

## Response of Estonia to the questions on the rights of the child

- 1. Please provide information on the main challenges related to the mobilization, allocation and spending of resources for children. Please provide examples of good practices undertaken to prioritize resource mobilization, allocation and spending towards child-focused sectors, such as health, education, social protection, child protection and child rights, in your national policy and/or overseas development assistance strategy.**

In allocating resources to children, the major challenge is to spend purposefully, as well as to spend the resources cost-effectively, both in local governments and at national level. As child protection is cross-sectorial, cost-effective spending of resources requires co-operation between different organisations related to children (including health, welfare, and law enforcement) and administrative levels (state and local governments). As the resources are limited, it is important to invest in activities that have proven to be effective. This, in turn, requires in-depth knowledge in fiscal policy at national and at local government's level.

Good practices:

- National development plans set strategic goals and necessary actions and resources to achieve these goals. For example:
  - Development plan for children and families for 2012-2020 is a strategic document that indicates activities in this particular field in various sectors. The implementation plan of the development plan for 2014-2017 includes detailed action plan along with the responsible bodies and planned expenditures;
  - Development plan for reducing violence for 2010-2014 one of the goals was to reduce violence against children. The implementation plan of the development plan approved activities of various sectors and expenditures in preventing violence against children. Currently, new development plan for reducing violence for 2015-2020 is being composed;
  - Youth development plan for 2014-2020 contributes to the objectives and activities of the competitiveness plan "Estonia 2020", also to the objectives and activities of the Government's action plan. Youth development plan is also important in achieving the objectives set out in the fields of population and family policy, labour market and social security, sports and integration.
- State program that ensures the rights and welfare of children. For example:
  - The "Children and Youth at Risk" program funded by the European Economic Area, is jointly carried out by the Ministry of Education and Science, Ministry of Social Affairs and Ministry of Justice. Through various sub-projects and activities of the program, significant resources are allocated to improve the welfare of children and youngsters up to 26 years old.
  - NGO Child Welfare Association is organizing the project "Voice of the Child" and through Open Estonia Foundation is financed by the EEA Financial Mechanisms and supported by the Ministry of Social Affairs. The project aims to promote awareness of children's rights and the current situation of the children's rights in the society. In using international

practice and the information received from the monitoring of children's rights, special base teaching module for universities devoted explicitly to the rights of children is being developed.

- Public Health Program funded by the EEA Financial Mechanism and implemented by the Ministry of Social Affairs aims to improve services for children's mental health and also inter-sectorial networking system.

**2. Please indicate how your national laws and policies provide opportunities for children to access budget information and participate in budgeting and fiscal processes. Please specify the extent to which resources spent on children are visible, and whether budget data is disaggregated by child rights related programmes, and/or age (0-18), in budget documents. Are any child friendly versions of budget information produced?**

The law does not explicitly foresee children's right to information related to budget information, nor does the law foresee the requirement to allow children to participate in the budgetary process. However, according to various legislative acts, state and local government's authorities are obliged to ensure that legislation and policy-making includes budgetary and fiscal transparency and that stakeholders are involved in the policy formation process. The annual Budget Acts are publicly available and published in the State Gazette, although no specifically child-friendly version of the Budget Act is drafted.

National development plans include implementation plans that are available to the public online. In these implementation plans, yearly updated and detailed information is provided about the budget resources allocated for each specific activity/service/benefit.

Good practices

- Government's legislation for opened state management and involvement of stakeholders. For example:
  - Based on good practice of involvement governmental institutions involve stakeholders and the public to decision making in order to ensure the best quality of decisions and legitimacy. When composing the draft, the government consults with stakeholders and public in the earliest stage of the process and during the process over-all. In case of drafts of greater importance, when the public consultation has ended, the government analyses the effectiveness of the involvement, including the attainment of the objectives, the accuracy of the methods used, the participation of stakeholders at consultations, communication and feedback and stakeholder's content with the involvement. The government also asked the stakeholder's their assessment of the process.
  - Regulation of good legislation and provisions technical rules requires, prior to the preparation of a draft, to prepare and coordinate with various parties the explanatory draft where the intention of the new draft is clearly expressed. It is also necessary to draw up a comprehensive explanatory note to the draft law in order to analyse and explain the impacts (for example social impacts, the impact on the budget of the state and local government's etc.). The draft must be coordinated with government's agencies and interest groups, also public consultation of the draft needs to be held.

