

# Employability of young people with mental disabilities in local communities

- ★ Employment situation of people with mental disabilities in Estonia
- ★ Pilot study of potential employers in Ida-Virumaa

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# Employment situation of people with mental disabilities in Estonia

- ✔ Unemployment rates are usually the highest among disadvantaged groups.
- ✔ According to the UN Department of economic and social affairs, in developing countries 80% to 90% of people with disabilities of working age are unemployed.
- ✔ In most developed countries the official unemployment rate for people with disabilities of working age is at least **twice** than for those who have no disability.

# Employment situation of people with mental disabilities in Estonia

**Population:** 1,331,796 (2022)

**At-risk of poverty rate** 22,8% (2021)

**Average monthly gross wages and salaries** 1,679 euros (Q3 2022)

**Employment rate** 69,6% (Q4 2022)

**Unemployment rate** 5,4% (Q4 2022)

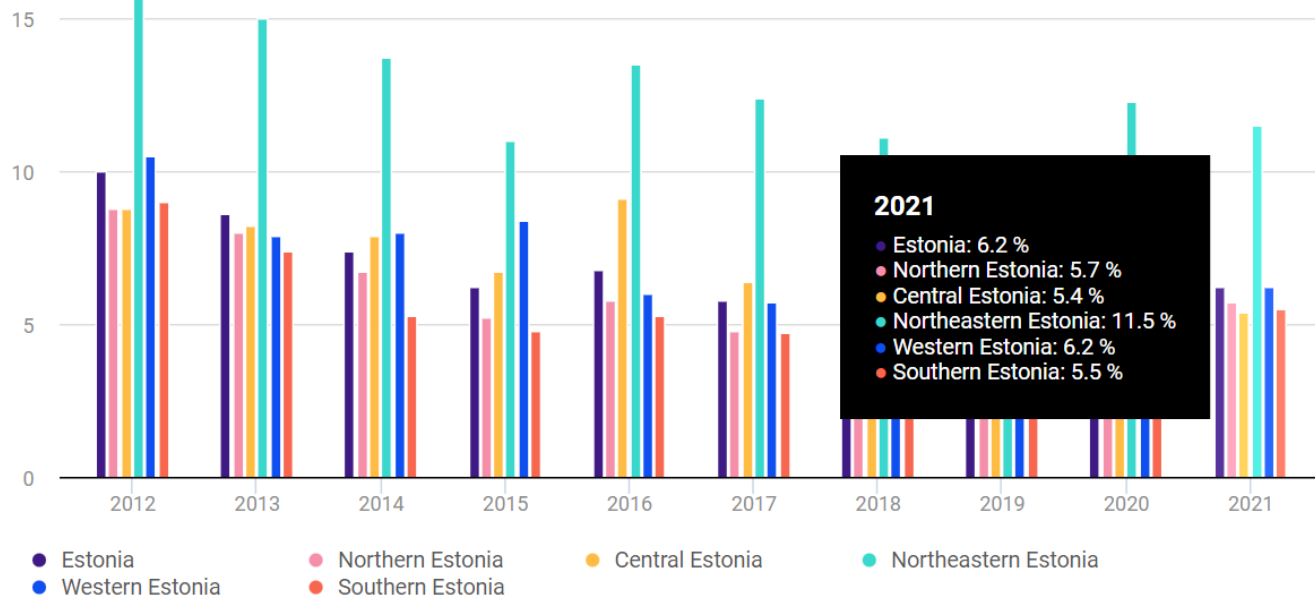
Source: <https://www.stat.ee/>

## THV23: DISABLED PERSONS, 1 JANUARY by Year, County, Age group and Sex

		Total
		Males and females
2022	Whole country	133,679

# Employment situation of people with mental disabilities in Estonia

Unemployment rate in Northeastern Estonia is **twice higher** than in the country in average



# Employment situation of people with mental disabilities in Estonia

Number of disabled persons aged 16-39 in Estonia **13573** (2022)

Number of disabled persons aged 16-39 in Ida-Virumaa **1729** (2022)

## THV23: DISABLED PERSONS, 1 JANUARY by Year, County, Age group and Sex

		16-24	25-29	30-34	35-39
		Males and females	Males and females	Males and females	Males and females
2022	Whole country	4,239	2,355	3,315	3,664

