

## **SUMMARY OF THE STUDY OF THE IMPACT OF LANGUAGE TRAINING DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMMES**

**Commissioned by: The Integration and Migration Foundation Our  
People**

**Carried out by: Saar Poll OÜ**

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## OVERVIEW OF PROGRAMMES AND STUDY METHODOLOGY

From December 2012 to May 2013 Social and Market Research Company Saar Poll OÜ carried out a study of the **impact of the programmes ‘Development of Language Training 2007-2010’ and ‘Development of Language Training 2011-2013’, which were financed by the European Social Fund, on the acquisition of Estonian language skills, improvement of the quality of language training, development of new methods and change in attitudes**, at the request of the Integration and Migration Foundation Our People (MISA).

This study was carried out as part of the ‘Language Training Development 2011-2013’ programme, a measure of the ‘Lifelong Learning’ priority of the ‘Human Resources Development Plan’ financed by the European Social Fund.

The objective of the programme at the general level is to increase the awareness of Estonian residents of the advantages of multilingualism and to create opportunities for the acquisition of various languages. The general objective is to provide all people living in Estonia irrespective of their native languages with equal opportunities to acquire an education and be active in the labour market.

The project has three sub-objectives:

- students whose native language is not Estonian have learnt Estonian at the level required for living in Estonia;
- adults whose native language is not Estonian have learnt Estonian at the level required for everyday and professional life in Estonia;
- the foreign language skills of people graduating from different levels of education and heading for the labour market have been determined for making the necessary language policy decisions.

The target groups of the ‘Language Studies Development 2007-2010’ programme are:

- people whose command of the Estonian language is inadequate (people for whom school attendance is not compulsory and people who have not registered as unemployed for the purposes of the Labour Market Services and Benefits Act);
- students aged 14 and over whose native language is not Estonian;
- teachers and officials who work with students whose native language is not Estonian.

The target groups of the ‘Language Studies Development 2011-2013’ programme are:

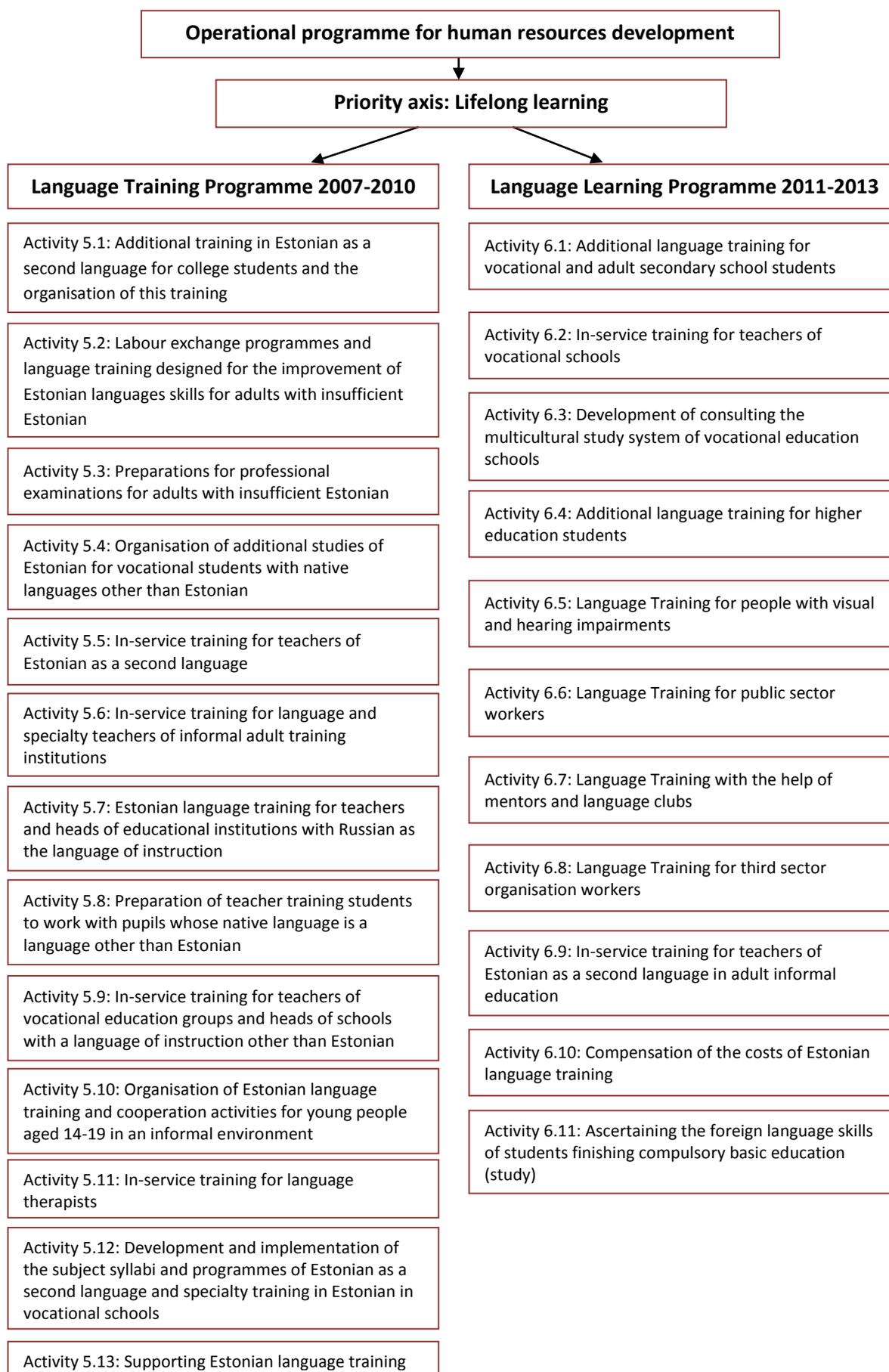
- people for whom school attendance is not compulsory but whose command of the Estonian language is insufficient;
- students of general, vocational and higher education schools whose native language is not Estonian;
- students of general education, vocational education and higher education schools;
- teachers and officials who work with students whose native language is not Estonian.

A detailed overview of language training development programmes is available on the MISA website <http://www.meis.ee/esf>.

The full version of the study of the impact of language training development programmes can be viewed at <http://www.meis.ee/uuringud>.

