



A study on the effects of participation in a
Youth in Action project
on the level of competences



Preface

Youth in Action – RAY

Youth in Action is a Programme of the European Union supporting European youth projects. The ‘Research-based Analysis and Monitoring of the Youth in Action Programme’ (RAY) is conducted by the RAY Network, which currently includes the Youth in Action National Agencies and their research partners in 15 countries.

This specific study was designed, instrumented, implemented and analyzed by Marti Taru, Youth Research Ltd., Tallinn University, in cooperation with the National Agencies of Youth in Action in Belgium-Flanders, Bulgaria, the Czech Republic, Estonia, Finland, and Sweden. The study was funded with contributions from the National Agencies from these six countries.

The actual study was carried out in the different countries in the fall of 2012 and the report was written in Tallinn, Estonia in 2013 by the researcher Marti Taru.

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Introduction and the goal of the study

Organised youth mobility has a decades-long history¹ and nearly one thousand schemes dedicated to mobility are currently running in 34 European countries.² Interest in non-formal learning that takes place during a stay abroad is a relatively recent development, however. For instance, the European Platform for Learning Mobility was launched only in 2011 and its second meeting took place in March 2013.³ The rise of this interest can be associated with the increasing significance of youth work and non-formal learning in general. During the last ten years or so, a lot of effort has been put into recognition of non-formal learning and finding an appropriate role for youth work in the wider framework of youth policies.⁴ Learning mobility has been defined as *a period of time spent in another country than one's own, organised for the purpose of acquiring knowledge, skills and competences. The stay may be organised in a formal or a non-formal context.*⁵ This definition is also useful for this study although the formal context is not present.

The interest in researching the effects of learning mobility is relatively recent, too. It seems that at the moment there is no solid understanding of whether and how much the non-formal aspects and settings of a mobility experience contribute to the development of a young person. A recent (non-academic) publication claims that most research on learning mobility does not meet solid (academic) quality standards⁶, that it lacks methodological variety (being mostly qualitative) and is concentrated mainly in Germany.⁷ A roughly similar situation is described in another report, too: The research on learning mobility is at its early stages, it is carried out mainly in Germany and France, a lot of practical development is going on but the understanding of the topic is modest.⁸ An overview of competences necessary for youth workers to support young people in international learning mobility projects was written recently. The overview includes mainly theoretical and policy papers, there is not much empirical research on the subject.⁹ However, it seems that a little more research is available on some aspects of learning mobility, mainly on long-term mobility experiences.

In this context, the goal of this study is to contribute to the growing body of literature on non-formal aspects of learning mobility, as well as to the literature on assessment of youth work in general. As such, it can also be identified as a summative evaluation of youth work. In more concrete terms, the study sets out to analyse whether a short-term, non-formal learning mobility experience can be associated with an increase in the level of participants' competences. Is there proof that participation in an international youth project improves competences?

¹ Lejeune, P. History of youth mobility in Europe. in F.Coussee, H.Williamson, G.Verschelden (eds.) The history of youth work in Europe. Relevance for today's youth work policy. Vol.3. p. 263-268. Council of Europe Publishing. 2013.

² Study on Mobility Developments in School Education, Vocational Education and Training, Adult Education and Youth Exchanges. ICON-INSTITUTE GmbH and CO KG Consulting Gruppe. 2012. P.9.

³ European Platform for Learning Mobility, <http://www.learningmobility.eu>

⁴ Recognition of non-formal learning/education. European Knowledge Centre for Youth Policies, http://youth-partnership-eu.coe.int/youth-partnership/ekcyp/BGKNGE/Non-formal_learning.html?_locale=en.

⁵ Study on Mobility Developments in School Education, Vocational Education and Training, Adult Education and Youth Exchanges. P. 17-19.

⁶ Ilg, W. Evaluation of international youth exchanges. In G.J.Friesenhahn, H.Schild, H.-G.Wicke, J.Balogh (eds.) Learning mobility and non-formal learning in European contexts. Policies, approaches and examples. Provisional version. P.189-198. Strasbourg: Council of Europe. 2013.

⁷ Dubiski, J. What do we know? A systematic literature review on youth learning mobility in European contexts. In G.J.Friesenhahn, H.Schild, H.-G.Wicke, J.Balogh (eds.) Learning mobility and non-formal learning in European contexts. Policies, approaches and examples. Provisional version. P.117-128. Strasbourg: Council of Europe. 2013.

⁸ Study on Mobility Developments ... p 13.

⁹ Pantea, M.C. Mapping of competences needed by youth workers to support young people in international learning mobility projects. Youth Partnership. 2012.

Youth in Action programme and learning mobility

A mobility scheme supported by the Youth in Action programme qualifies as a mobility programme targeted to young people and providing opportunities for non-formal learning.¹⁰ The projects selected for this study were supported from sub-actions 1.1 and 3.1 (Youth Exchanges only).

Sub-action 1.1 is Youth Exchanges. Youth Exchanges offer an opportunity for groups of young people from different countries to meet and learn about each other's cultures. The groups plan together their Youth Exchange around a theme of mutual interest.

Sub-action 3.1 is Cooperation with the Neighbouring Countries of the European Union. This sub-action supports projects with neighbouring partner countries, namely youth exchanges and training and networking projects in the youth field.

The aim of youth exchanges is to get groups of young people from different countries together so they can explore their social and cultural differences and similarities. Youth exchanges are targeted at young people between the age of 13 and 25 (up to 20% of participants may be aged between 25 and 30). They get a unique opportunity to experience learning situations and to strengthen their European identity. Each exchange must have a theme that is relevant to the daily experiences of the young people involved but also has a clear European dimension. Themes could cover a variety of issues, such as young people in society, racism and xenophobia, local heritage, drugs, the environment, etc.¹¹

In 2010, the average number of participants per project in the EU was 30 in the sub-action 1.1 and 24 in the sub-action 3.1. In 2011, respective figures were 36 and 29, so the projects were somewhat larger. The average duration of projects was 1.2 weeks (8 days) and 1.4 weeks (10 days) respectively. In 2011, the average duration of both types of projects was 1.2 weeks (8 days).

In 2010, projects in the sub-action 1.1 were mostly multilateral youth exchanges (61% of projects), meaning that young people from at least 4 countries participated. 10% of projects were trilateral and 27% bilateral. 68% of participants went abroad. In 2011, the figures were 13%, 25% and 61%.

¹⁰ Study on Mobility Developments in ... p. 35.

¹¹ http://ec.europa.eu/youth/youth-in-action-programme/youth-for-europe_en.htm

In 2011, the three most common general objectives of sub-action 1.1 projects were:

- fostering mutual understanding between people in different countries (91% of projects)
- developing solidarity and promoting tolerance among young people (79%)
- promoting young people's active citizenship (73%).

In 2011, sub-action 1.1 projects were more common than sub-action 3.1 projects, having 60,172 and 15,376 participants respectively. In 2010, the figures were 46,951 and 11,315.¹² Distribution of participants between the sub-actions was roughly 4:1.

The research question and hypothesis

This research project started from an interest in the question whether participation in a project supported by the Youth in Action programme contributes to reducing youth unemployment. However, it was not realistic to examine such a broad question and the question was narrowed to whether participation contributes to young people's competitiveness in the labour market, which was still deemed far too general to be realistically researched. Finally, the focus was set to understanding whether participation in a short-term youth learning mobility project contributes to personal development, like developing some aspects of the eight key competences and contributing to participants' future education and career plans.¹³

More formally speaking, there are two aspects to the statement that participation increases competence levels:

- IF participation in a project, THEN increase in selected competences/skills.
- IF no participation in a project, THEN no increase in selected competences/skills.

Both of these conditions need to be met to be sure that it was the participation in a project that caused the increase in the competence level and no other reason. If these conditions are fulfilled, participants will have higher competence levels than non-participants at the end of the project.

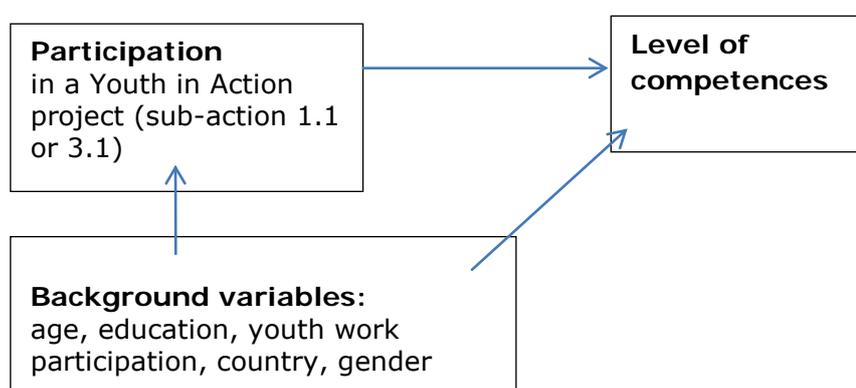
Thus it makes sense to ask the following question: Is participation in a mobility project associated with significant differences in the levels of participants' and non-participants' competences and skills, independently of other variables? The hypothesis is that yes, there is a positive difference.

