



Preliminary policy recommendations

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

Through the project “Supporting young people to succeed – building capacities to better integrate non-formal and formal learning”, we are creating a comprehensive solution for integrating non-formal and formal learning in Estonian general and vocational education. The solution under development supports awareness and recognition of the knowledge and skills acquired by students as a result of non-formal learning (NFL) in formal education (FE) and facilitates recognition of those skills and competences in completing the curriculum. The solution under development contributes to a more flexible and learner-centric education system and supports the following activity determined in the action plan ‘Estonia 2035’: “taking into consideration knowledge and skills acquired outside formal education (e.g. in youth work, hobby education and the Defence Forces) in formal education”.² In addition, it makes a contribution to the strategic objective of the Education Strategy, according to which “learning opportunities are diverse and accessible and the education system enables smooth transition between levels and types of education”,³ and the sub-objective of the Youth Sector Development Plan 2021-2035⁴ to ensure “the purposefulness, valuation, appreciation and acknowledgement of the competences acquired in youth work (including hobby education for young people), especially in formal education”.

Within the framework of the project, we have studied the current organisation of the integration of non-formal and formal learning and the problems related to it in Estonia.⁵ In addition, we have analysed integration practices of non-formal and formal learning in other countries and exchanged experiences with leaders of integration initiatives in the United States, Finland and Malta.⁶ On the basis of these analyses, we also carried out an ex-ante impact assessment of policy change required for the integration of NFL and FL,⁷ which revealed that it is important to systematically implement three policy options related to recognising non-formal learning in order to achieve the objective of the change in policy:

1. Recognition of non-formal learning as a compulsory part of the school curriculum
2. Recognition of knowledge acquired through non-formal learning as an elective subject or course
3. Recognition of non-formal learning as an optional subject

The aim of this report is to formulate preliminary policy recommendations for the stakeholders promoting and organising the integration of non-formal and formal

² Government of the Republic, (2022). Estonia 2035. Action Plan of the Government of the Republic (28 April 2022). <https://valitsus.ee/strateegia-eeesti-2035-arengukavad-ja-planeering/strateegia/materjalid>

³ Education Strategy 2021-2035.

https://www.hm.ee/sites/default/files/eeesti_haridusvaldkonna_arengukava_2035_seisuga_2020.03.27.pdf

⁴ Youth Sector Development Plan 2021-2035.

https://www.hm.ee/sites/default/files/noortevaldkonna_arengukava_2021-2035_kinnitatus_12.08.2035.pdf

⁵ ICF, Praxis, Tallinn University and Civitta Estonia. (2022) Non-formal and formal learning integration practices in Estonia. Supporting young people to succeed – building capacities to better integrate non-formal and formal learning (REFORM/SC2021/066).

⁶ ICF, Praxis, Tallinn University and Civitta Estonia. (2022). Analytical report on relevant examples of policy and practice from other countries. Supporting young people to succeed – building capacities to better integrate non-formal and formal learning (REFORM/SC2021/066). <https://www.hm.ee/et/mitteformaalse-oppimise-loimimine-formaalharidusse>

⁷ ICF, Praxis, Tallinn University and Civitta Estonia. (2022) Ex-ante impact assessment of policy options. Supporting the success of young people – developing the capacity to integrate non-formal learning with formal learning (REFORM/SC2021/066).



learning, taking the conclusions of the aforementioned analyses as the basis. The policy recommendations support the stakeholders in implementing the policy change corresponding to the objective of the project. We explained the content of the policy change and its intervention logic in more detail in the report concerning the previous stage of the project.⁸ We will present policy recommendations on the basis of the roles of the stakeholders, taking into consideration the current legislation.

The preliminary policy recommendations will provide an input for the next stages of the project, during which we will co-create and pilot guidance materials with a range of stakeholders. Subsequently, the final policy recommendations will be prepared to introduce a change in policy that will lead to a situation where there is an awareness of competences acquired by students through non-formal learning in the Estonian education system and these are recognised in formal education and taken into consideration in the completion of the curriculum.

