



TARTU ÜLIKOOL



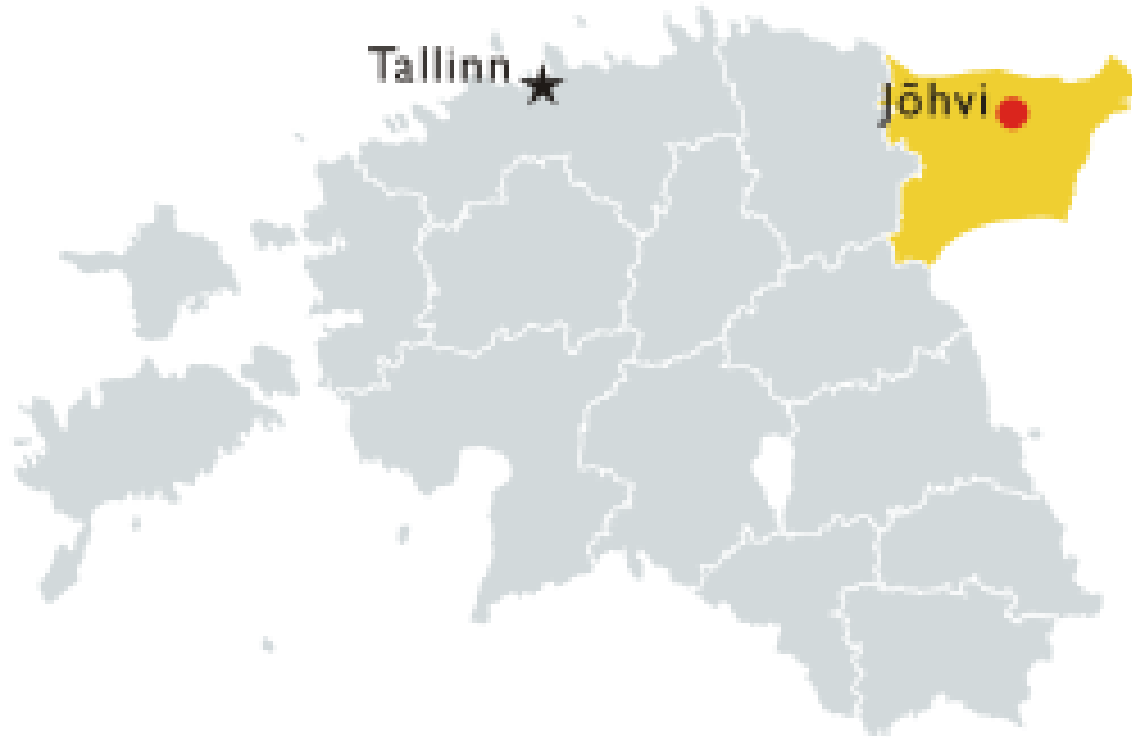
From Past Experiences to Future Skills: Towards a Just and Sustainable Labour Market

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IN SOCIOLOGY OF TRANSITION

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Ida-Virumaa in Transition



- Estonia's oil shale heartland → rapid decarbonisation
- **12.7% unemployment** (highest in Estonia, 2025)
- Population decline (~1,800 in 2024), ageing & outmigration
- 75% Russian-speaking → language barrier in labour market
- **€354M Just Transition Fund** allocated to Ida-Viru



Research Focus & Method

Question: How to make labour market transitions fairer in a decarbonising region?

Focus: Short-Format Training (SFT) – short, practical courses.

Method: 48 interviews →
21 workers/learners
14 teachers
13 employers

Key Findings



- **SFT helps, but gaps remain**
- **Activation & Orientation** → confidence + direction
- **Soft skills & language gap** → “hired for hard skills, fired for soft skills”
- **Workplace culture** → fear of showing “I don’t know”
- **System gaps** → weak guidance, rigid formats, low employer input

Transition = a learning process

- Pair SFT with guidance & career roadmaps
- Integrate soft skills & workplace Estonian
- Co-design training with employers
- Support teachers & learners beyond the course

Takeaway:

A just and sustainable labour market means building **confidence, language, and teamwork** – not only technical skills.



Communities at the Heart of Sustainable Transitions

- Exploration = **first contact with society**
→ builds or breaks trust
- People's curiosity & concerns must be addressed early
- Open dialogue reduces conflict, supports collaboration
- Local context shapes outcomes: social, cultural, economic realities
- State + companies + universities = partners in **community-centred learning**.





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Thank you!



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