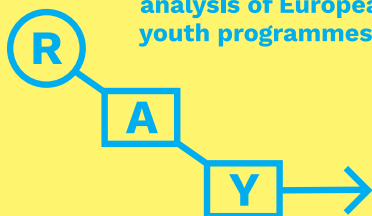


Research-based  
analysis of European  
youth programmes



Written by  
Doris Bammer  
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Cara Lee Roth

# Research Report

**RAY-  
CAP**

**2015  
2018**

Competence  
development  
and capacity  
building of  
youth workers  
and youth  
leaders

Transnational  
Analysis  
Modules (A),  
(B) and (C)



Erasmus+ Youth in Action is part of the Erasmus+ Programme of the European Union in support of European youth projects. The research project on Competence Development and Capacity Building in Erasmus+ Youth in Action (RAY-CAP) was conducted in the framework of Research-based Analysis of Erasmus+ Youth in Action (RAY) by 17\* partners of the RAY Network, which includes the National Agencies of Erasmus+ Youth in Action and their research partners.

This study contains the transnational analysis of the results from more than 600 interviews conducted in 16\*\* of the 17 RAY-CAP partner countries between November 2015 and November 2018 with participants and organisations involved in Erasmus+ Youth in Action projects aimed at competence development and capacity building.

The study was designed and implemented by the Institute of Educational Science at the University of Innsbruck and the Generation and Educational Science Institute in Austria in cooperation with all RAY-CAP partners and with technical support by Youth Policy Labs. It was funded within the Transnational Cooperation Activities (TCA) of Erasmus+ Youth in Action.

\* Austria, Belgium (Flemish-speaking community), Czechia, Estonia, Finland, France, Germany, Hungary, Ireland, Italy, Latvia, Lithuania, Poland, Portugal\*\*\*, Romania, Slovenia and Turkey.

\*\* Austria, Belgium (Flemish-speaking community), Czechia, Estonia, Finland, France, Germany, Hungary, Ireland, Italy, Latvia, Poland, Portugal\*\*\*, Romania, Slovenia and Turkey.

\*\*\* Portugal joined the research project for its third module (C) on systemic effects.



Where available, national research reports can be requested from the respective National Agencies and their research partners



[www.researchyouth.net/network](http://www.researchyouth.net/network)

Further RAY publications can be retrieved from



[www.researchyouth.net](http://www.researchyouth.net)



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Design by Mursal Nasr  
and Paula Klattenhoff



# Research Report



Competence  
development and  
capacity building  
of youth workers and  
youth leaders

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Transnational Analysis  
Modules (A), (B) and (C)

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# ABBREVIATIONS AND DEFINITIONS

## ABBREVIATIONS

<b>E+</b>	European Union Programme Erasmus+ (2014–2020)
<b>E+/YiA</b>	Erasmus+ Youth in Action (2014–2020) – the youth strand within Erasmus+
<b>EU</b>	European Union
<b>FE</b>	Formal education
<b>FL</b>	Formal learning
<b>NA</b>	National Agency
<b>NFE</b>	Non-formal education
<b>NFL</b>	Non-formal learning
<b>ICL</b>	Intercultural learning
<b>PL</b>	Project leaders/members of project teams: Youth workers, youth leaders, trainers or other actors who prepared and implemented YiA projects for/with young people or youth workers/leaders, at least in an education/socio-pedagogic function, but frequently also with an organisational function; normally, in particular in the case of projects with participants from two or more different countries, these projects are prepared and implemented by project teams with two or more project leaders.
<b>PP</b>	Project participants: Youth workers, youth leaders, teachers or other actors who attended projects/training/activity within E+/YiA for/with youth workers/leaders, at least in an education/socio-pedagogic function, but frequently also with an organisational function.
<b>RAY</b>	Research-based Analysis of Erasmus+ Youth in Action. The RAY Network consists of the Youth in Action National Agencies and their research partners involved in the RAY project.
<b>YiA</b>	European Union Programme ‘Youth in Action’ (2007–2013) – the predecessor of Erasmus+
<b>YPFO</b>	Young people with fewer opportunities
<b>YPSN</b>	Young people with special needs

## ACTIVITY TYPES

<b>CP</b>	Capacity building in the field of youth (Key Action 2)
<b>EVS</b>	European Voluntary Service (Key Action 1). As of 2018, this format is covered by a new European youth programme, the European Solidarity Corps.
<b>SD</b>	Structured Dialogue – meetings between young people and decision-makers in the field of youth (Key Action 3). As of 2019, this format is called Youth Dialogue.
<b>SP</b>	Strategic Partnerships (Key Action 2)
<b>TCA</b>	Transnational Cooperation Activities
<b>YE</b>	Youth Exchanges (Key Action 1)
<b>YWM</b>	Mobility of youth workers (Key Action 1)