⁸ *Ibid.*

2 Roles of the stakeholders in implementing the policy change

Regardless of the manner of recognising competences acquired through non-formal learning, close cooperation between various stakeholders is required for integration: students, parents, general education and vocational schools, local governments, the Ministry of Education and Research (the state) and providers of non-formal learning among others. The main roles of all stakeholders have been summarised below (see Figure 1). The roles and tasks of the Stakeholders, as we will describe below, have been primarily determined by the legislation of the field (the Basic Schools and Upper Secondary Schools Act, the national curriculum for basic schools, the national curriculum for secondary schools, the Local Government Organisation Act, the Youth Work Act, the State Budget Act, etc.). In the course of further piloting and analysis in the next stages of the project, the stakeholders' activities required to achieve the desired situation will be specified.

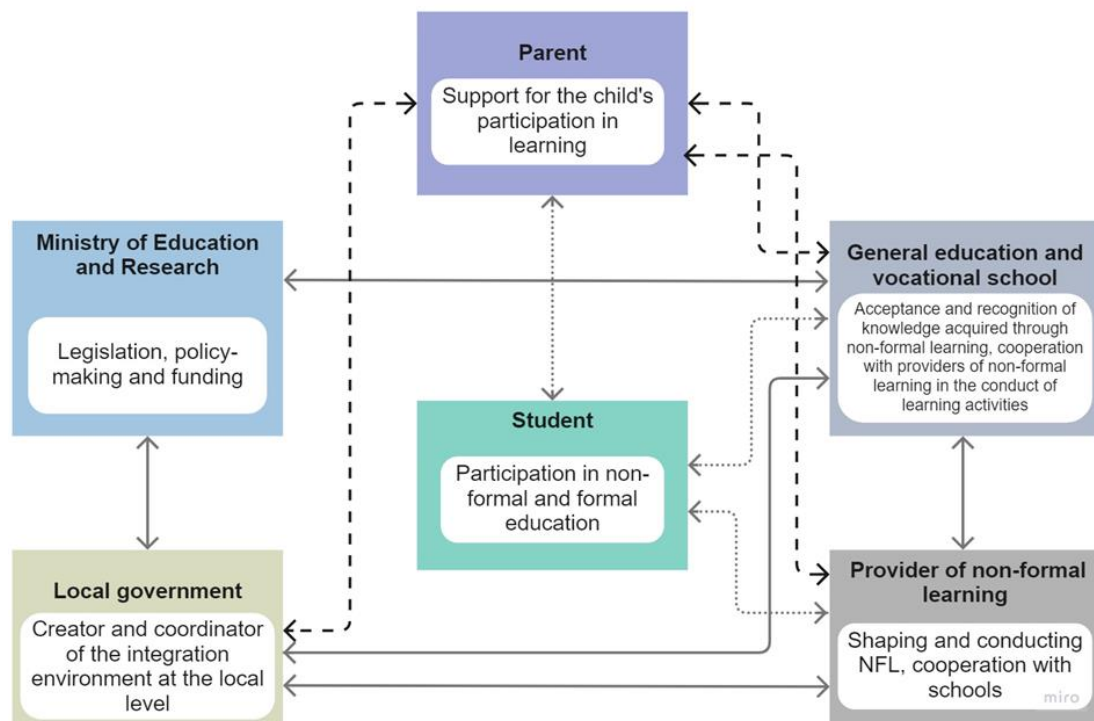


Figure 1. The stakeholders involved in integrating non-formal and formal learning, their primary roles and the institutional (continuous line) and personal (student, parent) links (dotted line) between them

The **students** and the shaping and development of their general and field competences are at the heart of the recognition of competences acquired through non-formal learning. We expect students to be more motivated to participate in non-formal learning if the relevant opportunities are more accessible to them and they are supported in finding and selecting activities that match their interests, if non-formal learning is also better integrated into their school day and its learning outcomes can be recognised as compulsory, elective or optional subjects.⁹

⁹ ICF, Praxis, Tallinn University and Civitta Estonia. (2022) Non-formal and formal learning integration practices in Estonia. Supporting young people to succeed – building capacities to better integrate non-formal and formal learning (REFORM/SC2021/066).