## THV23: DISABLED PERSONS, 1 JANUARY by Year, County, Age group and Sex

		16-24	25-29	30-34	35-39
		Males and females	Males and females	Males and females	Males and females
2022	Ida-Viru county	513	256	414	546

# Employment situation of people with mental disabilities in Estonia

% of disabled persons in working-age population – **8,3%** (2021)

Overall **54 300** disabled people can be involved in the labour market (2021)

## THV601: Labour status of working-age population by disability by Indicator, Age group, Disability / capacity for work and Reference period

		Disability/capacity for work total
		2021
Labour force, thousands	From 16 years to retirement age	650.5

## THV602: Persons aged 15-64 by Indicator, Age group, Disability, Capacity for work and Reference period

			Persons with limited capacity for work
			2021
Number of persons, thousands	From 16 years to retirement age	Disabled persons	54.3

# Employment situation of people with mental disabilities in Estonia

Unemployment rate of disabled persons is **2,5 times** higher than average among population

**34 000** disabled people of working age are unemployed/inactive – out of labour market

**THV601: Labour status of working-age population by disability by Indicator, Age group, Disability / capacity for work and Reference period**

		Disabled persons
		2021
Number of persons employed, thousands	From 16 years to retirement age	21.3
Number of unemployed persons, thousands	From 16 years to retirement age	3.6
Number of inactive persons, thousands	From 16 years to retirement age	30.4
Employment rate, %	From 16 years to retirement age	38.5
Unemployment rate, %	From 16 years to retirement age	14.3

# Employment situation of people with mental disabilities in Estonia

Out of 22 000 disabled people employed in 2021:

Employed in agriculture, forestry and fishing	1.4
Employed in manufacturing	3.9
Employed in construction	1.5
Employed in wholesale and retail trade, transport, accommodation and food service activities, information and communication	4.6
Employed in financial-, real estate, professional and administrative activities	2.9
Employed in other service activities	7.7



# Pilot study of potential employers in Ida-Virumaa

- ✔ Employers' experience in hiring people with disabilities in Ida-Virumaa
- ✔ Barriers and opportunities: state support services for employers, jobs suitable for young people with special needs, employers' working environment and interest in inclusion
- ✔ If they may be potentially interested in cooperation in the future

# Pilot study of potential employers in Ida-Virumaa

**Timeline:** December 2022 – March 2023

**Cities:** Narva, Narva-Joesuu, Silamae, Kohtla-Jarve, Johvi, Toila.

## **Stages:**

1. December 2022-January 2023: online questionnaire
2. January 2023-February 2023: in-depth interviews to identify barriers, experience and potential interest in hiring young people
3. March 2023: description of the study

# Pilot study of potential employers in Ida-Virumaa

**Number of companies reached:** 141

Sources: open registers of legal entities, Estonian unemployment insurance fund.

Funnel criteria:

1. Located in the cities of study.
2. Have a positive account balance and staff members, no tax debts.
3. Some fields of activities were excluded: investment funds, consulting etc.
4. State institutions included (healthcare, education, youth centers etc.)

Emailing in both Estonian and Russian with further calls to a selected amount of companies and reaching out to HRs via open platforms (LinkedIn and Ida-Virumaa business support center).

# Pilot study of potential employers in Ida-Virumaa

**Number of companies reached:** 141

Field of activity	Nº of companies
Manufacturing	
- Metals and energy	14
- Clothes	12
- Furniture, building materials and supplies	11
- Food	6
Agriculture	13
Hospitality	12
Restaurants, bars and catering	10

# Pilot study of potential employers in Ida-Virumaa

Field of activity	Nº of companies
Retail stores	
- Chain stores	8
- Others	7
State and private companies	
- Healthcare	1
- Education	7
- Cultural	4
- Social services	4

# Pilot study of potential employers in Ida-Virumaa

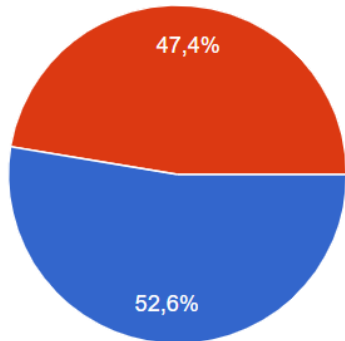
Field of activity	Nº of companies
Construction	5
Utility service (water supply, waste collection)	4
Cleaning	4
Transport (including ports)	3
Banks	2
Gas stations	2
Telecommunications	1
Auto repair shop	1
Others	10

