it was felt that if the subjects and learning outcomes of NFL and FL overlap exactly, there is no need to highlight in the certificate that the specific subject had been acquired through NFL. The co-creation working group found no common answers to the above question, meaning that these issues should certainly be further clarified in the future, when the digital register is created and common evaluation criteria are found.

The Viljandi team mapped the daily schedules of selected students with a high NFL workload to find ways to reduce their load by integrating FL and NFL. Based on the data collected and the discussions held, it was concluded that the selected students have very long days. Depending on the school stage and the intensity of NFL, the total FL and NFL workload of the students is about 26-43 hours per week. There are practically no long breaks during the day, and most students spend a considerable amount of time travelling between school, hobby school or practice and home. To mitigate the latter, parents transport their children so as not to lose time waiting for public transport.

Based on information gathered from parents, they lack experience and understanding of how integration might reduce the workload of students. For example, it is stated that *"Going to practice brings positivity and they enjoy it, so we see no reason why this part should be reduced"*.

All parents point out that the greatest struggle is doing homework at the end of a long day. Reducing homework is seen as the only way to reduce this workload. It is felt that teachers should coordinate and plan ahead so that homework is distributed more evenly. Only one parent felt that the number of physical education classes could be reduced for a student who practices sport at a very high level.

In summary, all the teams and the participants in the taskforce meeting found that there is probably some overlap or complementarity between many of the current FL

and NFL curricula and that they allow for some degree of integration. Therefore, FL and NFL providers should work closely together to start integration and appropriate integration options for specific schools and NFL providers should be found through curricula comparisons. It was acknowledged that such comparisons are easier to produce in smaller educational institutions or in a smaller community where educational institutions are located close to each other, where people are used to working together or where teachers are more familiar with students' extracurricular activities. Constant communication and mutual contact builds trust, supports flexibility and motivates cooperation. Achieving broader integration that would cover all FL and NFL providers and students will certainly require the introduction of a common format for curricula and the identification of elements enabling integration at the ministerial level.

3.3 Case II: Supporting students in designing an individual curriculum

The aim of piloting this case was **to identify, based on the needs of the student, what kind of support they need and from whom** in order to ensure successful and student-centred FL and NFL integration. Pilots were tasked with involving 3-5 students from primary, basic or upper secondary school in the piloting process, to map the students' semester activities and participation in NFL, to analyse the students' curricula and to prepare individual curricula and daily schedules for the students.

The main focus of the case was to determine whether students should be supported in the design of individual curricula and on matters related to integration:

- by a school integration coordinator;
- by their class teacher;
- by the student themselves and/or their parents;
- by the NFL side (coach, supervisor, someone else).

As the time planned for piloting was quite short, the individual curriculum and the daily schedule were mostly not completed within the given timeframe. Some teams promised to continue piloting activities in the coming months (e.g. Rae, Saue).

3.3.1 Teams that piloted the case

The following teams were involved in piloting the case study regarding support for the design of individual curricula for students:

- Elva – Elva Gymnasium, students from the 4th, 7th, 11th and 12th grade of Elva Gymnasium, Elva Music School
- Kohtla-Järve/Lüganuse – Kohtla-Järve Gymnasium and Kiviõli School of Arts
- Rae – Rae Hobby School, Jüri Gymnasium, student from school stage III
- Saue – Saue rural municipality, Laagri School, Laagri Hobby School
- Tallinn – Tallinn Arte Gymnasium, Estonian Football Association, Tallinn Education Department

3.3.2 Activities carried out during piloting

Although the LGs participating in the co-creation working group are more informed and more interested than average in integration issues, effective cooperation between FL and NFL institutions in their LG has yet to be achieved everywhere. The piloting reports reveal that it is easier to build a relationship between FL and NFL in

a smaller LG and where FL and NFL institutions are located close to each other or even in the same building. This meant that for several local governments, the first step in piloting was to bring the stakeholders together and introduce the representatives to each other. Meetings were organised between FL, NFL and LG representatives to discuss the content and long-term objectives of integration and to map out priority activities for piloting.

In terms of substantive activities, piloting included conducting surveys and qualitative interviews with students and analysing the data collected. Parents were contacted and feedback was collected on the academic workload of young people and their ability to cope in general education schools and hobby education.

Taskforce meetings were used to discuss ways to compare curricula, create individual curricula and plan learning activities (weekly timetable, daily timetable), but for the most part, this did not result in practical steps due to the limited timeframe.

Summaries were taken to record successes and failures. According to several of the teams, the activities needed to achieve integration did not end with this project and the teams will continue with the practical steps on their own initiative in the coming months (April-May-June).

3.3.3 Main outcomes

Both the reports of the piloting teams and the third meeting of the co-creation working group showed that although the taskforce involved people from FL, NFL and LGs with high motivation to engage in integration, there is still some confusion as to what exactly integration is and whether a particular approach is integration or something else (e.g. at the taskforce meeting there was a lot of discussion about whether a class focussed on football is an example of integration or not). To clarify the concept, clear guidelines from the state are needed for all stakeholders (student, parent, FL, NFL and LG) regarding the concept of integration and its purpose, how integration should take place, etc. **Definitions and roles at national level** (e.g. the role of the integration coordinator) are needed if only to ensure that **those implementing integration have sufficient powers and authority to carry out integration activities.**

Both the piloting teams and the co-creation working group found that designing an individual curriculum for a student with special interests who indicates a willingness for such a solution is not usually a problem. However, the whole education system would have to change if we want to ensure that all students have their own individual curriculum.

Reducing students' academic workload is not a key objective in designing an integrated and individual curriculum, but the teams piloting this case were very much motivated by this. In the beginning several teams enthusiastically started to look into the weekly timetable of students in the hope of somehow reducing their excessive workload (40+ hours in FL and NFL), it soon became apparent that, especially at the basic school level, reducing the workload is practically impossible without major interventions in the national curriculum. At upper secondary level, students can transfer a certain number of NFL subjects under FL electives, but this option is not available in the national curriculum for basic schools.

"...the weekly workload of students in basic school must be reduced to allow for extracurricular growth and give students the chance to engage in hobbies that can become a profession, and to take up more physical activity or even sport." Rae

On the other hand, the same “overburdened” students involved in the pilot did not see a problem with their weekly workload and were generally not prepared to give up anything in FL (e.g. a music school student wanted to continue attending music classes and a sports school student wanted to continue attending physical education classes).

“This year, the hobby education burden seems to be high because, due to the working days of teachers, hobby education is concentrated on three weekdays (Mon until 18:00, Tue until 19:00, Wed until 20:00). Obviously, the child will be quite tired by the evening, but they manage because study activities usually don’t take very long. They have made their own hobby education choices and don’t want to give anything up. It’s up to the family to help manage the child’s workload and, at critical moments, to help them focus on priorities and find ways to pull back. You have to make sure that they get enough sleep and don’t have to endure a long day with only school meals. If the school day starts at 8:00 and the day ends at 19:00 or 20:00 after hobby education, we’ll pick them up so they can get home faster to eat, study and rest.” parent of a 7th grade student, Elva

According to parents in several LGs, one way **to reduce children’s workload is to cut back on homework**. There are already schools (e.g. Elva Gymnasium) where the school pays a lot of attention to the amount of homework given to students, asking young people to note down the time spent on homework and giving less homework on certain days. Then again, we should keep in mind the individual characteristics of each student and the fact that the time needed to master the subject matter may vary from student to student.

In general, it was also found that **students themselves show little interest in individual curricula**. This may be due to a number of factors. Students with a heavy workload may be happy with their choices and they might not want to make changes to the schedule. It may also be the case that there is a lack of awareness among students about integration, including individual curricula and how to implement them. Piloting also highlighted a lack of desire to differentiate from other students. Currently, individual curricula are implemented for young people with special educational needs, which gives a negative connotation to curricular differentiations (as if they are students who cannot manage otherwise). At the co-creation working group meeting, it was stressed that individual curricula should become a natural part of education for all students, but especially for those who wish to pursue their interests in depth and who have a real need for it.

The implementation of individual curricula is therefore much easier in schools where specialised curricula are already in place (e.g. Tallinn School of Music and Ballet, upper secondary sports schools, specialised classes such as the football class in Tallinn Arte Gymnasium etc.). In this case, it is easier to integrate FL and NFL for practical reasons alone – NFL and FL subjects are taught in the same premises, logistics from school to practice is easier for the whole class (buses ordered, etc.), extra meals are organised for large groups, etc.

The Tallinn/Harju county team analysed the example of a football class at Tallinn Arte Gymnasium, where the students’ daily schedule is primarily based on training and competition schedules, and the national curriculum is based on an individual approach for the whole class, meaning that teachers also need to be flexible in their work and take into account training and competition periods. The daily schedules of young people studying in a class with a special focus area are very busy, but compared to students who study both under a regular programme in a general education school and also based on a subject-specific programme in a hobby school

and then get home late in the evening, the students attending a class specialised on football actually finish their day by 17:00.

*“It’s possible to combine teaching and practice, because there is no drop in academic performance, and it’s also possible to raise the quality of the students’ game. In the same way, the curriculum can be monitored to ensure that it is fulfilled, and thanks to the substitution of physical education classes with training, the students’ academic workload can be normalised. /.../ At the moment, 2/3 of the boys in our academy represent the Estonian national team and are capable of studying for good and very good results.”
Tallinn*

There were conflicting views on the need for an in-school integration

coordinator both in the piloting reports and at the co-creation working group meeting. Some felt that the role of the in-school integration coordinator is critical throughout the school year and, depending on the size of the school, the position should require either a full-time or part-time employment with the school. According to others, assuming that schools have introduced a logical digital register containing data on subject matters completed in FL and NFL, there is either no need for an integration coordinator, or the need for such a position only arises at the start of the integration process and/or at the beginning of the school year.

If a school feels the need for an integration coordinator, one option is to use existing employees who currently have a lower workload, who are interested in the subject of integration and who would like to work full-time (e.g. part-time coordinators of students with special educational needs, heads of extracurricular activities, etc.). The option of having one integration coordinator manage several schools was also discussed at the taskforce meeting since the need for individual curricula is not massive. The primary advantage of such an approach would be the improvement of cooperation between different schools and learning from each other. The director of studies was also seen as a possible candidate for performing the tasks of the integration coordinator. It was acknowledged that directors of studies usually have excess workloads, but at the same time, they have more authority to organise teaching and delegate tasks within the school compared to the position of the integration coordinator.

The piloting reports pointed out that class teachers are already under a heavy workload and therefore their role in the integration process could be limited to mapping out the subjects that students should be taking in NFL. On the other hand, it was also highlighted at the taskforce meeting that since the class teacher is the first contact and guide for the student in the FL, the class teacher could introduce the students to the possibilities of integrating FL and NFL and explain how the individual curriculum is designed. To avoid the risk of overburdening the class teachers, other stakeholders and facilitators must be involved in the process. In the assessment of the taskforce, sharing the experiences of students who have used an individual curriculum – students who have designed their own individual curriculum and followed it – would help raise awareness among teachers and students about the possibilities of individual curricula. This could be achieved, for example, through the student council, but this requires the student council to have a good reputation among students.

Parents might be good sources of input regarding the NFL activities of their children, but this relies heavily on the parents’ interest in sharing information about their child. According to several piloting teams, the main initiative and interest in individual curricula should come from the students themselves and their parents. To ensure

this, the target group needs to be much better informed about the different options available.

In conclusion, it was pointed out that several LGs already use student-centred integration solutions to a certain extent (e.g. in Rae rural municipality music school students do not have to attend music theory classes as they acquire the same knowledge in general education schools, Pärnu Mai School is another good example of integration, etc.). In addition, piloting led to a positive change in one LG as the local music school resolved to recognise its students' FL timetables when planning lessons. This helped make students' timetables much more logical (fewer gaps in the middle of the day).

3.4 Case III: Improving cooperation between FL and NFL.

The aim of piloting this case was to create a common learning and communication space for NFL and FL teachers and supervisors, to facilitate network meetings, cooperation between the stakeholders and to reduce possible prejudices towards each other.

The piloting teams had the option of using the following approaches 1) facilitating cooperation under the lead of the LG or 2) facilitating cooperation under the lead of NFL and FL. In the first case, the approach was to achieve cooperation between FL and NFL on the initiative of the LG and on a larger scale. In the second case, the aim was to look at a situation where the establishment and improvement of FL and NFL relations is exemplified by a specific FL and NFL with the LG being involved in more of a supporting role. The task of the pilots was to consider ways to bring together FL and NFL stakeholders, to conceptualise the role of the LG coordinator and to find ways to facilitate the sharing of good practices between LGs.

In most cases, the teams opted for the approach under the lead of the LG and tried to involve as many FL and NFL stakeholders as possible at the LG level. During the piloting period, the only reports on piloting that were received concerned this option, but just before the third meeting of the co-creation working group, a major event with 1,300 students was organised in Viimsi in cooperation between the LG, FL and NFL following the second approach. The piloting team did not document any results for the latter, but they shared their impressions at the co-creation working group meeting.

3.4.1 Teams that piloted the case

The following teams were involved in piloting the case aimed at improving cooperation between FL and NFL:

- Viimsi rural municipality – Viimsi School, Haabneeme School, Püünsi School, Randvere School, Viimsi Music School, Viimsi Art School, Viimsi Science School, Head of the Education Department and senior specialist on hobby education at Viimsi Rural Municipality Government.
- Viljandi city and rural municipality – Viljandi city, Viljandi rural municipality LG officials, Viljandi Hobby School, Viljandi Art School, Heimtali School, Viljandi Sports School, headmasters of Viljandi general education schools, class teachers at general education school, students.
- Tallinn – HUVA taskforce at Tallinn Education Department (October 2021 to December 2022), consisting of Tallinn Education Department, Ehte grammar school, Tallinn Rahumäe School, Kadriorg German Gymnasium, Tallinn "Kullo" Hobby Centre, Tallinn Nõmme Music School, and students from Ehte grammar

school, Tallinn Nõmme Upper Secondary School, Tallinn School No. 21, Tallinn Russian Lyceum and Laanemere Gymnasium of Tallinn.

In the case of the Tallinn team, the activities were initiated by the stakeholders themselves at an earlier time, but as the topics largely overlapped and the stakeholders in the HUVA team were part of the co-creation working group, the analysis of the piloting outcomes also took into account the previous work done by this team.

3.4.2 Activities carried out during piloting

The activities carried out by the piloting teams clearly reflect the different experiences of LGs in dealing with integration. This in turn has an impact on the preparedness of stakeholders to engage with this matter in their LG. Although members of the co-creation working group have been involved in integration for a long time in the context of this project, the involvement of other stakeholders in the piloting had to start from the basics by defining integration. The LG team who joined the co-creation working group at a later time first had to understand what integration is and then share their newly acquired knowledge with the other stakeholders.

Most initial piloting team meetings discussed the substance of the pilot project and the definition of integration to make sure that everyone understood integration in the same way. A number of meetings were held with the participation of FL and NFL stakeholders, where, among other things, integration issues and curricula of general education schools were discussed in broader terms, and LG integration opportunities were mapped.

The aim was to identify the attitudes towards and preparedness for integration of different stakeholders. To this end, qualitative interviews were conducted with class teachers in general education schools, students and headmasters of general education schools were surveyed through a questionnaire.

Piloting also resulted in substantive activities, such as joint meetings in Viimsi between teachers of subjects (music, science, art) from general education schools and teachers and heads of municipal hobby schools. The participants worked together to organise a joint concert. A meeting between the management teams of Viimsi Science School and general education schools also took place, where it was made clear that general education schools are ready to cooperate, but only if there are integration-oriented curricula in place that can be used as guidance for school work.

Pärnu has been repeatedly mentioned as an example of positive integration during the various meetings of the co-creation working group. Pärnu has been prioritising the integration of FL and NFL in its LG for a long time and, according to the members of the co-creation working group, has been doing an excellent job. The seminar for music and art teachers organised in Viimsi by Pernova Education Centre serves as a great example of how good integration practices could be shared between different Estonian LGs.