At the level of the school, students regularly communicate with their class teacher, subject teachers and the school employee who has been assigned the role of an integration coordinator. They help them reflect on the knowledge obtained through non-formal learning and instruct them in the process of applying for the recognition of such learning outcomes.

The **parents'** task is to fully support (including with appropriate attitudes and, where necessary, financially) the participation of their child in non-formal learning. The role of parents becomes particularly important in the case of recognising non-formal learning as an optional subject¹⁰ as they can encourage children to take up learning activities that are interesting to them and support their development. Where necessary, parents communicate with the local government to get compensation for the participation of their child in non-formal learning, as well as with the school's integration coordinator and providers of non-formal learning.

The role and functions of **general education schools** as the main providers of general education are defined in the Basic Schools and Upper Secondary Schools Act,¹¹ according to which the role of schools is to create a learning environment that develops students' interest in learning, skills, critical thinking and creative self-expression. In addition, upper secondary schools are expected to support students in finding a field that interests them and corresponds to their abilities for their further studies.

When it comes to the integration of non-formal and formal learning, it is important that the teachers, class teachers/mentors and support specialists at every school are able to identify the interests and talents of students and also direct them to interesting non-formal learning activities. The task of general education schools is to ensure the smooth organisation of integration, i.e. to develop the bases for recognising the learning outcomes of non-formal learning in the school curriculum and to prepare lesson plans so that students have the opportunity to participate in non-formal learning and have the acquired knowledge recognised in their formal studies, which also means that the results of non-formal learning need to be included in their graduation certificate. Schools need to think through and create a system of providing (where necessary, also individual) counselling and guidance to students in connection with preparing the necessary integration-related documentation. For the implementation of integration, it is necessary to appoint an employee who is responsible for and coordinates integration at school, i.e. an integration coordinator. This may mean that the tasks of an integration coordinator are assigned to one of the school's employees or divided between various school employees or in larger schools, for instance, a separate position is established and a new person is hired. The latter is particularly relevant in the context of the high workload of teachers, where assigning them additional tasks may not be realistic.

The successful implementation of integration requires multifaceted cooperation between the provider of formal education and students, providers of non-formal learning and the local government. In cooperation with providers of non-formal learning, schools introduce various non-formal learning opportunities to their students so that each student can find learning opportunities that match their interests. In addition to advising students and cooperating with providers of non-formal learning, schools must comply with requirements arising from legislation

¹⁰ See more about the policy options for recognising non-formal learning: ICF, Praxis, Tallinn University and Civitta Estonia. (2022) Ex-ante impact assessment of policy options. Supporting the success of young people – developing the capacity to integrate non-formal learning with formal learning (REFORM/SC2021/066).

¹¹ Basic Schools and Upper Secondary Schools Act. <https://www.riigiteataja.ee/en/eli/509112022002/consolide>

when implementing the policy options, make corresponding changes in the school curriculum and cooperate with the local government in order to ensure the availability of diverse learning opportunities.

The role of **vocational education institutions** in the organisation of integration is similar to that of general education schools. Since the principles and procedures for the recognition of the knowledge acquired through non-formal learning have already been established at Estonian vocational educational institutions, the schools should, where necessary, only specify the procedure for the recognition of prior learning and work experience (Estonian: VÕTA) in their regulations for organisation of studies. School curricula need to be supplemented if the concept of optional subject is introduced.

The role and functions of **local governments** is determined in the Local Government Organisation Act.¹² According to section 6 of the Act, the task of local governments is to manage educational institutions at the local level. In addition, local governments are responsible for ensuring the provision of diverse learning opportunities and their availability, facilitating and empowering cooperation between non-formal and formal learning institutions and supporting integration through funding.

Based on this, it is the responsibility of local governments to create opportunities for non-formal learning in various subjects and fields in their and to ensure the corresponding infrastructure, accessibility of opportunities, financing, etc. The existence of a wide range of options, close cooperation with providers of non-formal and formal learning and the smooth organisation of the integration of non-formal and formal learning will encourage students to join an interesting non-formal learning activities that support their development and are organised in their local area.