¹² Information obtained from Youth in Action programme overviews.

¹³ Because of the high percentage of non-response to the four questions on future plans, the questions could not be included in the further analysis. Frequency distributions of the variables are given in appendix 3.

The conceptual model

The previous section focused only on the relationship between participation and the level of competences. A more realistic approach proceeds from a model in which competence levels depend on several factors, and participation in a Youth in Action mobility project is only one of those variables. It is also assumed that participation in a Youth in Action project could be influenced by different background variables.



Graph 1. Graphical depiction of the relationships between variables

To put it in more concrete terms, it is assumed that the level of competences is influenced by education (it is assumed that in general higher educational attainment is associated with a higher level of competences), by participation in youth work (more participation is associated with a higher level of competences), and by factors that influence both variables, like age (in this age group older age normally also means higher educational attainment). Country is included to account for differences in the composition of the sample: Respondents from Bulgaria tended to be older and (consequently) more educated and living in large cities while respondents from Sweden and Finland were younger, less educated and resided in relatively small locations. This also helps take into account cultural backgrounds and the translation of the questionnaires, which may have an impact on the evaluation of competences, too.

At the first stage of the analysis of the data, only the relationship between the two upper boxes will be examined. A bivariate analysis seeks to find out whether participants' and non-participants' levels of competences are similar or different. If there is a significant difference, a regression analysis will be carried out. Using regression, the full model will be analysed. This analysis will return direct relationships of all variables to the dependent variable. A direct or a net effect describes a relationship in which the impact of other variables is absent. The results of the regression analysis will show if there is a direct or a net relationship between participation and competence levels when all other explanations are taken into account.

Empirical research

The research design

The research design can be thought of as a framework, a structure of the research activities that are conducted within a certain research project. It is the glue that holds together building of the hypothesis, planning, data collection and analysis and that structures the process of transforming research inputs into research outputs.

The design of this research project proceeds from the research question formulated earlier (The research question and the research design were actually developed jointly to take into account limitations of the real world.). Participation or non-participation in a project played a central role in this.

Thus the design of the research project consists of measuring the level of competences in the group of project participants and non-participants after the activities of the projects have finished. This enables comparison of participants' and non-participants' level of competences and helps draw conclusions on whether participation increased the level of competences or not. If the competence levels are similar, we can be fairly sure that participation did not make any difference. If they are dissimilar, and the levels are higher in the group of participants, one potential explanation for that is participation in a project.

An experimental design that involves a random assignment into a test group (participants) and a control group (non-participants) and the comparison of levels has sometimes been called the 'gold standard' research design.¹⁴ The random assignment into groups is important because this makes the groups equal in all other matters except that one group has participated in a project and the other has not. If the groups are truly randomly composed and we see a difference in competence levels, the differences can be explained by participation in a project since this is the only difference between the two groups. If they are not randomly composed, other explanations are possible.

This research design resembles experimental design in the sense that it has a test group (participants) and a control group (non-participants). However, it lacks a core ingredient of experimental design: The assignment into the groups is not random. Since the random allocation to groups is missing, it does not qualify as experimental design and the groups are not strictly equivalent.

¹⁴ Those interested in what hides behind the words 'experimental design' and why it is valued may visit www.socialresearchmethods.net and / or take a look at the following publications that can be downloaded free of charge:

Mattero, M., & Campbell-Patton, C. (2008). *Measuring the impact of youth voluntary service programs. Summary and conclusions of the international experts' meeting*. The World Bank, Innovations in Civic Participation.

Granger, R. C. (2008). *After-School Programs and Academics: Implications for Policy, Practice, and Research*. William T. Grant foundation Social Policy Report 12(2).

Durlak, J.A., Weissberg, R.P., Dymnicki, A.B., Taylor, R.D. and Schellinger, K.B. (2011). The Impact of Enhancing Students' Social and Emotional Learning: A Meta-Analysis of School-Based Universal Interventions. *Child Development*, January/February 2011, Volume 82, Number 1.

Payton, J., Weissberg, R.P., Durlak, J.A., Dymnicki, A.B., Taylor, R.D., Schellinger, K.B., & Pachan, M. (2008). The positive impact of social and emotional learning for kindergarten to eighth-grade students: Findings from three scientific reviews. Chicago, IL: Collaborative for Academic, Social, and Emotional Learning.

Variables in the analysis

Empirical analysis contains a set of dependent variables (competences) and a set of independent variables (participation and background).

Participation/non-participation

The groups of participants and non-participants were composed by the National Agencies (NAs) of the Youth in Action programme in the participant countries. The NAs assembled email contact lists of both project participants and non-participants. The criterion for including people in the participant group was that the activities of their project (supported from the sub-actions 1.1 or 3.1 youth exchanges) had ended recently, within the last six months.

The main criterion for including young people in the control group was that they were similar to participants when possible. This group was selected by the NAs, too. A detailed description of the two groups is given in table 4.

Competences and skills

The list of competences to be measured in the study was based on the European framework for key competences for lifelong learning, which is comprised of eight key competences.¹⁵ Only five out of the eight competences were included:

- Key Competence 2: Communication in foreign languages
- KC5: Learning to learn
- KC6: Social and civic competences
- KC7: Sense of initiative and entrepreneurship
- KC8: Cultural awareness and expression.

This set of competences was selected because, drawing on the opinion of experts (representatives of NAs), they could be influenced by participation in a youth exchange project.

In the questionnaire, KC2, KC7 and KC8 were represented by one question, KC5 by 2 and KC6 by 3 questions. For each of the key competence variables, three aspects were assessed:

- the respondent's assessment of the general importance of a key competence/skill
- the respondent's own assessment of their level at a key competence/skill
- the respondent's willingness to improve a key competence/skill in the future.

¹⁵ A number of descriptions are available, one can be found here:
http://ec.europa.eu/dgs/education_culture/publ/pdf/ll-learning/keycomp_en.pdf

The descriptions of the competence variables

A complete list of the questions is given in appendix 1. Below is a list of characteristics presented to the respondents in the questionnaire to ask them how important they regarded them for leading a satisfying and self-fulfilling life:

- having good foreign language skills
- knowing well one's skills and competencies that are necessary in everyday situations
- ability to acquire new knowledge and new skills that are useful in everyday life
- skills for collaborating with people who come from other countries
- behaving well in different situations, such as partying with friends or being examined by a medical doctor
- being tolerant towards people from other cultures
- frequent participation in youth organisation(s) or in (other) voluntary civic organisation(s) (e.g. Greenpeace)
- being active at work, starting new projects and taking a leadership role
- artistic expression (e.g. singing, playing an instrument, writing short stories).

Scales

Two different scales were used: A scale ranging from 1 to 4 and a scale ranging from 1 to 10. Both scales also included the additional category of response: 'can't say'.

Social background variables

The following variables were included as variables of social background:

- country (determined by the NAs)
- age
- size/type of residence
- activity status
- educational attainment
- participation in youth work activities
- international experiences through youth work.

The complete wordings are given in the appendix 1.

Data collection and the survey process

Development of the questionnaire

The development of the master questionnaire was a joint effort, with all participant countries giving feedback and input on the initial version. The final version of the English master questionnaire was ready in August 2012; it was proof-read by a native English speaker employed by a translation bureau Interlex OÜ (www.interlex.ee). The English master questionnaire was translated into the native languages of the participating countries. The final list of languages included: Estonian, Finnish, Russian, Dutch, Bulgarian, Czech and English.

The survey

The data collection was carried out by a polling company Klaster OÜ (www.klaster.ee/eng/).

Before the survey started, all questionnaires were uploaded to the internet and tested. Each participant country checked their own language version of the questionnaire and corrections were made where necessary.

The questionnaire was active from 18th of October 2012 until 10th of November 2012. Invitations were sent to the contacts provided by the NAs; the NAs provided contact lists for both project participants and non-participants. In Estonia, the list of contacts was only available for project participants. The non-participants were recruited by sending invitations to two youth organisations (Open Youth Centres and National Youth League).

The number of invitations sent out was approximately 3,000. During the survey period, two reminders were also sent.

This resulted in 936 questionnaires started, meaning that at least one question was answered in those questionnaires. Out of those, 277 were project participants.

Data cleaning

The goal of the data cleaning was to identify and delete responses that would have harmed the validity of further analysis and the trustworthiness of the results. This was done using a two-step procedure.

At step one, a set of summated indices was developed to indicate the number of skipped questions per respondent. The indices were based on the following categories:

Socio-demographic variables

The social background variables used for data cleaning included:

- country of permanent residence
- sex
- age
- highest educational attainment
- main place of residence: size/type
- activity status.

In this category only one missing value was allowed.

Competence variables

All 27 competence variables were included. A maximum of eight missing values were allowed.