## Study of the Impact of Language Training Development Programmes

### Activities of the Language Training Development Programmes for 2007-2010 and 2011-2013



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The **target groups of the study** of the impact of language training development programmes included programme participants, service providers, promoters of the programme activities as well as the experts involved in the development of the programme. A **document analysis** was carried out within the scope of the study and a **feedback survey** was conducted among the members of target groups using different study methods.

### Study methods in feedback survey

Target group	Study methods used
Programme participants – people who took part in the courses/training organised within the scope of MISA programmes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Online survey (514 respondents, incl. students, adult language learners and teachers)</li> <li>• 2 mini focus groups with vocational students in Tallinn and Kohtla-Järve</li> </ul>
Programme participants – people to whom the cost of Estonian language training was compensated	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Online survey (175 respondents)</li> </ul>
Service providers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Online survey (53 respondents)</li> <li>• In-depth interviews with representatives of 4 service providers</li> <li>• Semi-structured telephone interviews with two authors of training materials for people with visual and hearing impairments</li> </ul>
Experts – programme promoters from MISA and experts from outside the foundation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Online survey (29 respondents)</li> <li>• Focus group with programme promoters from MISA</li> <li>• In-depth interviews with three members of the programme's steering committee</li> </ul>

## OPINION OF THE SUCCESS OF THE PROGRAMME ON THE BASIS OF DOCUMENT ANALYSIS

The success and impact of activities can mainly be assessed in the case of the programme for 2007-2010, as most of the activities of the 2011-2013 programme have not been finished yet. Assessing the impact and success of a programme usually requires a longer period of time, because some activities are planned for a long time and their direct impact is not immediately manifested (e.g. in case of attitudes). Assessing the impact of a specific programme is difficult, because the goals that are set are either complex and influenced also by activities outside the programme that support the achievement of the same goals and are carried out by other institutions and organisations.

The promoter of the programme '**Development of Language Training 2007-2010**' believes that it was a success and MISA is of the opinion that the objectives of the programme were achieved. The programme covered 13 different activities, which largely concerned teaching Estonian to the non-Estonian-speaking population. The total budget of the programme was €4,101,200 and €4,048,716 of

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this amount was paid out. Changes were made to the programme's budget and activities in the course of implementation. The indicators set as the objectives were generally achieved in the course of the programme; some minor omissions that were found related to both organisational issues as well as the lack of interest in the target group. The level to which indicators were achieved exceeded the planned volume in case of many activities. This was caused by several different factors (e.g. lots of interest among participants, price decrease caused by the economic situation, forecasts that were too modest during initial planning).

More than 7,000 people participated in the activities of the programme (the number of participants initially planned was ca. 5,000). However, the number of people who benefitted from the activities was higher, because various diverse training materials that were translated or specially prepared in the course of the programme are accessible to institutions that teach Estonian as a second language and thousands of language learners. The programme had the biggest impact on the achievement of the objectives of the development plan 'Estonian Integration Plan 2008-2013' in the areas of educational, cultural, social and economic integration. The programme contributed to the following: 1) that the people who acquire vocational education in Estonia have a command of the Estonian language that corresponds to their level of education and qualification requirements and are more competitive on the Estonian labour market; 2) that students of secondary schools where the language of instruction is not Estonian can successfully acquire higher education in Estonian; 3) that teachers are able to teach in multilingual and multicultural learning environments and students whose level of Estonian is different.

11 activities will be carried out from 2011 to 2013 on the basis of the programme '**Development of Language Training 2011-2013**'. Four of these activities are new, the rest continue and further the activities of the previous programme. The total volume of the programme is €2,458,000, which should provide training to ca. 1,800 and language learning compensation to 2,500 people, plus consultations in vocational schools, development of various study materials and completion of a study. The implementation of the project is going as planned and the results of the activities are more or less as intended. The achievement of several output indicators is low, but the number of people currently in training is rather large, which allows that all of the indicators can be expected to be met by the end of the programme period.

This means that most targets have been achieved and exceeded from the aspect of implementation. However, the opinion is somewhat different from the language policy and substantive aspect. The document analysis indicated that the objectives of programmes are sometimes vaguely or too flamboyantly worded, which means that they and their achievement cannot always be assessed from the viewpoint of language training organisation. As the objectives and activities described in the programme have not been arranged in a clear hierarchy in relation to each other and there is no uniform understanding of how the activities support the achievement of the programme objectives, then there is the threat that the desired impact is not clearly understandable when the project is implemented and the objectives are therefore not achievement or their achievement is not satisfactory.

The main basis for the development of the programmes was the operational programme for human resources development and several of its shortcomings transferred into the language training programmes. For example, the number of training courses and the number of people who participated in and passed the courses are used as the general indicators of the project irrespective of the type, goal or participation criteria of the course or any other activity. The criticism here is aimed at focusing too much on the number people who 'passed' the courses, as it doesn't always entail measuring

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language-related results. Based on the information existing about programmes, it is impossible to determine how much language skills have improved or whether it has a lasting impact, or to identify the impact of the programme on attitudes. MISA should acknowledge the importance of the substantive result of language training and its measurement. For example, structural changes in the language environment should have been previously analysed and then measured after the training during past programmes. The success rate of students taking the relevant formal exams for which training was financed (e.g. passing a vocational exam after studies, students of institutions administered by the public sector and local authorities passing Estonian languages proficiency exams) should also be monitored. Guaranteeing the success of the programmes solely on the basis of output indicators does not work; it's important to define and use success and impact indicators separately for each activity.

## OVERVIEW OF FEEDBACK FROM DIFFERENT PARTIES

### *Success of the programme: opinions of changes*

The online survey indicated that 74% of the people who took part in the language training offered by the language training development programmes have passed language proficiency exams. A quarter of them did it only before or only after passing a course organised by MISA and are therefore unable to say whether or not the course improved their language skills. One-half of the people who passed the exam noted on the basis of the proficiency exam results that their language proficiency improved after the course or training. Almost every fourth participant said that their skills remained at the same level, and in a few cases they deteriorated.

The persons who participated in training, the service providers who organised the training and the experts involved in the programmes were asked to assess the changes that resulted from the course/training.