“A seminar for music and art teachers was held in Viimsi Artium on 2 March 2023. Representatives of subject teachers from all general education schools in the rural municipality and teachers from hobby schools took part in the event, about 40 people in total. The seminar was conducted by the head and director of studies of Pernova Education Centre, who talked about their experiences (difficulties, teachers’ beliefs, etc.)” Viimsi

The creation of cross-LG e-mail lists to facilitate communication between different FL subject teachers and NFL hobby group supervisors and teachers was also mentioned as a positive example.

Although the piloting period was very short and participation in piloting increased the workload of all stakeholders, several teams are planning follow-up activities for the coming months. Examples provided included the design of an annual action plan (e.g. work visits between teachers of hobby and general education schools), introducing teachers of general education schools to the idea and possibilities of FL and NFL integration, the discussion of integration in different configurations and at different levels (e.g. county education conference) and network meetings between representatives of FL, NFL and the LG.

3.4.3 Main outcomes

The successful integration of FL and NFL requires a shared understanding of integration among stakeholders and the prioritisation of integration at the local government level. Depending on the size and experience of the LG, current knowledge of integration varies widely from one LG to another.

Although participation in piloting was voluntary for all, several piloting teams admitted that compared to NFL, general education schools and LGs are somewhat less interested in dealing with integration matters. This likely comes down to the general experience and activity of LGs in integrating FL and NFL and their general awareness of integration issues. In the assessment of the pilots, there is still a lack of appreciation of hobby education and activities and the benefits they offer, such as enriching the student's educational pathway, helping young people grow self-confident, helping them discover their interests and talents, facilitating future career choices, and so on.

Clarifications and guidelines from the state are needed to harmonise these concepts between the different stakeholders (FL, NFL, LG, students, parents) and to explain what integration is and how to implement it in everyday practice. While guidelines are crucial, it is even more important to create a system that would continue to work when people in key positions change.

At the local government level, the inclusion of integration in the LG development plan and strategies helps keep it relevant (*Viimsi – the development plan of Viimsi rural municipality includes the integration of general education, hobby education and youth work as a strategic goal in the field of education and youths for the period 2021-2023; Tallinn – goals related to individual learning pathways, APEL/FONO/HUVA⁶ are established in Tallinn Education Strategy 2020-2030 and Tallinn Development Strategy 2035*). Provided that integration is a priority on the LG level and integration-related objectives are set out in development plans and strategies, it is important to think about the funding model from the outset as this model should be adjustable over time.

⁶ Explanation of abbreviations used by Tallinn Education Department: *HUVA - Hobby Education Accounting (huvihariduse arvestamine in Estonian). Accreditation of prior and experiential learning or APEL, which has been used to date, involves the recognition of previous studies and work experience, which is not adequate in the context of our task. We would like to recognise things like current studies. There is no initial focus on work experience. FONO stands for formal and non-formal learning in the curriculum.*

“Integration starts when the FL + NFL leaders and FL + NFL teachers understand the matter, prioritise it and take appropriate action. We have yet to see any of that.” Viljandi

Communication and meetings between the stakeholders should be encouraged going forward. Regular meetings at the LG level, common objectives between the stakeholders and willingness to organise joint events (e.g. with the aim of providing an experience for students, etc.) and design action plans are all needed to support open communication

“Specific integration “projects” and the real needs of students are the drivers. Open communication relies on trust in each other’s work and better awareness of needs and opportunities.” Tallinn

The LG coordinator plays a crucial role in initiating and maintaining regular communication and cooperation and one of their key tasks is to make the integration of FL and NFL a priority for their LG and to bring the stakeholders together. In addition, according to the pilots, the LG coordinator might also be tasked with improving the legislation of the institutions managed by the LG, i.e. statutes, development plans, budget strategies, mapping of providers of hobby education and youth work services, designing of action plans, leading their implementation and analysing corresponding results.

If there is no separate integration co-ordinator in the LG, the LG should at least initially be in charge of calling the stakeholders together, e.g. an official of the education department of the LG. Later on, tasks can be delegated between different stakeholders, but to get the process moving, the first step needs to be taken by someone who has the power and authority. The suitability of the role of the integration coordinator for general education school head teachers, directors of studies, coordinators of students with special educational needs or for the managers of youth centres was also discussed, but it was concluded that strong support from the LG is also needed and that the personal characteristics of the individual (whether or not they are a leader) also play a role.

Since awareness and understanding of integration varies greatly between local governments, pilots feel that the creation of a common platform with all the current information related to integration (networking, cooperation opportunities, offers, etc.), is crucial for explaining the issues of integration and keeping the matter relevant. The co-creation working group mentioned the integration information on the website of the Education and Youth Board of Estonia, but most participants had not heard of it and were unsure whether it was updated at all.

It is also important for LGs to communicate and share practices. The pilots were able to highlight several good examples of integration systems that already work successfully (e.g. Pärnu Pernova, Antsla). At a meeting of the co-creation working group, a representative from Pärnu said that integration efforts started with children with special educational needs and while everyone involved had a lot of fears in the beginning, these were quickly overcome and the project soon became a success story, attracting new teachers who also wanted to be part of something bigger.

The most resonating idea that came from the piloting reports and the comments of the pilots during the co-creation working group meeting was that to improve cooperation between FL and NFL, it is necessary to step out of the comfort zone and think about FL and NFL teaching in the context of integration. This requires updates to the curricula of general education schools so that anything learned outside the FL classroom can be recognised throughout the student’s learning pathway. It is also possible to make FL classes fresh and exciting with the help of

NFL teachers, who could work in tandem with FL teachers when teaching the subject matter. For the time being, there is a perceived desire on the part of FL teachers to distance themselves and let NFL teachers take charge even during joint events in LGs with an excellent track record on integration. We need to challenge this mindset and recognise that students ideally learn through the joint efforts of FL and NFL and both sides can learn a thing or two from the other.

“I would like to see hobby school teachers spruce up and add value to FL classes with flexible visits and temporary takeovers. Viljandi

If the enrichment of students' more routine classes were to be carried out in tandem by FL and NFL teachers, it immediately brings up the question of fair funding. This is something that the city of Pärnu has already successfully tackled within its own LG by allocating additional financial resources for collaborative projects between FL and NFL teachers. More specifically, the remuneration of NFL teachers for teaching FL subjects is dependent on the regularity of such work – if an NFL teacher teaches the subjects regularly, their remuneration for these lessons is included in their monthly salary, if irregularly, the NFL teacher is paid extra for the additional classes.

There are many other examples of cooperation between FL and NFL. A good example mentioned during piloting was the suggestion of an art teacher from a general education school to take their students to an art school teacher to learn new techniques. While FL art teachers also have specialised training, the teachers in art schools are often top specialists in their field and able to bring in-depth expertise to a particular field of art (e.g. ceramics).

Project days and project weeks are carried out in many schools, mostly at the behest of general education schools, but the pilots feel that this is where more NFL teachers and supervisors could be involved. In fact, this practice is already used in many places, but there seems to be a lack of acknowledgement that this too constitutes FL and NFL integration.

It was proposed to review the organisation of the submission of FL and NFL creative works for basic school students and, if the student is enrolled in the same subjects in FL and NFL and the volume of the creative work requires more or less the same capacity, to do it in cooperation between FL and NFL so that the student only has to submit one creative work, reducing their overall workload during an already stressful period as they are working to graduate from basic school.

In the case of integration between FL and NFL, a digital register would be of great help, showing the NFL subjects that students are taking. This would allow maths teachers, for example, to get an overview of the interests and backgrounds of their students, and if it turns out that half of the students are enrolled in robotics, the teacher can tailor the lesson accordingly and get the students more interested in their subject.

While integration provides a good opportunity to discover talents and develop their inherent strengths, piloting also emphasised that integration should be accessible to all and involve all students, not just those from larger regions or with special interests. Solving problems related to long distances is difficult but not impossible - for example, it is possible to set up hobby groups directly in general education schools with funding from the LG, it is also possible to outsource hobby group services or to invite NFL teachers to a smaller location a couple of times a week (mobile hobby group) (e.g. Kolga-Jaani School with a total of 64 students also has nine hobby groups).



To highlight the importance of FL and NFL alike, the results obtained in the FL and NFL should be reflected in the student's leaving certificate and this could help the student find their first job.

4 Improved guidelines for the implementation of policy recommendations

This chapter presents guidelines for implementing the policy recommendations. The guidelines were formulated as a result of the meetings of the co-creation working group and include an explanation of why they are necessary.

As a result of the first co-creation working group meeting, initial guidelines were developed, validated and improved during the second co-creation working group meeting. Following the piloting actions and the third co-creation working group meeting, a final improvement of the guidelines took place.

The guidelines are provided based on policy recommendations and their targets (state, LG, FL and NFL). The key role in the implementation of the guidelines may differ from the target of the policy recommendation or may require cooperation between all stakeholders.

4.1 Guidelines for implementing policy recommendations aimed at the state

Although there are numerous examples of the integration of non-formal and formal learning across Estonia, strong support from the state, i.e. the Ministry of Education and Research, is needed for all stakeholders on an equal footing to ensure systemic success. The state is responsible for the legislation, funding, support systems and technical capacity related to policy change. In the process of discussing the policy recommendations made to the state, the members of the co-creation working group came up with a number of important activities that the state alone can implement and which are of critical importance of the integration of non-formal and formal learning.

Below is a summary table with the guidelines needed to implement the policy recommendation.

Table 1: Summary of the activities needed to implement the policy recommendations aimed at the state

Policy recommendation	Guidelines for implementing policy recommendations aimed at the state
1. Develop the principles, guidance materials and support measures of the integration of FL and NFL	<ul style="list-style-type: none">1.1 Create a quality model for integration1.2 Identify the way to describe NFL learning outcomes1.3 Establish support measures/encourage the creation of cooperation groups at local level1.4 Create a digital register of education
2. Prepare amendments to legislation to recognise optional subjects as a part of the compulsory curriculum	<ul style="list-style-type: none">2.1 Define the concept of optional subjects at national level2.2 Create a quality model for NFL subjects that provides stakeholders with assurance on the quality of NFL2.3 Introduce a “free timeslot” for NFL in the national curriculum for basic schools2.4 Establish different assessment criteria for optional subjects than those in the national



	curriculum for upper secondary schools and national curriculum for basic schools
3 Support the development of a professional qualification system for hobby education, continue to popularise the professional qualification system for youth work	<p>3.1 Continue to popularise the professional qualification system of existing vocations in hobby education (e.g. coach, dance specialist, etc.)</p> <p>3.2 Create a professional system for teachers in hobby education, agree on qualification requirements</p> <p>3.3 Ensure national support for the salaries of youth workers</p>
4 Establish a common digital register of education for FL and NFL with an overview of learning pathways in FL and NFL (portfolio/education passport), qualifications of NFL providers, NFL content, learning outcomes (register of education and youth).	<p>4.1 Create a digital register of education that is open to all stakeholders, including the state, FL, NFL, parents and students</p> <p>4.2 Ensure that the digital register of education provides an overview of the qualifications of NFL service providers (teachers, coaches, youth workers in hobby education, etc.)</p> <p>4.3 Categorise hobby education services according to proficiency and/or levels</p>
5 Develop the digital competences of youth workers/hobby education teachers in both initial and further training	<p>5.1 Offer training programmes to develop digital competences</p> <p>5.2 Ensure IT support for the use of digital solutions in FL and NFL teaching and learning</p>
6 Organise training for schools and prepare guidance materials that explain how to use self-assessment to assess the achievement of learning outcomes when recognising NFL.	<p>The taskforce made an additional suggestion to this policy recommendation to emphasise the common training needs of FL and NFL organisations. This policy recommendation might therefore sound as follows: <u>Organise joint training for general education schools and NFL organisations</u> and to prepare guidance materials that explain how to use self-assessment to assess the achievement of learning outcomes when recognising NFL.</p> <p>6.1 Organise joint training and guidance materials for NFL and FL</p>
7 Train integration coordinators, support networking: organise information days and co-vision meetings, continue to collect examples of successful cooperation between NFL and FL, etc.	<p>7.1 Define the role and tasks of the integration coordinator</p> <p>7.2 Train integration coordinators with experience in FL and NFL</p> <p>7.3 Build trust between different stakeholders and raise awareness among stakeholders</p>
8 Monitor and assess the progress and success of the policy change related to the integration of FL and NFL	<p>8.1 Support the process of comparing NFL and FL curricula and/or subject syllabi</p> <p>8.2 Evaluate how many students had their academic workload reduced and how many obtained a positive result in NFL and FL learning outcomes</p> <p>S8.3 Evaluate the number of subject syllabi updated in cooperation</p>

4.1.1 Recommendation No. 1

S1. Develop the principles, guidance materials and support measures of the integration of non-formal and formal learning, which allow and support the implementation of all three policy options and enhance cooperation between various stakeholders.

In the course of discussion, the co-creation working group came up with four activities that are essential to realise this policy recommendation. What matters most is cooperation between different stakeholders, in particular between the state and local governments. At the local level, cooperation between the LG, general education schools, NFL providers, students and their parents should all work together.

1.1 Create a quality model for integration

In order to ensure that the integration of FL and NFL is carried out under the same terms and conditions throughout Estonia, it is necessary to create a common quality model for integration, the principles of which should be laid down in legislation. On the one hand, clearly defining and describing the roles of the integration process and its different stages, including the roles of the integration stakeholders, is critical for ensuring the quality of integration as a process, while on the other hand, clear requirements and quality criteria for service providers must be provided for in legislation. While qualification requirements for FL teachers are already established, no such requirements exist for hobby school employees and youth workers.

Members of the co-creation working group pointed out that at the moment the recognition of NFL subjects in general education schools is chaotic and lacks a common basis. In general education schools where NFL is recognised, it is mostly based on gut feeling. At the same time, there are some schools where there is no systematic recognition of NFL. A common quality model ensures the same principles for recognising NFL even if the student has to move within Estonia.

As general education schools currently have the option, not obligation, to review applications submitted by parents for recognising NFL, the inclusion of the principles of integration in legislation ensures that the school must review the application and that the decision taken by the general education school has a legal basis. This, in turn, reduces the ambiguity that often accompanies the recognition of NFL. In addition, the specificities of the LG should be taken into account when recognising NFL (size of the LG, material capacities, distances between NFL service providers and FL – possible cooperation with neighbouring LGs).

The sharing of best practices between FL and NFL providers does not provide a clear understanding of the content and purpose of integration and its expected impact on students. When it comes to the introduction of the practice, there tends to be a degree of mistrust and uncertainty about what is allowed. National clarification and the coordinated sharing of practices would therefore lend some much needed credibility, encouraging FL providers to adopt them more widely.

The principles and evaluation criteria for quality assurance for NFL areas should be described in developing a quality model for integration, as these are essential for building trust between the stakeholders. At the second meeting of the co-creation working group, it was pointed out that umbrella organisations for hobby education are currently working on the description of an NFL quality model with the aim of identifying what can be considered a quality service in hobby education and how it fits in with FL.

It is important to define what should be the qualifications of a hobby education teacher, youth worker and NFL provider and what a truly student-centred learning environment should look like. A standardised approach is necessary to ensure that NFL is recognised on the same bases in different general education schools across Estonia.

More broadly, integration should be a two-way process, i.e. thought should be given not only how to recognise NFL subjects in FL, but also how to apply FL teachings in NFL.

1.2 Identify the way to describe NFL learning outcomes

In addition to a clear description of the integration processes and the tasks of the integration stakeholders, and the qualification requirements for service providers, there is also a need for a coherent and clear description of NFL learning outcomes, which should be competency-based and with measurable factors. Clearly described learning outcomes help decide how to structure the integration process and will contribute to improving the overall quality of integration as a process. As it is not always possible to describe learning outcomes using exactly the same criteria, it is important to take into account the specificities of the fields (e.g. arts, sport, etc.).

The way in which learning outcomes are described can be determined by the state, e.g. in what form the learning NFL outcomes must be described in the curricula of the fields of interest of the registered schools of interest in EHIS. As the learning outcomes should be aligned with those of general education schools (Policy Recommendation No. 15), government guidelines would ensure a common understanding of the NFL and FL learning outcomes. The unambiguous description of learning outcomes presupposes a coherent and clear vision of the direction to be taken, how APEL or a similar system will be implemented or how NFL will be taken into account in formal learning.