Youth work participation variables

Youth work variables included

- participation in domestic and international youth projects and in volunteering events
- involvement in the management of a youth organisation or a youth project
- having received guidance and counselling on education, careers, youth participation, leisure time activities, or on other themes.

This index was constituted of a total of 10 variables and a maximum of four missing values were allowed.

Age restriction

Only respondents in the age range 13-30 years were included.

Country

Country was determined on the basis of what the NAs reported as the respondents' country of permanent residence.¹⁶

Only countries with a minimum of 10 cases were included. This limitation was imposed in order to be able to include country as a separate variable in the set of independent variables.

The fine-tuning of the final sample required reducing the number of non-participants in the case of Estonia, the Czech Republic and Bulgaria. For that purpose, a random sample was drawn from these groups. The number of respondents was computed in such a way that the ratio of participants and non-participants was roughly similar in all countries.

Final sample

The data cleaning resulted in the final sample of 324 cases. A description of the sample is given below.

¹⁶ There was a notable difference between the countries of permanent residence reported by the respondents themselves and by the NAs.

Country

The three largest countries account for 85% of all cases in the study and the results also apply primarily to these countries. They are Bulgaria, the Czech Republic and Estonia.

Table 1. Number of respondents by country

Belgium	14
Bulgaria	119
Czech Republic	81
Estonia	77
Finland	20
Sweden	13
Total	324

Sub-action

Out of the 95 participants 75 were involved in projects supported through the sub-action 1.1 and 18 through the sub-action 3.1 . Thus the ratio of 1.1 and 3.1 matches fairly well with the statistical portrait. Action was not recorded for 2 participants.

Socio-demographic background

Table 2. Socio-demographic characteristics in the sample

Gender	1 female	69%
	2 male	31%
Educational attainment	I have not finished primary education	7%
	Primary education	23%
	Secondary, general education	15%
	Secondary, vocational education	4%
	Post-secondary, but not higher education	17%
	Higher education, research degree	33%
Activity status	In training/school, not paid for by employer	61%
	Self-employed, entrepreneur	6%
	Employed	25%
	Unemployed	7%
	Permanently sick/ill or disabled	1%
	Volunteering	14%
	Not in paid work	5%
Type/size of the place of residence	a big city (over 1,000,000 people)	24%
	a city (100,000 to 1,000,000 people)	20%
	a town (15,000 to about 100,000 people)	23%
	a small town (3,000 to about 15,000 people)	15%
	a village (fewer than 3,000 people)	12%
	in the countryside (e.g. on a farm, in an isolated house)	5%

The respondents were relatively well educated with 50% of them holding a post-secondary degree. Most of them were active either in education or at the labour market and only 7% said they were unemployed. A quarter of them lived in a city with more than 1 million inhabitants, one fifth in a city with more than 100,000 inhabitants.

There is no good reason to consider young people involved in the study to be young people with fewer opportunities. On the contrary, their social background suggests that the sample is composed of quite well-off young people.

Comparison of participants' and non-participants' backgrounds

One of the central elements of the study was that the composition of participant and non-participant groups should be roughly similar. Although the effect of differences can be reduced through data analysis, it is still important to aim for a group composition that is as similar as possible.

The mean **age** of participants was 20.5 years, and 21.5 years for non-participants. This variable had a relatively similar mean value in the two groups.

The participant/non-participant ratio remained between 0.3 and 0.4 in all **countries**.

Table 3. The number of participants and non-participants by country

	Non-participant	Participant
Belgium	10	4
Bulgaria	82	37
Czech Republic	60	21
Estonia	55	22
Finland	14	6
Sweden	8	5
Total	229	95

The **gender** distribution was similar in the groups.

The **education** profiles of the two groups are different. However, there is no systematic pattern that would enable us to say that participants were less educated than non-participants (which could be the case since they were slightly younger).

The **activity status** profiles indicated a somewhat systematic difference between the groups: Among participants, there was a higher percentage of young people in training/school and a lower percentage in employment. This finding could be explained by the project participants' younger age.

The profile of the **size of the place of residence** of the two groups differed in that among project participants a higher percentage reported living in towns with 15,000 to 1,000,000 inhabitants. Among non-participants a higher percentage reported living in large cities with more than 1,000,000 inhabitants and in small locations with less than 15,000 inhabitants.

Table 4. Social background profiles of participants and non-participants

	non-participant	participant	difference
Female	70%	65%	-5%
Male	30%	35%	5%
I have not finished primary education	10%	0%	-10%
Primary education	20%	32%	12%
Secondary, general education	13%	21%	8%
Secondary, vocational education	5%	1%	-4%
Post-secondary, but not higher education	15%	23%	8%
Higher education, research degree	37%	24%	-13%
In training/school, not paid for by employer	54%	80%	26%
Self-employed, entrepreneur	7%	4%	-2%
Employed	28%	19%	-9%
Unemployed	7%	8%	2%
Permanently sick/ill or disabled	1%	0%	-1%
Volunteering	14%	13%	-1%
Not in paid work	4%	6%	2%
a big city (over 1,000,000 people)	26%	20%	-6%
a city (100,000 to 1,000,000 people)	17%	29%	12%
a town (15,000 to about 100,000 people)	21%	29%	8%
a small town (3,000 to about 15,000 people)	17%	12%	-5%
a village (fewer than 3,000 people)	14%	10%	-4%
in the countryside (e.g. on a farm, in an isolated house)	6%	1%	-5%
Participation in an international youth project (mean value of occasions)	0.6	1.6	1
Participation in an in-country youth project	1.1	0.9	-0.2
Participation in a volunteering event	2.7	2.1	-0.6
Has been a leader of a youth organisation/council	2.1	1.9	-0.2
Has been a member of team of a youth project	2.3	2.4	0.1

To summarise, there were quite notable differences between the two groups in some variables. The good thing is that they were not systematic. Fortunately, it is possible to deal with the differences at the data analysis stage and ‘compute them out’ using regression analysis.

Data analysis and results

The analysis was conducted in two stages: bivariate and multivariate analysis.

Comparison of participants and non-participants

At stage one, the level of competences of participants and non-participants was compared. The mean values¹⁷ of the variables are presented in the table below. The text in bold denotes the variables / competences in which there was a significantly different distribution in participant and non-participant groups.¹⁸

Table 5. Mean values of competences in the groups of participants and non-participants

	non-participant	participant	Participant – non-participant
The importance of each of the characteristics and skills evaluated by respondents themselves¹⁹			
Having good foreign language skills	3.60	3.73	0.12
Knowing well one's skills	3.71	3.76	0.05
Ability to acquire new knowledge	3.68	3.67	0.00
Skills for collaborating with people	3.20	3.51	0.30
Behaving well in different situations	3.54	3.49	-0.05
Being tolerant	3.56	3.61	0.04
Frequent participation in youth organisation(s)	2.73	2.75	0.02
Being active at work	3.23	3.29	0.06
Artistic expression	2.81	3.00	0.19
Self-assessed level of each of the following competences of a person²⁰			
Level of the foreign language that the respondent considered to be his/her best	2.84	3.14	0.30
Knowing my skills	2.94	3.07	0.13
Ability to acquire new knowledge	3.09	3.12	0.03
Skills for collaborating with people	2.85	3.07	0.22
Behaving well in different situations	3.12	3.16	0.04
Being tolerant	3.15	3.22	0.07
Frequent participation in youth organisation(s)	2.65	2.63	-0.03
Being active at work	2.96	2.70	-0.25
Artistic expression	2.67	2.78	0.11

¹⁷ The mean values are used because they summarise and present a general pattern of responses.

¹⁸ For the variables measured using the 4-category scale a chi-square statistic was used to estimate the relationship between participation and the level of competence. For the variables measured using the 10-category scale a t-test was used to determine whether the mean values were statistically significant.

¹⁹ The wording of the question: Below you will find a range of personal characteristics and skills. Many people believe that these characteristics and skills are crucial for leading a satisfying and self-fulfilling life. Based on your knowledge, how important is each of the characteristics and skills? Response categories: 1-unimportant, 2-rather unimportant, 3-rather important, 4-very important, 5-can't say (recoded to system missing).

²⁰ The wording of the question: Below is a list of skills and personal characteristics. Please indicate your level for each of the personal characteristics or skills, compared to other people in general. Is it:... Response categories: 1-significantly below others', 2-somewhat below others', 3-somewhat above others', 4-significantly above others', 5-can't say (recoded to system missing).

Willingness to improve a competence in the future²¹			
My skills in cooperation and collaboration	7.87	7.91	0.03
Behaving appropriately in different situations	8.00	7.78	-0.21
My sense of tolerance	7.58	7.75	0.18
Being active at work	8.04	8.12	0.08
Personal artistic expression	7.56	7.97	0.41
My skills in another foreign language	8.80	9.02	0.23
My skills that help me to identify my strengths and weaknesses	8.32	8.29	-0.04
Learning new knowledge and new skills	8.60	8.66	0.06
My participation in youth organisation(s)	6.86	6.99	0.13

There are two important findings in the table. First, the table indicates that the responses of participants tended generally more towards agreeing. The difference was up to approximately 10% in the scale used. They generally tended to consider each of the competences more important, assessed their competence levels higher and expressed more willingness to improve a competence in the future.

