

National Action Plan for Implementing Democratic Schools' Methodologies in Estonian Public Schools

This action plan aims to provide Estonian schools with a framework to implement democratic schools' methodologies and pedagogies. The goal is to incorporate democratic principles into the public education system, fostering an environment that supports active participation, inclusivity, and personal development. These guidelines are designed to help stakeholders understand and adopt a democratic education approach.

Objectives and Strategic Actions

1. Promote Awareness of Democratic Education

- Organize campaigns, seminars, and interactive workshops for educators, students, and parents to discuss the value of democratic education.
- Develop informational materials (brochures, videos, online courses) to highlight the benefits of democratic methodologies in schools.

2. Empower Teachers as Change Agents

- Recognize teachers as central figures in implementing educational innovation.
- Provide professional development opportunities through:
 - Training programs on democratic education, student-led learning, and active citizenship.
 - Collaborative forums for sharing best practices and experiences.

3. Foster Self-Education Among Educators

- Encourage continuous professional and personal development among teachers to enhance their understanding of democratic principles and practices.

4. Establish Connections with Broader Communities

- Develop partnerships with local communities, businesses, NGOs, and cultural institutions to enrich the educational experience.
- Involve external experts in school activities to provide diverse perspectives.

5. Strengthen Collaborative School Governance

- Implement school governance models that include student and teacher representatives in decision-making processes.
- Organize regular meetings and assemblies to ensure transparency and inclusivity.

6. Prioritize Self-Directed Learning

- Integrate self-directed learning as a cornerstone of the curriculum, allowing students to take responsibility for their educational journeys.



7. Encourage Active Citizenship

- Design activities and projects that involve students in real-life civic engagement and community service.



- Provide opportunities for students to voice their opinions and contribute to societal development.
8. Support Freedom and Creativity in Learning
- Allow flexibility in learning environments to accommodate students' interests and creative pursuits.
 - Introduce unstructured time for free play and exploration to support emotional and cognitive development.
9. Adopt Adaptive and Student-Centered Pedagogies
- Focus on spontaneous and situational learning rather than rigid, pre-determined study plans.
 - Emphasize learning processes over standardized outcomes.
10. Cultivate Inclusive and Mixed Learning Groups
- Promote inclusive practices that encourage empathy and collaboration in diverse and mixed-age groups.
 - Facilitate group activities that build social and emotional intelligence.
11. Implement Comprehensive Evaluation Systems
- Develop evaluation systems that include self-assessment for students and teachers.
 - Use reflective practices to identify strengths and areas for improvement.
12. Engage with Parents and Families
- Create platforms for parents to actively participate in the school community.
 - Offer workshops and discussion forums to educate families about democratic school principles.

Implementation Timeline

- Year 1: Conduct awareness campaigns and preliminary teacher training.
- Year 2: Pilot democratic methodologies in selected schools and refine strategies based on feedback.
- Year 3: Expand implementation to a broader network of schools and establish evaluation frameworks.
- Year 4: Review and adapt methodologies, ensuring sustainability and scalability.

Conclusion

This action plan outlines a strategic approach to embedding democratic principles into Estonian public schools. Success depends on the collaboration and commitment of educators, students, parents, and policymakers. Together, we can create educational environments that nurture responsible, engaged, and empathetic citizens.