## DEFINITIONS

<b>Activity start/end</b>	The dates when, within a funded project, the core activity starts/ends, for example a youth worker mobility (when youth workers from different countries meet in one country), a seminar, a training course, etc.
<b>Project start/end</b>	The dates when a funded project starts/ends; the duration of a project is normally much longer than that of the core activity (see activity start/end) – the project also includes the preparation of and the follow-up to the core activity.
<b>Residence/home country</b>	Country of residence at the beginning of the project (the country of the partner organisation who the participant was part of)
<b>Funding country</b>	Country in which a project was funded through the respective National Agency of E+/YiA
<b>Venue country</b>	Country in which one or more core activities within a project – in particular meetings of young people or of youth workers/leaders (in most cases from different countries of origin) – took place; also referred to as ‘hosting country’
<b>Hosting country</b>	Country in which one or more core activities within a project – in particular meetings of young people or of youth workers/leaders (in most cases from different countries of origin) – took place; also referred to as ‘venue country’
<b>Sending</b>	This refers to PP or PL who came from a ‘sending’ partner, i.e., they went to another country for their project.
<b>Hosting</b>	This refers to PP or PL who came from a ‘hosting’ partner, i.e., they were involved in a project taking place in their country of residence.

## KEY COMPETENCES FOR LIFELONG LEARNING \*

<b>KC1</b>	Communication in the mother tongue	<b>KC7</b>	Sense of initiative and entrepreneurship
<b>KC2</b>	Communication in foreign languages	<b>KC7a</b>	Sense of initiative
<b>KC3</b>	Mathematical competence and basic competences in science and technology	<b>KC7b</b>	Sense of entrepreneurship
<b>KC3a</b>	Mathematical competence	<b>KC8</b>	Cultural awareness and expression
<b>KC3b</b>	Basic competences in science and technology	<b>ML</b>	Media literacy
<b>KC4</b>	Digital competence		
<b>KC5</b>	Learning competence (learning to learn)		
<b>KC6</b>	Social and civic competences		
<b>KC6a</b>	Interpersonal and social competence		
<b>KC6b</b>	Intercultural competence		
<b>KC6c</b>	Civic competence		

\* Note that the key competences were revised in 2018. These are the ‘old’ key competences, as these were valid for the duration of this research project.

# COUNTRIES AND RESEARCH PROJECTS

## COUNTRIES

<b>E+/YiA Programme countries</b>	These are EU member states, EEA countries and EU candidate/accession countries (for country codes/abbreviations see Table 2 in the RAY-MON Data Report).
<b>E+/YiA Partner countries</b>	These are countries from Southeast Europe, countries from Eastern Europe and the Caucasus region as well as Mediterranean countries (for country codes/abbreviations see Table 3 in the RAY-MON Data Report).
<b>RAY countries</b>	RAY Network members participating in the RAY-MON surveys as funding countries (Austria, Belgium, Croatia, Cyprus, Czechia, Denmark, Estonia, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Hungary, Iceland, Ireland, Italy, Latvia, Liechtenstein, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Malta, Netherlands, North Macedonia, Norway, Poland, Portugal, Romania, Serbia, Slovakia, Slovenia, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland, Turkey, United Kingdom).

## RAY RESEARCH PROJECTS

<b>RAY-CAP</b>	A research project on competence development and capacity building of youth workers and youth leaders involved in training and support activities in Erasmus+ Youth in Action. 17 RAY Network members have been involved in this project.
<b>RAY-INNO</b>	A research project on the impact, role and potential of strategic partnerships in Erasmus+ Youth in Action (a format under Key Action 2) as instruments to foster innovation and exchange of good practices in the youth sector and related fields. 16 RAY Network members are involved in this project.
<b>RAY-LEARN</b>	A research project on strategies and practices for organisational development and learning of organisations and networks in the European youth sector. 15 RAY Network members are involved in this project.
<b>RAY-LTE</b>	A research project on the long-term effects of Erasmus+ Youth in Action on participation and citizenship of young people and youth leaders. 10 RAY Network members have been involved in this project.
<b>RAY-MON</b>	Research-based analysis and monitoring of Erasmus+ Youth in Action contributes to the monitoring and development of Erasmus+ Youth in Action and the quality of projects supported by it. This research strand is a joint core activity of all RAY Network members.
<b>RAY-PART</b>	A research project on approaches to participation and citizenship education and learning in the European youth programmes, and the competences necessary to implement such educational approaches. 9 RAY Network members are involved in this project.
<b>RAY-SOC</b>	Research-based analysis and monitoring of the European Solidarity Corps contributes to the monitoring and development of the European Solidarity Corps and the quality of projects supported by it. This research strand is a joint core activity of all RAY Network members.