The co-creation working group endorsed the concept of APEL, which takes into account a person's prior learning and work experience, and whereby learning institutions must be prepared to recognise knowledge and skills acquired outside formal education as equivalent to learning outcomes acquired in formal education, while at the same time being prepared to approach each student individually.⁷ The use of a similar approach to APEL (structured process, availability of forms, etc.) could, in the opinion of the taskforce members, also reduce the burden on schools in organising integration.

Clear guidelines are needed from the state on how to count NFL subjects towards FL, how to assess and compare the learning outcomes of NFL and FL subjects taken. At a later stage in the integration process, it may be necessary to set up a committee at the level of the LG to assess learning outcomes (form, timing and content depend on the LG). A systematic approach to setting up committees should also be taken to establish who the members are, at what point working with NFL service providers becomes necessary and how to cooperate in mapping learning outcomes. This framework could be provided by the state, with the setting up of commissions in the responsibility of the LG, so that general education schools and NFL institutions under LG administration can move towards common educational goals. When determining the composition of the committee, the size and specificities of the LG must be taken into account, e.g. for smaller LGs, the same people may be teaching in general education schools and NFL service providers.

⁷ APEL <https://www.hm.ee/kutse-ja-taiskasvanuharidus/taiskasvanuharidus/vota>

In the assessment of the co-creation working group, the risk of not introducing changes is that students will continue to be overburdened and fatigued, which could lead to a loss of motivation affecting mental health in general. In order to encourage students' personal development, it is important that they feel that their efforts in NFL are noticed and recognised.

1.3 Establish support measures/encourage the creation of cooperation groups at local level

For successful integration to take place, there needs to be a discussion between FL and NFL and the stakeholders must come together. To enhance cooperation between the stakeholders, taskforces should be set up, involving representatives of FL and NFL, with the organisation of the taskforces being led by the state, at least in the initial phase (e.g. setting up guidelines on how to set up taskforces, who should be involved in the taskforces, what the objectives of the meetings should be, etc.). In the longer term, the convening and organisation of cooperation groups should be the responsibility of the LG, in particular the LG's integration coordinator or, if the LG cannot afford to fund this position, the LG's department of education or culture. One of the aims of cooperation groups would be to compare learning outcomes and to try to find common ground between the FL and NFL subjects. The co-creation working group has provided good examples of how interest schools work together with general education schools, and where separately established co-production groups analyse national and hobby school curricula.

This activity is partly in line with policy recommendation No. 12, which is addressed to LGs, but is also important for the implementation of policy recommendation No. 1, in particular as regards the improvement of cooperation between NFL and FL.

1.4 Create a digital register of education

In the assessment of the taskforce, there is a significant need for a digital database to keep track of students' comprehensive learning history. A digital database would allow different stakeholders (state, LG, FL, students themselves, parent) to see which activities the student is involved in outside FL. The taskforce pointed out that the creation and maintenance of a database requires a constant flow of resources, and that if the database is not sufficiently developed, it can produce additional burden and waste rather than benefits. The creation of a database requires the financial capacity to develop, maintain and update it. The issues related to the digital register are covered in more detail in policy recommendation No. 4.

4.1.2 Recommendation No. 2

S2. Prepare a legislative amendment that allows optional subjects to be recognised as a part of the compulsory curriculum.

In the course of the discussion on this policy recommendation, the co-creation working group essentially came up with five activities that are essential for the implementation of this recommendation.

2.1 Define the concept of optional subjects at national level

Firstly, the concept of optional subjects should be defined at national level, so that all stakeholders understand it in the same way and all stakeholders have a common framework for further activities.

2.2 Create a quality model for NFL subjects that provides stakeholders with assurance on the quality of NFL

As a key activity in the implementation of this policy recommendation, the creation of a quality model for NFL was highlighted to explain would clarify the requirements for non-formal learning, how learning outcomes are assessed (i.e. the methods used to assess learning outcomes should be described in the curricula), and the basis on which non-formal learning is integrated with formal learning. Agreeing on a common set of quality criteria for NFL will provide all stakeholders with certainty regarding the quality of non-formal learning, especially general education schools, as there are many providers of non-formal learning and it is sometimes difficult to understand the quality of the service they provide.

However, it was underlined at the second co-creation working group meeting that under the current system, highly academic institutions, which assess the quality of their services through already existing and functioning systems, are also seen as providers of non-formal learning, providing students with a very comprehensive, broad and in-depth subject-based education. The studies provided by such NFL providers are systematic and time-tested, e.g. pre-professional musical learning, the “Thought-out programme” or environmental training with a cloudberry label, or in-depth teaching of science or technical subjects by the University of Tartu Youth Academy.

If the inclusion of optional subjects is a part of the national curriculum, the state needs to provide local governments with guidelines and instructions on the principles of the implementation of optional subjects. Although there are many differences between municipalities, both regionally and in terms of the size of the local government, a national framework is needed to provide a common view and accommodate LG-specific differences for each LG, e.g. based on what NFL provision is possible in the LG (e.g. Tallinn vs Kihnu).

In turn, local governments can use their knowledge to create a list of service providers whose quality of service meets the quality requirements of optional subjects. Here, it was stressed that the particulars associated with local governments should be taken into account, as their financial possibilities can be very different, and if it is part of a national curriculum, there should be a possibility to include state funding for the implementation of optional subjects.

The educational background of non-formal learning teachers and supervisors was highlighted as an important issue. Since non-formal learning can differ greatly from formal learning in different subject areas, and often the practical skills, expertise and long experience of non-formal teachers take priority, the national qualification requirements for general education should not be used to assess the suitability of a teacher or supervisor of an optional subject. The taskforce believes that some relaxation in the qualification requirements for supervisors/teachers is needed to be able to offer the widest possible choice of optional subjects. One of the risks of including optional subjects as a compulsory part of the curriculum was identified as situations where coaches are certified at professional level 7 or 8 but have no Master’s degree, which means that there is no legal basis for teaching classes (optional subjects) that are part of the formal education curriculum.

To ensure that non-formal education has a sufficient number of qualified supervisors and teachers who are suitable for teaching optional subjects, and that local governments have a sufficiently wide range of optional subjects on offer for students to choose from, the members of the taskforce believe that it is necessary to harmonise the hourly rates for formal education teachers and for teachers and youth workers in hobby education. National support is also needed to pay teachers and youth workers in hobby education.

2.3 Introduce a “free timeslot” for NFL in the national curriculum for basic schools

According to the national curriculum for upper secondary schools, the minimum academic workload in upper secondary school is 96 courses (1 course is 35 lessons), of which 69 are set by the state. At the second meeting of the co-creation working group, it was proposed to define a certain number of courses for non-formal learning determined by the state. In this case, it would be up to the student to decide what and when they want to learn in non-formal learning. It is important to reach a certain number of lessons and it is also important that subjects completed in NFL could be recognised as courses in FL curricula. It was acknowledged that this approach is already in use in some schools, but that in such cases the general education school and the hobby school have to prove that the student has indeed completed the given course.

In the assessment of the co-creation working group, a similar approach could be used in basic school, as currently the national curriculum for basic schools is primarily filled with core subjects. From the point of view of the integration of effective non-formal and formal learning, it is important to create a “free timeslot” for optional subjects in the curricula of basic schools and to define optional subjects at legislative level so that schools would not be able to use this time to supplement core subjects and this timeslot would be strictly prescribed for the development of students’ interests outside FL, either with an FL provider (optional subjects provided by the school) or by giving the student extra time and the opportunity to seek activities in their own interest with NFL service providers.

Members of the co-creation working group gave the example of a situation where the curriculum of basic schools presently has four optional subjects per week in school stage III, but most of the time they are used as additional lessons for the teaching of core subjects (mathematics, physics, Estonian, etc.), which does not serve the intended purpose of optional subjects. Therefore, it would be important to designate a certain number of lessons (e.g. two lessons per week, in each class in school stage III) as a formal part of non-formal learning, i.e. as a compulsory part of the curriculum to be dedicated to optional subjects, which may not be allocated for the subjects listed in the national curriculum for basic schools.

On the matter of practical arrangements for introducing optional subjects, the taskforce proposed to include such subjects offered by the school either at the beginning of the day or at the end of the day to avoid unnecessary time gaps in the middle of the day, which can be difficult for students to fill independently and in a meaningful way depending on their self-management skills. This way, students who have opted for a non-formal service provider for their optional subject can also use their time more efficiently. In a (smaller) school, where all the optional subjects are offered at school, it is easier to organise the students’ timetable and optional subjects can take place in the middle of the school day. It is important to plan students’ school days wisely and make sure there are no non-beneficial breaks.

2.4 Establish different assessment criteria for optional subjects than those in the national curriculum for secondary schools and national curriculum for basic schools

The taskforce also discussed the assessment of optional subjects and the assessment criteria, which should be different from the traditional numerical assessment of subjects in the national curricula for upper secondary and basic schools, focussing instead on whether the student has completed the prescribed amount of learning or not (passed-not passed).

On the one hand, the non-numerical assessment and crediting of optional subjects is important in terms of encouraging students to participate in non-formal learning, and on the other hand, a clear distinction between formal and non-formal learning is

needed so that non-formal optional subjects continue to be primarily based on the personal interests of students as opposed to compulsory subjects.

4.1.3 Recommendation No. 3

S3. Support the development of a professional qualification system for hobby education and continue to popularise the professional qualification system for youth work.

Discussions in the co-creation working group came up with three activities that are essential for the implementation of this policy recommendation.

3.1 Continue to popularise the professional qualification system of existing vocations in hobby education (e.g. coach, dance specialist, etc.)

Future labour shortages and the lack of students in non-formal learning could be avoided by popularising existing professions. This includes not only the qualification of youth workers, but also certain types of coaches, dance specialists, etc. Members of the taskforce pointed out that one of the prerequisites for popularising the vocational system for hobby education qualifications are support systems in non-formal learning, which should be linked to the qualifications of employees at all levels.

3.2 Create a professional system for teachers in hobby education, agree on qualification requirements

According to the co-creation working group participants, the creation of a professional system for teachers of hobby education and hobby activities where their qualification is directly linked to their salaries is essential to motivate teachers and supervisors to apply for a qualification. The qualifications of a hobby education teacher and a teacher at a general education school should be equivalent and equally valued.

The lack of a professional standard for hobby education means that salaries in hobby education are also lower. The integration of non-formal and formal learning would be smoother if NFL and FL salary levels were brought to equal footing. In the assessment of the co-creation working group, public funding is of critical importance to getting the vocational system for hobby education qualifications up and running. At present, there is no incentive to apply for the qualification of a hobby education teacher because it generally entails little to no reward (although there are some LGs where this is incentivised by offering higher salaries).

3.3 Ensure national support for the salaries of youth workers

There is a need for state level salary support for specialists in non-formal learning. On the one hand, it would foster the sentiment that non-formal learning is also important at national level, and on the other hand it works as a personal incentive for hobby education teachers and youth workers to apply for a profession and keep developing. A good example was given of a system where coaches receive national salary support. This system produced a significantly higher number of applications for teaching qualifications compared to areas where there is no national support.

A model for financing the work of NFL teachers needs to be considered at the national and LG level for cases where NFL teachers visit regular FL classes to spruce things up and where FL is carried out in cooperation between NFL and FL teachers.

4.1.4 Recommendation No. 4

S4. Establish a common digital register of education for FL and NFL, which

- 1. gives an overview of the student's learning pathway with respect to both FL and NFL (function of a portfolio/education passport);**
- 2. gives an overview of the qualifications of NFL providers and the content and expected learning outcomes of NFL (function of a register for the field of education and youth).**

At the second meeting of the co-creation working group, the smart models for youth work, the Hobby Wolf and Infohunt, established under the European Social Fund's programme "Involving young people at risk of exclusion and improving their employability" were mentioned. These registers combine information from service providers and young people, bringing the two stakeholders together. Although the user base is not yet very substantial, some local governments have already successfully implemented these registers. However, for many local governments, the lack of a data management solution such as the ARNO software system presents an obstacle, resulting in the use of MS Excel spreadsheets, which prohibit the exchange of data between stakeholders. The introduction and implementation of a nationwide system is therefore essential for communication between the stakeholders.

The project dedicated to personalised learning pathways was also mentioned, which has now reached the piloting stage. This project enables the comparison of NFL and FL learning outcomes, but this requires the learning outcomes in hobby education to be described in a similar way to FL.

Extensive preparations are underway for the development of the Estonian Education Information System EHIS in 2025. According to a spokesperson from the Ministry of Education and Research, EHIS is undergoing major changes. The new digital register is set to include curricula updates for hobby schools, giving a better overview of what, where and how is being achieved and with what objectives and learning outcomes. There are also plans to add the capacity to issue certificates to hobby schools, and analyses of this, etc.

Largely unaware of the background described above, the co-creation working group arrived at three key activities from the viewpoint of implementing the policy recommendation.

4.1 Create a digital register of education that is open to all stakeholders, including the state, FL, NFL, parents and students

Stakeholders in the co-creation working group have high expectations for the digital register. Above all, it should be a state-supported, multifunctional and sustainable database, which is continuously updated, maintained and monitored, i.e. a register administrator is appointed to take responsibility for and verify the accuracy of the data and communicate with stakeholders and request updates if necessary. The functioning of the digital register should also not be dependent on public procurements, so that no matter who is awarded a public procurement or what stage the procurement procedure is at, the digital register should always be accessible and updated.

On the one hand, it is important to ensure a convenient view for parents, who can get a relevant overview of their child's activities and, if necessary, easily retrieve information on their child's hobby groups or schools (much like kindergartens currently provide information for schools). On the other hand, the digital register is a

good analytical tool for local governments, who can collect statistics on the hobby activities and hobby education of children living in the local government.

The digital register should also provide the wider public with an overview of the activities and learning outcomes of different non-formal learning providers.

Since current legislation does not allow a student's learning pathway to be published in EHIS for teachers and youth workers in general and hobby education, cooperation between the Ministry of Education and Research and the Estonian Data Protection Inspectorate is crucial (amendments to the Personal Data Protection Act may need to be introduced). Certainly, a student's personal data should be protected and visible only to related stakeholders (adult students can grant permission to view their data), but it should also be possible to analyse the data and draw broader conclusions based on the non-personalised data. At present, unless students or their parents have asked for the data to be published, hobby schools do not even have information on which general education school the student attends.

For the digital register to become a valuable practical tool for all stakeholders, it must be compatible with different databases, which would only permit the party providing data to enter information once. With the databases currently in use, the same information has to be re-entered into different databases each time to make it available to everyone. This is not a cost-effective solution and can lead to information gaps.

4.2 Ensure that the digital register of education provides an overview of the qualifications of NFL service providers (teachers, coaches, youth workers in hobby education, etc.)

In contrast to formal education, one of the biggest drawbacks of the current EHIS from a non-formal learning point of view is that EHIS allows for the entry of the highest level of education (e.g. Bachelor, Master, etc.) of an employee working in non-formal learning if it is not already recorded in the system, but there are no technical solutions for adding further training or other specialised training (e.g. coach qualification) that would better describe the qualifications of a hobby education teacher and youth worker. This is not a problem for FL as the system allows the inclusion of further training and other training for FL in addition to the acquired degree.

The qualification of non-formal learning providers is a recurrent topic that requires a more comprehensive approach and improved flexibility from the state in the assessment of the co-creation working group. According to the taskforce, there are currently different qualification requirements for teachers and lecturers in general education, vocational education and training and higher education, and the area with the most ambiguity is hobby education and hobby activities as different approaches apply to different service providers.

The register of coaches (Estonian Sports Register) was mentioned as a good example, which could also be applied to non-formal learning service providers. A well-functioning professional standard for coaches has been developed, setting out minimum qualification requirements based on specificity.

The problem of teacher qualification requirements is also already fairly well addressed in vocational education, where professional practice is part of the studies and practical knowledge is passed on by experts in the field (welders, master builders, etc.). The co-creation working group believes that vocational training could serve as an example for involving practitioners in schoolwork and giving them a legal basis for teaching in general education.