**Language training participants** have felt the nuances related to the improvement of their language skills as a result of the courses. Looking at the respondents in [Figure 1](#) who said that the statement applies to them (score 4-5), then we see that one-half of language training participants find that their language skills improved and they use the knowledge and skills they acquired in everyday situations and their work. About two-fifths of language learners noted that they are more prepared to communicate in Estonian and they are able to express themselves better in writing. Less people agreed with the statement that concerns the application of the acquired skills in other areas of life (e.g. communication at work, in school or in relation to hobbies; following Estonian-language media; reading professional literature). 30% of language learners find that participation in training made them more competitive in the labour market. As the existence of the relevant language environment is a premise to the use of the Estonian language, then it's not that surprising that participation in language training has had the least impact on communication with friends and relatives.

Two-thirds of the **teachers and trainers** who participated in courses/training find that they have applied the knowledge and experience they gained in their work ([Figure 2](#)). About one-half find that their teaching skills and the ability to make students more prepared to communicate improved as a

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result of a course or training. Approximately as many find that their work-related motivation increased as a result of the courses. Fewer respondents (41%) agreed with the statement that their competitiveness on the labour market improved as a result of the training. Approximately every third teacher/trainer found that students and colleagues value them more as a result of their participation in training. A third also found that the performance of their students improved as a result of them passing the course or training. It is important to note here that about a fifth of the teachers and trainers could not respond anything to statements about competitiveness, respect from colleagues and students, and improvement of the performance of students.

Both **service providers** and the **experts** who were involved in the programmes have a more positive opinion of the results of the training than the participants ([Figure 3](#) and [Figure 4](#), respectively). When we take improvement of language skills as an example, then a half of the participants perceived the change, but as many as four-fifths of experts find that the Estonian language skills of participants are better than before. It is also interesting that the participants themselves highlighted the improvement of their language skills first of all, but service providers and experts put increased readiness to communicate in the first place. It's difficult to explain the background of these differences on the basis of this study. Although performance indicators are considerably higher among service providers and experts, their opinions also indicate that the courses carried out within the framework of the MISA programmes have had more impact on direct language skills than on the broader integration process in society.

Qualitative study methods highlighted different, sometimes even contradictory opinions of the success of the language training programmes of MISA. On one hand, it can be said that short-term learning does not contribute to integration and that its impact on language skills is small, but we can see that both participants and other target groups have positive examples about changes in attitudes, a better understanding of society and increased interest in the state, culture and people of Estonia. The problem in the achievement of long-term results is the fact that the better language skills acquired in courses disappears if after the end of the course the person has no Estonian-language environment where to practice (i.e. there is no need or opportunity to communicate in Estonian).

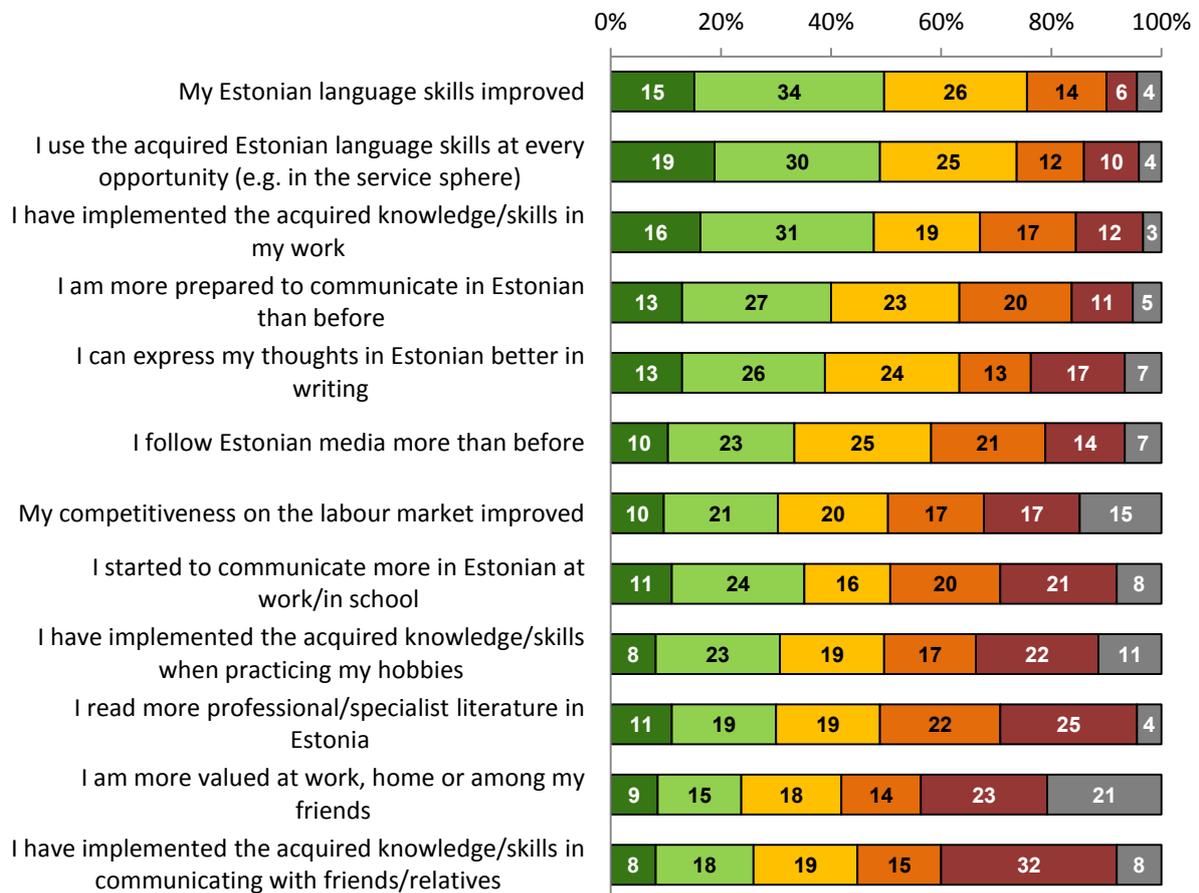
In addition to the positive training results revealed by the study, we also have to admit that the **need of programme participants for additional Estonian language training is still vast**: as many as 97% of adult language learners and 86% of school students think that additional language training is necessary. The need of teachers for additional training is somewhat smaller than the need of language learners, but 83% of them also find that they will need similar training in the future (e.g. they need to improve their teaching and Estonian language skills). Sometimes it seems that this learning process is endless, because most of the people who participate in the MISA courses have learnt Estonian at language courses, in communication, etc., before.

