



POWERPOOR

Empowering Energy Poor Citizens through Joint Energy Initiatives

POWERPOOR Key Results in Estonia

Working on the ground with energy-poor households and policymakers to mitigate energy poverty.

www.powerpoor.eu

POWERPOOR empowers non-profit apartment associations to function as energy communities, and the associations' leaders to serve as energy mentors across Estonia.

In Estonia, around 70% of the population lives in multi apartment buildings where significant energy-efficient improvements are needed. People living in buildings with poor thermal insulation and inefficient heating systems were more likely to experience energy poverty than those living in energy efficient buildings.

The concept of energy communities is still new in Estonia, but as residents are also owners in apartment buildings, the non-profit apartment associations that manage the building, can act in many ways as energy communities, organising impactful energy-efficient improvements and implementing renewable energy sources to achieve energy efficiency. Often, these apartment associations are, to some extent, energy-poor communities that need assistance to lift themselves out of energy poverty.

To reach to the heart of these communities and engage low-income residents in these buildings, POWERPOOR in Estonia invited the representatives of the non-profit apartment associations to become energy supporters and mentors, who are members of the same communities and have already gained the trust of the residents.



Active energy mentor in the city of Tartu, making home visits and organizing renovation of the heating system of the building.

In close cooperation with the Energy Poverty Alleviation Office established in Tallinn, these energy supporters and mentors, that enumerate to more than 100 altogether, identified energy poor households in the apartment associations during the home visits with the help of the POWERPOOR toolkit, convincing apartment owners to renovate their houses and to start planning for establishing joint energy initiatives, for example, installing solar panels to the building to alleviate energy poverty. Altogether more than 600 households have received

advice from the energy supporters and mentors in Estonia in the project regions – cities of Tallinn, Tartu, Pärnu, and Kuressaare.

The knowledge and skills of the energy supporters and mentors have been improved in the POWERPOOR training programme, adapted to Estonian conditions, especially in the module on financing energy efficiency, considering the opportunities to finance the renovation and implementation of renewable energy solutions with grants, loans, and guarantees available in Estonia.



Active energy mentor in the city of Tallinn, making home visits, teaching skills for saving energy at home, and identifying households at risk of energy poverty.

POWERPOOR created a national level multi-stakeholder partnership to support joint energy actions and eradicate energy poverty in Estonia.

As energy poverty is always a multi-stakeholder issue and the topic of energy communities is still very new in Estonia, the POWERPOOR initiative became a real pathfinder in Estonia, coordinating collective efforts and cross-domain synergies for alleviating energy poverty through joint energy actions in apartment buildings. EKYL joined forces with other stakeholders in Estonia who are the decision-makers responsible for mitigating energy poverty at the national or local level.

The POWERPOOR Stakeholder Liaison Group developed during the project period to become a very influential taskforce for alleviating energy poverty in Estonia. The members of the Stakeholder Liaison Group are the Ministry of Economic Affairs and Communications, the Ministry of Environment, Fund KredEx, City of Tallinn, City of Tartu, City of Pärnu, City of Kuressaare, Consumer Protection and Technical Regulation Authority, Tartu Regional Energy Agency, Association of Estonian Cities and Municipalities, housing magazine “Elamu”. In

addition, case-based cooperation was initiated with the Ministry of Justice and Tallinn University of Technology.

In its work in Estonia, the POWERPOOR initiative also cooperates with the Research and Development Program LIFE IP BuildEST and Project ENPOR, that both contribute to the same goal: to alleviate energy poverty and create conditions for the establishment of new joint energy initiatives in Estonia.



Members of the POWERPOOR stakeholder liaison group participating in the workshop and mapping the situation with energy poverty, and discussing the next steps in cooperation at the meeting in Tallinn.

