

“Estonia can only be successful as a country when our people are well educated,” said President Toomas Hendrik Ilves on Wednesday at the presentation ceremony for the Educational Awards of the Head of State's Cultural Foundation. “A good education can only be provided by a good teacher. A teacher cannot just be a dull transmitter of a subject, but must also be someone that arouses interest, guides and directs students. The teachers that we remember are those that are professional fanatics, in the best sense of the word.”

“You are such teachers,” President Ilves said addressing the Educational Award winners—Tiina Talvi, biology teacher and Director at the Lümända Basic School, Ene Jakobson, founder and long-time leader of the Sõleke Dance Ensemble, and Vladimir Ossipov, chemistry teacher at the 53rd Secondary School in Tallinn.

“I am very glad that a chemistry teacher is among the Cultural Foundation prizewinners. As we know, the development and success of knowledge-based countries and economies is related to the ratio of students studying natural and physical sciences,” said the Head of State.

President Ilves recalled that he too has worked as a schoolteacher and as a university lecturer, “I know the feeling of preparing for a new class, standing up in front of the students, and thinking—will they understand, will they listen to what I have to say, will they learn anything. These are the important questions, which, if answered in the affirmative, will create a bridge of learning and knowledge that will help schoolteachers be successful in life.”

The President's Cultural Foundation, with Indrek Neivelt as Chairman of the Supervisory Board, is presenting Educational Awards financed by Hansapank for the fifth year. The Cultural Foundation was initiated by the Head of State in 1992 and collects monetary donations from individuals, companies, organizations and associations to support Estonia's cultural, educational, and research activities.

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