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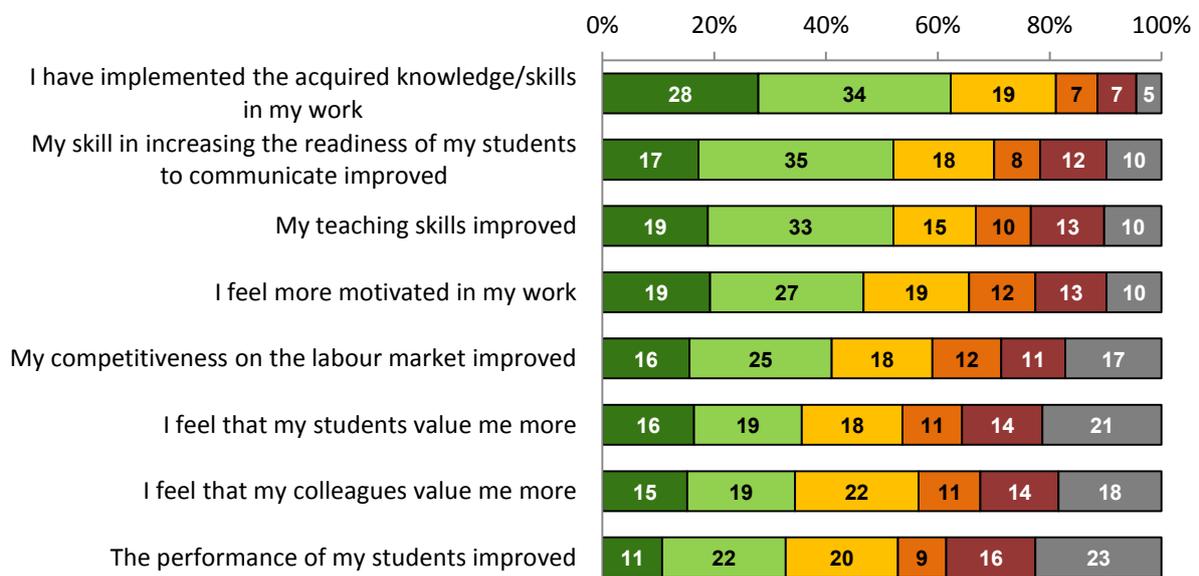
**What are the changes that occurred as a result of this course/training?** (listed on the basis of the average)

**Figure 1. Opinions of students and adult language learners (N=270)**

■ 5 - Applies to me to a large extent ■ 4 ■ 3 ■ 2 ■ 1- Does not apply to me at all ■ Difficult to say



**Figure 2. Opinions of teachers and trainers (N=244)**



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What are the changes that occurred among participants as a result of the programmes?

Figure 3. Opinions of service providers (65 activities in language training and 23 activities in teacher training were assessed)

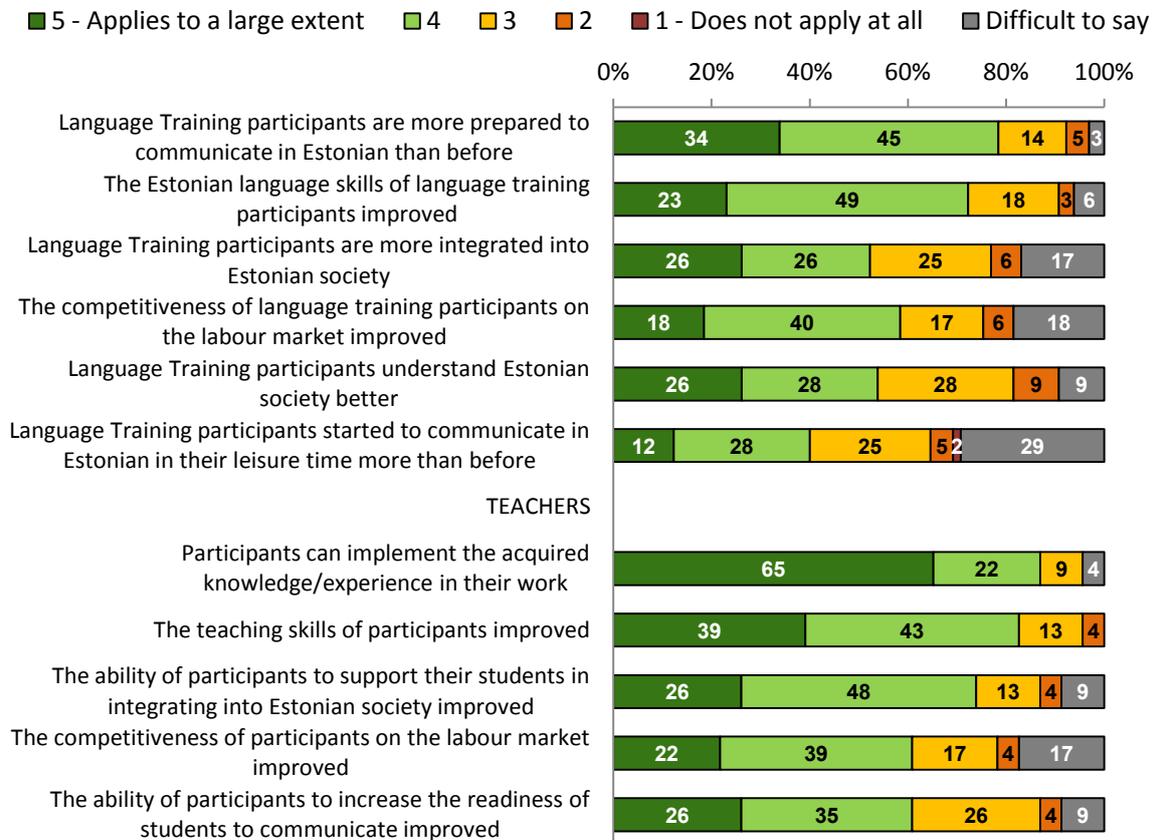
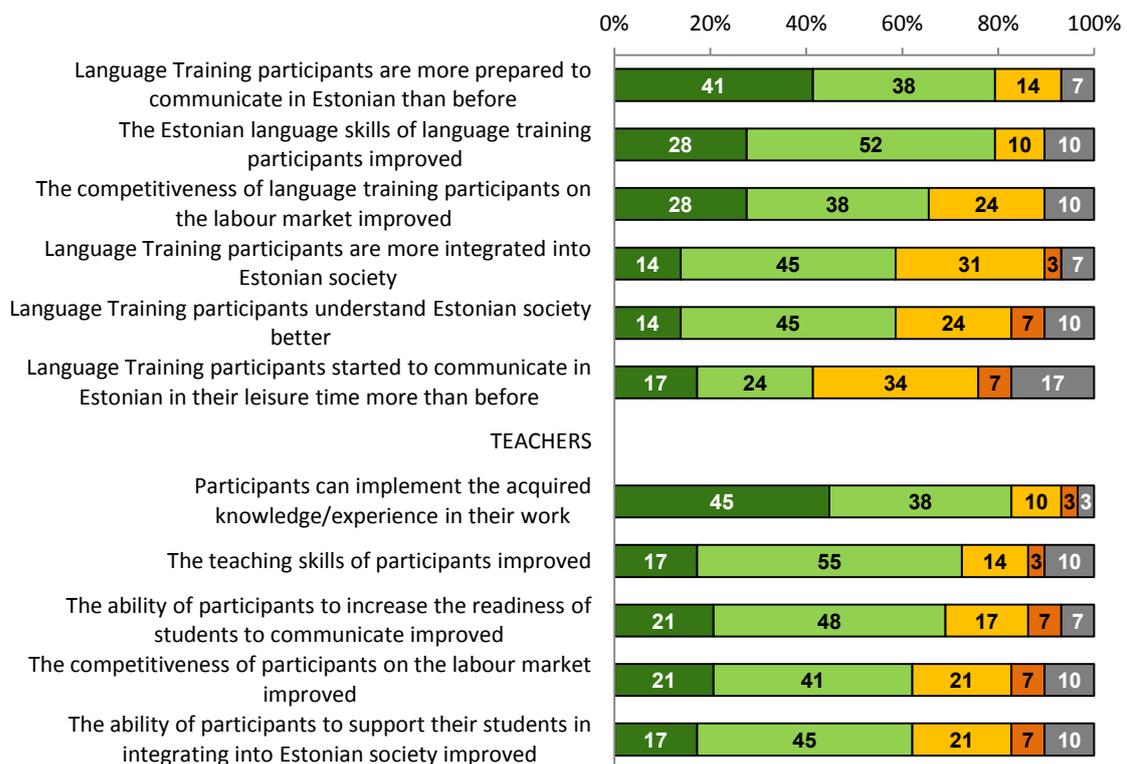