# SUMMARY & RECOMMENDATIONS

## 1 — INTRODUCTION

This study was implemented as part of the research project on competence development and capacity building in Erasmus+ Youth in Action (RAY-CAP research project) and in the framework of the project ‘Research-based Analysis of Erasmus+ Youth in Action’ (RAY) by the Institute of Educational Science at the University of Innsbruck and the Generation and Educational Science Institute in Austria in cooperation with the RAY-CAP partners and in particular the members of the RAY-CAP working group .

This report is a summary of the research project, module (A) on competence development, module (B) on competence transfer into practice and module (C) on systemic effects and organisational development. It aims to explore processes, effects and impact of training activities for youth workers and youth leaders in Erasmus+ Youth in Action (E+/YiA). The objective is to gain a better understanding of the systemic impact of training activities within E+/YiA. Furthermore, the study aims to contribute to the quality development and strategic planning of Transnational Cooperation Activities (TCA) within E+/YiA.

### 1.1 Research implementation

For modules (A) and (B), project participants, who attended a YWM-activity or a TCA-activity within E+/YiA, were interviewed by national researchers. Overall, three interviews were conducted with each interviewee between November 2015 and November 2017: one before the activity (interview 1) to analyse expectations and motivations, the second one two months after the activity (interview 2) to explore initial effects and processes of changes after the activity, and the third one twelve months after the activity (interview 3) to explore the transfer of learning outcomes into youth work practice.

For module (C), between 10 and 15 qualitative face-to-face interviews were conducted and an-

alysed in national synthesis reports from each researcher of the RAY-CAP partners in national languages with key staff members of organisations, platforms and networks working in E+/YiA. These selected key staff members are either involved in international training and support activities for youth workers and youth leaders funded through E+/YiA and/or implement own E+/YiA projects with a focus on competence development and capacity building.

This report is based on 405 interviews with participants of Erasmus+ Youth in Action activities aimed at competence development and capacity building and 200 interviews with key actors in organisations, platforms and networks active in E+/YiA.

### 1.2 In a nutshell

Our conclusions and summaries demonstrate the many positive outcomes of competence development and capacity building activities in Erasmus+ Youth in Action. At the same time, a number of suggestions for considerations have emerged from our research to further improve competence development and capacity building activities.

### 1.3 Acknowledgements

The authors would like to wholeheartedly thank all interviewees as well as the 17 research and project partners involved in RAY-CAP, and the working group of the project – without you this report would not exist.

## 2 — EXPECTATIONS AND MOTIVATION TO ATTEND AN ACTIVITY

### Expectations including Motivation

Module (A): competence development | Module (B): transfer into practice

### Personal Experiences

#### **Personal Development**

##### Module (A)

- Gain inspiration and motivation for the own work
- Gain self-confidence in the quality of own work
- Dealing with emotions and communication

#### **Decision processes / motivation**

##### Module (A)

- Initiatives of attending a training / activity come almost from individuals
- Vague expectations for the attended training / activity in order to be positively surprised from the outcomes and avoid disappointments
- Topic-related decisions to strengthen expert knowledge; start international youth projects; improve NFL approach and training / activity practice

#### **New experiences / learning opportunities**

##### Module (A)

- Interests in intercultural learning; learning in a different country and learning from others' experience
- Broadening personal horizons; learning to think differently
- Exchange good and bad practices
- Meet people with similar values ('sense of community')
- Build networks and partnerships

#### **Professional development**

##### Module (A)

- Acquire knowledge for international youth projects and youth work
- Obtain information for the E+/YiA programme
- Acquire specialised knowledge (i.e. inclusion of YPFO/YPSN, efficient communication, enhance the quality in youth work)
- Increase language skills
- Gain digital competence
- Increase career perspectives

##### Module (B)

- Dominates expectations/motivations and may influence the perceived training outcomes

## Expectations

Module (A): competence development

### Organisational Experiences

#### Expansion of know-how

Module (A)

- Information about the E+/YiA programme
- Applications for international youth projects
- Implementation of international youth projects
- New international practical knowledge (best practice)
- Dissemination activities according to existing structures (i.e. workshops; meetings)

#### Needs analysis

Module (A)

- Almost coherent with personal expectations
- Rarely systematically organised or implemented
- Tools and methods for carrying out trainings

#### Support

Module (A)

- Wide range for participants from financial support, over preparation support, to mental support

#### Decision processes

Module (A)

- Organisations are not always involved (no interest; trust the staff for finding the best decision; without organisational background)
- Topic related (inline with interests and abilities of participants)
- Get inspiration by peers/other European countries/organisations
- Learn new techniques, effective methods, tools for communication and for activating young people
- Raise professional competences

### RECOMMENDATIONS | IDEAS TO CONSIDER

#### **Support potential participants & organisations**

Module (A)

- Provide simple needs analysis to clarify expectations (i.e. guidelines)
- Provide training descriptions in time, including precise requirement
- Provide application forms that enable recruiting processes/matching of peers