4.3 Categorise hobby education services according to proficiency and/or levels

The categorisation of activities gives a better overview of the background of service providers, which is particularly important for new service providers. From the point of view of integrating non-formal and formal learning, the availability of comprehensive information in a single database is particularly important for general and vocational schools, which have to decide whether or not to accept courses a student has completed in non-formal learning.

An essential prerequisite for the establishment of a quality model for NFL service providers is the creation of a nationwide standard that would define the quality of service and the volume of subjects. In the assessment of the co-creation working group, the standardisation of activities would give a better understanding of the quality and content of hobby education courses. The assignment of proficiency and/or levels to the services of a provider of hobby education provides a common basis for deciding under which conditions a subject can be recognised as part of formal learning, regardless of who was the service provider or in which local government the subject was taught.

At the moment, the definitions of youth hobby education and hobby activities are not yet approved, but the umbrella organisations for hobby education propose dividing hobby education into three levels – recreational hobby education, basic hobby education and pre-professional hobby education.

In the two meetings of the co-creation working group, NFL service levels (e.g. A1, A2, etc.) and the levels of hobby education (recreational hobby education, basic hobby education and pre-professional hobby education) were discussed, but no final choice was made. Simplicity emerged as the key issue – the system of proficiencies and/or levels should not be complex and overly detailed to avoid the risk that the system will not work as intended.

4.1.5 Recommendation No. 5

S5. Develop the digital competences of youth workers/hobby education teachers in both initial and further training.

While it is necessary to develop the digital competences of youth workers and hobby education teachers in both initial and further training, the taskforce believes that it is important to keep in mind that personal contact between student and teacher is key in hobby education and activities. For more creative subjects (dance, musical instruments), it was felt that it was impossible to start the teaching process online, as there were no precise guidelines compared to more concrete and practical subjects (e.g. robotics, space lectures, etc.), where it is easier to manage independently. However, three key activities to implement the policy recommendation were identified.

5.1 Offer training programmes to develop digital competences

As the capacity of local governments to offer different non-formal learning services depends largely on the size of the city or local government, it is important to focus on developing the digital competences of service providers in less wealthy LGs, thus giving students the opportunity to participate in non-formal learning online, to reduce the disparities between LGs and ensure successful integration.

It is also important to develop the digital competences of teachers and supervisors in rural areas where it is not practical to open a hobby group due to a lack of

students, or where there is a high demand for a service but not enough places for everyone.

5.2 Ensure IT support for the use of digital solutions in FL and NFL teaching and learning

Digital solutions are increasingly used for teaching and learning in FL and NFL. To ensure that digital solutions are seamlessly integrated into both formal and non-formal learning, hobby education teachers, youth workers and FL teachers should have access to IT support at all times. The state can support LGs by developing guidelines and sharing know-how, while LGs will be tasked with providing IT support to stakeholders.

4.1.6 Recommendation No. 6

S6. Organise training for schools and prepare guidance materials that explain how to use self-assessment to determine the achievement of learning outcomes when recognising NFL.

The taskforce which discussed policy recommendations proposed to update this recommendation by including the need for joint training for FL and NFL organisations, as keeping the stakeholders separate does not promote successful integration between FL and NFL. The importance of both sides being on the same level of communication and mutual meetings was stressed – as joint training sessions and get-togethers facilitate more effective cooperation. The same idea was repeatedly discussed among other taskforces. It was also suggested to say “general education schools” instead of “schools” for clarity.

The improved policy recommendation might therefore sound as follows:

S6. Organise joint training for general education schools and NFL organisations and to prepare guidance materials that explain how to use self-assessment to determine the achievement of learning outcomes when recognising NFL.

6.1 Organise joint training and guidance materials for NFL and FL

As mentioned above, close cooperation between the representatives of FL and NFL, including the managers, is critical for successful integration. Taskforce members stressed that FL and NFL representatives need to share the same information space and that national training systems should be designed in a way that takes all stakeholders into account. They pointed out specifically that at the moment, not enough training is offered to the managers of hobby education schools, or that participation is hindered due to the difficulty in meeting the training conditions. This means that at the moment, NFL managers receive training mainly through the Association of Estonian Hobby Schools.

With formal education, the qualifications of the teachers and the learning outcomes of the subjects are both very clearly described and known to all, whereas in the case of non-formal learning there is much more ambiguity, making it easy for preconceptions to arise about the quality of the service provided by non-formal education. A shared information space would bring FL and NFL representatives closer together and increase understanding of each other’s values, activities and qualifications. Clear guidance materials on self-assessment criteria should be developed across the education system for service providers and students to be implemented in FL and NFL.

One of the essential prerequisites for cooperation between the representatives of FL and NFL is a shared digital environment that combines different databases and holds information on the student's learning pathway. This means both information about the student and information about NFL providers (qualifications of service providers, etc.). Such a database would also give an overview of the selection of service providers, as well as the number of students participating in non-formal learning.

For a successful integration process, the organisation of joint training sessions by the state for FL and NFL stakeholders, at least in the early years of integration, is key, as it signals that integration issues are important for the state and require the participation and input of all stakeholders. In the future, the local government should be more involved in the organisation of joint events for FL and NFL and the building of trust between the stakeholders (the role of the LG integration coordinator or another LG official).

4.1.7 Recommendation No. 7

S7. Train integration coordinators and support their networking: organise information days and co-vision meetings, continue to collect examples of successful cooperation between NFL and FL, etc.

Discussions within the taskforce resulted in three activities.

7.1 Define the role and tasks of the integration coordinator

Although the first two co-creation working group meetings mostly focused on the position of an integration coordinator in general education schools, the different discussions in the taskforce also considered coordinators at the level of the local government, the coordinator of the NFL service provider or other alternatives to support the student in implementing integration (e.g. class teacher, director of studies, coordinators of students with special educational needs, etc.). During the discussions, it was recognised that the role and purpose of a particular position will depend on the institution and the level at which the coordinator will work.

The definition of the role of the integration coordinator and who should perform this role was also left to be tested by the participants of the co-creation working group interested in piloting. As a result of piloting and discussions at the third co-creation working group meeting, it was felt that at the level of the LG, the LG or the LG integration coordinator should be responsible for bringing FL and NFL stakeholders together, but that support from FL in particular is needed for the specific day-to-day issues of integration and help with the creation of students' individual curricula, either in the form of an in-school integration coordinator or another FL employee taking responsibility for integration-related issues in addition to other work tasks. As students are not believed to take a mass interest in integration, it was suggested that in larger LGs there could be one integration coordinator per school to interact with FL and NFL stakeholders and students on a daily basis. Such an approach might foster cooperation between schools, and all stakeholders would ultimately benefit from the shared experience.

As the curriculum prescribes optional and elective subjects, and these are taught in cooperation with other outside institutions, including NFL service providers, the integration coordinator could also be one of the school support specialists who helps organise studies. Depending on the size of the school, the coordinator may work part-time and/or their tasks may be distributed among existing school employees (director of studies, head of extracurricular activities, career counsellor, coordinator of students with special educational needs, etc.). However, as the integration

coordinator will have to coordinate the documentation of students' optional and elective subjects, liaise with non-formal learning providers, children and their parents, a full-time position would be needed for larger schools.

A systematic digital register where the different non-formal learning services are standardised, e.g. categorised according to different proficiencies and/or levels with the background of service providers easily accessible and different plans available, would help reduce the workload on the coordinator. However, in the assessment of the co-creation working group, the assessment of the quality of the providers of hobby education should not remain the responsibility of the integration coordinator alone, since, on the one hand, it is currently too complex a task (on what basis to assess quality) and, on the other hand, the general education school also bears responsibility for the future of the student by issuing a leaving certificate.

If the role of an integration coordinator remains only at the LG level, the co-creation working group believes continuous financial support from the state to be necessary to maintain the position of the LG integration coordinator. Otherwise, it will be a considerable additional cost, especially for smaller LGs that cannot financially cover these tasks, meaning that the provision of the service and its quality may suffer significantly. The position of an integration coordinator at the LG level also runs the risk of creating excessive reporting and bureaucracy.

7.2 Train integration coordinators with experience in FL and NFL

In the assessment of the co-creation working group, there are many teachers in Estonia who teach in both hobby schools and general and vocational schools, and are therefore familiar with how both systems function internally. There are also many teachers in general education schools who are parents themselves and therefore have good knowledge of NFL. In the assessment of the co-creation working group, these teachers should be the first to undergo training as coordinators to promote integration and networking. The taskforce again referred to the digital register, which should, among other things, reflect the background of teachers in general education schools, as well as hobby education teachers, youth workers and coaches to provide an overview of people with the right background. For the sake of simplicity, it was suggested to start with FL and NFL institutions within the same LG.

7.3 Build trust between different stakeholders and raise awareness among stakeholders

To facilitate the work of the integration coordinators and ensure good cooperation between the different stakeholders, more trust needs to be built between the stakeholders. Dialogue between representatives of formal and non-formal learning is critical for raising awareness among stakeholders and should be included in the working time (for collaboration, dialogue, new ideas, planning, etc.).

Building and enhancing trust between the stakeholders was a recurrent topic in the discussion of policy recommendations aimed at different stakeholders, and this should, at least initially, be the responsibility of both the state and the LG. Later on, more of the responsibility can fall on the LG with the LG integration coordinator acting as a bridge between FL and NFL.

4.1.8 Recommendation No. 8

S8. Monitor and assess the progress and success of the policy change related to the integration of FL and NFL.

In the course of discussion, the co-creation working group came up with three activities that might help bring this policy recommendation to life.

8.1 Support the process of comparing NFL and FL curricula and/or subject syllabi

Before monitoring the progress and success of policy changes, it is necessary to map the current situation and to compare the curricula and/or subject syllabi of NFL and FL, which should fall to the FL and NFL stakeholders. The main role of the state here is to develop appropriate guidance materials for comparing curricula and/or subject syllabi and to provide relevant training.

The purpose of comparison of NFL and FL subject syllabi is to identify common elements of learning outcomes, find ways to reduce the overall workload for students and to develop principles for the recognition of NFL studies. In the case of curricula, the learning outcomes and competences to be achieved across subjects can be compared with those offered in hobby education and youth work in the same region, i.e. an assessment can be made of which other providers could provide the student with relevant knowledge and skills similar to those gained through the FL subject.

The prerequisites for curricula comparison are joint discussions and state-provided joint trainings for NFL and FL. The resources needed for joint training are time and funding from the state. The co-creation working group gave the example of Viimsi rural municipality, where music teachers from general education schools and hobby education organised a joint meeting to map out what someone was doing. As such meetings often raise the issue of excessive workload and the need to find a time that is suitable for everyone, it was felt that the will of the stakeholders and communication between them was the key. Importance was also ascribed to getting to know one's partners and learning what is being done in general education and in hobby education.

Currently, sectoral changes to the national curriculum are expected in 2024, which will open up more flexible opportunities for NFL to be recognised in general education.

8.2 Evaluate how many students had their academic workload reduced and how many obtained a positive result in NFL and FL learning outcomes

Once the preparatory work is completed by mapping the curricula or subject syllabi of the other side, and a reference value is identified against which to compare future results, an assessment should be made of the real beneficiaries, i.e. how many students have had their workload reduced and how many have had NFL recognised in different subjects. One of the indicators could also be the assessment of the workload of teachers and supervisors (to monitor whether the workload of FL teachers decreases or increases as a result of integration). This also requires a basic set of principles based on which data could be collected in general education schools. Additional resources (including finances) for data collection and management should also be taken into account. It is also possible to include questions on integration in the satisfaction survey of schools and teachers, to help measure satisfaction with the integration process and with current achievements.

The co-creation working group also stressed the importance of the autonomous students, i.e. students themselves must be able to decide what parts of their NFL studies they would like to be recognised for FL and what parts they do not want recognised. Students must be able to self-assess how they did in NFL, meaning that NFL must enable students to understand what new knowledge or skills they acquired during the learning process. This information and related solutions/opportunities should also reach the digital register. The digital register should be a practical tool for the class teacher. Presently, the information related to

NFL is communicated to the class teacher through development conversations with the students. Class teachers often help students with NFL and FL integration and are involved in the student's interactions with their subject teacher.

Depending on the age of the child, parents' expectations and preparedness for integration should also be taken into account (the parent as the financier). For younger age groups, more thought must be given to the role of parents in integration and parents must be made more aware of what other things NFL has to offer in addition to specific skills (e.g. dance), such as collaborative and communication skills.

It was also highlighted that successful integration of NFL and FL requires a coordinator who is able to communicate and work with stakeholders (students, parents, teachers, heads of school). The coordinator must be a determined leader with a strong personality, someone who is respected.

One of the risks mentioned was that in some cases the student might not want to give up their FL class because they genuinely enjoy it, despite it overlapping with their studies in music school. Secondly, it was pointed out that students do not always have a place to be in between classes, as there is no common study room or library in general education schools. There is also the question of who is responsible for the student when they are not in class.

In addition, it was noted that the salaries of teachers in general education schools and hobby schools and youth workers are different and it is up to politicians to ensure their harmonisation.

8.3 Evaluate the number of subject syllabi updated in cooperation

An assessment should also be made of how many subject syllabi have been updated and co-produced, i.e. how many collaborative pathways have been created. In terms of monitoring frequency, either annual or five-yearly monitoring was proposed.

4.2 Guidelines for implementing policy recommendations aimed at local governments

The following table summarises the policy recommendations made to local governments and the activities identified by the co-creation working group to implement these policy recommendations.

Table 2: Summary of the activities needed to implement the policy recommendations aimed at local governments

Policy recommendations	Guidelines for implementing policy recommendations aimed at local governments
9. Prioritise the integration of NFL and FL at the level of the LG in development plans for the education and youth sector, thereby monitoring and analysing the progress and success of integration	9.1 Organise network meetings between FL and NFL heads of school 9.2 Encourage the sharing of good practices between LGs 9.3 Find additional funding for LGs to implement integration (calls for proposals for LGs) 9.4 Establish the role of integration coordinator at LG level

<p>10. Diversify the possibilities of NFL at LG level and ensure the availability of support measures (e.g. coverage of participation fees, appropriate transport arrangements) that would improve access to NFL for students from all regions and various socio-economic backgrounds</p>	<p>10.1 Categorise NFL services according to proficiency and/or level</p> <p>10.2 Map the NFL aspirations and interests of young people in the local government</p> <p>10.3 Resolve transport-related problems when using NFL services</p> <p>10.4 Find solutions to problems related to the remuneration of hobby education teachers and youth workers</p> <p>10.5 Map local government opportunities and premises</p> <p>10.6 Map young people excluded from non-formal learning in their local government and the reasons for their exclusion</p> <p>10.7 Establish a clear system for diversifying NFL opportunities in the LG and for ensuring support measures for students from different regions and socio-economic backgrounds to take part in NFL</p> <p>10.8 Ensure local government funding to (partially) cover participation fees for hobby education and activities</p>
<p>11. Fund the role or separate position of an integration coordinator at school.</p>	<p>11.1 Define the role of the integration coordinator and develop a system for the implementation of integration coordinators</p> <p>11.2 Ensure public funding (through the LG) for the integration coordinator</p> <p>11.3 Introduce the integration system and strategies in the development and financing plans of LGs</p>
<p>12. Map the NFL opportunities of the region and organise network meetings for NFL providers and schools.</p>	<p>12.1 Establish the role of integration coordinator at LG level</p> <p>12.2 Organise regular meetings between the different stakeholders</p> <p>12.3 Contribute to the development of cooperation between the stakeholders</p>
<p>13. Carry out consistent monitoring of the quality of NFL and assess the impact of policy changes related to the integration of FL and NFL at the local level.</p>	<p>13.1 At local government level, analyse the current use of free lessons</p> <p>13.2 Use NFL quality model designed by the state to assess the quality of NFL</p> <p>13.3 National requirements must be complemented by specific requirements for LGs</p> <p>13.4 Work with the community</p>

4.2.1 Recommendation No. 9

S9. Prioritise the integration of NFL and FL at the level of local governments in development plans for the education and youth sector, thereby monitoring and analysing the progress and success of integration.

In the course of the discussion, the co-creation working group came up with four key activities that could help implement this policy recommendation.