Figure 4. Opinions of experts (N=29)



### *Satisfaction with form of study, teaching level and study materials*

The feedback study shows that the opinion of **participants** about the training offered within the scope of the MISA programmes is predominantly positive: 90% of (language) training participants found the form of study suitable for them; 84% considered learning in this form rather or very effective; 86% of respondents found the level of teaching to be good or very good; and 85% found that the level of study and auxiliary materials was equally good. **Communication in an Estonian-language environment and oral language practice** was considered the most necessary in the training offered within the scope of the MISA programmes. The study results indicate that teachers and teaching methods are particularly important from the viewpoint of satisfaction and motivation whilst some other aspects are also important, but not important enough to generate a feeling of satisfaction. The result complies very well with the studies of adult students recently carried out in Estonia, which also indicate that aspects associated with the learning environment and teaching have the biggest impact on progress and satisfaction with studies.

The opinions **service providers** have of the activities they offer are also positive: In ca. 90% of all cases the form of study that was used is considered effective, suitable for participants and seen as favouring people's integration into Estonia society, and the level of the study and auxiliary materials used was seen as good. Service providers found in regard to four-fifths of the activities that participants had a rather strong or very strong desire to learn. Interviews reveal that the people's desire and interest to learn are different: some are not motivated at all or only attend the courses because they have to, other have the need and desire to improve their language skills.

As **experts** should have an overview of the different activities of the various activities of the programmes and the opportunity to compare them, then they were all asked to assess how efficient all of these activities are in achieving better integration in Estonian society. The results indicate that learning Estonian in the form of labour exchange is the most effective way of learning Estonian; the other most effective activities in promoting integration are language training for people with visual and hearing impairments, Estonian language training and cooperation activities for young people aged 14-19 in an informal environment, language training with the help of a mentor and in language clubs, development and implementation of the subject syllabi and programmes of Estonian as a second language and specialty training in Estonian in vocational schools, language training for public/third sector employees and in-service training for general education school teachers.

Experts have a good opinion of the level of study and auxiliary materials offered in the course of language training programmes. The survey indicated that there is an urgent need for the development of study materials within the scope of MISA programmes: of all experts 69% deem it very necessary and 24% rather necessary. The qualitative study explained that the need for the development of study materials arises mainly from the fact that the language training activities of MISA are often aimed at small target groups for whom no study materials are prepared at the level of the state.

### *Compensation of the costs of Estonian language training*

Compensation of the costs of language learning is an **important factor that favours language training**. More than a half of the respondents (62%) found that the option to receive compensation for their language training costs after they have passed the proficiency exam has influenced their Estonian

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language learning. Without the compensation they would have either attended fewer or cheaper language courses, postponed their attendance of a course or given it up altogether. Every third (37%) recipient of language training compensation used the compensation to go and learn Estonian again; the same indicator among people who have received the language training compensation more than once is as high as 61%. The understanding of the people who have received the compensation of the necessary extent of the compensation of costs varies greatly. Most people find that the compensation paid for one passed proficiency exam should be 300-500 euros. 15% mentioned smaller and 30% larger amounts. People would mostly like to receive compensation for the cost of study materials (textbooks, workbooks); and the others most often mentioned were the cost of photocopying and printing, etc., and the cost of transport, incl. fuel.

Since 95% of the language training compensation recipients feel the **need for additional Estonian language training**, then the need for compensation of training expenses is likely to remain high. Compensation recipients are of the opinion that the monetary aspect is very important, if not the most important factor that influences the **desire of people whose native language is not Estonian to learn Estonia** (e.g. it is necessary to provide free or more affordable language training, compensation of training expenses, financial support to language training, etc.). The person's motivation is also important in case of language training – they must want to learn the language and feel the need to learn it. Increased communication between Estonians and Russians and the creation of practice opportunities, more respect towards Russian-language residents, provision of language training of better quality and other circumstances that promote the desire to learn were also considered necessary.

