

I Want to Join the Estonian Defence Forces



One in four young men currently fails to attend the medical examination required before compulsory military service, while avoiding military service is often met with a relatively understanding attitude among their peers.

The project focused specifically on the perspective of young people and explored how compulsory military service could be made more meaningful and valued in their eyes.

The team developed solutions to reduce barriers and concerns both before compulsory military service and upon arrival at a military unit:

- ✓ Inspired by the success of the earlier “Compulsory Military Service with Your Class” project, we introduced the concept of joining with a group of friends. Young people can now begin their military service together with their closest friends. We also tested whether attending the medical examination together with classmates would make the process more reassuring and encourage young people to complete their military service earlier rather than later. It is clear that the older a person is when beginning military service, the more practical obstacles they are likely to face.

- ✓ Recognising that young people need support in preparing for military service and in identifying and overcoming various barriers, we also reviewed the activities of the Defence Resources Agency. Its advisers help young people understand the practical preparations required before entering military service and, where necessary, provide guidance on matters such as loan obligations, legal issues and financial arrangements.
- ✓ We redesigned the process of arrival and induction at military units to reduce uncertainty and anxiety among new conscripts. As part of the pilot, professional military personnel and drill sergeants at two units received training focused on psychology and team-building exercises. The aim was to help them better support the rapid adjustment of young soldiers, the development of more cohesive units, improved learning outcomes and stronger, more sustained motivation.
- ✓ We also developed a prototype certificate of completion for compulsory military service. The certificate has two purposes: to help young people recall, reflect on and describe their experience to prospective employers, and to help employers understand the practical knowledge and skills acquired during military service.

Team Members

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The project took place in 2021.

The project was implemented as part of the Innovation Programme

Read more (in Estonian):

[Tahan ajateenistusse - lõpuesitlus.pdf | 10.31 MB | pdf](#)

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