9.1 Organise network meetings between FL and NFL heads of school

During the discussion in the co-creation working group, it was concluded that only a few LGs are currently prioritising the integration of NFL and FL. For integration-related activities to become part of the daily work of the LG, it is necessary to prioritise and keep focus on integration issues. This is better achieved by including integration matters in the development plans and strategies of the LG. The creation of a shared information space (including network meetings) and getting the same information to all local governments across Estonia will create better conditions for the smooth integration of FL and NFL.

One important activity is the organisation of network meetings between heads of school by the LG, which would indicate that the LG considers integration an important topic. Network meetings help to build a common understanding of the need for integration and to highlight its benefits for all stakeholders.

At the moment, there are many positive views on integration among different stakeholders (state, LGs, NFL and FL representatives, parents), but there is no common understanding of the concept and importance of integration. To create a common understanding of the integration of NFL and FL and to raise awareness among all stakeholders involved, in addition to communication on the part of the LGs, it is also necessary to explain at the national level what integration is and what it entails for the stakeholders involved.

9.2 Encourage the sharing of good practices between LGs

Sharing good integration practices and experiences between LGs should always be encouraged. The taskforce pointed out that sharing the experiences of larger cities (Tallinn, Tartu, Pärnu) might prove interesting and useful for other LGs.

On the one hand, there is a lack of information on good practices in other LGs and no knowledge on where to look for them. On the other hand, not all LGs are willing to share good practices themselves, which creates a situation where there is actually no wider awareness of how integration between NFL and FL works in other LGs. At the same time, there is a willingness to learn from the experience of others. Therefore, the LG coordinator or another LG employee might be responsible for sharing good practices. At the same time, it was noted that additional funding would be needed to create the new position. Cooperation between associations of LGs, as well as between the Ministry of Education and Research and LGs is necessary and welcome.

The co-creation working group proposed the idea of awarding the title of Integrator of the Year, which would serve as more of a metaphor and help introduce the concept of integration to a wider audience. Integrator of the Year would function in a similar way to the existing title Education Friend of the Year, which has a broad meaning. At the third co-creation working group meeting, it was suggested that, at least in the early years of integration, successful integrators should be rewarded by allocating additional resources for integration or using a similar reward system.

9.3 Find additional funding for LGs to implement integration (calls for proposals for LGs)

According to the members of the taskforce, reducing or maintaining the level of national funding reflects the country's overall attitude towards integration. If the

integration of FL and NFL is not prioritised on a national level, it is difficult to convince local governments that they should be the ones prioritising integration issues. In a joint discussion, it was suggested that LGs should hold calls for proposals for additional integration projects, where LGs could apply for additional resources for integration. Additional funding could also cover the financing needed for integration coordinators.

In addition, it was felt that the participation of LGs in different taskforces would contribute to the sharing of good practices. For example, pilot projects with additional funding could be organised, enabling LGs participating in piloting to later share their experience with others.

9.4 Establish the role of integration coordinator at LG level

It is important not to assign integration matters as an added task for an existing full-time LG employee. In the assessment of the taskforce members, there should be a separate employee in the LG to deal with integration issues, and their tasks should include sharing good integration practices and organising meetings. It was also stressed that while the role of the integration coordinator is considered important at national level, the creation of such a post should also be possible at the LG level. The need for a separate LG integration coordinator was also highlighted in policy recommendation No. 12.

However, it was recognised that the role of an integration coordinator at LG level is dependent more on political decisions. While it is possible to create the role of an integration coordinator at a departmental level within an LG, it is important to consider that this is not a position that is universal for all LGs, as LGs differ in size and capacity. Given that integration is a relatively new topic and that the processes involved should be largely coordinated by the state, it is important that the state sets clear and specific targets for integration.

4.2.2 Recommendation No. 10

S10. Diversify the possibilities of NFL at local government level and ensure the availability of support measures (e.g. coverage of participation fees, appropriate transport arrangements) that would improve access to NFL for students from all regions and various socio-economic backgrounds.

Eight key activities were identified that should be taken to implement this policy recommendation.

10.1 Categorise NFL services according to proficiency and/or levels

For the local government to have a better overview of local NFL providers and their services (including quality), it is necessary to categorise services, either directly by the local government or at a national level. Categorising services would also greatly simplify the work of integration coordinators and help build trust between non-formal and formal learning providers.

10.2 Map the NFL aspirations and interests of young people in the local government

Feedback from young people, both at national and LG level, is crucial for integration, and therefore feedback mapping should be carried out on a common basis across all LGs, so that the data collected is comparable and can be used as a basis for strategic decisions.

In the assessment of the co-creation working group, a functioning system for collecting student feedback is already in place. The Ministry of Education and

Research organises annual surveys at the end of each school stage and in the assessment of the co-creation working group, this survey could be updated to include questions specific to the LG in relation to the integration of NFL and FL to get feedback on the students' wishes and needs (e.g. what works well in the LG, what needs improvement, etc.). This would allow LGs to make changes and additions to their development plans, while also giving them the chance to compare themselves with the Estonian average and other LGs. Such an approach would also provide more information for the state to plan strategic activities.

The student-centred approach adopted by a local government should ensure that all young people have the opportunity to pursue their interests. If the local government is not able to provide certain services to young people in its city or rural municipality, it can work with neighbouring rural municipalities or cities. For example, a child in Viimsi was unable to play parasport basketball, but the local government helped find a suitable basketball practice for them in Astangu and Viimsi rural municipality covered the travel costs.

It is also important to set priorities at local government level (in framework documents) and decide whether the rural municipality wishes to offer NFL services to all young people or whether there are exceptions, e.g. children with special needs etc., for whom it is admitted that the LG is financially unable to offer hobby education or activities to this target group.

10.3 Resolve transport-related problems when using NFL services

Regardless of the size of the LG, transport challenges arise everywhere. It is therefore important that a bus service with sufficient frequency between the different areas of the LG is ensured by the LG. Rae rural municipality was brought up as an example by the taskforce – Rae Hobby School operates in six different locations, but public transport timetables or insufficient routes (including for the school bus) remain a restrictive issue. This problem is even more relevant in smaller areas, as most NFL service providers are located in county centres which can be as far as 25-35 km from students' homes in smaller places, making NFL services time- and resource-consuming for the student and their family.

Although carpooling for the transport of children has occasionally been proposed at the national or county level, the taskforce does not see this as a good option. On the one hand, it puts the responsibility for the other children on the parent who is transporting them, and on the other hand, not all parents will trust their child to be in a stranger's car (the values of another parent may be very different from our own values, e.g. regarding drunk driving, driving style, etc.).

There are several ways to solve problems related to long distances or logistics. One solution proposed was the so-called reverse movement approach, whereby one or two days a week, hobby education teachers and youth workers move to smaller rural towns away from the county centres to be closer to students. In larger local governments, where hobby schools operate in several branches, this kind of teacher mobility system is already in place. This makes it possible to make use of the unused premises of formal education providers in the evenings. Another advantage is that the financial resources needed for transport do not come from the students' families but from the institutions providing NFL services.

It was also proposed for general education schools to create their own hobby groups with funding assistance from the LG, a good example being Kolga-Jaani School, which has 64 students but nine hobby groups. Another option is to outsource hobby groups, but this entails the risk that the fees requested by teachers/coaches will be too high, and that not all students will be able to participate in paid groups.

10.4 Find solutions to problems related to the remuneration of hobby education teachers and youth workers

The co-creation working group pointed out that unaffordable NFL service fees are not always the problem. The bigger issue is the remuneration of supervisors, which many LGs have no funds for. An example was given of a situation where an LG can allocate about 11 EUR/h gross for hobby group supervisors, but new supervisors (e.g. robotics, science groups, children's yoga) charge a 50-80 EUR/h gross fee for their time. As a result, some LGs are not able to provide all services of interest to children in the LG without additional support from the state.

In the assessment of the co-creation working group, additional resources should be allocated by the state to enable the provision of NFL services or the national and LG education funding model should be revised. In the latter case, if optional subjects are to be part of the formal learning curriculum and will be chosen by students from non-formal learning institutions outside formal learning, the part that is planned for optional subjects (e.g. 15-20%) in the formal curriculum could be reallocated to NFL providers.

10.5 Map local government opportunities and premises

Successful integration of formal and non-formal learning requires, first and foremost, the identification of options available to the local government (including premises) and the establishment of a network of trusted partners.

We should start by determining to what extent and with what means it would be possible to diversify the choices of local students and offer activities of interest to all target groups. In addition to municipal NFL providers, private service providers and their capacities (including premises) should be mapped in the LG. Information on all NFL service providers (including those based on private capital) in the LG and the supervisors working there should be consolidated into a single digital register. The creation of a database of experts to identify training providers in any given field would provide a better overview of the NFL opportunities available locally as well as nationwide. The database would bring experts and training providers willing to give private lessons in different fields on a common platform. For example, dance enthusiasts could find a dance teacher. A solution like that would make it easier to find supervisors specialised in an area that interests the student and would put the service provider in touch with the interested party more quickly. It could also include suitably qualified training providers (e.g. from hobby schools) to conduct basic courses.

If a local government wishes to provide non-formal learning services to all target groups, it is the responsibility of the LG to ensure, through various methods, whether paid or otherwise, that competent supervisors are available and willing to teach students with special needs or from different socio-economic backgrounds, as children with special needs are often excluded from NFL activities due to a lack of supervisors willing to teach more difficult target groups.

10.6 Map young people excluded from non-formal learning in their local government and the reasons for their exclusion

According to the co-creation working group, the highest number of students excluded from non-formal learning is in school stage III (grades 7-9). At local government level, the main reasons why young people do not take part in non-formal learning groups offered by their town or rural municipality should be identified – is it because there is no service of interest or because the student simply does not want to take part in hobby education and hobby activities.

It is important to ensure a smooth entry into non-formal learning for students of all ages to motivate them to participate in non-formal learning and to give them more options. If a student develops an interest in a subject later on, they can join a beginners' group without worrying that their peers are three or four years ahead. Similarly, if a student wants to change direction, the transition should be smooth.

10.7 Set up a clear system for diversifying NFL opportunities in the LG and for ensuring support measures for students from different regions and socio-economic backgrounds to take part in NFL

Set up a clear system for diversifying NFL opportunities in the LG and for ensuring support measures that improve access to NFL for students from different regions and socio-economic backgrounds.

The main risk here is that people working in the local government may change jobs, resulting in a change of priorities, which may affect the creation and provision of diverse learning opportunities. For example, the LG may decide that the new priority is to support only basketball, etc. At the LG level, a policy direction determining what is prioritised at local level is also important.

10.8 Ensure local government funding to (partially) cover participation fees for hobby education and activities

According to the co-creation working group, local government funding to support hobby education should go primarily to school stage I as children at this age are still discovering their interests and it is important for hobby group fees to be as low as possible to give children the opportunity to try out everything that interests them. For older children, LGs should find other methods to support students' interests.

4.2.3 Recommendation No. 11

S11. Fund the role or separate position of an integration coordinator at school.

In the course of discussion, the co-creation working group came up with three activities that are essential for the implementation of this policy recommendation.

11.1 Define the role of the integration coordinator and develop a system for the implementation of integration coordinators

In the assessment of the taskforce, it should be up to the local government to decide how to structure the role of the coordinator. Ideally, the coordinator should be represented in both FL and NFL. There was a consensus in the co-creation working group on the importance of the position of a coordinator position, especially in the early days of integration processes, when information needs to be available quickly to all stakeholders (what options are there to recognise NFL and under what terms and conditions). The role of the coordinator was mentioned throughout the discussions on the various policy recommendations.

The co-creation working group pointed out that in determining the role of the integration coordinator, it is important to keep in mind the large differences between LGs and general education schools. For example, in a school with 100 students, the school's head of extracurricular activities should be able to fulfil the role of the integration coordinator, but in larger schools, the heads of extracurricular activities have more tasks as it is and additional workload by having to coordinate integration is out of the question.

One of the prerequisites for using integration coordinators is the development of clear objectives for the role of the integration coordinator and the provision of

training, resulting in trained specialists competent to fulfil the role of the integration coordinator. A coordinator is by nature a team player who maps and brings all opportunities into a common information flow and ensures that the information reaches all stakeholders.

In the assessment of the co-creation working group, the role of the coordinator is extremely important for integration to advance and at least in the beginning, the state should be more supportive in guiding and assisting LGs, e.g. in the creation of guidelines, etc. It is important for LGs not to feel as if they have been left all alone by the state when dealing with this new topic. The taskforce found that, in order to have a more uniform level of coordinators nationwide, cooperation between coordinators should be organised at a national level. Therefore, an intermediate step between the state and the LGs was proposed, e.g. four national integration coordinators for a longer period.

11.2 Ensure public funding (through the LG) for the integration coordinator

During the joint discussion of the taskforce, it was concluded that effective NFL and FL integration requires support for the role of the coordinator at national policy level. The lack of political support and the rush to action by LGs were seen as a risk, which could lead to stakeholder fatigue and disinterest in the issue. It was also pointed out that the service might suffer if there is insufficient funding, meaning that the responsibilities of the integration coordinator would be assigned to someone else who is less familiar with the subject or does not consider it a priority. National support is certainly important, especially during the start-up phase of the reform.

11.3 Introduce the integration system and strategies in the development and financing plans of LGs

Since the position of the integration coordinator is coordinated by LG policies, the said policies should support it. Integration strategy should be reflected in the development plans of the LG and linked to specific funding. The LG must understand the importance of the integration coordinator and thus support the creation of this position. To do this, it is necessary to designate a responsible person (e.g. nationally) and to consider how the relevance of the post will be assessed and monitored.

4.2.4 Recommendation No. 12

S12. Map the NFL opportunities of the region and organise network meetings for NFL providers and schools.

In the course of discussion, the co-creation working group came up with three activities.

12.1 Establish the role of integration coordinator at LG level

The co-creation working group found that first of all the LG should have a specialist responsible for leading the mapping of NFL opportunities in the region and for collecting and disseminating information. Depending on the LG and the department where the specialist works, these mapping efforts could be done in cooperation with another department, e.g. the education department and the culture department. The role of the LG would be to systematically bring the different stakeholders together on the issues of integration, which would help raise awareness of the content of FL and NFL integration. The mapping of NFL opportunities should be carried out on a sectoral basis with the wishes of general education schools being mapped separately.

The need for an integration coordinator at LG level was repeatedly highlighted in discussions over various policy recommendations.

12.2 Organise regular meetings between the different stakeholders

Having an integration coordinator would ensure regular meetings and networking between providers of FL and NFL. Tartu was mentioned as an example of an LG with about 80 private sports schools, meaning that not all sports schools can come together at the same time because they experience different problems. Meetings would therefore need to be carefully planned to benefit all participants. Meetings should also be organised at the level of LG specialists to review each other's activities and progress, and to plan the way forward.

Networking should also take into account students and parents (by involving their representatives) to broaden the view and scope of cooperation. One part of these meetings would certainly be awareness raising, i.e. what, why and how to integrate between NFL and FL.

12.3 Contribute to the development of cooperation between the stakeholders

The smooth integration of FL and NFL requires open and trusting communication, which is not always quick and easily to achieve. It can take several meetings to develop a common understanding of each other's needs and expectations. Implementing the integration of RL and NFL requires clear objectives and a coordinator to keep an eye on the process of mapping NFL opportunities in the region.

Cooperation is needed in particular between the LG and hobby schools, hobby associations, museums, sports schools, general education schools and youth centres. Insufficient cooperation and the emergence of unjustified competition between them was seen as a risk!

4.2.5 Recommendation No. 13

S13. Carry out consistent monitoring of the quality of NFL and assess the impact of policy changes related to the integration of FL and NFL at the local level.

In the course of the discussion, the co-creation working group came up with four key activities.

13.1 At local government level, analyse the current use of free lessons

A mapping of how general education and vocational schools have used the resource of optional subjects so far should be carried out. The members of the co-creation working group were convinced that at the moment, most schools use the resources allocated for optional subjects at the basic school level more so for teaching core subjects (Estonian, mathematics, etc.), which does not fulfil the purpose of an optional subject.