- Impact assessment methodology is guidance for the government's officials engaged in policy-making and therefore officials who are involved in drafting the legislation, development plans, formulating the government's positions in matters related to the EU or implementing the EU law. The methodology is designed to improve and streamline the government's agencies capacity to plan and implement the government's policies.
- Information systems for public consultation and coordination. For example:
  - Participation Web ([www.osale.ee](http://www.osale.ee)) through which everyone can submit ideas and proposals to the government, collect signatures in support of their ideas, express their opinion about the draft legislation that are in process or search for strategy documents;
  - Draft Information System (<http://eelnoud.valitsus.ee>) is an environment where documents between agencies are coordinated, communicated and presented for the cabinet meeting and where public consultations are held. The information system enables everyone to follow the proceedings of the draft legislations, find the documents, participate in public consultations and comment on the documents that are being processed;
  - Petition.ee (<http://petitsioon.ee>) is created with the support of the National Foundation of Civil Society and NGO Estonian Central Union of Owners and enables people to participate in matters related to the society in three ways: supporting the petition, collecting pledges and voting.

**3. What are the mechanisms in place to ensure transparent, effective and efficient utilization of public resources for the realization of children's rights in line with Article 4 of the Convention on the Rights of the Child?**

Please see the response to the question no 5.

**4. What mechanisms are in place to assess the impacts of fiscal policies and budgets on children? Are human rights and child rights impact assessments conducted in relation to budget planning and execution? Please indicate measures in place to identify the needs of the most marginalized and vulnerable children, and formulate target that assess the impact of public spending on these groups.**

Please see the response to the question no 5.

**5. What systems or mechanisms are in place to ensure that the private sector contributes, rather than undermine, state efforts to improve public spending on children? Please also indicate if systems or mechanisms are in place to ensure that public resources are spent well also when government funded children's rights programmes/projects are outsourced to the private sector.**

Open and effective use of resources is granted by a multi-level quality management mechanism: pre- and post-analysis of the efficacy of the use of the resources and interventions; drafting strategic development plans and impact analyses of draft legislation (see more detailed above). It is important to involve the representatives of stakeholders (non-profit and profit sectors).

Developing an effective monitoring system is also a crucial element. Generally, state monitoring is arranged through the state agencies. In each area the responsibility of monitoring is assigned to a

specific agency, inspectorate or county through the county governors. County governors are responsible, *inter alia*, to carry out monitoring of the quality of welfare and education and of the usage of funds allocated for these purposes.

Good practices:

- Monitoring mechanisms independent of the executive power. For example:
  - The Chancellor of Justice (also Children's Ombudsman) under article 4 of the Convention on the Rights of the Child performs functions to protect and promote the rights of child;
  - National Audit Office of Estonia through economic audit gives the Parliament and the public security that public funds are used legally and effectively.
- Opinions of state capacity drafted annually by the NGOs. For example:
  - Annual report on human rights by the Centre for Human Rights provides recommendations of experts on how to improve the human rights' situation nationally. One part of the report addresses the issues concerning the rights of children.
- Public support for conducting the impact analyses and developing the civil society. For example:
  - Wise Decisions Foundation (<https://riigikantselei.ee/et/valitsuse-toetamine/mojude-hindamine-ja-tarkade-otsuste-fond/tarkade-otsuste-fond>), created by State Office and with the support of Social Fund, which encourages the decisions to be made according to quality analyses;
  - National Foundation of Civil Society ([www.kysk.ee](http://www.kysk.ee)) in contributing to the development of the civil society has the mission to strengthen the civil society.
- Voluntary organizations support the development of cohesive society and the development of socially responsible ventures:
  - Estonian Cooperation Assembly ([www.kogu.ee](http://www.kogu.ee)) is a collaboration of non-governmental organizations established by the President of the Republic in 2007. The foundation monitors topics which influence Estonia's long term development and that are seen as priorities by its members. Estonian Cooperation Assembly develops analyses, proposals and policy advice on these topics together with all interest groups.
  - Good Deed Foundation ([www.heategu.ee](http://www.heategu.ee)) supports organizations and enterprises with great social impact, involving primarily the competence of business partners and in some cases helps to find investors.
  - Social Business Network (<http://sev.ee>) has the mission to increase the number, capacity and impact of social enterprises in Estonia and to appreciate social enterprises in our society.
- Supporting family-friendly companies in both public and private sector:
  - In cooperation with the Ministry of Social Affairs, newspaper "Äripäev" (Business Day) and magazine "Pere ja Kodu" (Family and Home) annual competition of "Family and employee-friendly company" is held. The aim is to recognize companies where reconciliation of family and work life is being practiced and employees and their families are being supported.