There was also one exception to the general pattern – being active at work was reported by a higher percentage of non-participants than participants. The difference was not statistically significant.

Second, only two of the differences were statistically significant:

- the self-assessed general importance given to skills for collaborating with other people and
- the self-assessed level at a foreign language.

None of the other differences were statistically significant.

There were also some other variables with notable differences, which therefore deserve attention, too. One could hypothesise that these differences were statistically insignificant because the sample size was too small and that if a larger sample had been used, the differences might have been significant. However, the results of the current analysis leave us only with the conclusion that the differences were not significant.

²¹ The wording of the question: Now please think of your willingness to improve the following personal characteristics in the future. How willing are you to improve them? Scale: 1-I am not at all willing ... 10-I am very much willing, 11-can't say (recoded to system missing).

Table 6. Differences between participants and non-participants that were not statistically significant

	non-participant	participant	Participant – non-participant
Self-assessed importance of each of the characteristics and skills²²			
Having good foreign language skills	3.60	3.73	0.12
Artistic expression	2.81	3.00	0.19
Self-assessed level of each of the following competences of a person²³			
Knowing my skills	2.94	3.07	0.13
Skills for collaborating with people	2.85	3.07	0.22
Being active at work	2.96	2.70	-0.25
Artistic expression	2.67	2.78	0.11
Willingness to improve a competence in the future²⁴			
Personal artistic expression	7.56	7.97	0.41

The analysis of the competences in the table above and taking into account variables that were statistically significant brings us to two significant findings.

First, artistic expression was the only competence with quite notable differences in all the three dimensions, albeit none was statistically significant. Finding a substantive explanation to the differences would be a challenge for research.

Second, the importance of foreign language skills and collaboration skills that were different in two dimensions (and in the case of each competence, one of the differences was statistically significant). These findings match expectations that are associated with participation in a youth project in which young people from different countries meet and carry out joint activities.

Competences that were not different

It would also be worth listing the variables in which there were no significant differences between participants and non-participants.

- Learning new knowledge
- Tolerance
- Participation in youth organisations
- Behaving appropriately in different situations
- Being active at work

Finding explanations for why there were no differences or why there was a negative difference as in the case of being active at work is a highly relevant research task, too. Knowing what does not work could be even more useful for the Youth in Action programme than knowing what works. The most popular general goals of the 1.1

²² The wording of the question: Below you will find a range of personal characteristics and skills. Many people believe that these characteristics and skills are crucial for leading a satisfying and self-fulfilling life. Based on your knowledge, how important is each of the characteristics and skills? Response categories: 1-unimportant, 2-rather unimportant, 3-rather important, 4-very important, 5-can't say (recoded to system missing).

²³ The wording of the question: Below is a list of skills and personal characteristics. Please indicate your level for each of the personal characteristics or skills, compared to other people in general. Is it:... Response categories: 1-significantly below others', 2-somewhat below others', 3- somewhat above others', 4-significantly above others', 5- can't say (recoded to system missing).

²⁴ The wording of the question: Now please think of your willingness to improve the following personal characteristics in the future. How willing are you to improve them? Scale: 1-I am not at all willing ... 10-I am very much willing, 11- can't say (recoded to system missing).

projects were fostering mutual understanding between people in different countries, developing solidarity and promoting tolerance among young people and promoting young people's active citizenship. It would be only natural for there to be a difference in at least the competences relating to tolerance, participation and being active – but there was none.

Analysis of the complex model

Regression analysis is a data analysis method that is used to establish direct correlations between a dependent variable and each of the independent variables. Multinomial logistic regression was used to analyse whether the two significant differences remain statistically significant when other potential explanatory factors are taken into account, too. If they do remain significant, participation has a direct 'effect' on the level of competences. If the effect goes away, there is no direct 'effect'. Covariation between participation and the level of competences was caused by some other variable that influenced both taking part in a project and the level of competences.

Modifications in the data

In order to be able to perform the regression analysis it was necessary to modify the data. The following three changes were made to the data:

- the first two categories of both dependent variables were merged into one
- Belgium was deleted from the database
- Finland and Sweden were merged into one category.

Independent variables

The list of independent variables, in addition to the variable indicating participation in youth exchange projects, included:

- gender
- age
- educational attainment
- activity status (yes/no): in education, employed, self-employed, unemployed, volunteering
- type/size of place of residence
- country
- participation in youth work activities in the previous 12 months (yes/no): sports club, hobbies/club, youth centre, youth council, youth organisation, other organised youth activity
- number of international youth projects in the last 12 months.

Regression analysis results

Detailed results of the regression analysis are given in the appendix 2.

The main result of the analysis was that non-participation in a youth exchange project increased the likelihood of choosing the response 'not important' when assessing the importance of cooperation or 'below others' when assessing one's foreign language skills compared to the likelihood of choosing the category 'very important' or 'much above others'. To put this more clearly, those who had participated in a youth exchange project were more likely to rate their foreign language skills higher and give more importance to collaboration with people from other cultures. The relationship was statistically significant. The relationship holds independently of other variables.

Summary of the main results

The study looked at self-assessed levels of some selected competences, and Youth in Action project participants were compared to non-participants in 6 countries. There were positive differences between project participants and non-participants but most of the differences were not statistically significant. When comparing mean values within the self-assessment scale, the differences were up to approximately 10% within the scale. How does this compare to results from other studies? The AFS has studied the impact of a stay abroad comparing “before” and “after” scores, and the difference in scores was approximately similar. Interestingly, there was no difference between a year-long stay and a short-term stay abroad.²⁵ Another study found that the difference between “before” and “after” in foreign language skills was 15%. Improvement by 6% was reported for open-mindedness. The length of stay abroad in these projects was 3-4 months.²⁶ So, results of the present study match results from other research projects. Still, it needs to be kept in mind that the other studies used “before” and “after” comparison while the present study compared participants to non-participants. Such a comparison assumes that the differences between participants and non-participants were positive results gained from participation. The regression analysis confirms that this might indeed be the case.

The results of the regression analysis ruled out the possibility that both participation in a project and the differences in the levels of competences could have resulted completely from a third, pre-existing variable. Even if it was the case that, for example, the educational attainment or earlier international project experiences (or some other personal characteristics or experiences) influenced both participation and competences in a positive way, participation in a project was also associated with higher levels of the competences independently of those variables.

The occurrences of having no differences which came out in the analysis deserve as much attention as the differences. Why didn't participation in projects, which are aimed at promoting tolerance and active participation, increase tolerance or civic participation? Finding answers to these questions could potentially be very valuable for the development and implementation of the Youth in Action programme.

Ideas for further research

The results of the study generally confirmed expectations: The participants' level of competences was higher. However, most of the differences were statistically insignificant. Increasing the size of the sample would help to make this point more clear because that would probably make the smaller differences statistically significant, too.

Because the study was carried out only in six countries (and was dominated by three countries), a question arises whether the patterns are characteristic to these countries only or whether they are more general? Involving a higher number of countries, as well as increasing the sample size, would help answer this question.

From the perspective of evaluation and development of the Youth in Action programme, it would be worth paying attention to the differences that did not materialise. Why did they not materialise although they in general related to the most popular goals of projects?

²⁵ The AFS impact study: final report. Research Report 33. The AFS Centre for the Study of Intercultural Learning. 1986. P. 4-5.

²⁶ Stronkhorst, R. Journal of Studies in International Education, Vol. 9 No. 4, Winter 2005. 292-315.

The results show that independently of educational attainment, earlier participation in international projects and other youth work and social background, participation in a youth exchange project was associated with higher competence levels. This difference could be explained by learning in youth exchange projects if we could be sure that all factors that could have increased competence levels were included in the analysis. However, can we be sure that that we did not leave out some relevant variables and that there is no other alternative explanation? For example, variables relating to personal characteristics, peer socialisation or family background were not included. It might well be that family background and peers both stimulate active participation and elevate competences. To explore these themes would require developing a more complex or a different conceptual model and analysing the role of other background variables.

Alternatively, research could explore in more depth what other personal characteristics and competences are linked to a significant degree with participation in a mobility programme as well as with (other) background variables. This would also entail building a more complex conceptual model first and then developing appropriate research methods.

To describe the problems appropriately and to find adequate answers to them would require a considerable amount of desk research, conceptual analysis and building of a complex analytical model before starting the empirical part of the research.

Appendix 1

Master questionnaire in English

Letter of invitation

Hi!

The youth workers and youth researchers of six countries are asking for your help. We are conducting a survey in order to better understand how the youth projects and other leisure time activities help young people develop various skills and plans for education and work. The results of the survey are planned to be used in the development of leisure time activities for young people, so that these could be used to better support the development of the various skills and plans of young people. 6 countries are participating in this survey: Estonia, Finland, Sweden, Bulgaria, the Czech Republic and Belgium-Flanders. The survey is being conducted by research company Noorteuring OÜ in Estonia and research partners in the other European countries.