13.2 Use NFL quality model designed by the state to assess the quality of NFL

For consistent monitoring of NFL quality, it is necessary to develop a framework and specific metrics at a national level to assess the quality of NFL service providers. According to one of the participants in the co-creation working group, work has already started on this issue at national level and the Ministry of Education and Research, in cooperation with its strategic partners, is already developing criteria to help decide when a private or municipal NFL provider is of high quality and when it

is not (e.g. initially on the basis of self-assessment, subsequently on the basis of an evaluation and a commission decision, etc.).

On the practical side, the taskforce proposed the use of a questionnaire in the digital register, which would reveal the level or category of the NFL service provider. The results would be reviewed and approved e.g. by the relevant committee.

One member of the taskforce felt that in the case of smaller hobby schools, which may only have three or four employees, the quality model seems too bureaucratic and it would be better to use state-issued diplomas or certificates.

The co-creation working group believes that the framework should be flexible, e.g. consider the experience of the coronavirus crisis and move forward with new knowledge. For example, during the outbreak of the virus, there was flexibility in assessing learning outcomes and in taking into account the achievement of minimum levels, e.g. in music lessons or physical education, even though children were acting independently teachers were unable to monitor their performance at all times.

13.3 National requirements must be complemented by specific requirements for LGs

As each local government is different in size and specificity, it is necessary to establish specific requirements for each rural municipality or city, in addition to the general national framework.

Based on the common framework and quality metrics developed by the state, LGs can put together their own lists of NFL providers who are accepted as NFL service providers in that specific LG. In this case, quality is the responsibility of the LG, as it is closest to the service providers and therefore has the best overview of the service providers and how the service is delivered.

13.4 Work with the community

In the assessment of the co-creation working group, it is not possible to carry out an evaluation of non-formal learning without taking into account the views of different stakeholders, including young people and parents. To get an unbiased view from the outside, it was suggested to take into account the opinion of community members who do not have children or who no longer have children of that age and who would be attending different hobby groups.

4.3 Guidelines for implementing policy recommendations aimed at providers of non-formal learning

The following table summarises the policy recommendations made to NFL service providers and the activities identified by the co-creation working group to implement these policy recommendations.

Table 3: Summary of the activities needed to implement the policy recommendations aimed at providers of non-formal learning

Policy recommendation	Guidelines for implementing policy recommendations aimed at the providers of non-formal learning
14. Support employees in obtaining the qualification of a youth worker (information, enabling participation in	For this policy recommendation, the taskforce proposed some improvements. In the assessment of the taskforce, the policy recommendation might sound as follows: 14. Support <u>youth workers</u> in obtaining the

training, linking the wage system to the qualification).	qualification of a youth worker and hobby education qualifications (<u>coach, dance specialist, hobby education teacher</u>) (information, enabling participation in training, linking the wage system to the qualification) 14.1 Move the part qualification of a hobby education teacher under the qualification of a teacher 14.2 Actively participate in learning and communication spaces for NFL and FL representatives 14.3 Change the conditions for participation in further training and retraining to enable hobby education teachers and youth workers to participate in further training and retraining
15. Clearly formulate the learning outcomes of NFL, paying particular attention to the development of general competences (e.g. hobby education, curricula).	15.1. Contribute to the creation of a national NFL vision 15.2. Participation in network meetings and further training of NFL representatives with FL representatives

4.3.1 Recommendation No. 14

S14. Support employees in obtaining the qualification of a youth worker (information, enabling participation in training, linking the wage system to the qualification).

For this policy recommendation, the co-creation working group proposed some improvements at its first meeting, which were accepted at the second meeting of the co-creation working group.

In the assessment of the taskforce, the policy recommendation might sound as follows: 14. Support youth workers in obtaining the qualification of a youth worker and hobby education qualifications (coach, dance specialist, hobby education teacher, etc.) (information, enabling participation in training, linking the wage system to the qualification)

The discussion identified four activities that are essential to realise this policy recommendation.

14.1 Move the part qualification of a hobby education teacher under the qualification of a teacher

The prerequisite for activities are clarity of concepts (hobby education, hobby activities) and equal treatment of hobby teachers with teachers of general education schools in the field of FL. Cooperation should take place in particular between the state, LG, hobby schools, vocational training providers and various umbrella organisations involved.

In the assessment of the taskforce, a professional system in the field of hobby education, where there is a constant shortage of teachers, is essential to give those interested in entering the field the opportunity to do so. The qualification system provides a model for self-evaluation for hobby education teachers and is an important basis for valuing hobby education teachers on an equal footing with FL teachers in terms of national salary support. The creation of a vocational training system could be viewed as part of the preparation for supporting integration.

NFL representatives should keep the topic relevant and communicate the importance of introducing the change to decision-makers.

14.2 Actively participate in learning and communication spaces for NFL and FL representatives

Closer cooperation between NFL and FL representatives will create a more conducive environment for trust. It is important for all stakeholders to recognise that FI and NFL specialists are equal partners with the common goal of addressing the needs of the student.

Close cooperation between the LG, NFL and FL is a prerequisite for the success of this process. Joint training sessions for teachers and supervisors in hobby education, hobby activities and formal learning were seen as a way to improve cooperation.

Mapping the training needs of NFL and FL providers is important here. Both NFL providers and FL representatives should work together. One of the problems identified was that while training and training needs exist, training courses are often not attended. This means it is also necessary to tackle the problem of lack of motivation of teachers, youth workers and managers in hobby education. Ways must be found to encourage them to take part in training, as integration cannot be achieved without cooperation between NFL and FL.

14.3 Change the conditions for participation in further training and retraining to enable hobby education teachers and youth workers to participate in further training and retraining

During discussions in the co-creation working group, it was agreed that there is a need to ensure equal treatment of hobby education teachers with FL teachers in further training and retraining. If a specialist with a Master's degree is employed in a hobby education, they cannot currently take part in retraining (e.g. to become a maths teacher), as only teachers working in general education schools are accepted for retraining.

The state has a key role to play in removing such restrictions, especially as there is a severe shortage of teachers in Estonia, which could be alleviated by this change. The problem at the moment is the attitude that a hobby education teacher is not a teacher because one must complete separate studies to become a teacher.

The lack of new good teachers in the field of hobby education and a decrease in the number of existing teachers willing to continue working in NFL was identified as an overall major risk. Training problems and lack of clarity on training in NFL were identified as risks. It was also felt that more focus should be given to the attitudes of FL teachers towards integration and their willingness to contribute to it.

4.3.2 Recommendation No. 15

S15. Clearly formulate the learning outcomes of NFL, paying particular attention to the development of general competences (e.g. hobby education, curricula).

In the course of discussion, the co-creation working group came up with two activities that are essential to realise this policy recommendation.

15.1 Contribute to the creation of a national NFL vision

For the successful implementation of integration, it is essential that the vision for NFL is outlined at a national level, including both the general principles of integration

and the principles and criteria for the quality of NFL. This vision should also encompass hobby education, hobby activities and youth work. The role of NFL in this context is to actively contribute to the creation of the NFL vision, e.g. on the basis of a nationally formulated framework for the description of learning outcomes, the introduction of learning outcomes into NFL curricula.

15.2 Participation in network meetings and further training of NFL representatives with FL representatives

Personal experience and networking between NFL and FL is essential for this activity, mainly through joint meetings organised by the LG. By working together, it is possible to formulate learning outcomes and set up meetings, taking into account the level of both managers and teachers. Network meetings would be a place to change mindsets – the more people inhabit a shared information space, the more receptive they are to change.

A prerequisite and a necessity is the easy comparability of NFL activities with regular FL studies and dialogue between both stakeholders. In the course of discussions in the co-creation working group it was noted that at the moment it is difficult to compare NFL and FL and doing so in practice should receive careful consideration. One way of doing this is to organise an exchange between teachers in general education schools and teachers and youth workers in hobby education, so that both sides can better understand what one or the other is offering the student. At the same time, harmonisation should not result in loss of freedom, flexibility and spontaneity that is one of the greatest strengths of hobby education and activities. Hobby education is not just exciting and cool, there is an educational side to it, but it is perhaps not so well expressed. The opposite is true for general education schools, where the excitement is there but it is also not highlighted.

The broader aim of network meetings is to accept different ways and sources of learning and to convince stakeholders that activities that seem like fun can also be educational for students. An example was given of watching a cartoon, i.e. if the learning outcomes and objectives of the cartoon are clear, this activity should also be acceptable.

In terms of training, the need for training in curriculum development for NFL providers was highlighted, with the possibility of training being linked to funding as an incentive. Tartu was highlighted as a positive example, where such an approach was used for hobby schools. Namely, support was given to hobby schools to develop curricula and the work of the taskforce revealed that there are curricula of very different levels, indicating that NFL providers do need such support from the state or the LG.

4.4 Guidelines for implementing policy recommendations aimed at providers of formal learning

The following table summarises the policy recommendations made to FL service providers and the activities identified by the co-creation working group to implement these policy recommendations.

Table 4: Summary of the activities needed to implement the policy recommendations aimed at providers of formal learning

Policy recommendations	Guidelines for the implementation of policy recommendations for formal learning providers
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16. Set out the principles and organisation of completing and recognising compulsory, elective and optional subjects through NFL in the FL curriculum	16.1 Be guided by the quality model for integration developed by the state 16.2 Map the learning outcomes of FL and NFL, identify and analyse links and overlaps 16.3 Define criteria for the assessment of learning outcomes of non-formal learning 16.4 Recognise that knowledge acquired through non-formal learning often contributes to making the theory acquired through formal learning more personal and practical.
17. Enhance the coordination of integration within schools – appoint an integration coordinator.	17.1 Agree on the role, tasks and responsibilities of the integration coordinator 17.2 Create clear guidelines to students on the principles of integration 17.3 Create clear guidelines for the integration coordinator on how and by what means student' NFL knowledge can be recognised in FL 17.4 Actively participate in setting up the quality model designed by the state
18. Describe learning outcomes in a broader and field-based manner in curricula.	18.1 Find funding for more opportunities in general education schools 18.2 Set up a system to support and monitor students' learning pathways
19. Shape the organisation of self-assessment and instruments for the recognition of NFL in cooperation with regional providers of NFL and based on current knowledge.	19.1 Identify a facilitator to support the students' learning pathway 19.2 Define the objectives of NFL and FL curricula and find commonalities 19.3 Use development conversation tools to create a student's individual learning pathway 19.4 Ensure funding from LGs for all students to engage in NFL

4.4.1 Recommendation No. 16

S16. Set out the principles and organisation of completing and recognising compulsory, elective and optional subjects through NFL in the curriculum of general education schools

For this policy recommendation, it was proposed to change the wording of the policy recommendation to avoid a cognitive disadvantage for optional and elective subjects, as all subjects are important. The following wording was proposed by the co-creation working group:

S16. Set out the principles and organisation of completing and recognising subjects through NFL in the curriculum of general education schools

The taskforce's efforts led to the identification of four key activities from the viewpoint of implementing the policy recommendation.

16.1 Be guided by the quality model for integration developed by the state

In this context, FL activities rely on the establishment of an overall quality model for integration, developed by the state. To ensure that the principles and organisation of completing and recognising compulsory, elective and optional subjects through NFL in the curriculum of general education schools are set out in the curricula of general education schools, a framework for integration should be established by the state to guide all stakeholders. At the level of the general education school, the national framework for integration can be used as a guideline, but it is up to the general education schools themselves to agree on school-specific rules, or how they operate in terms of recognising subjects students have completed through NFL.

In setting up a framework, it will be necessary to identify and cooperate with NFL providers who are willing to offer non-formal learning activities in addition to or in support of formal learning outcomes.

As the topic of integration is still quite new, the co-creation working group sees the facilitation of cooperation between different stakeholders as a longer process that requires continuous process management and situation mapping.

According to the co-creation working group, formal and non-formal learning providers may share the same objectives or even, in some cases, the same methodologies, but the low level of awareness and mistrust between general education and vocational schools about the quality of non-formal learning can hamper smooth cooperation. This is why the support and backing of local governments is needed.

16.2 Map the learning outcomes of FL and NFL, identify and analyse links and overlaps

With the analysis of the learning outcomes of FL and NFL, it is important to find common ground, to learn and understand what the different stakeholders are offering to the student, and to think through how the new knowledge can be applied for the benefit of students in the future. The process of analysing the learning outcomes should certainly involve student representatives.

To improve cooperation between FL and NFL service providers, it is necessary to create a communication platform for all stakeholders involved (e.g. a virtual environment or a round table, etc.) at local government level, which would facilitate the mapping of learning outcomes and the setting of assessment criteria. The co-creation working group stressed the importance of preparedness and will of the stakeholders involved, and the need for purposeful action to achieve student-centred outcomes. It was pointed out that the results of the work conducted should be continuously documented, so that no information would be lost and no pauses occur when people change.

16.3 Define criteria for the assessment of learning outcomes of non-formal learning

In particular, this calls for openness on the part of formal learning providers and motivation to accept knowledge gained through NFL and to implement actions.

In cooperation between the stakeholders involved, it is necessary to define the criteria for assessing NFL learning outcomes, whether it is a graded assessment or a summative assessment, and how the learning can be taken into account in formal education.

To alleviate possible fears in formal education, e.g. that formal teachers will have to reduce their workload and salaries, etc., because of the recognition of NFL, it is necessary to clearly communicate the issues related to integration and to clarify possible fears.

16.4 Recognise that knowledge acquired through non-formal learning often contributes to making the theory acquired through formal learning more personal and practical.

NFL and FL experiences in turn guide young persons towards more informed choices after completing upper secondary school or vocational education.

4.4.2 Recommendation No. 17

S17. Enhance the coordination of integration within schools – appoint an integration coordinator

Co-creation working group members believe that all stakeholders should work together to implement this policy recommendation. General education and vocational schools, non-formal learning providers, but also the state, local governments, parents and student representatives. The taskforce identified four key activities.

17.1 Agree on the role, tasks and responsibilities of the integration coordinator

First of all, it is necessary to define and agree on the role of the integration coordinator in the general education school and the specific tasks for which they will be responsible. The workload of the coordinator should be based on the specificity of the school and the number of students in the school, and whether the role of the integration coordinator requires a full-time position or can be divided among existing school employees.

To successfully carry out the coordinator's duties, teachers, directors of studies and head teachers must be willing to work together and in a new way.

To ensure that the integration of non-formal and formal learning takes place as smoothly as possible in different regions across Estonia, guidance materials developed by the state for general education schools, hobby schools and youth centres are needed to help better define the tasks and responsibilities of the integration coordinator.

A well-functioning digital register, where the various activities related to integration are standardised, will certainly help to reduce the workload of the integration coordinator and other stakeholders (including parents). For example, the digital register must include the option for the student or their parent to apply for integration, and the application process should be as smooth and simple as possible (automated application process, e.g. pre-described NFL services available from a drop-down menu, etc.), and from there on, it is handled by the coordinator, who knows more about the background thanks to the previously automated process. However, as long as the exact development plans and functionality of the new digital register are not known, it cannot be taken into account.

Remember, that the role of the integration coordinator requires considerable additional working time, and that in larger schools there is a risk that the workload for one coordinator may become too much (e.g. especially before the start of a new school year) with a student-centred approach to integration. Therefore, the coordinator's role should definitely be paid, and the co-creation working group believes that the funding should come from the state.

The workload of the integration coordinator and other stakeholders involved in the process will depend largely on the balance between standardisation and individualisation of processes, i.e. to what extent the different frameworks,

guidelines or digital registers are standardised and to what extent they need to be adapted to the specificities of the student, school or LG.

In the assessment of the co-creation working group, the responsibility of the integration coordinator should be defined in legislation in a similar way to that of coordinators of students with special educational needs, so that it is clear to all stakeholders involved what are the areas of responsibility of the integration coordinator.

17.2 Create clear guidelines to students on the principles of integration

To ensure that students understand and benefit as much as possible from the integration of formal and non-formal learning, there should be clear guidance materials for students about the work of the integration coordinator, how to design an individual curriculum, how to choose optional and elective subjects, and how NFL can be recognised in formal learning. A comprehensive overview of the opportunities provided by NFL should not be presented in a dry and boring way for students. The new opportunities and choices should seem attractive to them.

