Companies Needs
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STEAM BOSS

boosting soft skills

Evaluation with VET system

National Report ESTONIA | February 2026

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1. Introduction

The survey “Evaluation with VET system” seeks to understand whether the proposed activities generated interest, influenced teaching practices, and contributed to creating or strengthening collaborations between VET schools and local companies. Survey was addressed to teachers and trainers who have participated in at least one of the STEAM BO.SS project activities. This national report summarises feedback collected through this survey. The objective is to describe how the training influenced teaching practice in three areas: implementation of the STEAM approach, attention to soft skills, and collaboration with companies or other external partners.

Respondents represented two institutions (Saaremaa Gümnaasium and Kuressaare College/Regional Training Centre) and a mix of general upper-secondary and VET settings.

Given the small sample size, results are presented as descriptive counts and complemented with short examples from open-ended responses.

2. Teacher/Trainer Profile

The survey included five teachers from Estonia representing Saaremaa Gümnaasium and Kuressaare College/Regional Training Centre).

- Experience: The participants possess a wide range of teaching experience, ranging from 5 to 35 years.
- Educational Level and Subjects: The respondents teach at the high school, vocational (VET), and university levels. Their subjects include social studies, informatics (IT), English, technology, and project management.
- Training Participation: All respondents participated in various training activities, including training camp, MOOCs, "Train the Trainers" program and pilot projects

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3. STEAM approach implementation

Respondents reported a clear influence of the STEAM training on their teaching methodology: two indicated it influenced them 'quite a lot' and three indicated 'somewhat'. In addition, all respondents reported using active learning methods (e.g., PBL, challenge-based learning, flipped classroom) more frequently after the training, and all felt better prepared in their teaching practice.

Implementation after the training was high: all respondents introduced STEAM-based activities in their classes. Satisfaction with this introduction was also high.

The most frequently reported areas of methodological change were inclusion and diversity (mentioned by 4 respondents) and technology integration (3 respondents). Planning and activity design were also often selected (2 respondents each).

Inspiring examples of implemented STEAM projects include:

- Social Studies Conference Simulation: solving societal problems using AI and digital tools to create and visualize conference materials.
- Engineering and AI Module: developing a specific curriculum and matching study materials for a specialized module at Saaremaa Gümnaasium.
- Design STEM (Environmental Challenges): measuring ecological footprints and proposing zero-waste solutions and biomaterial products.
- Mobile Parking: designing and prototyping a mobile phone holder made of environmentally friendly materials using AutoCAD and 3D printing

All respondents indicated that they plan to further develop STEAM-based activities in the future, suggesting that the approach is being embedded beyond one-off experiments.

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4. Soft skills: use and relevance

Awareness of the importance of soft skills increased after the training: two respondents selected ‘very much’, two selected ‘quite a lot’, and one selected ‘somewhat’. All respondents reported increasing their focus on developing soft skills in their teaching.

The training significantly elevated the teachers' awareness of soft skills. Specifically, 80% of the respondents (4 out of 5) reported being "very" or "quite" aware of their importance following the sessions. This awareness translated into action, with all participants increasing their focus on developing these skills in their students to some degree—ranging from "somewhat" to "very much"

The soft skills most frequently emphasised after the training were problem-solving (4 respondents), decision-making (3), and time management (3). Other repeatedly mentioned skills included conflict resolution (2), proactivity (2), and flexibility (2).

All respondents observed higher student engagement and collaboration when using methodologies that intentionally focus on soft skills (5/5 ‘yes’).

The answers indicate that soft skills are not taught in isolation but are integrated into broader methodological changes. Teachers reported that the greatest changes occurred in areas such as inclusion and diversity, as well as activity design. By focusing on soft skills like teamwork and problem-solving, educators have found it easier to implement complex STEAM projects, such as ecological footprint modeling or 3D prototyping

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5. Interest and impact of collaboration with companies

Interest in collaborating with companies or external partners grew for nearly all participants as a result of the project. Four out of five respondents have successfully established or strengthened contacts with external organizations

Collaboration most commonly involved local companies and public-sector organisations (each selected by 4 respondents). One respondent also indicated cooperation with universities or research centres.

The preferred areas of collaboration were co-designing learning activities and delivering guest lectures/workshops, as well as work placements or career guidance for students.

Collaboration Details:

- Types of Organizations: partners include local companies, public sector institutions, universities, and research centers.
- Areas of Collaboration: cooperation focused on planning learning activities, conducting guest lectures and workshops, providing study materials, and offering internships or career counseling for students.
- Key Activities: notable collaborative efforts included study visits to companies, presentations of study materials, and cross-sectoral collaboration projects with partner-school.

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6. Conclusions and Recommendations

Overall satisfaction with the STEAM and soft skills training was high (3 respondents 'very satisfied', 2 'quite satisfied'). All respondents reported increased use of active learning methods and improved readiness to apply new approaches.

STEAM approach implementation was strong in this small sample: all respondents introduced STEAM-based activities and highlighted methodological shifts particularly in inclusion/diversity and technology integration.

Soft skills were treated as an explicit focus area after the training, with problem-solving, decision-making, and time management most frequently emphasised, alongside perceived improvements in student engagement and collaboration.

Collaboration with companies and external partners increased for most respondents and resulted in concrete activities (e.g., visits, guest sessions, joint projects), indicating potential for strengthening local education–industry ecosystems.

Recommendations based on the response patterns: keep training highly practical and example-driven; provide reusable STEAM activity templates and assessment tools; and support structured matchmaking/co-design with local companies and public-sector partners to sustain collaboration.

- Key Findings: the STEAM methodology has been successfully integrated into various subjects, effectively bridging the gap between technology and real-world challenges.
- Benefits: focus on soft skills has directly led to improved student engagement and better classroom cooperation.
- Recommendation: there is a continued interest in receiving more practical examples and materials to further support the implementation of STEAM in different teaching contexts. All respondents noted an increase in their use of active learning methods (such as PBL and flipped classroom) following the training

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7. Appendix

- Survey questionnaire: https://forms.gle/eDoKTnZHYnxFnQyX8

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