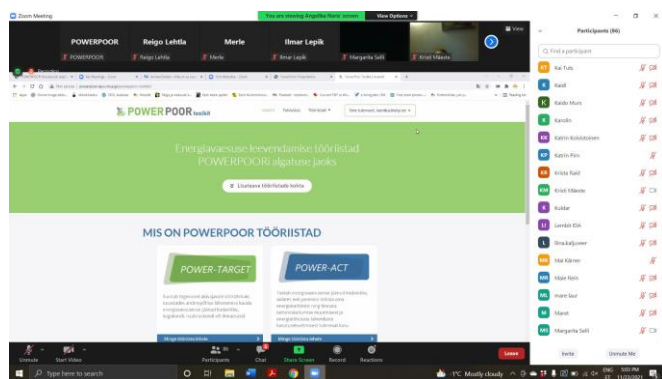
As a result of the work of the group, direct connections were created between state institutions and local authorities to work together to alleviate energy poverty and empower joint energy initiatives in Estonia. Also, policy recommendations were developed for Estonia to support energy poverty mitigation and contribute to the new law on energy management issues. Active public discussion was initiated in Estonian media on the definitions of energy poverty and energy community, renovation as a solution for alleviating energy poverty, and challenges with establishing energy communities in Estonia.



POWERPOOR cooperates with media channels in Estonia to contribute to the public discussion on energy poverty and joint energy initiatives.

POWERPOOR advances joint energy initiatives in Estonia by facilitating meaningful sustainable networking opportunities for certified energy supporters and mentors.

Since the very beginning of the POWERPOOR project, EKYL has aimed to secure the sustainability of the results of the project actions for alleviating energy poverty after the end of the project. As 101 certified energy supporters and mentors have now finished the POWERPOOR training programme in Estonia, their knowledge and practical experiences form an important resource with potential for energy poverty alleviation across the country in the coming years. Therefore, a special dissemination platform was created by EKYL as a tool for advancing their collective efforts to support joint energy initiatives in apartment associations. The platform consists of 3 elements: (1) a mailing list of energy supporters and mentors to share new information about energy efficiency, financing, and new emerging opportunities for energy communities; (2) a newsletter to provide articles and information to the energy supporters and mentors on joint energy initiatives; and (3) regular webinar round-tables for managers of apartment associations who are acting as energy mentors to exchange their experiences with alleviating energy poverty through renovation and collect their feedback and reflections on this process.



Energy supporters and mentors in Estonia are actively using the opportunities for additional trainings and networking to support the joint energy actions in their communities also after they have finished their contribution in POWERPOOR project activities

The network of energy supporters and mentors created by the POWERPOOR project brings together practitioners across the country, helping to create contacts and secure the sustainability of the POWERPOOR results after the project's lifespan. Several emerging topics on energy poverty and joint energy actions have been presented and discussed in the list, newsletter, and roundtables of the energy supporters and mentors.

The Energy Poverty Alleviation Office established in Tallinn plays an important role in this networking, creating regular opportunities for the exchange of experience and peer-to-peer learning options for energy supporters and

mentors. As energy communities are still a new topic for many residents in Estonia, the discussions in the network will shape the understanding of representatives of non-profit apartment associations on joint energy actions in the years to come.

POWERPOOR helped the municipalities of Tallinn, Tartu, Pärnu, and Kuressaare to identify energy poor households and include relevant mitigation actions in their sustainable energy and climate action plans.

Although the POWERPOOR's Energy Poverty Alleviation Office was established in Tallinn, the POWERPOOR project collaborated with municipalities from four different cities throughout the country: Tallinn, Tartu, Pärnu and Kuressaare.

Information days were held in every city to encourage direct communication between the municipality and non-profit apartment associations that represent residents in multi-apartment buildings. The intention was to introduce the tools for identifying households in energy poverty, explain the concept of joint energy initiatives as an addition to the municipality's sustainable energy and climate action plan, discuss the barriers for residents to achieve energy efficiency, and introduce collaborative financing measures for implementation of the action plan.



POWERPOOR info-days in different cities provided a great opportunity for community members to meet the representatives of the municipalities and discuss options for alleviating energy poverty through joint energy actions

As a result of the activity, all four municipalities have emphasised the potential of energy communities, the importance of renovation and joint renewable energy actions as a solution for energy poverty in multi-apartment buildings, and their readiness to collaborate with the local apartment associations to alleviate energy poverty as well as to promote and facilitate the development of energy communities. The municipalities have expressed interest in including relevant actions in their energy planning.