Completing the questionnaire will take you about 20 to 30 minutes.

Your responses will remain anonymous and will be treated confidentially.

If you have any questions about the survey, please send an email to marti.taru@gmail.com

Many thanks for your time and support.

Let's start with the questionnaire!

In this questionnaire you will be asked mostly questions which already have response options. When you choose answers to the questions, please select the response option which most closely resembles your opinion or situation, even if it does not reflect it exactly or completely.

First, please choose the language you want to use for responding to the questionnaire. You can change the language at any point later on.

- | | | | |
|------------------------------------|----------------------------------|----------------------------------|-----------------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Bulgarian | <input type="checkbox"/> Czech | <input type="checkbox"/> Dutch | <input type="checkbox"/> Estonian |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Finnish | <input type="checkbox"/> Russian | <input type="checkbox"/> Swedish | |

1. What is your country of permanent residence?

- | | | | |
|---|----------------------------------|---|------------------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Austria | <input type="checkbox"/> Belgium | <input type="checkbox"/> Bulgaria | <input type="checkbox"/> Cyprus |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Czech Republic | <input type="checkbox"/> Denmark | <input type="checkbox"/> Estonia | <input type="checkbox"/> Finland |
| <input type="checkbox"/> France | <input type="checkbox"/> Germany | <input type="checkbox"/> Greece | <input type="checkbox"/> Hungary |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Ireland | <input type="checkbox"/> Italy | <input type="checkbox"/> Latvia | <input type="checkbox"/> Lithuania |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Luxembourg | <input type="checkbox"/> Malta | <input type="checkbox"/> Netherlands | <input type="checkbox"/> Poland |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Portugal | <input type="checkbox"/> Romania | <input type="checkbox"/> Slovakia | <input type="checkbox"/> Slovenia |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Spain | <input type="checkbox"/> Sweden | <input type="checkbox"/> United Kingdom | <input type="checkbox"/> Other |

2. I am:

- | | |
|---------------------------------|-------------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> female | <input type="checkbox"/> male |
|---------------------------------|-------------------------------|

3. I am:

..... years old

4. My highest educational attainment, or the highest level of schooling that I have finished, is:

- I have not finished primary education
- Primary education
- Secondary, general education
- Secondary, vocational education
- Post-secondary, but not higher education
- Higher education, research degree
- Other

5. I live mainly in ...

- ... a big city (over 1 000 000 people)
- ... a city (100 000 to 1 000 000 people)
- ... a town (15 000 to about 100 000 people)
- ... a small town (3 000 to about 15 000 people)
- ... a village (fewer than 3 000 people)
- ... in the countryside (e.g. on a farm, in an isolated house)

6. Which of these following describes your situation in the last month?

(Check a maximum of 2)

- In training/school, not paid for by employer (even if on vacation, doing apprenticeship, traineeship or other work placement program)
- Self-employed, entrepreneur [→ next question]
- Employed [→ next question]
- Unemployed (wanting a job, capable of working and looking for a job)
Permanently sick/ill or disabled
- Volunteering (donating time and energy for the good of other people or society in general (except your relatives and immediate household members))
- Not in paid work (e.g. taking care of children or other relatives, household, etc.)
- Other

7. What is your main position at work?

(Check a maximum of 2)

- Entrepreneur, small-business owner (e.g. owner of a shoe repair shop, ...)
- Politician (elected member of the parliament, municipal council or other political mandate)
- Government official, employed in public service (e.g. municipal official, ministerial official, official employed in other state or local government organisations)
- Manager (e.g. member of the board of a business company, trade union leader, head of sales department, senior official of an economic-interest organisation)
- Professional (computer programmer, medical doctor, teacher, accountant, social work professional, architect, professional youth worker)
- Technician, associate professional (e.g. photographer, air traffic controller, real estate agent, border inspector, decorator or commercial designer)
- Office clerk (secretary, assistant, receptionist, library clerk or filing clerk)

- Personal services, protective services worker (cook, salesperson, hairdresser, travel guide, police officer, fire-fighter)
- Worker in agriculture or fishery (farmer, vegetable grower, poultry producer, logger, fisherman)
- Worker in craft and related trades (bricklayer, carpenter, plumber, motor vehicle mechanic, bookbinder, butcher, sewer, shoe-maker)
- Machine operator (bus driver, crane operator, well-driller, mining-plant operator, dairy-product machine operator, operator at brewery)
- Unskilled worker (street vendor, shoe cleaner, domestic helper or cleaner, farm/forestry/fishery/mining/building labourer, hand packer)
- Working in military (except doing one's compulsory military service)
- Other

8. What is your mother tongue?

(If you have a bilingual background, please check a maximum of 2)

- | | | | |
|------------------------------------|-------------------------------------|-------------------------------------|----------------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Bulgarian | <input type="checkbox"/> Czech | <input type="checkbox"/> Danish | <input type="checkbox"/> Dutch |
| <input type="checkbox"/> English | <input type="checkbox"/> Estonian | <input type="checkbox"/> Finnish | <input type="checkbox"/> French |
| <input type="checkbox"/> German | <input type="checkbox"/> Greek | <input type="checkbox"/> Hungarian | <input type="checkbox"/> Irish |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Italian | <input type="checkbox"/> Latvian | <input type="checkbox"/> Lithuanian | <input type="checkbox"/> Maltese |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Polish | <input type="checkbox"/> Portuguese | <input type="checkbox"/> Romanian | <input type="checkbox"/> Russian |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Slovak | <input type="checkbox"/> Slovene | <input type="checkbox"/> Spanish | <input type="checkbox"/> Swedish |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Other | | | |

Below you will find a range of personal characteristics and skills. Many people believe that these characteristics and skills are crucial for leading a satisfying and self-fulfilling life. Based on your knowledge, how important is each of the characteristics and skills?

9. Having good foreign language skills

Unimportant Rather unimportant Rather important Very important Can't say

10. Knowing well one's skills and competencies that are necessary in everyday situations

Unimportant Rather unimportant Rather important Very important Can't say

11. Ability to acquire new knowledge and new skills that are useful in everyday life

Unimportant Rather unimportant Rather important Very important Can't say

12. Skills for collaborating with people who come from other countries

Unimportant Rather unimportant Rather important Very important Can't say

13. Behaving well in different situations, such as partying with friends or being examined by a medical doctor

Unimportant Rather unimportant Rather important Very important Can't say

14. Being tolerant toward people from other cultures

Unimportant Rather unimportant Rather important Very important Can't say

15. Frequent participation in youth organisation(s) or in (other) voluntary civic organisation(s) (f.e. Greenpeace)

Unimportant Rather unimportant Rather important Very important Can't say

16. Being active at work, starting new projects and taking a leadership role

Unimportant Rather unimportant Rather important Very important Can't say

17. Artistic expression of oneself (f.e. singing, playing an instrument, writing short stories)

Unimportant Rather unimportant Rather important Very important Can't say

Below is a list of skills and personal characteristics. Please indicate your level for each of the personal characteristic or skills, compared to other people in general. Is it:

18. Please think of the foreign language that you know the best. Compared to others, my skill level with this foreign language is ...

- Significant below others Somewhat below others Somewhat above others
 Significantly above others Can't say

19. Compared to others, my level of awareness of skills that are necessary in everyday situations is ...

- Significant below others Somewhat below others Somewhat above others
 Significantly above others Can't say

20. Compared to others, learning new knowledge and new skills that are useful in everyday life is ...

- Significant below others Somewhat below others Somewhat above others
 Significantly above others Can't say

21. Compared to others, my skill level when working together on a project or a task with people who come from another country is...

- Significant below others Somewhat below others Somewhat above others
 Significantly above others Can't say

22. Compared to others, behaving well in various situations, like seeing a doctor or going to a party, is...

- Significant below others Somewhat below others Somewhat above others
 Significantly above others Can't say

23. Compared to others, being easy-going when I am with people from different cultures, is ...

- Significant below others Somewhat below others Somewhat above others
 Significantly above others Can't say

24. Compared to others, my activism in taking part in different voluntary organisations and NGOs such as youth organisations or (other) civic organisations (f.e. Greenpeace), is ...

- Significant below others Somewhat below others Somewhat above others
 Significantly above others Can't say

25. Compared to others, my activism at my job, starting new things and taking a lead within a group, is ...

- Significant below others Somewhat below others Somewhat above others
 Significantly above others Can't say

26. Compared to others, my skills in using art as a means of expressing myself (e.g. painting, making movies, taking pictures...) are ...

- Significant below others Somewhat below others Somewhat above others
 Significantly above others Can't say

Now please think of your willingness to improve the following personal characteristics in the future. How willing are you to improve them?