The awareness of people of the compensation of Estonian language training expenses should be raised, as less than a half (47%) of the people who had received the compensation found that people whose first language is not Estonian are generally well aware of the opportunity to apply for compensation. Two-thirds of the respondents were aware of the fact they could apply for compensation before they started preparing for the first proficiency exam, but people don't often know which organisations paid the compensation. When the respondents were asked to indicate in the list given to them the organisations that had compensated their language training expenses and the organisations that had generally been involved in compensating language training expenses from 2007-2012, then about two-fifths of compensation recipients were unable to indicate any. 29% of compensation recipients think that the National Examination and Qualification Centre compensated their language training expenses and only 25% thought that it was the Integration and Migration Foundation Our People.

### ***Sustainability of activities***

The sustainability of activities can be assessed in many ways: the interest of service providers and participants, the implementation of the courses/training initiated within the scope of MISA programmes after the end of the programmes and the readiness to continue with them in the future if the support of MISA or the European Social Fund disappeared.

Most experts find that people are interested in participating in MISA's programmes. In the online survey 83% of experts thought that the **potential interest of applicants** to submit proposals for courses/training to MISA programmes is big (incl. very big in the opinion of 31%). However, the

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qualitative study indicated that participation the procurement has decreased considerably in the last ten years. The interest of **target groups** in participating in courses/training offered within the scope of language training programmes was assessed as somewhat lower in the online study (21% of experts thought interest was very big). The qualitative study carried out later confirmed that the formation of some study groups had not been easy and the motivation of some participants was not high, e.g. when language training was compulsory for the participants.

The **sustainability of present activities** can be seen as rather good. Four-fifths of the experts said that some of the activities initiated within the scope of the MISA language training programmes have also been implemented after the end of the programmes. Service providers said that about a half of the courses/training initiated within the scope of MISA programmes have also been implemented after the end of the programmes. Their implementation has been mostly partial (e.g. the prepared study materials, the same methods and the experience gained in the MISA programme have been used). The most important reasons why a course has not been organised again seem to be financial ones (e.g. people are not interested in paying for training, schools cannot pay, the activity that was developed for MISA was too expensive).

The survey also showed that **neither service providers nor MISA have the readiness or the resources to continue with the activities without the support of the ESF**. Service providers believe that financial support is more important than MISA's advice and consultations for the continuation of the activities initiated in the programmes: about a half (53%) tend to think that they would cope without MISA's advice and consultations, but less than a quarter (23%) of the service providers would be able to continue with the activities without the financial support of MISA/ESF. In the opinion of experts, the situation is even worse: more than four-fifths find that schools and service providers are not ready and don't have the resources required for continuing with the activities initiated and developed in the programmes without external advice and consultations and MISA cannot continue with language training programmes without ESF financing.

### *MISA requirements and organisational activities*

**Service providers and experts have a similar understanding of the suitability and performance of programme requirements.** The majority of service providers (approximately 90%) and experts find that either most or all of the requirements for activities (e.g. number of participants, schedule, number of lessons, etc.) were met. Two-thirds of respondents in both target groups found that the requirements set for activities were suitable but every fourth respondent considered them too high. It may therefore be presumed that the requirements set to programme activities were relatively tough and they don't allow the organisers of MISA programme activities to keep to a routine, but require them to make a new effort every time. The requirement that worried the service providers the most is the number of participants and attendance percentage (85% attendance requirement is too high; it's difficult to find the required number of people in some target groups and to guarantee that they all attend the course until its end), because the implementation of the capitation fee system means that they will suffer financial losses if the requirements are not met. Service providers expect MISA to also be more about making changes in the schedule. Some experts also admit that some of the goals that were set are too optimistic, not all of the requirements correspond to actual possibilities and there is a lot of bureaucracy.

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Most service providers (91% of all cases) find that the **organisational activities of MISA** in the proposal submission/procurement stage are good or very good and that sufficient and appropriate support from the MISA team was guaranteed for them in the course of carrying out the training. Although service providers are generally satisfied with the activities of MISA and agree that MISA has been a good and profitable partner in the long run, they have also found problems in the cooperation. The main reproaches to MISA are excessive bureaucracy and limited flexibility: long reports, which often focus on formal issues rather than the content of training; making changes in the schedule whilst the activity is ongoing is difficult; inflexible capitation fee system in remuneration, tough sanctions, lack of the option to make prepayments; long processing deadlines, etc. Some service providers have also encountered communication problems, but they do admit that this depends largely on the MISA coordinator, their communication skills and competency.

**Guaranteeing the quality of language training** is a problem seen by MISA. Service providers can be divided into two groups: those who have their own language training competency and teaching staff, and those who don't have teaching competency, but do have management competency and trainers are so-say outsourced. The problem with the second type of companies is their possible incompetence and their inability to take responsibility for the quality of teaching staff, as the company itself is unable to check and guarantee the quality of teachers. Unfortunately, the level of teachers varies and good teachers are busy and expensive. MISA's options to inspect the quality of language training are limited, because some companies and teachers don't want programme coordinators to visit language lessons. Obtaining an overview of training quality solely on the basis of the information given in the tender is difficult. As participation in procurement has decreased, MISA needs to review its requirements and criteria carefully to guarantee that cooperation with professional service providers, whose methods have proven to be successful, will continue. The option of having its own qualified teaching staff could also be considered.