17.3 Create clear guidelines for the integration coordinator on how and by what means student' NFL knowledge can be recognised in FL

To avoid the possible subjective attitude and/or incompetence on the part of the integration coordinator when making decisions about the recognition of non-formal learning subjects in formal learning, it is necessary to establish clear principles on how this process can be carried out most effectively. During the discussions of the co-creation working group, several solutions were proposed on how NFL subjects should be recognised. One solution proposed was the creation of a committee within general education schools to compare the learning outcomes of NFL and FL and make decisions on this basis. Another solution was for the integration coordinator to work together with subject teachers, the director of studies or head teachers, who would certainly be better placed to say whether or not a subject completed by a student through NFL meets the learning outcomes. However, the taskforce noted that teachers and supervisors in NFL are often top professionals in their field and FL subject teachers lack the competence to assess their skills and work since FL teachers are required to grasp the whole, but might not have the specific knowledge required (e.g. a music teacher might not have the competence to assess the violin teacher's skills and student assessment). In this case, it could be of some help if the recognition of NFL were to be based on the volume of the subject in FL and whether or not it is met, without involving specific numerical grading.

According to the participants in the taskforce, not everything that students learn in non-formal learning should necessarily be recognised in formal learning.

17.4 Actively participate in setting up the quality model designed by the state

To improve the coordination of integration within schools, it is necessary to establish criteria for assessing the quality of non-formal learning providers, which should be developed with the involvement of representatives of non-formal learning, formal learning, local government and the state.

4.4.3 Recommendation No. 18

S18. Describe learning outcomes in a broader and field-based manner in school curricula

In the course of discussion, the co-creation working group came up with two activities that are essential for implementing this policy recommendation.

18.1 Find funding for more opportunities in general education schools

The co-creation working group pointed out that the national curriculum is so comprehensive and detailed that it leaves no room for change for general education schools and this is seen as a major problem. On the one hand, additional time should be created in the national curriculum for NFL subjects and, on the other hand, financial means should be found to provide more opportunities for students to engage in NFL. This calls for closer cooperation with local governments, who are able to support general education schools (cooperation projects across several LGs to improve the selection of NFL services, etc.).

It should also be taken into account that introducing the concept of “optional subjects” into legislation and creating “free time” for NFL in FL curriculum can prove to be a time-consuming process.

18.2 Set up a system to support and monitor students’ learning pathways

The key question is how to give general education schools an overview of what kind of hobby groups a student is participating in, so that it can be taken into account in the FL learning system. One of the solutions proposed was to use developmental conversations, during which class teachers explore not only general education topics but also hobby activities. During the conversation, teachers could specify the reasons why a student is not pursuing their interests or if there are too many activities at the same time. Teachers could help the student and the parent to balance this for the student. In such cases, primary cooperation should be between the student, the class teacher and the parent. The end result should be the recognition of the students’ NFL performance on their FL leaving certificate. On a more detailed level, it should be considered whether the recognition of NFL should be subject-based, field-based or output-based.

This presupposes the teacher’s willingness to compile the data collected during development conversations, which means extra work for teachers and should be compensated. If there is no vision for the whole process and no understanding that the student will ultimately benefit from it (e.g. time or recognition), there is a high risk that this approach will not work. This means that all stakeholders must be willing to provide data and participate in the process. For this to be possible, state support is needed to pay teachers a fair premium for the extra work, but also to provide a clear vision and guidelines for integration. All teachers must be valued and paid for additional work to incentivise teachers in general education schools to contribute more to integration. In the context of a general education school, every student should receive support, but it need not come from their class teacher. It should also be considered who will support the student from the NFL side.

The co-creation working group also discussed the possibility of presenting NFL options to students in school stages I and II and explaining what NFL would mean for them. Electives and optional subjects with more flexibility are preferred for students in school stages III and IV. In this case, it was suggested that the school day should start or end with the subjects that the student does not need to attend if they so wish. The question of what students would be doing during a free class in the middle of the day was also discussed. It was felt that in this case, the general education school should be responsible for ensuring that the student has somewhere to go during free time, e.g. a common study room open to all.

In general, complexity is also seen in the fact that some general education schools have a large number of students who engage in very different subjects (e.g. music, art, sport, etc.). Heads of school are worried that too many students will want different types of assessments and that there will be differences in lessons and gaps

in timetables. It was also proposed that art school students could organise an exhibition or music school children organise a performance. The aim would be to show other students what they are doing outside formal learning. For the young persons themselves, this would also be a recognition of something they find important.

The co-creation working group also discussed the problem of students who are not involved and who do not want to do anything. If NFL is given more prominence at the level of general education schools or represented on a leaving certificate, then over time it will be understood that NFL is also important and a source of knowledge.

4.4.4 Recommendation No. 19

S19. Shape the organisation of self-assessment and instruments for the recognition of NFL in cooperation with regional providers of NFL and based on current knowledge

In the course of discussion, the co-creation working group came up with four activities that are essential to realise this policy recommendation.

The biggest risk for the entire policy recommendation is seen in the potential for NFL to lose its entertainment aspect by being recognised and assessed. It must be ensured that NFL does not become just a routine obligation. In addition, the student should have the option to not have their NFL activities recognised in FL if they so wish.

To implement the policy recommendation, it is important for the integration coordinator and the national policy to be guided by the same objectives. In addition, the general social attitude towards integration should ensure that the creation of individual learning pathways benefits the student and that teachers and heads of school are in agreement on the integration of NFL and FL. It was acknowledged that a general education school would need an additional head of methodology for the development of subjects and curricula, i.e. another mid-level manager between the headmaster and the teachers (or director of studies) to help implement the changes.

19.1 Identify a facilitator to support the students' learning pathway

The co-creation working group felt it was important to ensure that FL and NFL teachers have their students' best interests in mind. There should be more interaction between teachers and students, and more formative assessment and personal goal-setting so as to avoid just giving grades. The role of supporting the design of a student's learning pathway should be viewed in terms of different school stages (in primary school, the role of the class teacher is more important, while in basic school it is perhaps more up to the head of extracurricular activities). It was also suggested to review how support for learners is provided in vocational training, or whether there is something to be taken over from there.

Supporting students in designing their individual curriculum was also a major piloting topic and central during the third co-creation working group meeting. Although there were conflicting views on whether this requires a separate full-time or part-time integration coordinator, or whether a coordinator was needed throughout the entire school year or it would suffice to have a coordinator only at the beginning of the school year and/or in the early years of integration, it was agreed that students need support in the integration process.

As a result of piloting and the discussions held in the co-creation working group, it was felt that the class teacher has an important role to play in getting to know,

support and guide their students, including helping them find NFL activities that are relevant to their interests. However, it was indicated that the main work duties and overall workload of class teachers make them unable to fully perform this role and they would definitely need assistants. One of the solutions proposed was the involvement of several class teachers for one class. The drawbacks for this proposal are the lack of funds in general education schools and the risk that the class teacher does not meet with the students often enough to really notice and advise them.

If it is not feasible to bring in an integration coordinator or class teacher to support the students, then an existing school employee might be considered for this position, e.g. the head of extracurricular activities, school psychologist, coordinators of students with special educational needs, director of studies, etc., who may currently be working part-time but who are willing to take on integration issues and would like to work full-time.

The steps to be taken in designing and supporting a student's learning pathway, who would be on the team to design and support the student's learning pathway, and what the overall system would be, should be defined separately.

19.2 Define the objectives of NFL and FL curricula and find commonalities

To find the common ground between NFL and FL curricula, it is first necessary to describe the NFL learning outcomes, which should be competence-based with measurable factors.

19.3 Use development conversation tools to create a student's individual learning pathway

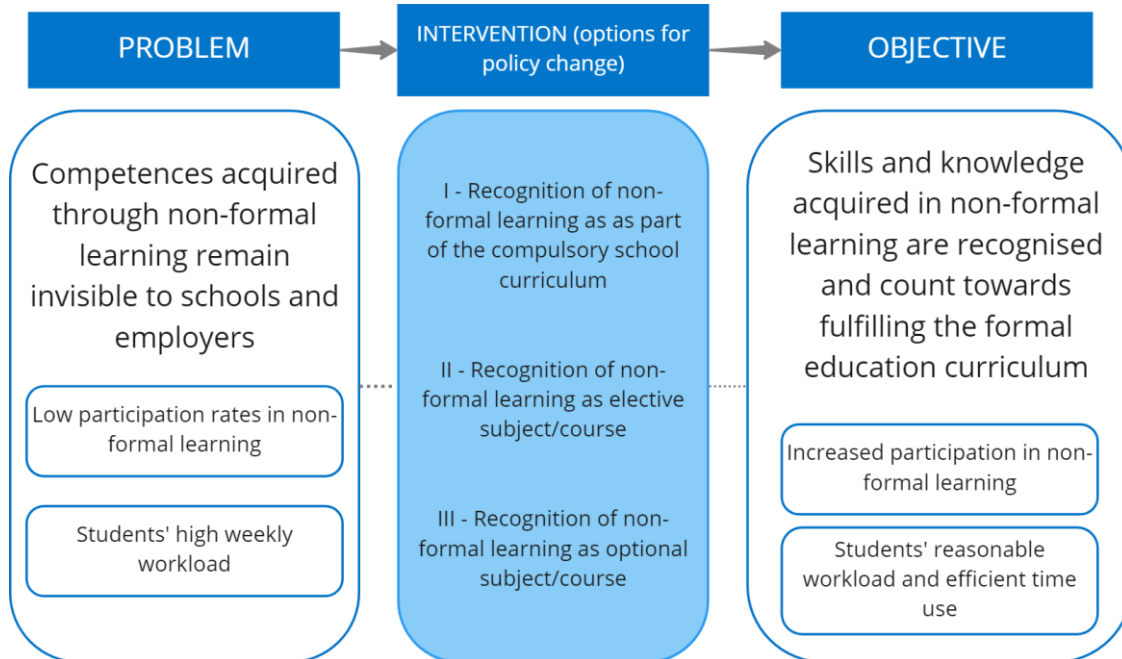
Development conversation should use software tools (e.g. eKool, Clanbeat) that facilitate the mapping of the student's aspirations and abilities and help in setting their next goals. This means that the individual learning pathway would not only be on paper, but always available in a virtual environment, logged in and tracked. This requires access to an electronic environment and the openness of teachers to an individual learning pathway system.

19.4 Ensure funding from LGs for all students to have the opportunity to engage in NFL

The provision of free and paid NFL groups in the LG was identified as a key issue. While it was felt that NFL activities need not be completely free of charge for students, there should be a common funding system in place on LG level to provide support with NFL fees for students whose families cannot otherwise afford it. The role of the general education school should be to introduce students to different options to cover participation fees of different NFL services if the fees are too high for the family.

5 Annexes

Annex 1. Policy interventions or solutions





Annex 2. Policy recommendations to promote integration.

State

Recommendation	Reason the recommendation is relevant	Expected impact	Risks upon failure to address the recommendation
Develop the principles, guidance materials and support measures of the integration of non-formal and formal learning, which allow and support the implementation of all three policy options and enhance cooperation between various stakeholders	<p>Based on the analysis of practices in Estonia and other countries, it can be concluded that the lack of a strategic vision and a systematic approach is the main obstacle to the integration of non-formal and formal learning.</p> <p>Even if legislation allows integration and it is being prioritised in the education strategy in general terms, it may not provide sufficient clarity to those responsible for the day-to-day organisation of integration as to how integration can actually be implemented. 8</p>	Local governments, schools and NFL providers have sufficient practical information and capacity to organise integration; support for different policy options (also in legislation) allows for sufficient flexibility.	The objectives of integration are not clear to the stakeholders or the integration of FL and NFL is not applied more systematically than before or does not rely on the best knowledge in the field. Therefore, the objective of the policy change is not achieved or it remains modest in its scope.
Prepare amendments to legislation that allow optional subjects to be recognised as a part of the compulsory curriculum	The concept and organisation of optional subjects is currently unregulated and their definition differs among schools. In order to increase the volume of FL subjects/courses that students can complete in NFL, the corresponding changes must be made in the Basic Schools and Upper Secondary Schools	With a compulsory optional subject completed in NFL, the integration of FL and NFL would benefit all students, not only those who already participate in NFL. Students can develop their talents and interests more and the	Fewer less motivated students participate in NFL, since the recognition of such learning as an optional subject is limited to adding the student's chosen NFL activity to their results report (not included in the completion of the curriculum) or partially replacing elective subjects

⁸ ICF, Praxis, Tallinn University and Civitta Estonia. (2022) Analüütiline aruanne välisriikide poliitika ja praktika asjakohaste näidete kohta. Noorte edu toetuseks – võimekuse arendamine mitteformaalõppe lõimimiseks formaalõppega [*Supporting young people to succeed – building capacities to better integrate non-formal and formal learning*] (REFORM/SC2021/066).



Recommendation	Reason the recommendation is relevant	Expected impact	Risks upon failure to address the recommendation
	<p>Act and set out in the national curriculum for basic schools and the national curriculum for upper secondary schools. The definition of optional subjects, the students' right or obligation to complete them and the conditions related to the organisation thereof, including the obligations of the stakeholders, funding, etc., must be regulated. The conceptual framework of optional subjects must be precisely established and described before preparing the draft act.</p>	<p>application of individual learning pathways improves.</p>	<p>with a freely chosen NFL activity. The application of the concept of individual learning pathways remains modest and/or one-sided.</p>
<p>Support the development of a professional qualification system for hobby education and continue to popularise the professional qualification system for youth work</p>	<p>Compared to FL, NFL is characterised by greater freedom, flexibility and diversity in the preparation and qualifications of those carrying out the activities. As such, some school employees express their doubt with regard to the quality of NFL.⁹ Therefore, it is particularly important to address the competences of NFL providers at different levels and to harmonise and monitor the quality of NFL.</p>	<p>More youth workers regularly participate in further training and seek the qualification of a youth worker. A professional standard is applied in hobby education. The specific competences of employees in the field of NFL are also valued by the stakeholders related to FL. There is a broader understanding of the field of NFL and the value of the integration of NFL and FL, thereby increasing trust in NFL and readiness for closer cooperation.</p>	<p>The quality of NFL is inconsistent, NFL providers do not perceive, value or acknowledge their distinctive competences in supporting students. Only a narrow selection of all NFL activities can be recognised in FL because the quality of NFL does not meet the expectations of FL stakeholders</p>
<p>Establish a common digital register of education that gives an overview of the student's learning pathway with respect to both FL and NFL (function of a</p>	<p>Various stakeholders see the need to combine several information systems into a single information infrastructure for learning and education, which would record the learning pathway for students and help them use this information to</p>	<p>Recognising NFL is easier and quicker for schools. NFL providers do not need to provide information concerning the same activity separately for each student's application for the recognition of</p>	<p>Schools have a substantial administrative burden owing to the verification of the qualifications of NFL providers, while NFL providers have a large administrative workload as they compile the</p>

⁹ ICF, Praxis, Tallinn University and Civitta Estonia. (2022). Mitteformaal- ja formaalõppe lõimimise praktikad Eestis. Noorte edu toetuseks – võimekuse arendamine mitteformaalõppe lõimimiseks formaalõppega. <https://www.hm.ee/et/mitteformaalse-oppimise-loimimine-formaalharidusse>



Recommendation	Reason the recommendation is relevant	Expected impact	Risks upon failure to address the recommendation
<p>portfolio/education passport); gives an overview of the qualifications of NFL providers and the content and expected learning outcomes of NFL (function of a register for the field of education and youth)</p>	<p>prove their competences throughout their lives. A common digital register would also make it easy to gain an overview of the qualifications of NFL providers and the content of their activities. 10</p>	<p>NFL. Students and parents increasingly value and understand lifelong learning. General awareness and appreciation of knowledge obtained in different environments increases. Employers and higher education institutions can obtain a standardised overview of applicants' competences acquired in different learning environments.</p>	<p>information required for the applications of all the students applying for the recognition of NFL. It is difficult for higher education institutions to recognise the results of compulsory subjects that students have (partially) completed in NFL and that have been listed on their transcripts with undifferentiated grades. Students do not have the opportunity to gather all the information concerning their learning pathway so that it would be easier for them to prove their competences in the future.</p>
<p>Develop the digital competences of youth workers/hobby education teachers in both initial and further training.</p>	<p>One of the main obstacles to the integration of NFL and FL is the inconsistent availability of NFL across regions. Digital solutions in the provision of NFL may alleviate inequalities between young people in different regions and provide them with a more diverse range of NFL opportunities. 11</p>	<p>NFL providers have sufficient competences to design and carry out high-quality online activities. Students in rural areas thus have a wider range of NFL opportunities and more possibilities to diversify their FL learning environment through integration. The benefits of the policy change materialise to a greater extent.</p>	<p>Inconsistent availability of NFL leads to significant inequalities with respect to the benefits of the integration of NFL and FL for students in different areas.</p>
<p>Organise training for schools and prepare guidance materials that explain how to use self-</p>	<p>The use of student self-assessment contributes to maintaining the distinctive nature and added value of NFL and develops the general competences of</p>	<p>Students' general competences improve thanks to positive attitudes of school employees towards self-assessment; its value</p>	<p>Schools do not apply assessment systems that take into account the distinctive nature and added value of NFL, e.g. numerical assessment</p>

¹⁰ Ibid.