27. My skills in cooperation and collaboration with people who have a different cultural background

I am not at all willing										I am very much willing		Cannot say
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10			11

28. Behaving appropriately in different situations, like partying with friends or being examined by a medical doctor

I am not at all willing										I am very much willing		Cannot say
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10			11

29. My sense of tolerance towards representatives of other cultures

I am not at all willing										I am very much willing		Cannot say
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10			11

30. My activism at work, starting new projects and taking a leadership role

I am not at all willing										I am very much willing		Cannot say
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10			11

31. Personal artistic expression

(e.g. singing, playing an instrument, writing short stories, ...)

I am not at all willing										I am very much willing		Cannot say
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10			11

32. My skills in another foreign language

I am not at all willing										I am very much willing		Cannot say
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10			11

33. My skills that help me to identify my strengths and weaknesses in everyday situations

I am not at all willing										I am very much willing		Cannot say
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10			11

34. Learning new knowledge and new skills that are useful in everyday life

I am not at all willing										I am very much willing		Cannot say
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10			11

35. My participation in youth organisation(s) or in (other) civic organisation(s) (f.e. Greenpeace)

I am not at all willing										I am very much willing		Cannot say
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10			11

36. Have you finished your studies in formal education system – that is in secondary school, vocational school, university or other school from where you can get a degree or a diploma?

- Yes, I have already obtained the education I wanted to and I do not intend to continue studies in formal educational system [→ Q38]
- No [→ next question]
- Cannot say [→ next question]

37. What is the highest level of formal education you aspire to complete?

- I don't know yet, but I have thought about alternatives
- I don't know, I have not thought about alternatives
- I do not plan to finish primary or secondary education
- Primary education
- General secondary education
- Vocational secondary education
- Post-secondary, but not higher education
- Higher education or research degree
- I have no preference

38. Are you now engaged as an entrepreneur, part-time or full-time?

- Yes [→ Q40]
- No [→ next question]
- Cannot say [→ next question]

39. Do you plan to be an entrepreneur?

- I don't know yet, but I have thought about being an entrepreneur
- I don't know, I have not thought about being an entrepreneur
- Yes, certainly
- Yes, maybe
- Probably not
- Certainly not
- I have no preference

**40. Please think of your future work/career
– at what position do you want to work?**

Examples of work position include manager, specialist, assistant, and worker.
Please check a response to the question even if you are already working and you currently have no intention of changing your job.

- I don't know yet, but I have thought about alternatives
- I don't know, I have not thought about alternatives
- I already work and plan to continue doing the same job
- I want to work in the position of (please specify): ...
- I have no preference
- Does not apply (I cannot work; I do not plan to work)

**41. Please think of your future work/career
– in what field of work do you want to work?**

Examples of fields of work include education, media, manufacturing, agriculture, ICT, recreation. Please check a response to the question even if you already work and currently have no intention of changing your field of work.

- I don't know yet, but I have thought about alternatives
- I don't know, I have not thought about alternatives
- I already work and plan to continue doing the same job.
- I want to work in the field of (please specify): ...
- I have no preference
- Does not apply (I cannot work; I do not plan to work).

Several possibilities for spending one's leisure time are described below. Please think of the previous 12 months and indicate how frequently you have participated in each of the activities during that period.

42. Sports group or a sports club

Organised and supervised sporting activity, individual or team sports, recreational or competition level

- | | | |
|---|---|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Several times a week | <input type="checkbox"/> Once a week | <input type="checkbox"/> 2-3 times a month |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Once in a month | <input type="checkbox"/> 2-3 times in half a year | <input type="checkbox"/> 2-3 times during the last year |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Less frequently | <input type="checkbox"/> Have not participated | |

43. Hobby activity, hobby circle, hobby group, except sports

A hobby group is a supervised group activity where one can learn and/or practise some activity/skill (e.g. playing an instrument, singing, making a movie, painting and crafts, street-dance, ...).

- | | | |
|---|---|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Several times a week | <input type="checkbox"/> Once a week | <input type="checkbox"/> 2-3 times a month |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Once in a month | <input type="checkbox"/> 2-3 times in half a year | <input type="checkbox"/> 2-3 times during the last year |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Less frequently | <input type="checkbox"/> Have not participated | |

44. Activities at a youth centre or a youth club, which are different from participating in sports or learning /practicing some activity

A youth centre is open to all young people and it offers various opportunities for spending leisure time, ranging from playing table games to participation in youth projects

- | | | |
|---|---|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Several times a week | <input type="checkbox"/> Once a week | <input type="checkbox"/> 2-3 times a month |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Once in a month | <input type="checkbox"/> 2-3 times in half a year | <input type="checkbox"/> 2-3 times during the last year |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Less frequently | <input type="checkbox"/> Have not participated | |

45. Youth councils and other youth organisations of youth participation

Youth councils and other organisations of youth participation are structures that are involved in policy processes (e.g. municipal youth council, national youth council) or in management processes (e.g. school student council)

- | | | |
|---|---|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Several times a week | <input type="checkbox"/> Once a week | <input type="checkbox"/> 2-3 times a month |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Once in a month | <input type="checkbox"/> 2-3 times in half a year | <input type="checkbox"/> 2-3 times during the last year |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Less frequently | <input type="checkbox"/> Have not participated | |

46. Youth organisations, excluding youth councils

Youth organisations are organisations that are aimed at providing leisure time opportunities for children and young people. A majority of the members of the organisations are young people, and management of the organisations is done by young people to a considerable extent, and for the good of young people.

- Several times a week
- Once a week
- 2-3 times a month
- Once in a month
- 2-3 times in half a year
- 2-3 times during the last year
- Less frequently
- Have not participated

47. Other organised and/or supervised leisure-time activity taking place outside school, work and family

- Several times a week
- Once a week
- 2-3 times a month
- Once in a month
- 2-3 times in half a year
- 2-3 times during the last year
- Less frequently
- Have not participated

How long is the period that you have been in touch with the organisations, groups mentioned in the previous question? Please give total length of time, even if your relationship to the organisation, group has changed over that period.

48. Sports group or a sports club

- Up to 6 months
- 6 months to 1 year
- 1 year to 3 years
- 3 years to 5 years
- More than 5 years

49. Hobby activity, hobby circle, hobby group, except sports

- Up to 6 months
- 6 months to 1 year
- 1 year to 3 years
- 3 years to 5 years
- More than 5 years

50. Open youth centre, youth centre, youth clubs

- Up to 6 months
- 6 months to 1 year
- 1 year to 3 years
- 3 years to 5 years
- More than 5 years

51. Youth councils and other youth organisations of youth participation

- Up to 6 months
- 6 months to 1 year
- 1 year to 3 years
- 3 years to 5 years
- More than 5 years

52. Other youth organisations, except youth councils

- Up to 6 months
- 6 months to 1 year
- 1 year to 3 years
- 3 years to 5 years
- More than 5 years

53. Other organised and/or supervised leisure-time activity

- Up to 6 months
- 6 months to 1 year
- 1 year to 3 years
- 3 years to 5 years
- More than 5 years

A youth project is an activity for young people, which has a set start and end date, specific goal and fixed budget. It can be organised by young people or by adults, or by both.

54. In the last 12 months, how many times have you participated in an international youth project with participants from abroad, and/or traveling abroad?

(Please enter 0 if have not participated)

... times.

55. In the last 12 months, how many times have you participated in a youth project which took place in the country you live in and where there were no participants from other countries?

(Please enter 0 if have not participated)

... times.

Volunteering means spending one's time and energy for the good of society or people who are not your relatives or members of your household. Volunteers do not get paid in exchange for spending their time and energy. Please respond here, even if you think that much of your activities in connection with youth organisations and/or other leisure time spending activities involve volunteering.

56. In the last 12 months, how many times have you participated in special volunteering events and/or volunteering projects?

(Please enter 0 if have not participated)

... times.

57. Are you currently or have you previously been a board member / leader of a youth organisation and/or a youth council (students', pupils' council)?

If you have been re-elected to the same position several times, please count them separately.

- | | | |
|------------------------------------|-------------------------------------|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> No | <input type="checkbox"/> Once | <input type="checkbox"/> Twice |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 3-5 times | <input type="checkbox"/> 5-10 times | <input type="checkbox"/> More than 10 times |

58. Are you or have you been amongst initiators and/or a member of team of a youth project?

- | | | |
|------------------------------------|-------------------------------------|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> No | <input type="checkbox"/> Once | <input type="checkbox"/> Twice |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 3-5 times | <input type="checkbox"/> 5-10 times | <input type="checkbox"/> More than 10 times |

Youth counselling is aimed at supporting youth who are facing important decisions in their lives (e.g. choosing further education or starting work career) or who are experiencing hardships in their lives (e.g. unemployment, disability). Counselling is offered by youth workers, guidance counsellors, advisors or professional counsellors, but not by family members, friends or other adults in occasional encounters and settings.

In the previous 12 months, have you received counselling on the following themes?