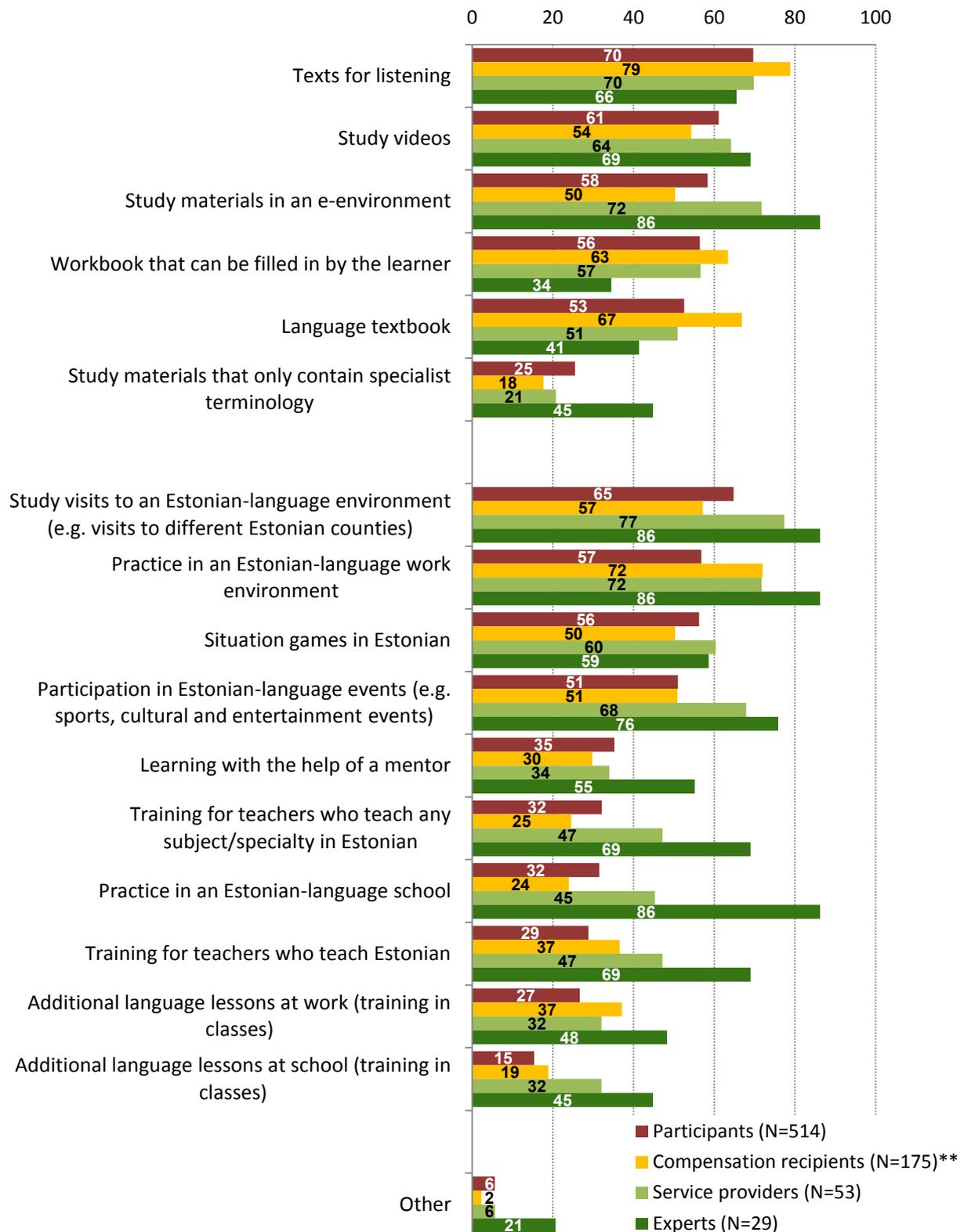
### ***Recommendations about teaching methods and study materials***

The results of the study reveal that an **Estonian-language environment and the opportunity to practice the language are extremely important to guarantee successful language learning**. Teaching Estonian in a non-Estonian environment is often lacking in efficiency as well as from the viewpoint of further use and practice of the language if no contacts in an Estonian-language environment are added to the training. The lack of constant language practice is one of the biggest problems in language learning, because people have no chance or courage to speak the language and they forget it quickly. Language training in an Estonian environment also has a broader meaning from the viewpoint of promoting integration. Practice shows that the non-Estonians who have been able to learn Estonian in an Estonian environment understand the Estonian conditions and people better, and thereby also feel closer to Estonians in their attitudes. This should be the ultimate goal of language training. However, the goal will not be achieved if no common language environment is created for Estonians and people of other nationalities. The latter is also important for Estonians whose Russian skills are unfortunately not that good, as the ability to speak Russian is required in many jobs.

This is why the use of **interactive language training programmes** applicable in an **Estonian-language environment** (e.g. study visits, practice in an Estonian-language workplace, participation in Estonian-language events, situation games) is primarily recommended in the MISA programmes ([Figure 5](#)).

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Figure 5. Which activities or materials do you recommend for use in MISA programmes in the future to make Estonian language training as effective as possible? (%)



\* The sum of percentages may be larger than 100, as every respondent could give more than one answer.

\*\* The question was worded differently for compensation recipients: Which activities or materials do you recommend to make Estonian language training as effective as possible?

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Different parties agreed that the need for additional auditory training in MISA programmes was the smallest; only a few respondents thought that additional language lessons at school or work would make Estonian language teaching more effective. In case of study forms it is noticeable that experts are the ones who favour a very diverse selection of language training activities and mention most of the activities more often than the other target groups (especially compared to people participating in training and compensation recipients). On the other hand, experts admit that interactive forms of study are indisputably more expensive than traditional approaches. This raises an important question: should MISA prefer the forms of study that are considerably more expensive (both in terms of language training and integration) but more expensive, or should it prefer the classic approach that makes it possible to organise so-called mass training?

The opinions of different target groups are somewhat different when it comes to the **efficiency of study materials**. The common trait is that the majority of respondents consider texts for listening to be effective. The use of study videos is mentioned somewhat less frequently. Study materials located in the e-environment are valued mainly by experts and service providers. People who have attended the courses themselves are more in favour of traditional study materials (textbook, workbook) than the experts.

### *Current extent and future outlooks of programmes*

Experts have a different understanding of how many people the language training programmes have reached from 2007 to 2013 and how well the target groups are covered. More than a half of the experts thought in the online study that there were **target groups** from 2007 to 2013 who were not sufficiently involved in language training programmes, but who should definitely be involved in the next programmes. The missing groups that were mentioned ranged from wall to wall and none of them were dominant in the answers. In terms of **regions** the present picture looks better (two-thirds of the experts found that all necessary regions were sufficiently involved), but sometimes it was found that both currently actively involved regions (Ida-Viru County, Tallinn) as well as Southern Estonia and other regions need to be involved more.