# Pilot study of potential employers in Ida-Virumaa

**Number of responses to the questionnaire: 19** (13,4%)

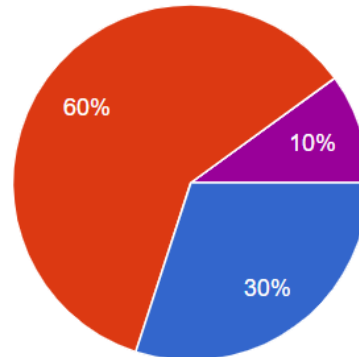
Hospitality, manufacturing, retail, restaurant, hospital, youth center, logistics

1. Has your company used any of the services of the Estonian Unemployment Insurance Fund to support employers who employ people with special needs?



**47,4%** - yes  
**52,6%** - no

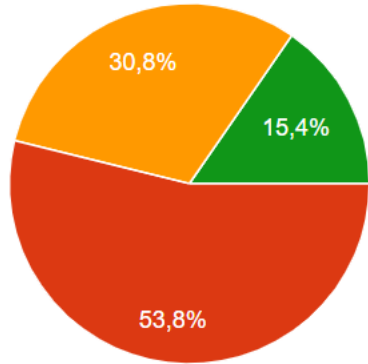
2. If your company has previously used such services, how would you rate the experience of receiving them?



**30%** - very positive  
**60%** - quite positive  
**10%** - it is difficult to answer (no personal experience)

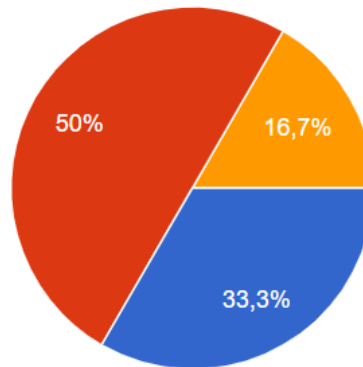
# Pilot study of potential employers in Ida-Virumaa

3. If your company has never used such services before, do you know about them?



**53,8%** - I have good knowledge  
**30,8%** - I have some knowledge / have heard of it  
**15,4%** - I do not know about them

4. Are you interested in learning more about these services?



**33,3%** - very interested  
**50%** - quite interested  
**16,7%** - rather not interested



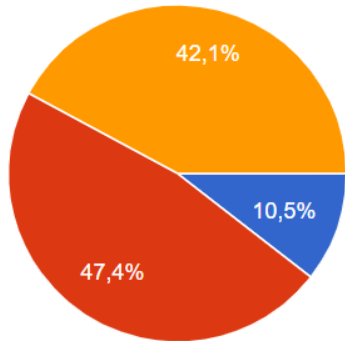
# Pilot study of potential employers in Ida-Virumaa

5. Does your company have permanent or temporary vacancies that do not require special training / vacancies available to candidates without work experience? Give examples of such vacancies (*if available*)

“in summer - laundry + ironing” (guesthouse), “not yet”, “warehouse worker”, “No, if there are vacancies, they require special training”, “Chef, cook assistant, waiter”, “track fitter, sailor” (port), “Housekeeping, kitchen assistant, cloakroom attendant”, “we employed teenagers in a labor camp and their task was to clean up the territory and clean up the city's info bollards” (youth center), “Rarely”, “cleaning of finished products, duplication of parts” (clothing manufacture), “each job requires a certain level of training”, “handymen, janitors” (chain retail store), “waiter, barista”

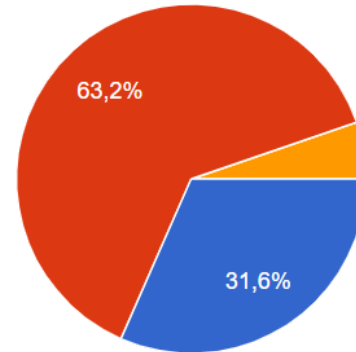
# Pilot study of potential employers in Ida-Virumaa

6. Are there routine/monotonous tasks in your company that are handled by highly qualified employees and that can potentially be allocated to an individual employee?