#### **Inclusion of participants in preparation**

Module (A)

- Provide possibilities to get in contact with peers and trainers in advance
- Clarify questions and expectations in advance
- Provide opportunities for improving English skills (i.e. vocabulary for youth work)
- Provide background material for preparation

### 3 — INVOLVEMENT IN THE YOUTH FIELD AND INITIAL CHANGES

#### Involvement in the youth field

Module (A): competence development | Module (B): transfer into practice

#### Organisational status

##### Organisations third sector

- Country-specific differences imply a wide range of reported organisations, i.e. associations, foundations/umbrella organisations, cooperatives, mutual benefit organisations

##### Two types of persons

- Those who were an active member of an organisation
- Those who joined an organisation in order to participate in the TCA/YWM

##### Three organisational typologies

- Organisations in the third sector

- Organisations in the public sector
- Individuals

##### Organisations public sector

Country-specific differences imply various organisations, such as:

- Provincial Ministries
- Municipal Government, Youth Section
- Youth work centres
- Youth representative bodies
- Youth services
- Advisory centre
- Youth forum (federation of youth organisations)
- Municipal culture house
- Body close to Federal Ministry of Education
- Schools (High School)
- Education Centre and Evening Art School
- Psychology and Development Centre
- Prison
- National Institute for Culture

#### RECOMMENDATIONS | IDEAS TO CONSIDER

##### Access of participation

- Widen the participation possibilities to make trainings accessible for people without organisational backgrounds

## 4 — CURRENT YOUTH WORK PRACTICE AND CHANGES

### Present (international) youth work: changes/effects

Module (A): competence development | Module (B): transfer into practice

#### (International) Youth projects|activities (I)

##### International youth work

###### Module (B)

- Total changes of the perspective or professional environment for international youth work are rare due to existing positive attitudes/experiences towards working internationally
- Not all participants express interests in international youth work (i.e. working locally)
- Self-perceived changes refer to personal and/or professional development

##### Learning in daily work

###### Module (A)

- Learning from young people and through the exchange with other organisations/youth workers
- Learning through NFL settings and without FL methods
- ICL through people with migration backgrounds

#### (International) Youth projects|activities (II)

##### Planning/Preparation of projects|activities

###### Module (A)

- Difficulties for unexperienced youth workers

###### Module (B)

- Unexpected changes: inclusion of new approaches and/or methods (i.e. inclusion of multiple options for targeting the needs of participants in the project design)

###### Modules (A) & (B)

- Inclusion of the needs and interests of the target group is reinforced in module (B)
- Consolidation of solid and trustful partnerships (clarification of expectations, resources, expertise) is confirmed in module (B)
- Required competences are reconsidered in module (B): active listening/communication skills; digital skills; variety of NFL methods

## (International) Youth projects|activities (III)

### Implementation of projects|activities

#### Module (A)

- Enforce good collaboration with partners through communication procedures
- Foster/collect feedback from participants
- Dissemination of the project/activity through advertisements, collaborations at local/regional level and satisfied participants

#### Module (B)

- Quality improvements (i.e. personal development; needs analysis; new approaches/methods; division of roles)
- Inclusion of disadvantaged young people requires more appropriate communication (i.e. digital youth work)

#### Modules (A) & (B)

- Enlarge recruitment of (disadvantaged) young people (i.e. cross-sectorial collaborations; more/wider communication)
- Ensure collaboration/active participation at early stages with the target groups by using needs analysis and/or pedagogical concepts/methods

## (International) Youth projects|activities (IV)

### Inclusion of (disadvantaged) young people

#### Module (A)

- High motivation to integrate the inclusion approach into daily work
- Gap between requirement and practice (i.e. selection of participants are carried out after grant approval)

#### Module (B)

- Awareness raising on the importance of the inclusion of (disadvantaged) young people in activities/projects
- Personal engagements of youth workers seem necessary to implement inclusion successfully
- Critique refers to a lack of understanding/knowledge about the world of (disadvantaged) young people

#### Modules (A) & (B)

- Different approaches are applied and reconsidered: empowerment (i.e. taking over responsibilities); social media (i.e. Facebook)
- Not every youth worker integrates the inclusion approach into daily business but for the majority inclusion is state of the art



## (International) Youth projects|activities (III)

### Implementation of projects|activities

#### Module (A)

- Enforce good collaboration with partners through communication procedures
- Foster/collect feedback from participants
- Dissemination of the project/activity through advertisements, collaborations at local/regional level and satisfied participants

#### Module (B)

- Quality improvements (i.e. personal development; needs analysis; new approaches/methods; division of roles)
- Inclusion of disadvantaged young people requires more appropriate communication (i.e. digital youth work)