¹¹ ICF, Praxis, Tallinn University and Civitta Estonia. (2022) Analüütiline aruanne välisriikide poliitika ja praktika asjakohaste näidete kohta. Noorte edu toetuseks – võimekuse arendamine mitteformaalõppe lõimimiseks formaalõppega [*Supporting young people to succeed – building capacities to better integrate non-formal and formal learning*] (REFORM/SC2021/066).



Recommendation	Reason the recommendation is relevant	Expected impact	Risks upon failure to address the recommendation
assessment to determine the achievement of learning outcomes when recognising NFL.	students. Not all self-assessment arrangements have equally positive impact, hence schools must be supported in establishing evidence-based self-assessment systems that fit their needs. 12	in shaping the mindset of lifelong learning and in self-directed learning is understood. Self-assessment systems applied at schools are evidence-based.	is used for NFL, resulting in mismatch between assessment type and of values of NFL its flexibility, voluntary nature, goal-setting by young people themselves and self-analysis. The diversification of learning thanks to different methods and learning environments does not materialise.
Train integration coordinators and support their networking: organise information days and co-vision meetings, continue to collect examples of successful cooperation between NFL and FL, etc.	For integration to be implemented systematically, it is necessary to harmonise perceptions of the importance of integration and best practices among schools in different regions. Even within schools, fairness in the recognition of NFL is currently hindered by the varying attitudes of school employees towards NFL and conflicting understandings of integration. ¹³ The coordination of the preparation and consistent support of integration coordinators at the national level makes it possible to harmonise integration principles both between and within schools.	Competent NFL and FL integration coordinators are active at schools. They have relevant knowledge and experience and they shape the positive attitudes of other employees at their school with respect to integration. The organisation of integration is understandable to all stakeholders. The network of coordinators enables schools to learn from the experiences of other schools.	The organisation of integration at schools is unclear. NFL is not recognised on an equal basis for students or they do not have sufficient information or support to apply for such recognition. The integration of NFL and FL is addressed only by more active local governments and the policy change is not fully implemented.
Monitor and assess the progress and success of the policy change related to the integration of FL and NFL	The monitoring and assessment of the progress and success of implementation of the policy change allows for the identification of the strengths, obstacles and impacts of the policy change (or the	Systematic support for integration at the national level is sufficiently sensitive to changes and feedback	The objective of the policy change is not fully or not at all achieved.

¹² ICF, Praxis, Tallinn University and Civitta Estonia. (2022). Poliitikavalikute mõju eelhindamine. Noorte edu toetuseks – võimekuse arendamine mitteformaalõppe loimimiseks formaalõppega.

¹³ ICF, Praxis, Tallinn University and Civitta Estonia. (2022). Mitteformaal- ja formaalõppe loimimise praktikad Eestis. Noorte edu toetuseks – võimekuse arendamine mitteformaalõppe loimimiseks formaalõppega. <https://www.hm.ee/et/mitteformaalse-oppimise-loimimine-formaalharidusse>



Recommendation	Reason the recommendation is relevant	Expected impact	Risks upon failure to address the recommendation
	lack thereof) and for the introduction of corresponding changes in support measures.	from stakeholders, adapting accordingly.	

Local government

Recommendation	Reason the recommendation is relevant	Expected impact	Risks upon failure to address the recommendation
Prioritise the integration of NFL and FL at the level of local governments in development plans for the education and youth sector, thereby monitoring and analysing the progress and success of integration	Successful and more comprehensive NFL and FL integration practices in both Estonia and other countries point to the importance of competent coordination at the local level. ^{14,15} The support for integration is more systematic and consistent and less dependent on the attitudes and motivation of individuals if targets have been set in local strategies.	Integration is systematically supported in the local government; its objectives have been defined in cooperation with relevant stakeholders. The system of integration applied meets the needs of the stakeholders, corresponds to their possibilities and is adapted and developed thanks to consistent monitoring.	The integration of NFL and FL is not applied or ceases because schools do not have consistent funding for the creation and implementation of an integration system, opportunities for the development of competences or motivation due to the lack of sufficient support from the local government.
Diversify the possibilities of NFL at the level of local government and ensure the availability of support measures (e.g. coverage of participation fees, appropriate transport	A versatile and high-quality selection of NFL opportunities available and accessible to students is a prerequisite for recognising NFL both as a compulsory and as an elective or optional subject. Currently, young people with different abilities and needs or from various	The benefits of the integration of NFL and FL materialise more equally for all students and interregional cooperation improves.	Students go to other areas where non-formal learning opportunities are more accessible and there is a wider range of options. The opportunities of non-formal learning are not accessible to all students.

¹⁴ ICF, Praxis, Tallinn University and Civitta Estonia. (2022) Analüütiline aruanne välisriikide poliitika ja praktika asjakohaste näidete kohta. Noorte edu toetuseks – võimekuse arendamine mitteformaalõppe loimimiseks formaalõppega [*Supporting young people to succeed – building capacities to better integrate non-formal and formal learning*] (REFORM/SC2021/066).

¹⁵ ICF, Praxis, Tallinn University and Civitta Estonia. (2022). Mitteformaal- ja formaalõppe loimimise praktikad Eestis. Noorte edu toetuseks – võimekuse arendamine mitteformaalõppe loimimiseks formaalõppega. <https://www.hm.ee/et/mitteformaalse-oppimise-loimimine-formaalharidusse>



Recommendation	Reason the recommendation is relevant	Expected impact	Risks upon failure to address the recommendation
<p>arrangements, physical accessibility) that would improve access to NFL for students from all regions and those with special needs and various socio-economic backgrounds</p>	<p>regions do not have equal access to diverse NFL activities.¹⁶</p>		
<p>Fund the role or separate position of an integration coordinator at schools</p>	<p>Integration is currently not systematic at schools and the attitudes of school employees towards NFL vary greatly.¹⁷ The appointment of an integration coordinator ensures that integration is understandable and accessible to all students and it helps avoid an additional burden for subject teachers.</p>	<p>Students' general competences develop and participation in non-formal learning increases because a specific responsible person has been appointed at schools. The integration coordinator has the necessary competences for ensuring the smooth organisation of integration in cooperation with other school employees and supporting students.</p>	<p>The recognition of NFL entails an additional burden for subject teachers; the organisation of recognition is not understandable for teachers and students. There is no clear responsible person who is assigned the task of providing explanations with regard to integration and supporting students in the process of recognising NFL. The knowledge acquired by students in NFL is not recognised on a clear and equal basis; it depends on the readiness of individual teachers. The development of students' general competences is not sufficiently supported.</p>
<p>Map the NFL opportunities of the region and organise network meetings for</p>	<p>In order to coordinate the networking of NFL and FL representatives at the local level, it is important for the local government to get an overview of the region's NFL providers. Networking supports the building of mutual</p>	<p>Stakeholders' understandings of the integration of NFL and FL are consistent, trust in NFL is increasing at schools and the creation of elective subjects offered in the cooperation of NFL</p>	<p>There is an insufficient overview of NFL in several regional areas and subjects/fields, which is why students are also less aware of their options. The lack of contact between NFL and FL representatives hinders the</p>

¹⁶ *Ibid.*

¹⁷ *Ibid.*



Recommendation	Reason the recommendation is relevant	Expected impact	Risks upon failure to address the recommendation
NFL providers and schools	trust and a comprehensive organisation of integration. ¹⁸¹⁹	and FL gains momentum with the support of networking.	development of trust. Integration is less accessible for students.
Carry out consistent monitoring of the quality of NFL and assess the impact of policy changes related to the integration of FL and NFL at the local level	The assessment of the impacts of policy changes and consistent quality monitoring make it possible to detect and address the strengths and shortcomings of the integration of NFL and FL. ²⁰	The integration of NFL and FL at the level of local government is continuously developing and meets the needs of various stakeholders.	The impact of the organisation of integration and the obstacles related to it have not been identified; resources are used for activities that do not have the desired effect or have a negative impact.

Providers of non-formal learning

Recommendation	Reason the recommendation is relevant	Expected impact	Risks upon failure to address the recommendation
Support employees in obtaining the qualification of a youth worker (information, enabling participation in training, linking the salary system to the qualification)	At the moment, there are no uniform quality requirements in NFL and it is difficult for students and school employees to assess the competences of NFL instructors and the quality of NFL; the quality of NFL is perceived inconsistent. ²¹	Employees in the field of NFL (also in hobby education and recreational activities) increasingly identify with the values and competences related to youth work; there are more NFL providers qualified as youth workers; the quality of NFL becomes more consistent.	The integration of NFL and FL ceases because there is no overview of the quality of NFL or trust in the competence of employees, schools do not consider NFL activities to be of sufficiently high quality to take them into consideration in the completion of the curriculum.

¹⁸ *Ibid.*

¹⁹ ICF, Praxis, Tallinn University and Civitta Estonia. (2022) Analüütiline aruanne välisriikide poliitika ja praktika asjakohaste näidete kohta. Noorte edu toetuseks – võimekuse arendamine mitteformaalõppe loimimiseks formaalõppega [*Supporting young people to succeed – building capacities to better integrate non-formal and formal learning*] (REFORM/SC2021/066).

²⁰ *Ibid.*

²¹ ICF, Praxis, Tallinn University and Civitta Estonia. (2022). Mitteformaal- ja formaalõppe loimimise praktikad Eestis. Noorte edu toetuseks – võimekuse arendamine mitteformaalõppe loimimiseks formaalõppega. <https://www.hm.ee/et/mitteformaalse-oppimise-loimimine-formaalharidusse>



Clearly formulate the learning outcomes of NFL, paying particular attention to the development of general competences (e.g. hobby education, curricula).

The various stakeholders in the education system perceive the important role of hobby education in the development of general competences, but

in order to ensure functional integration, the content and learning outcomes of NFL must be clarified so that they can be compared to the learning outcomes of FL.²²

NFL learning outcomes are easier to compare with those of FL, the process of recognising NFL at schools is simplified.

Schools find it difficult to detect overlaps between FL and NFL and integration does not apply to the maximum extent possible.

General education and vocational schools

Recommendation	Reason the recommendation is relevant	Expected impact	Risks upon failure to address the recommendation
Set out the principles and organisation of completing and recognising compulsory, elective and optional subjects through NFL in the curriculum of general education schools	<p>The current practice of recognising NFL is often different for students within a school, making integration unavailable to students under the same conditions.</p> <p>NFL remains unnoticed and unrecognised, reducing the students' motivation to participate in it.²³</p>	The overall weekly academic load of students decreases because the acceptance and recognition of NFL results is systematic and teachers, students and providers of NFL understand it better. Students' motivation to participate in NFL increases.	Stakeholders do not have a common understanding of the principles and process of integration, the recognition of the knowledge acquired through NFL is unclear and incidental. Students have little/insufficient motivation to participate in NFL.
Enhance the coordination of integration within schools – appoint an integration coordinator	A clear division of roles at school and the appointment of a school employee with respective training prevents the overload of subject teachers (a large part of whom are also affected by the recognition of NFL results) and inequalities between students arising from the varying attitudes and knowledge of teachers in connection with integration, which	Various stakeholders within the school have a clear understanding of integration: it is understood which principles are taken as the basis when recognising knowledge acquired through NFL at school. Information and	Various school employees are opposed to integration; families and students do not have sufficient information or support to apply for NFL recognition, even if the school curriculum allows it.

²² *Ibid.*

²³ ICF, Praxis, Tallinn University and Civitta Estonia. (2022). Mitteformaal- ja formaalõppe lõimimise praktikad Eestis. Noorte edu toetuseks – võimekuse arendamine mitteformaalõppe lõimimiseks formaalõppega. <https://www.hm.ee/et/mitteformaalse-oppimise-loimimine-formaalharidusse>



Recommendation	Reason the recommendation is relevant	Expected impact	Risks upon failure to address the recommendation
	<p>characterises the current situation where integration is not systematic at schools and within a single school. In addition, it is important to inform parents about integration.²⁴</p>	<p>counselling related to the recognition of NFL is available to students and parents, it increases their motivation to participate in non-formal learning and to request the recognition of the acquired knowledge. The development of the students' general competences is supported and the idea of lifelong learning takes root.</p>	
<p>Describe learning outcomes in a broader and field-based manner in school curricula</p>	<p>The experience of other countries in integrating FL and NFL demonstrates that learning outcomes that have been described in a too narrow or too detailed manner and rigid curricula are a significant obstacle to integration.²⁵</p>	<p>Learning outcomes that have been described in a broader, not too detailed manner and are not solely subject-based give greater freedom to recognise knowledge acquired in NFL. Students' opportunities to have their NFL results recognised improve, reducing their weekly load.</p>	<p>The recognition of NFL as a compulsory or elective subject remains a merely theoretical possibility and the benefits of recognising NFL are realised for a small number of students. Students who engage in some NFL activities very intensively or at a high level will continue to have a high weekly load because it is not possible to take into consideration the learning outcomes of NFL in completing the FL curriculum.</p>
<p>Shape the organisation of self-assessment and instruments for the recognition of NFL in cooperation with</p>	<p>If the learning outcomes of NFL have to be assessed on the basis of the (numerical) assessment system of the school in order to recognise them in FL, there is a risk of losing the specific character of NFL (voluntary nature,</p>	<p>The aspects related to assessment in the organisation of the recognition of NFL are understandable to students, school employees and NFL providers; the assessment of</p>	<p>The organisation of the recognition of NFL at school does not support the students' awareness of the learning outcomes of NFL. An assessment system that fails to take into consideration the distinctive features of</p>

²⁴ *Ibid.*

²⁵ ICF, Praxis, Tallinn University and Civitta Estonia. (2022) Analüütiline aruanne välisriikide poliitika ja praktika asjakohaste näidete kohta. Noorte edu toetuseks – võimekuse arendamine mitteformaalõppe lõimimiseks formaalõppega [*Supporting young people to succeed – building capacities to better integrate non-formal and formal learning*] (REFORM/SC2021/066).



Recommendation	Reason the recommendation is relevant	Expected impact	Risks upon failure to address the recommendation
<p>regional providers of NFL and based on current knowledge</p>	<p>internal motivation of participants, spontaneity and indeterminacy).^{26,27}</p>	<p>the knowledge acquired through NFL supports the development of attitudes and skills related to self-directed learning and takes into consideration the specific nature of NFL.</p>	<p>NFL will change its meaning, requirements and content, making them too similar to that of FL, so that the special character of the field is lost. The benefits related to the development of students' general skills and the diversification of the learning environment, which are the aim of the policy change, do not materialise.</p>

²⁶ ICF, Praxis, Tallinn University and Civitta Estonia. (2022) Analüütiline aruanne välisriikide poliitika ja praktika asjakohaste näidete kohta. Noorte edu toetuseks – võimekuse arendamine mitteformaalõppe lõimimiseks formaalõppega [*Supporting young people to succeed – building capacities to better integrate non-formal and formal learning*] (REFORM/SC2021/066).

²⁷ Põlda, H., Reinsalu, R., & Karu, K. (2021). Mitteformaalõppe praktikute keelekasutuses. The Yearbook of the Estonian Mother Tongue Society. 10.3176/esa66.10.



Annexes 3-6 are only included in the Estonian version of the report.