**10,5%** - yes  
**47,4%** - maybe (special evaluation is required)  
**42,1%** - no

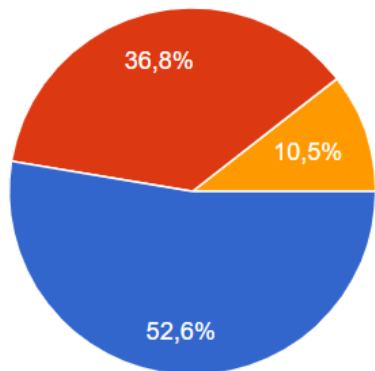
7. Does your company employ employees with special needs?



**31,6%** - yes  
**63,2%** - no  
**5,3%** - it is difficult to answer

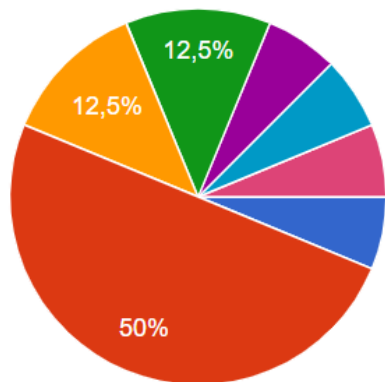
# Pilot study of potential employers in Ida-Virumaa

8. Have they worked at your company before?



**52,6%** - yes  
**36,8%** - no  
**10,5%** - it is difficult to answer

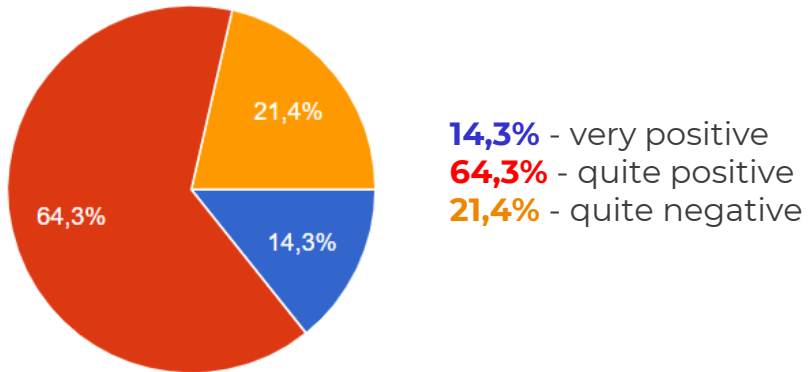
9. If you have experience in hiring employees with special needs, have you had any difficulties in working with them?



**6,3%** - yes, frequently  
**50%** - yes, from time to time  
**12,5%** - rarely  
**12,5%** - no  
**6,3%** - I had no experience  
**6,3%** - no specific difficulties, but there was a job coach who supported the employees  
**6,3%** - we had an intern and it required continuous control and support

# Pilot study of potential employers in Ida-Virumaa

10. In general, how would you characterize the company's experience in employing people with special needs? (if available)



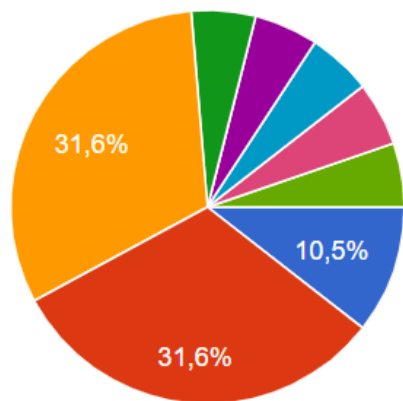
# Pilot study of potential employers in Ida-Virumaa

11. What is your characterization based on in the first place?

- “Employee behavior”
- “Many difficulties in organizing and supporting work”
- “The worker couldn’t cope with even simple tasks and others had to do them which had a bad effect on relationships in the team”
- “How the worker performed his duties”
- “On the fact that a teenager who was previously considered “unteachable” could not only perform simple duties but after that he began to move around the city and come to our youth center. Before that, he didn’t come out of the house he lives, on his own”
- “The team could not accept them, they felt uncomfortable at the workplace”
- “On employee’s experience”
- “Willingness to work”