59. Education and/or training

- Yes, I have received counselling
- No, I have not received counselling

60. Work and career

- Yes, I have received counselling
- No, I have not received counselling

61. Youth participation

- Yes, I have received counselling
- No, I have not received counselling

62. Spending leisure time

- Yes, I have received counselling
- No, I have not received counselling

63. Other themes

- Yes, I have received counselling
- No, I have not received counselling

THANK YOU

The main goal of the survey was to learn about how spending leisure-time is related to learning different skills and making important life plans. Results of the survey will be made accessible online and we will notify you when the results are available.

Appendix 2

Results of multinomial regression analysis

The dependent variable: importance of skills for collaborating with people who come from other countries. Distribution of responses

2 Unimportant + rather unimportant	31	11%
3 Rather important	136	47%
4 Very important	120	42%
Total	287	100%

Bivariate model – only participation included.

Model Fitting Information

Model	Model Fitting Criteria	Likelihood Ratio Tests		
		Chi-Square	df	Sig.
Intercept Only	31,325			
Final	18,659	12,667	2	,002

Pseudo R-Square

Cox and Snell	,041
Nagelkerke	,047
McFadden	,021

Parameter Estimates

k9_4_rec(a)		B	Std. Error	Wald	df	Sig.	Exp(B)	95% Confidence Interval for Exp(B)	
								Lower Bound	Upper Bound
2,00	Intercept	-2,773	,595	21,705	1	,000			
	[participation=,00]	1,825	,632	8,345	1	,004	6,200	1,798	21,380
	[participation=1,00]	0(b)	.	.	0	.	.	.	.
3,00	Intercept	-,182	,214	,725	1	,394			
	[participation=,00]	,445	,261	2,910	1	,088	1,560	,936	2,600
	[participation=1,00]	0(b)	.	.	0	.	.	.	.

a The reference category is: 4,00.

b This parameter is set to zero because it is redundant.

Multivariate model – all variables included.

Model Fitting Information

Model	Model Fitting Criteria	Likelihood Ratio Tests		
		Chi-Square	df	Sig.
Intercept Only	544,850			
Final	480,861	63,989	38	,005

Pseudo R-Square

Cox and Snell	,200
Nagelkerke	,234
McFadden	,116

Parameter Estimates

K9_4_rec(a)		B	Std. Error	Wald	df	Sig.	Exp(B)	95% Confidence Interval for Exp(B)	
								Lower Bound	Upper Bound
2,00	Intercept	-4,086	2,685	2,315	1	,128			
	K4	-,220	,184	1,430	1	,232	,803	,560	1,151
	K54	-,215	,240	,805	1	,370	,806	,504	1,290
	K5	,256	,181	1,998	1	,157	1,292	,906	1,842
	[cntry_NA_rec2=5,00]	1,515	1,267	1,429	1	,232	4,548	,380	54,498
	[cntry_NA_rec2=7,00]	2,561	1,154	4,927	1	,026	12,948	1,349	124,248
	[cntry_NA_rec2=9,00]	1,832	1,161	2,491	1	,115	6,249	,642	60,827
	[cntry_NA_rec2=12,00]	0(b)	.	.	0	.	.	.	.
	[participation=,00]	2,090	,840	6,193	1	,013	8,082	1,559	41,909
	[participation=1,00]	0(b)	.	.	0	.	.	.	.
	[K2=1]	-,553	,505	1,200	1	,273	,575	,214	1,547
	[K2=2]	0(b)	.	.	0	.	.	.	.
	[K42_1=0]	,644	,473	1,856	1	,173	1,905	,754	4,813
	[K42_1=1]	0(b)	.	.	0	.	.	.	.
	[K42_2=0]	,056	,517	,012	1	,913	1,058	,384	2,917
	[K42_2=1]	0(b)	.	.	0	.	.	.	.
	[K42_3=0]	1,147	,648	3,134	1	,077	3,150	,884	11,218
	[K42_3=1]	0(b)	.	.	0	.	.	.	.
	[K42_4=0]	-,139	,601	,054	1	,817	,870	,268	2,825
	[K42_4=1]	0(b)	.	.	0	.	.	.	.
	[K42_5=0]	-,154	,677	,052	1	,820	,857	,227	3,232
	[K42_5=1]	0(b)	.	.	0	.	.	.	.
	[K42_6=0]	,119	,503	,056	1	,813	1,126	,420	3,017
	[K42_6=1]	0(b)	.	.	0	.	.	.	.
	[K6_1=0]	,228	,589	,150	1	,699	1,256	,396	3,984
	[K6_1=1]	0(b)	.	.	0	.	.	.	.
	[K6_2=0]	-,475	,935	,258	1	,611	,622	,099	3,888
	[K6_2=1]	0(b)	.	.	0	.	.	.	.
	[K6_3=0]	-,472	,638	,548	1	,459	,624	,179	2,177
	[K6_3=1]	0(b)	.	.	0	.	.	.	.
	[K6_4=0]	-,905	1,023	,782	1	,377	,405	,054	3,006
	[K6_4=1]	0(b)	.	.	0	.	.	.	.
[K6_6=0]	,280	,837	,112	1	,738	1,323	,256	6,829	
[K6_6=1]	0(b)	.	.	0	.	.	.	.
3,00	Intercept	,023	1,450	,000	1	,987			
	K4	,110	,111	,984	1	,321	1,116	,898	1,387
	K54	-,347	,139	6,261	1	,012	,707	,538	,927
	K5	,029	,117	,060	1	,807	1,029	,818	1,295
	[cntry_NA_rec2=5,00]	-,124	,550	,051	1	,822	,883	,301	2,596
	[cntry_NA_rec2=7,00]	,447	,524	,728	1	,394	1,563	,560	4,365
	[cntry_NA_rec2=9,00]	,720	,491	2,149	1	,143	2,054	,785	5,380
	[cntry_NA_rec2=12,00]	0(b)	.	.	0	.	.	.	.
	[participation=,00]	,347	,335	1,079	1	,299	1,415	,735	2,727
	[participation=1,00]	0(b)	.	.	0	.	.	.	.
	[K2=1]	-,285	,307	,864	1	,353	,752	,412	1,372
	[K2=2]	0(b)	.	.	0	.	.	.	.
	[K42_1=0]	,441	,278	2,515	1	,113	1,554	,901	2,680
	[K42_1=1]	0(b)	.	.	0	.	.	.	.
	[K42_2=0]	-,365	,302	1,454	1	,228	,695	,384	1,256

[K42_2=1]	0(b)	.	.	0	.	.	.	.
[K42_3=0]	,180	,321	,314	1	,575	1,197	,639	2,243
[K42_3=1]	0(b)	.	.	0	.	.	.	.
[K42_4=0]	-,111	,346	,103	1	,748	,895	,455	1,762
[K42_4=1]	0(b)	.	.	0	.	.	.	.
[K42_5=0]	-,148	,373	,157	1	,692	,863	,415	1,792
[K42_5=1]	0(b)	.	.	0	.	.	.	.
[K42_6=0]	-,224	,293	,586	1	,444	,799	,450	1,419
[K42_6=1]	0(b)	.	.	0	.	.	.	.
[K6_1=0]	-,335	,360	,867	1	,352	,715	,353	1,449
[K6_1=1]	0(b)	.	.	0	.	.	.	.
[K6_2=0]	,316	,618	,261	1	,609	1,372	,408	4,607
[K6_2=1]	0(b)	.	.	0	.	.	.	.
[K6_3=0]	,044	,391	,012	1	,911	1,045	,485	2,248
[K6_3=1]	0(b)	.	.	0	.	.	.	.
[K6_4=0]	-,932	,585	2,537	1	,111	,394	,125	1,240
[K6_4=1]	0(b)	.	.	0	.	.	.	.
[K6_6=0]	,602	,452	1,774	1	,183	1,826	,753	4,427
[K6_6=1]	0(b)	.	.	0	.	.	.	.

a The reference category is: 4,00.

b This parameter is set to zero because it is redundant.

The dependent variable: skill level in the foreign language that the respondent knows best.

Distribution of responses

2 significantly + somewhat below others'	76	25%
3 somewhat above others'	157	52%
4 significantly above others'	71	23%
Total	304	100%

Bivariate model – only participation included.

Model Fitting Information

Model	Model Fitting Criteria	Likelihood Ratio Tests		
		Chi-Square	df	Sig.
Intercept Only	30,374			
Final	19,823	10,551	2	,005

Pseudo R-Square

Cox and Snell	,034
Nagelkerke	,039
McFadden	,017

Parameter Estimates

	B	Std. Error	Wald	df	Sig.	Exp(B)	95% Confidence Interval for Exp(B)	
							Lower Bound	Upper Bound
k18_1_rec(a)								
2,00	Intercept	-,734	,351	4,368	1	,037		
	[participation=,00]	1,064	,401	7,048	1	,008	2,899	1,321
	[participation=1,00]	0(b)	.	.	0	.	.	.
3,00	Intercept	,770	,242	10,135	1	,001		
	[participation=,00]	,036	,300	,014	1	,905	1,037	,576
	[participation=1,00]	0(b)	.	.	0	.	.	.

a The reference category is: 4,00.

b This parameter is set to zero because it is redundant.

