

Estonia. For the smartEST people in the world.

Estonia is known and recognized worldwide as a successful and innovative e-state. But how have world-changing companies like TransferWise, Bolt, and Skype grown out of a nation of only 1.3 million? Why does Estonia have one of the highest numbers of start-up companies per capita in the world? What prompted us to implement the “Tiger Leap” project, which digitized not only the education system but the entire public sector from governance to tax returns and led to innovation and transparency in many areas?

The answer is education. We are an education nation.



Education is valued in Estonian society — it has always been considered both a guarantee of individual success and one of the main drivers of the country's development.

The level of education of Estonian people is one of the highest in the Organisation for Economic Co-Operation and Development (OECD). Ninety percent of 25- to 64-year-olds have at least upper secondary education, the OECD average is 75%. According to PISA tests, one of the most important international standards in the field of education, Estonia has reached the pinnacle.

High-quality education is equally accessible to all, and obtaining education does not depend on the socio-economic background of parents or the gender of the student, as the state and the local government support the education of all children

Over the past 20 years, Estonia has undertaken multiple reforms that have made obtaining education more learner-centered, modern, and forward-looking. We have applied best practices from other countries and have been assertive in discovering and trying new things.

What does Estonian education stand out for in the world?



+ Estonia's basic education is at the top of the world. Estonian students have achieved consistently high scores in the PISA test. Our excellent position is due to the consistently high level of all students, and the number of top achievers has increased year by year while the number of students with substandard knowledge has declined. Estonian students have won hundreds of medals at international Olympiads over the last decade, confirming the quality of their expertise in the world's top competition.

In Estonia, access to pre-primary and basic education is very fair compared to other countries, which means that, unlike most OECD countries, the possibility of a child obtaining an education in Estonia is not dependent on the level of education achieved by the parent.

+ Estonia has a high level of vocational training, higher education, and adult education.

Vocational education has become an area of interest in many countries. Modernization of vocational education started in 1995 — and today, close collaboration with businesses, contemporary study conditions, the involvement of students of various ages, and excellent teachers, provide quality content to our vocational education programs.

The most prominent universities in Estonia — Tartu University, Tallinn University, and TalTech — earn prestigious, globally recognized rankings (THE, QS). Higher education is flexible and accessible — supported by a wide range of study forms, consideration of learning and work experience in studying, and the opportunity to work during studies. Curricula, including many in English, are characterized by innovation and a particular focus on information technology and entrepreneurship.

Estonia has developed a system for adults that offers opportunities for self-improvement in various fields. Acquiring new skills, retraining, and completing unfinished schooling are popular in Estonia, and lifelong learning has become a lifestyle: 19.7% of all 25- to 64-year-olds attended at least one training course in 2018. This indicator holds fourth place in the European Union.

+ Digitized schools provide Estonian students with future skills. We make extensive use of the possibilities offered by modern technology in teaching. Estonian education, research, the field of youth, and language are becoming more intelligent, and digital skills and competences play essential roles. In addition to teaching knowledge and skills in the digital field, Estonian education widely uses numerous smart solutions: digital databases, digital textbooks, e-learning materials, digital class diary, digital assessments, not to mention various applications and programs. Various e-solutions ultimately make students' schoolbags lighter, helping carry knowledge instead of a heavy schoolbag, improving posture, and making learning smarter. The Estonian school is mostly in the cloud; however, alongside digitization, books and traditional activities are valued.

+ Estonia features strong educational technology companies that make learning more personal. As of September 2019, there are 30 EdTech companies in Estonia that, together with educational institutions and experts, have created and validated successful educational products and services for both domestic and world markets.

All of these facts provided a platform and inspiration to develop the Education Nation brand.

Education Nation — a brand for the global marketing and export of Estonian education



We have the knowledge and expertise to share and export to other countries at national, municipal, institutional, and corporate levels.

The Education Nation brand is positioned to export Estonian education — under which the state of Estonia will directly sell or intermediate the priceable components, whether it be consulting, training, digital solutions, or similar.

Our channels include trade fairs, PR, social media, and direct contacts, as well as a website expected in 2020, and more.

In these ways, each country can take part in the success story of Estonian education. And the whole world can become the Education Nation.

Education Nation has been initiated by the Ministry of Education and Research and is coordinated by Foundation Innove.

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