#### Modules (A) & (B)

- Enlarge recruitment of (disadvantaged) young people (i.e. cross-sectorial collaborations; more/wider communication)
- Ensure collaboration/active participation at early stages with the target groups by using needs analysis and/or pedagogical concepts/methods

## (International) Youth projects|activities (IV)

### Inclusion of (disadvantaged) young people

#### Module (A)

- High motivation to integrate the inclusion approach into daily work
- Gap between requirement and practice (i.e. selection of participants are carried out after grant approval)

#### Module (B)

- Awareness raising on the importance of the inclusion of (disadvantaged) young people in activities/projects
- Personal engagements of youth workers seem necessary to implement inclusion successfully
- Critique refers to a lack of understanding/knowledge about the world of (disadvantaged) young people

#### Modules (A) & (B)

- Different approaches are applied and reconsidered: empowerment (i.e. taking over responsibilities); social media (i.e. Facebook)
- Not every youth worker integrates the inclusion approach into daily business but for the majority inclusion is state of the art

## (International) Youth projects|activities (V)

### Networks & partnerships

#### Module (A) & (B) project level

- Estimate to be essential for implementing international youth projects
- Enforce good collaboration with partners through communication processes
- Different kind of partnerships (also outside the EU) and professional/social networks were built and will be utilised in the future (passive now)
- Challenges of reactivating passive networks/partnerships (i.e. a lack of lasting effects of anticipated projects; funding obstacles; contact person change the organisation)

#### Module (A) & (B) political level

- Continuation of projects from already engaged organisations but seldomly instigated by inexperienced ones
- National level seems the starting point

## (International) Youth projects|activities (VI)

### European context

#### Module (B)

- Indicated societal challenges (i.e. refugee crisis, migration and radicalisation) create a turn-around of knowledge: from abstract to experienced one
- European identity is addressed controversially -> further discussions/definitions are requested
- Critique towards a lack of clear democratic manifestation within European policies

#### Modules (A) & (B)

- Positive EU image through E+/YiA but effective measures to protect vulnerable groups are considered to be still absent
- Increased enthusiasm, interests and openness towards European youth cooperations, ideas on Europe, European topics, NFL for (inter-)national youth work through E+/YiA
- Worries about the current political situations in Europe and beyond
- Expansions of views for European issues (i.e. country specific differences in the youth field) and the role of the EU

## RECOMMENDATIONS | IDEAS TO CONSIDER

### (International) Youth projects|activities

#### Module (A)

- Provide special support for inexperienced youth workers during the planning process
- Encourage the active inclusion of young people in the planning and implementation process (not only after the grant approval)
- Foster professionalism in terms of golden standards in project/activity implementation and risk management
- Provide follow-up activities

#### Module (B)

- Reconsider the coherence of processes of the grant approval with respect to the inclusion of (disadvantaged) young people
- Get familiar with the world of (disadvantaged) young people for communication processes and (international) youth projects/activities
- Foster (international) youth projects for inexperienced organisations at political level
- Foster the discourse of European identity with approved concept

## 5 — YOUTH WORK COMPETENCES AND THEIR DEVELOPMENT

### Acquired competences

Module (A): competence development | Module (B): transfer into practice

#### Knowledge (I)

##### E+/YiA programme

###### Modules (A) & (B)

- Understood the opportunities
- Obtained respective information
- Learnt about Structured Dialogue, KA2 applications, Youth Exchanges, EVS project

##### International youth projects

###### Modules (A) & (B)

- Exchanged practical knowledge for applications, preparations and implementation of (international) projects (i.e. team building; crisis management; dealing with ambiguity)
- Improved knowledge about evaluation and dissemination
- Acquired knowledge about fundraising

##### Additional knowledge

###### Modules (B)

- Acquired knowledge about NEET youth, youth work and Youthpass
- Outcomes are perceived as accumulation of knowledge from life, practice and other trainings/activities

#### Knowledge (II)

##### Participation & active citizenship

###### Modules (A)

- Understood the concept through application oriented approach (lack of concept)
- Understood the meaning/practice of democratic values, political participation, human rights
- Need for more solidarity and social change
- In practice democratic citizenship, human rights and solidarity/social change may be considered as a conglomerate

###### Modules (B)

- No changes were indicated but a reinforcement of values (i.e. humanistic values)

##### NFL/NFE approach

###### Modules (A) & (B)

- Understood the concept through application oriented approach (lack of concept)
- Understood inclusion of YPFO/YPSN
- Encouraged to apply/adapt self-experienced participatory, creative and interactive methods for the daily business
- Learnt methods for the own competence development (i.e. evaluation/reflection and learning from others)

##### Intercultural knowledge

###### Modules (A)

- Improved intercultural knowledge through exchange of practical experiences with international/diverse peers
- Increased quality of activities (i.e. avoiding stereotypes, broader view on intercultural dialogue, respective communication, dealing with inclusion, social integration and multiculturalism)