The main role of **providers of non-formal learning** is the provision of learning opportunities and the organisation of learning activities within their field. In Estonia, non-formal education primarily includes youth work, hobby education, recreational activities and further training, which are regulated by the following legislation: the Youth Work Act,¹³ the Hobby Schools Act¹⁴ and the Standard for Hobby Education,¹⁵ the Private Schools Act¹⁶ and the Adult Education Act.¹⁷ For the knowledge and skills acquired through non-formal learning to be acknowledged and recognised in formal learning, providers of non-formal learning must describe the learning objectives and expected learning outcomes and explain their assessment. When recognising non-formal learning as a compulsory or elective subject in formal education, the learning objectives and outcomes of non-formal learning must be compared to the provisions of formal learning curricula. The recognition of non-formal learning as an optional subject is easier if providers of non-formal learning are aware of the criteria for the recognition of such learning as an optional subject and take this into consideration when planning their activities. The successful implementation of integration requires multifaceted cooperation between the provider of non-formal learning and students, providers of formal learning and the

¹² Local Government Organisation Act. <https://www.riigiteataja.ee/en/eli/530082021001/consolide>

¹³ Youth Work Act. <https://www.riigiteataja.ee/en/eli/517072020007/consolide>

¹⁴ Hobby Schools Act. <https://www.riigiteataja.ee/en/eli/ee/520032014003/consolide/current>

¹⁵ Standard for Hobby Education. <https://www.riigiteataja.ee/en/eli/524092014010/consolide>

¹⁶ Private Schools Act. <https://www.riigiteataja.ee/en/eli/503062019009/consolide>

¹⁷ Adult Education Act <https://www.riigiteataja.ee/en/eli/523052019003/consolide>



local government. Furthermore, it is important for representative organisations of non-formal learning providers to continue the development of professional qualification system for hobby education.

The main role of the **Ministry of Education and Research (MER)** involves legislation, policy-making, funding and the creation of technical possibilities related to the change in policy, in order to empower the stakeholders indicated above in the successful and sustainable performance of their roles. The task of MER is to develop a common understanding of the integration of non-formal and formal learning among all stakeholders, to create the prerequisites and possibilities for the implementation of integration with laws as well as to finance development activities related to the policy change, such as expanding the opportunities for non-formal learning, mapping the competences and working conditions of employees in the field of education and youth work and aligning competences in different regions. One of the central activities is also the development of a common digital register for non-formal and formal learning, which would allow the recording and storing individual learning pathways (in the form of portfolio, education passport or 'wallet') and give an overview of providers of non-formal learning and their qualifications. In addition, the establishment of a system supporting the implementation of integration and policies, including technical support, training, advice, quality assessment and monitoring, is within the competence of MER. Cooperation related to integration primarily takes place at the level of local governments and general education and vocational schools.

The state's role in developing and harmonising the competences of employees in the field of education and youth work also includes supporting the development of professional qualification systems in the youth sector (for youth workers and teachers in the field of hobby education) and defining specific steps to achieve this goal. For example, in the case of a functioning professional qualification system for youth workers, this means that the need to establish a qualification requirement, the related risks and the support measures required to mitigate them have to be analysed.

For smooth and consistent implementation of the policy change necessary for the systematic integration of non-formal and formal learning, the organisation of integration must be clear for all related parties and the necessary legislative amendments have to be introduced both in national regulations (the Basic Schools and Upper Secondary Schools Act, the national curriculum for basic schools and the national curriculum for secondary schools) and in school curricula.

3 Policy recommendations

In the following section, we will formulate preliminary policy recommendations for the stakeholders promoting and organising the integration of non-formal and formal learning for them to be able to implement the policy change corresponding to the objective of the project, taking into consideration the practices and problems related to integration in Estonia¹⁸ and other countries^{19 20} and the intervention logic of the policy change explained in the previous stage of the project.²¹