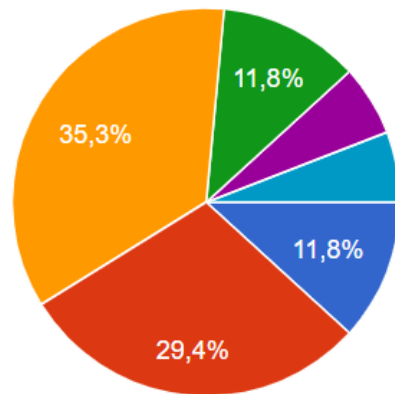
# Pilot study of potential employers in Ida-Virumaa

12. Is your company considering employing people with special needs?



**10,5%** - yes, definitely  
**31,6%** - yes, it rather is  
**31,6%** - no, it rather is not  
**5,3%** - no, definitely not  
**5,3%** - we need to think about it  
**5,3%** - only temporary jobs at a summer camp  
**5,3%** - now the hiring process in the company is on stop  
**5,3%** - if there is a need

13. If your company is considering employing people with special needs, is it ready to hire people with mental disabilities?



**11,8%** - yes, definitely  
**29,4%** - yes, it rather is  
**35,3%** - no, it rather is not  
**11,8%** - no, definitely not  
**5,9%** - working conditions at the producing factory do not allow it  
**5,9%** - depends on an employee's skills

# Pilot study of potential employers in Ida-Virumaa

14. If your company does not consider employing people with special needs, what is the reason for this? What could change your mind?

- “Logistics in the enterprise: availability ...”
- “There are no suitable vacancies for this category of people”
- “We have a hard night job with drunk people, we cannot waste time and energy on monitoring the work of a person with special needs”.
- “Our work is connected with children and youth and it is not monotonous, it requires a lot of skills and knowledge”.

# Pilot study of potential employers in Ida-Virumaa

- “Maybe if there is a support person nearby, yes. I would personally take it, but it needs to be taken very seriously”.
- “Let me tell you as an example from experience. We hired a hearing-impaired woman. Unfortunately, in 4 months she broke our equipment, because when loading a sewing machine she doesn't hear clicks and doesn't know that she has installed everything correctly. Therefore, the problem of low-quality seams was often there. And then there was the breakdown of the machine”.
- “Library provides services to people of different age groups speaking different languages. Workers need education, excellent people skills and stress resilience. It is a municipal institution, it is hard to open a job position for a person who will be engaged in simple and monotonous work under the guidance of a mentor”.



# Conclusions

- People with disabilities in Ida-Virumaa **face more challenges** finding jobs than in Estonia in average.
- Young people with mental disabilities are **in a group of higher risk** of staying out of labour market.
- Situation with jobs availability **is uneven** in Ida-Virumaa. Narva and Narva-Joesuu are locations with a larger number of employers.
- Employers are likely to look for employees **without addressing** Estonian Unemployment Insurance Fund. They tend to avoid bureaucracy and candidates with weak motivation for work.
- The number of employers ready to hire young people with disabilities in Ida-Virumaa **is limited**. Any negative experience is shared in the community.
- **Seasonal jobs** are more likely to be offered and be suitable for young people.
- **More suitable** fields: retail, hospitality, restaurants and clothing manufactures, state institutions

# Conclusions

## Specific barriers:

- Local communities have little awareness of young people with disabilities and their needs, not many media platforms cover this topic.
- The level of inclusion in society remains low: young people with disabilities have less educational and job opportunities and experience intolerance.
- There is no link between school education and further professional training for young people, which makes the transition inefficient.
- There is a significant number of employers who are not aware of support from Estonian Unemployment Insurance Fund.
- Estonian Unemployment Insurance Fund often doesn't have enough resources to conduct full assessment of young people's needs.
- "Supporting person" and other employer's staff often face challenges in communication with a person with disability and don't get necessary counseling from external experts.
- Some statistics on employment among young people is unavailable.

# Conclusions

## Suggestions:

- More social ads and presentation of positive cases publicly.
- Local municipalities should initiate and lead projects to increase awareness and develop inclusion in the communities.
- Employers should be informed by Estonian Unemployment Insurance Fund about their support more widely.
- There should be one center where employers and supporting organizations can get relevant information and training.
- There should be an opportunity for an employer to hire an employee for a test period before concluding an agreement for state subsidy and get compensation even if the employee left the job within a year (average period for state subsidy).
- There is a need for a social enterprise which could provide staff (young people with disabilities) for temporary and seasonal jobs in the region. It could also operate as multifunctional production and provide goods or services to local businesses.