###### Modules (B)

- Focused on the impact on the individual/organisational level

## Skills (I)

### Networks & partnerships

#### Module (A)

- Clarified interests for collaborations
- Organised study visits
- Implemented communication on a regular basis

#### Module (B)

- Ability to deal with conflicts and/or cultural diversity in collaborations
- Applied open and direct communication in foreign language(s)
- Ability to identify and transfer European/international youth work into local youth work reality

#### Modules (A) & (B)

- Ability to create reliable/trustworthy partnerships/teams in intercultural settings

### International youth projects

#### Module (A)

- Learnt through project simulations (wrote applications; organised a youth exchange)
- Acquired skills for team building

#### Module (A) & (B)

- Improved language, communication and presentation skills (one of the success factor of international youth work)
- Acquired skills for the development and implementation of youth projects/activities (i.e. project management)

### Intercultural learning

#### Module (A) & (B)

- Learnt to avoid stereotypes (increased sensitivity in communication skills)
- Learnt to behave sensitively and appropriately and to deal with emotions and conflicts
- Learnt to deal with inclusion, social integration and multiculturalism

## Skills (II)

### Participation & active citizenship

#### Module (A) & (B)

- Existing social and political engagements with strong interests to empower young people
- Acquired skills for team building
- Improved language, communication and presentation skills

#### Module (B)

- Reinforced humanistic values
- New developed competences seem limited

### NFL-approach

#### Module (A) & (B)

- Learnt to use NFL methods (creative, interactive, simulation methods) and encouraged to apply/adapt them for the own activities
- Learnt methods and techniques for the inclusion of YPFO/YPSN and active participation of young people
- Learnt methods for evaluation/reflection and learning from others/peers (perceived highly valuable competence development)
- Remained analogue; marginalised digital skills despite its importance as indicated by several interviewees

## Attitudes/values (I)

### Intercultural learning (ICL)

#### Module (A)

- Created 'sense of community' with peers who shared similar values
- Awareness about required behaviour for ICL (i.e. openness to look at culture, working with diversity and/or integrating socio-political and economic background)

#### Modules (A) & (B)

- Became aware about intercultural identities and country specific different values in youth work
- Increased sensitivity towards prejudices and stereotypes

### Networks & partnerships

#### Module (A)

- Being motivational and inspirational

#### Modules (A) & (B)

- Being open and willing for (future) collaborations
- Developing commitment

### Other improved attitudes/values

#### Modules (A) & (B)

- Openness
- Solidarity
- Tolerance
- Active listening
- Expressing oneself
- Engaged to democratic dialogue
- Critical thinking
- Improved attitude towards NFL
- Awareness raising about subjectivity, diversity and YPFO

## Attitudes/values (II)

### Participation & active citizenship

#### Module (A)

- Awareness raising on social needs and solidarity
- Awareness raising on the freedom of movement as a human right
- Awareness raising on the consideration of equality and social change

#### Module (B)

- More self-perceived developed attitudes/values for participation/active citizenship (i.e. high political engagements, humanistic values, positive effects of the EU on the civil society and young people)

### European values

#### Module (A)

- Raised awareness about different European values through peer learning
- Controversial EU image: absence of effective measures to protect vulnerable groups versus appreciated mobility opportunities for YPFO/YPSN within E+/YiA programme

#### Module (B)

- Increased awareness or commitment towards European values and political approaches in terms of migration and deradicalisation
- Reinforced existing humanistic values in line with European values or created European identity

## Summing up competence development (I)

### Professional development

#### Module (A) & (B)

- Gain new practical knowledge
- Establish networks and/or partnerships
- Competences for project application/implementation
- Newcomers benefit most from experienced youth workers in the training/activity; experienced youth workers through cross-generational learning with younger youth workers

#### Module (B)

- Satisfaction of the training outcomes may correlate with the perceived extension of professional development

### Personal development

#### Module (A) & (B)

- Most satisfying outcome of the training in module (A); slightly reduced in module (B)
- Gain self-awareness, self-knowledge and self-confidence
- Increased empathy
- Dealing with emotions and intercultural learning/identities
- Experienced youth workers indicate confidence, motivation and inspiration for continuing youth work

## Summing up competence development (II)

### Youth work competences

#### Module (A)

- Ability of being empathic is perceived to be one of the basic competences in youth work (i.e. communication skills, active listening, self-confidence, dealing with emotions, conflicts and needs)
- Intercultural learning most satisfying outcome of the training in module (A); reduced in module (B)