Based on the previous stage, i.e. the preliminary assessment of the impact of policy options, it can be concluded that the three policy options corresponding to the objective of the project – the recognition of non-formal learning as (1) a compulsory subject, (2) an elective subject or course, or (3) an optional subject – are not mutually exclusive, but rather require largely overlapping inputs and activities. By shaping the change in policy so that all three policy options are systematically supported, while maintaining a degree of flexibility for their exact organisation at the local level, the strengths of these policy options are enhanced and some bottlenecks are mitigated. The intervention logic of the policy change, which we visualised and explained in the report concerning the previous stage,²² shows that it is possible to achieve the goal set for the policy change by implementing three options, i.e. to establish a situation where there is an awareness of the competences acquired by students through non-formal learning in the education system and these are recognised and taken into consideration as learning outcomes in formal learning. Other problems indicated in the objectives of the project²³ will also be alleviated: students' motivation to participate in non-formal learning will increase, their time will be used more efficiently and the overall weekly academic load of students will decrease.

¹⁸ ICF, Praxis, Tallinn University and Civitta Estonia. (2022) Non-formal and formal learning integration practices in Estonia. Supporting young people to succeed – building capacities to better integrate non-formal and formal learning (REFORM/SC2021/066).

¹⁹ ICF, Praxis, Tallinn University and Civitta Estonia. (2022). Analytical report on relevant examples of policy and practice from other countries. Supporting young people to succeed – building capacities to better integrate non-formal and formal learning (REFORM/SC2021/066). Available at: <https://www.hm.ee/et/mitteformaalse-oppimise-loimimine-formaalharidusse>

²⁰ ICF, Praxis, Tallinn University and Civitta Estonia. (2022) Report from the online peer exchange with experts from other countries and the study visit to Finland. Supporting young people to succeed – building capacities to better integrate non-formal and formal learning (REFORM/SC2021/066).

²¹ See Chapter 9: ICF, Praxis, Tallinn University and Civitta Estonia. (2022) Ex-ante impact assessment of policy options. Supporting the success of young people – developing the capacity to integrate non-formal learning with formal learning (REFORM/SC2021/066).

²² *Ibid.*

²³ See 2.1 Study objectives - ICF, Praxis, Tallinn University and Civitta Estonia. (2022) Non-formal and formal learning integration practices in Estonia. Supporting young people to succeed – building capacities to better integrate non-formal and formal learning (REFORM/SC2021/066).



3.1. State

Recommendation	Relevance	Expected impact	Risks upon failure to address the recommendation
<p>Develop the principles, guidelines and support measures for the integration of non-formal and formal learning, which allow and support the implementation of all three policy options and enhance cooperation between stakeholders</p>	<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 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.²⁴</p>	<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.</p>	<p>The objectives of integration are not clear to the stakeholders or the integration of non-formal and formal learning is not applied more systemically than before or does not rely on the latest evidence in the field. Therefore, the objective of the policy change is not achieved or it remains limited in its scope.</p>
<p>Prepare amendments to legislation that allow optional subjects to be recognised as a part of the compulsory curriculum</p>	<p>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 Act and set out in the national curriculum for basic schools and the national curriculum for 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</p>	<p>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 application of individual learning pathways improves.</p>	<p>The participation of less active students in NFL remains low, since the recognition of such learning as an optional subject is limited to partially replacing elective subjects with freely chosen NFL activity or adding the student's chosen NFL activity to their transcript of records, i.e., NFL does not count towards completing FE curriculum. The application of the concept of individual learning pathways remains limited.</p>

²⁴ ICF, Praxis, Tallinn University and Civitta Estonia. (2022). Analytical report on relevant examples of policy and practice from other countries. Supporting young people to succeed – building capacities to better integrate non-formal and formal learning (REFORM/SC2021/066). <https://www.hm.ee/et/mitteformaalse-oppimise-loimimine-formaalharidusse>



Recommendation	Relevance	Expected impact	Risks upon failure to address the recommendation
	<p>regulated. The conceptual framework of optional subjects must be precisely established and described before preparing the draft act.</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.²⁵ 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 distinctive competencies 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 education register for FL and NFL, which includes Record of student's learning pathways in both FL and NFL (portfolio/education passport) gives an overview of the qualifications of NFL providers and the content and expected learning outcomes</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 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.²⁶</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 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</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 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</p>

²⁵ ICF, Praxis, Tallinn University and Civitta Estonia. (2022) Non-formal and formal learning integration practices in Estonia. Supporting young people to succeed – building capacities to better integrate non-formal and formal learning (REFORM/SC2021/066).