Multivariate model - all variables included.

Model Fitting Information

Model	Model Fitting Criteria	Likelihood Ratio Tests		
	-2 Log Likelihood	Chi-Square	df	Sig.
Intercept Only	578,864			
Final	509,568	69,296	40	,003

Pseudo R-Square

Cox and Snell	,216
Nagelkerke	,248
McFadden	,119

Parameter Estimates

	B	Std. Error	Wald	df	Sig.	Exp(B)	95% Confidence Interval for Exp(B)	
							Lower bound	Upper bound
k18_1_rec(a)								
2,00	Intercept	-1,021	2,168	,222	1	,637		
	K4	-,208	,159	1,714	1	,190	,812	,595 1,109
	K54	-,362	,203	3,162	1	,075	,697	,468 1,038
	K5	,410	,171	5,728	1	,017	1,507	1,077 2,109
	[cntry_NA_rec2=3,00]	2,771	1,238	5,013	1	,025	15,982	1,412 180,856
	[cntry_NA_rec2=5,00]	1,665	,859	3,760	1	,053	5,287	,982 28,465
	[cntry_NA_rec2=7,00]	1,546	,817	3,575	1	,059	4,691	,945 23,289
	[cntry_NA_rec2=9,00]	2,039	,767	7,073	1	,008	7,680	1,710 34,500
	[cntry_NA_rec2=12,00]	0(b)	.	.	0	.	.	.
	[participation=.00]	1,119	,549	4,153	1	,042	3,061	1,044 8,975
	[participation=1,00]	0(b)	.	.	0	.	.	.
	[K2=1]	,529	,431	1,507	1	,220	1,697	,729 3,948
	[K2=2]	0(b)	.	.	0	.	.	.
	[K42_1=0]	,436	,393	1,231	1	,267	1,547	,716 3,342
	[K42_1=1]	0(b)	.	.	0	.	.	.
	[K42_2=0]	,484	,446	1,177	1	,278	1,622	,677 3,888
	[K42_2=1]	0(b)	.	.	0	.	.	.
	[K42_3=0]	,197	,464	,180	1	,671	1,218	,491 3,024
	[K42_3=1]	0(b)	.	.	0	.	.	.
	[K42_4=0]	-,477	,491	,943	1	,332	,621	,237 1,626
	[K42_4=1]	0(b)	.	.	0	.	.	.
	[K42_5=0]	-,864	,544	2,518	1	,113	,422	,145 1,225
	[K42_5=1]	0(b)	.	.	0	.	.	.
	[K42_6=0]	,451	,427	1,117	1	,291	1,570	,680 3,625
	[K42_6=1]	0(b)	.	.	0	.	.	.
	[K6_1=0]	,324	,531	,373	1	,542	1,383	,489 3,914
	[K6_1=1]	0(b)	.	.	0	.	.	.
	[K6_2=0]	-,181	,937	1,589	1	,207	,307	,049 1,925
	[K6_2=1]	0(b)	.	.	0	.	.	.
	[K6_3=0]	,153	,559	,074	1	,785	1,165	,389 3,486
	[K6_3=1]	0(b)	.	.	0	.	.	.
	[K6_4=0]	-,1494	,844	3,134	1	,077	,225	,043 1,173
	[K6_4=1]	0(b)	.	.	0	.	.	.
	[K6_6=0]	,564	,710	,631	1	,427	1,759	,437 7,078
	[K6_6=1]	0(b)	.	.	0	.	.	.
3,00	Intercept	,785	1,774	,196	1	,658		

K4	-,082	,127	,419	1	,517	,921	,718	1,182
K54	-,226	,154	2,159	1	,142	,798	,590	1,078
K5	,366	,145	6,377	1	,012	1,442	1,085	1,916
[cntry_NA_rec2=3,00]	1,431	1,039	1,897	1	,168	4,181	,546	32,021
[cntry_NA_rec2=5,00]	1,101	,631	3,048	1	,081	3,007	,874	10,349
[cntry_NA_rec2=7,00]	1,173	,605	3,757	1	,053	3,232	,987	10,582
[cntry_NA_rec2=9,00]	,606	,584	1,076	1	,300	1,834	,583	5,765
[cntry_NA_rec2=12,00]	0(b)	.	.	0	.	.	.	.
[participation=,00]	-,333	,387	,739	1	,390	,717	,336	1,531
[participation=1,00]	0(b)	.	.	0	.	.	.	.
[K2=1]	,612	,351	3,040	1	,081	1,843	,927	3,666
[K2=2]	0(b)	.	.	0	.	.	.	.
[K42_1=0]	,204	,320	,405	1	,525	1,226	,655	2,296
[K42_1=1]	0(b)	.	.	0	.	.	.	.
[K42_2=0]	-,219	,351	,390	1	,532	,803	,403	1,599
[K42_2=1]	0(b)	.	.	0	.	.	.	.
[K42_3=0]	,317	,385	,678	1	,410	1,374	,645	2,924
[K42_3=1]	0(b)	.	.	0	.	.	.	.
[K42_4=0]	-,106	,422	,063	1	,802	,900	,394	2,055
[K42_4=1]	0(b)	.	.	0	.	.	.	.
[K42_5=0]	-,198	,447	,195	1	,658	,821	,342	1,972
[K42_5=1]	0(b)	.	.	0	.	.	.	.
[K42_6=0]	,184	,339	,295	1	,587	1,202	,618	2,338
[K42_6=1]	0(b)	.	.	0	.	.	.	.
[K6_1=0]	,349	,431	,655	1	,418	1,418	,609	3,302
[K6_1=1]	0(b)	.	.	0	.	.	.	.
[K6_2=0]	-,828	,811	1,044	1	,307	,437	,089	2,139
[K6_2=1]	0(b)	.	.	0	.	.	.	.
[K6_3=0]	,029	,447	,004	1	,948	1,030	,429	2,471
[K6_3=1]	0(b)	.	.	0	.	.	.	.
[K6_4=0]	-,454	,779	,340	1	,560	,635	,138	2,925
[K6_4=1]	0(b)	.	.	0	.	.	.	.
[K6_6=0]	-,551	,520	1,125	1	,289	,576	,208	1,596
[K6_6=1]	0(b)	.	.	0	.	.	.	.

a The reference category is: 4,00.

b This parameter is set to zero because it is redundant.

Appendix 3

Responses to the questions on education and work plans

K37 What is the highest level of formal education you aspire to complete?

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	1 I don't know yet, but I have thought about alternatives	38	11,7	15,8	15,8
	2 I don't know, I have not thought about alternatives	5	1,5	2,1	17,9
	4 Primary education	1	,3	,4	18,3
	5 General secondary education	6	1,9	2,5	20,8
	6 Vocational secondary education	7	2,2	2,9	23,8
	7 Post-secondary, but not higher education	9	2,8	3,8	27,5
	8 Higher education or research degree	170	52,5	70,8	98,3
	9 I have no preference	4	1,2	1,7	100,0
	Total	240	74,1	100,0	
Missing	System	84	25,9		
Total		324	100,0		

K39 Do you plan to be an entrepreneur?

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	1 I don't know yet, but I have thought about being an entrepreneur	76	23,5	27,8	27,8
	2 I don't know, I have not thought about being an entrepreneur	34	10,5	12,5	40,3
	3 Yes, certainly	21	6,5	7,7	48,0
	4 Yes, maybe	45	13,9	16,5	64,5
	5 Probably not	59	18,2	21,6	86,1
	6 Certainly not	22	6,8	8,1	94,1
	7 I have no preference	16	4,9	5,9	100,0
	Total	273	84,3	100,0	
Missing	System	51	15,7		
Total		324	100,0		

K40 Please think of your future work/career - at what position do you want to work? Examples of work position include manager, specialist, assistant, and worker.

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	1 I don't know yet, but I have thought about alternatives	135	41,7	61,9	61,9
	2 I don't know, I have not thought about alternatives	23	7,1	10,6	72,5
	3 I already work and plan to continue doing the same job	47	14,5	21,6	94,0
	5 I have no preference	12	3,7	5,5	99,5
	6 Does not apply (I cannot work; I do not plan to work)	1	,3	,5	100,0
	Total	218	67,3	100,0	
Missing	System	106	32,7		
Total		324	100,0		

K41 Please think of your future work/career - in what field of work do you want to work? Examples of fields of work include education, media, manufacturing, agriculture, ICT, recreation.

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	1 I don't know yet, but I have thought about alternatives	100	30,9	57,5	57,5
	2 I don't know, I have not thought about alternatives	14	4,3	8,0	65,5
	3 I already work and plan to continue doing the same job	52	16,0	29,9	95,4
	5 I have no preference	7	2,2	4,0	99,4
	6 Does not apply (I cannot work; I do not plan to work)	1	,3	,6	100,0
	Total	174	53,7	100,0	
Missing	System	150	46,3		
Total		324	100,0		

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Youth in Action – RAY

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