#### Module (B)

- Perceived intercultural competences focussed on individual/organisational impact and intercultural learning experiences
- Marginalised developed competences for participation and active citizenship but increased attitudes/values towards active citizenship
- Additional remark: Competences for network and partnership should be integrated in the drafted RAY-CAP framework
- Increased reported changes/effects due to the acquisition of attitudes/values (i.e. awareness raising on the importance of using E+/YiA opportunities and taking over the initiative)
- Long lasting effects of international experiences on developed attitudes/values (i.e. working internationally in the youth field; being a social/youth worker; being motivated for the own work)

#### Modules (A) & (B)

- Digital competences are addressed in the interviews before the activity but marginalised after the activity

## RECOMMENDATIONS | IDEAS TO CONSIDER

### Consider relevant topics for (international) youth work

#### Module (A) & (B)

- Provide learning opportunities in terms of digitalisation
- Provide flexible learning/training settings to identify, discuss and solve new challenges in daily business
- Strengthen political knowledge, engagements and awareness among participants

### Provide approved concepts of (international) youth work

#### Module (A) & (B)

- Integrate concepts for NFL and NFE approach, ICL, participation/active citizenship and international youth work
- Include competence models for working internationally in the youth field
- Consider concepts of ethics and integrity
- Consider concepts and European frameworks in the context of democracy, human rights, solidarity

### Ensure a balanced combination of theory/concepts & practice/methods

#### Module (A)

- Strengthen quality in sources of input and variations of methods
- Provide an appropriate (learner-centred/target-oriented) training in combination of programme and informal settings
- Strengthen competences of trainers to address innovative approaches and concepts (i.e. digitalisation, philosophy, ethics, integrity)

#### Module (B)

- Provide evaluation/reflection processes and/or methods to foster competence development

### Consider network & partnership competences

#### Module (A) & (B)

- Creating reliable and trustworthy partnerships/teams in intercultural settings
- Dealing with conflicts and/or cultural diversity in collaborations
- Foster open and direct communication in foreign language(s)
- Identifying/transferring European/international youth work into local youth work reality

## 6 — TRAINING AND SUPPORT ACTIVITIES

### Training/support activities

Module (A): competence development | Module (B): transfer into practice

#### Effectiveness (I)

##### Training effects

###### Modules (A) & (B)

- Motivational and inspirational for (international) youth work and the own business
- Focus on peer learning (exchange of experiences; learning by doing/workplace learning)
- Professionalisation, particularly in personal and professional development through peer learning (i.e. promote activities, recharge own batteries, ideas for projects, new collaborations/connections)
- Interests from the FE sector
- Intercultural learning through exchange of practices and experiences with international participants/trainers with diverse backgrounds
- Perceived long-lasting effects (i.e. increased communication processes, partnerships/collaborations, personal relationships; contributed to job opportunities)

###### Module (B)

- Turn-around of statements of training/learning outcomes in some cases (most of the time negative ones turned to positive ones)
- No causalities due to multiple/additional influences on the perceived effects (i.e. life, practice, further trainings) -> accumulation of a learning package

#### Effectiveness (II)

##### Unexpected effects

###### Modules (B)

- Variations of the perceived training/learning outcomes, ranging from little impact/less valuable outcomes to high satisfaction/impact
  - Bad practice experienced in the training setting
  - Positive changes of perspectives for Youthpass
- Impact of effects perceived more reduced in some cases than in module (A) (i.e. impact of further/previous trainings/activities; coming back to routine in daily work; lack of cooperations/follow-ups)
- Difficulties to recall respective training/activity or learning



## Effectiveness (III)

### Assumed success

#### Modules (A)

- Well-structured and well-organised
- Almost free of charge

#### Module (A) & (B)

- Well-qualified trainers
- International participants with similar professional backgrounds but with high diversity in terms of nationality and age
- Combination of learner-centred/target-oriented theoretical and practical approach, including sufficient informal settings and field trips
- Concrete outcomes ('products') interrelated with the daily business

### Critical remarks

#### Module (A) & (B)

- Lack of diversification in terms of topics, duration and thematic in-depth knowledge
- Specialists/experienced participants criticise a lack of new knowledge and/or skills as well as relevance for daily business
- Quality of the training/activity setting and/or implemented approach was lacking due to not well-qualified trainers or mismatched peers
- Lack of training information in advance
- Lack of follow-up trainings/activities for deepening learning outcomes, reinforcing networks/partnerships, providing in-depth trainings/activities on specific topics
- Lack of the inclusion of structural problems for challenges in international youth work

## Effectiveness (IV)

### Networks & partnerships

#### Modules (A)

- Met interesting, qualified and professional people
- Established collaborations/networks for specific purpose and interests
- Reinforced established successful partnerships
- Developed ideas for the submission/implementation of international youth projects/activities
- Passive networks are not assessed negatively at all -> reactivation are assumed if needed

#### Module (A) & (B)

- More international youth projects/activities are submitted/implemented than in module (A)
- Evidence that reactivation of passive networks does not seem feasible any time