²⁶ *Ibid.*

Recommendation	Relevance	Expected impact	Risks upon failure to address the recommendation
of NFL (register for the field of education and youth)		obtain a standardised overview of applicants' competences acquired in different learning environments.	transcripts with undifferentiated grades. Students do not have the opportunity to collect and record all the information concerning their learning pathway for
Develop digital competences of youth workers/hobby education teachers in both initial and further training	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. ²⁷	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.	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.
Organise trainings for school staff and prepare guidelines on using student self-assessment to assess the achievement of learning outcomes (in NFL recognition process)	The use of student self-assessment contributes to maintaining the distinctive nature and added value of NFL and develops the general competences of 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. ²⁸	Students' general competences improve thanks to positive attitudes of school employees towards self-assessment; its value in shaping the mindset of lifelong learning and in self-directed learning is understood. Self-assessment systems applied at schools are evidence-based.	Schools do not apply assessment systems that take into account the distinctive nature and added value of NFL, e.g. numerical assessment 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.

²⁷ ICF, Praxis, Tallinn University and Civitta Estonia. (2022). Analytical report on relevant examples of policy and practice from other countries. Supporting young people to succeed – building capacities to better integrate non-formal and formal learning (REFORM/SC2021/066). <https://www.hm.ee/et/mitteformaalse-oppimise-loimimine-formaalharidusse>

²⁸ ICF, Praxis, Tallinn University and Civitta Estonia. (2022) Ex-ante impact assessment of policy options. Supporting the success of young people – developing the capacity to integrate non-formal learning with formal learning (REFORM/SC2021/066).

Recommendation	Relevance	Expected impact	Risks upon failure to address the recommendation
Train integration coordinators and support their networking: organise information days, covision, 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. ²⁹ 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 school community's positive attitudes towards 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 lack thereof) and for the introduction of corresponding changes in support measures.	Systematic support for integration at the national level is sufficiently sensitive to changes and feedback from parties, adapting accordingly.	The objective of the policy change is not fully or not at all achieved.

3.2. Local government

Recommendation	Relevance	Expected impact	Risks upon failure to address the recommendation
Prioritise the integration of NFL and FL in local level education and	Successful and more comprehensive NFL and FL integration practices in both Estonia and other countries point to the importance of competent	Integration is systematically supported in the local government; its objectives have been defined in	The integration of NFL and FL is not applied or ceases because schools do not have consistent funding for the creation

²⁹ ICF, Praxis, Tallinn University and Civitta Estonia. (2022) Non-formal and formal learning integration practices in Estonia. Supporting young people to succeed – building capacities to better integrate non-formal and formal learning (REFORM/SC2021/066).



Recommendation	Relevance	Expected impact	Risks upon failure to address the recommendation
youth strategies, thereby monitoring and analysing the progress and success of integration	coordination at the local level. ^{30 31} 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.	cooperation with relevant stakeholders. The organisation of the integration of NFL and FL meets the needs of stakeholders, corresponds to their possibilities and is adapted and developed thanks to consistent monitoring.	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 NFL opportunities at the local level and ensure the availability of support measures (e.g. covering participation fees, appropriate transport arrangements, physical accessibility) that would improve access to NFL for students from all regions and those with special needs and various socio-economic backgrounds	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 regions do not have equal access to diverse NFL activities. ³²	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.
Fund the role or separate position of an integration coordinator at schools	Integration is currently not systematic at schools and the attitudes of school employees towards NFL vary greatly. ³³ The appointment of an integration coordinator ensures that integration is	Students' general competences develop and participation in non-formal learning increases because a specific responsible has been	The recognition of NFL entails an additional burden for subject teachers; the organisation of recognition is not understandable for teachers and students.