Experts and service providers were in agreement about the **volume in which language training should be issued in MISA programmes in the future** to ensure that people whose language of instruction is not Estonian are integrated into Estonian society as efficiently as possible. In the online study 51% of service providers found that as many people as possible should pass language training (this opinion was dominant in language training companies) and 26% were in favour of in-depth language training even if it meant that only a few people could participate. The opinions of experts were divided more equally: 45% of respondents were in favour of a number that was as big as possible and 35% favoured focusing on language training. The in-depth interviews with experts highlighted clearly that they supported in-depth training, but the high price of these methods curbed their enthusiasm.

On one hand, they want to add to the list of target groups but on the other hand they want to reduce the number of target groups to focus on the main thing. Many experts find that the public sector should be the main target group of language training, because the state has set certain language requirements for this group. The other important target group, which MISA has actually been dealing with for many years, is the students and teachers of vocational schools, because of the transfer to 60% of subject teaching in Estonian at the level of vocational education in vocational schools by 2020. The

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third important target group are the teachers of general education schools (both teachers of Estonian and subject teachers who teach in Estonian). A missing target group that was mentioned are upper secondary school students, who are planning to continue their education in institutions of higher education. As the Estonian language skills of people of other nationalities is improving year on year, then the share of so-called beginner level and assisting Estonian language courses should be decreasing. The role of MISA in Estonian language training should also change in light of this.

### *Measuring success*

In order to plan training activities and assess their success, it is important to assess the level of participants both at the start and end of language courses. According to the results of the study, this is currently done more often at the beginning of courses rather than at their end. When we proceed from the feedback given by participants (students and adult language learners) themselves, training started with an assessment of the level of language proficiency in 74% of cases and ended with a test or exam in 57% of cases. In the case of these indicators, it must be considered that in certain cases participants may not have understood or remembered that their language skills were assessed. This interpretation is supported by the responses of service providers – they say that participants were assessed (in the form of an exam or test) in 80-90% of activities, and even more often in language training companies. The qualitative study indicated that formal inspection does not always exist, as some teachers do not assess the development of language skills with tests and exams, but individually by monitoring the areas in which a student developed during the course. Although the requirement to assess language skills is included in MISA programmes, the programme experts do not agree on this – three-quarters of the experts who responded found that language courses should start and end with assessments of language proficiency. Two-thirds of service providers and experts currently find that the assessment of Estonian language proficiency in the course of courses/training during MISA programmes should be based on the same system used in language proficiency exams (A2, B1, B2, etc.).

It is difficult to get a common position on this issue, as MISA deals with a lot of target groups and uses different methodologies. The service providers who organise language training think that testing language skills at the start of a course is useful, as it helps divide the participants into groups of similar proficiency levels. Although testing may also be used to assess the development of students it is not always the most suitable approach and a more complex assessment is required to ascertain the development of language skills (incl. the opinion of the teachers and students themselves). In certain cases related to shorter courses or training that is solely professional or more individual (e.g. labour exchange, learning under the guidance of a mentor, informal activities, etc.), the need for an exam and its form becomes somewhat questionable. A language test may measure the wealth of vocabulary and knowledge of grammar, but not the person's readiness to communicate in Estonian or their attitudes. On the other hand, it is necessary to measure the efficiency of the programme activities in some way. This highlights a contradiction that must be separately resolved in each activity of language training programmes depending on the objective of the training. The creation of indicators is an area where the search for suitable solutions must continue.

## WHERE TO GO NEXT AND HOW?

Summarising the results of this study, it can be said that the work done by MISA in organising and developing Estonian language training from 2007 to 2013 can be considered a success. The long activities of MISA have given many people the opportunity to develop various methods of language training for many target groups, to test them and perfect new methodologies. The approach to language training has become more systematic than before. However, it has to be said that language skills can only be successfully developed after determining the needs and motives of the learners. The main responsibility in language training lies on the learner. No methodological approach is effective if the learner does not want to learn.

In addition to the generally positive assessment, the study also highlighted several problems related to setting the objectives and sub-objectives of activities as well as determining the indicators with which the impact of activities can be measured. The relatively small impact of language training on integration is certainly a serious problem for Estonian society. This phenomenon of course has a number of reasons, but we should probably start looking at language training in a broader context than now. In political rhetoric, learning Estonian is spoken about as an objective. Actually, language should also be seen as the tool that can be used for oral or written communication in everyday and working life. Language learning in itself does not guarantee the integration of participants into Estonian society. Language training is a premise, but it does not mean automatic integration. This is why the courses of MISA should also be analysed from the aspect of the push they give to the integration process of students: the desire to use Estonian, to broaden the circle of acquaintances, to be more in touch with events in Estonia via media. And certainly not unilaterally, but bilaterally, as integration is not a one-way but a two-way process.

Estonia needs Estonian language training at different levels for many years to come. Every year a large number of people enter the labour market and their Estonian language skills are not at the level that would allow them to work in positions of relevant qualification, study in the educational institutions where they would like to study or just communicate with officials in everyday life. Expedient use of existing means is important, as language training is expensive. Constant financing from the state budget is the basis of sustainable and efficient language training. The support received from various funds is one-off in its nature and the use of these means therefore tends to be project-based. This is why it is impossible to prepare development plans whose duration exceeds that of a one-off project. As long as there are people among residents of other nationalities whose Estonian language skills are insufficient, MISA should function on the basis of systematic activities the nature and possibilities of which are understood by both language learners and teachers and that would inform both parties of the development opportunities they entail when they enter them as learners or teachers.

This highlights the problematic side of MISA's role: should MISA be regarded as the organisation that only deals with language training and other related activities, or is MISA also a centre of competency in the given area because its activities are extremely broad-based and demand good professional knowledge of several areas. As MISA has many partners looking for substantive answers in addition to organisational ones, then MISA should increase as a centre of competency. This allows for a better definition of the objectives of language training in various target groups and a more justified outlining of the language needs of target groups and the indicators used to measure the success of activities, and it helps the organisation to be a better partner and perform a competent control function.

**Study of the Impact of Language Training Development Programmes**

Many subjects still need to be resolved at the political level: what should funding from Estonia's state budget be like, which are the main target groups that activities should be aimed at, what should be the ratio of mass and in-depth language training and how to guarantee Estonian language training in an Estonian-language environment better than before. The activities of MISA during the period under review make it possible to answer these questions better than before.