³⁰ ICF, Praxis, Tallinn University and Civitta Estonia. (2022). Analytical report on relevant examples of policy and practice from other countries. Supporting young people to succeed – building capacities to better integrate non-formal and formal learning (REFORM/SC2021/066). <https://www.hm.ee/et/mitteformaalse-oppimise-loimimine-formaalharidusse>

³¹ ICF, Praxis, Tallinn University and Civitta Estonia. (2022) Non-formal and formal learning integration practices in Estonia. Supporting young people to succeed – building capacities to better integrate non-formal and formal learning (REFORM/SC2021/066).

³² *Ibid.*

³³ *Ibid.*

Recommendation	Relevance	Expected impact	Risks upon failure to address the recommendation
	<p>understandable and accessible to all students and it helps avoid an additional burden for subject teachers.</p>	<p>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>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 NFL providers and schools</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 mutual trust building and a comprehensive organisation of integration.^{34,35}</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 and FL gains momentum with the support of networking.</p>	<p>NFL opportunities are poorly mapped 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 development of trust. Integration is less accessible for students.</p>
<p>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>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.³⁶</p>	<p>The integration of NFL and FL at the level of local government is continuously developing and meets the needs of various parties.</p>	<p>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.</p>

³⁴ *Ibid.*

³⁵ ICF, Praxis, Tallinn University and Civitta Estonia. (2022). Analytical report on relevant examples of policy and practice from other countries. Supporting young people to succeed – building capacities to better integrate non-formal and formal learning (REFORM/SC2021/066). <https://www.hm.ee/et/mitteformaalse-oppimise-loimimine-formaalharidusse>

³⁶ *Ibid.*

3.3. Providers of non-formal learning

Recommendation	Relevance	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 wage 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. ³⁷	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.
Clearly formulate the learning outcomes of NFL, paying particular attention to the development of general competences (e.g. hobby education, curricula)	The various parties 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. ³⁸	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.

³⁷ ICF, Praxis, Tallinn University and Civitta Estonia. (2022) Non-formal and formal learning integration practices in Estonia. Supporting young people to succeed – building capacities to better integrate non-formal and formal learning (REFORM/SC2021/066).

³⁸ *Ibid.*

3.4. General education and vocational schools

Recommendation	Relevance	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. ³⁹</p>	<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.</p>	<p>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.</p>
Enhance the coordination of integration within schools – appoint an integration coordinator	<p>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 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. ⁴⁰</p>	<p>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 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>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.</p>
Describe learning outcomes in a broader	<p>The experience of other countries in integrating FL and NFL demonstrates that learning outcomes that</p>	<p>Learning outcomes that have been described in a broader, not too</p>	<p>The recognition of NFL as a mandatory or elective subject remains a merely theoretical</p>

³⁹ ICF, Praxis, Tallinn University and Civitta Estonia. (2022) Non-formal and formal learning integration practices in Estonia. Supporting young people to succeed – building capacities to better integrate non-formal and formal learning (REFORM/SC2021/066).

⁴⁰ *Ibid.*



Recommendation	Relevance	Expected impact	Risks upon failure to address the recommendation
and field-based manner in school curricula	have been described in a too narrow or too detailed manner and rigid curricula are a significant obstacle to integration. ⁴¹	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.	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.
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	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, internal motivation of participants, spontaneity and indeterminacy). ^{42,43}	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 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.	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 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.

⁴¹ ICF, Praxis, Tallinn University and Civitta Estonia. (2022). Analytical report on relevant examples of policy and practice from other countries. Supporting young people to succeed – building capacities to better integrate non-formal and formal learning (REFORM/SC2021/066). Available at: <https://www.hm.ee/et/mitteformaalse-oppimise-loimimine-formaalharidusse>

⁴² ICF, Praxis, Tallinn University and Civitta Estonia. (2022). Analytical report on relevant examples of policy and practice from other countries. Supporting young people to succeed – building capacities to better integrate non-formal and formal learning (REFORM/SC2021/066). <https://www.hm.ee/et/mitteformaalse-oppimise-loimimine-formaalharidusse>

⁴³ Põlda, H., Reinsalu, R. & Karu, K. (2021). Mitteformaalõpe praktikute keelekasutuses. The Yearbook of the Estonian Mother Tongue Society. 10.3176/esa66.10.