#### Module (A) & (B)

- Some established collaborations/networks still remain passive (i.e. lose interests, lack of resources) and would need a concrete purpose, a common ground for collaboration, follow-up activities or organisational strategies/plans for implementing projects/activities for being active

## Training approaches/ methods

### Application oriented approach

#### Module (A)

- Learning by doing
- Workplace learning (study visits/field trips)
- Peer learning
- Process oriented approach

#### Module (B)

- Is re-assessed to be a gain

### Role of trainers

#### Module (A)

- Described to be engaged, motivated and carry out several roles (expert, facilitator, mentor/coach)

#### Module (A) & (B)

- Influenced the training atmosphere and learning outcomes

### Learning/training methods

#### Module (A)

- Focus on peer learning and practical approach
- Package method/set of a solid toolbox: field trips, interactive and simulation methods (ice-breakers)
- Not always appropriate for different groups: intensive versus bored

## RECOMMENDATIONS | IDEAS TO CONSIDER

### Strengthen the quality of the training/activity

#### Module (A) & (B)

- Ensure high quality in the implementation of the training/activity (inputs, activities, experts) in relation to the working field
- Consider appropriate matching of participants (similar professional backgrounds, nationalities, age)
- Consider new and innovative methods and formats for trainings/activities (incubators for developing new methods; call for new methods)
- Design in-depth and specialised trainings/activities for experts
- Revisit training of trainers; improve competences of trainers

### Ensure sustainability

#### Module (A) & (B)

- Provide follow-up activities for deepening learning outcomes and peer learning
- Provide follow-up activities for reinforcing networks and partnerships
- Ensure respective circumstances for active networks such as concrete purposes, a common ground for collaboration or organisational strategies/plans for implementing projects/activities

## 7 — TRANSFER OF LEARNING OUTCOMES INTO PRACTICE

### Transfer into practice

Module (A): competence development | Module (B): transfer into practice

#### Individual impact Effects and changes (I)

##### Professional development

###### Module (A)

- Completed a professional gap for (international) youth work (not provided in formal education)
- Applied some practical knowledge and methods in daily work (business-related knowledge; developed new workshops and trainings; daily reflection; NFL methods)
- Expressed interests in further trainings/education (conflict management) or self-learning (reading books)

###### Module (B)

- More frequently addressed than in module (A)
- Strengthened/validated the own expertise in (international) youth work through intercultural learning
- Collected gains in terms of new contacts, (inter-) national networking, partnership building and future collaborations
- Changed perspectives for NFL education and reinforced activities for the application in practice
- Increased participation and engagement for civil society and/or for NEET youth
- Perceived a broader view on minorities, the elimination of stereotypes/prejudices and the integration of refugees/migration
- Applied more effective communication and improved presentations

#### Individual impact Effects and changes (II)

##### Personal development

###### Module (A)

- Changed behaviour with target groups (EVS volunteers; more creativity to support young people)

###### Module (B)

- Less frequently addressed than in module (A)
- Increased social awareness about social problems
- Gained more self-confidence in solving social problems with different methods
- Learned through role-models (i.e. trainers)
- Discovered oneself and the own body

###### Modules (A) & (B)

- Increased professionalism through more self-confidence and certainty and transparency for the own profession
- Developed sense of community encourage own youth work (i.e. direction of thinking, confrontation with the same difficulties, own practice)
- Some contacts with (national) peers remain active (further meetings)

## Individual impact Effects and changes (III)

### Obstacles

#### Module (A) & (B)

- Criticism of the implemented training approach (less outcomes – less impact)
- No chance/opportunity for the application of the outcomes (no resources/time constraints or other priorities; without organisational background; weak involvement in the organisation; little interests/support from colleagues/organisations; restrictions for organisational changes)
- No application of outcomes due to a lack of relevance/innovation for daily business, which may correlate with the motivation of attending the training/activity (i.e. individual ambitions), shaky connections or weak ties in the organisation and a gap between training topic, training approach and daily work

#### Module (B)

- Observed distance to local and regional authorities in the E+/YiA programme
- Complicated evaluation paths for the NFL sector
- Complex/complicated grant regulations required long-term preparation for new projects
- Tensions between professional goals of the formal sector and activities in the field of non-formal education

## Individual impact Effects and changes (IV)

### General conclusions

#### Module (A) & (B)

- Self-perceived impact may correlate with the relevance of the outcomes for the daily work
- International experience/interculturality is one of the main benefits of the training/activity

#### Module (B)

- Turn-around of statements due to unexpected positive effects of applied outcomes
- Self-perceived impact (i.e. developed competences) despite the fact that no learning outcomes have been transferred into practice
- Quality of youth work could be improved (i.e. more flexibility; more international youth projects) -> effected also the organisational level
- Highly supportive individual initiatives for the transfer of training/learning outcomes into practice (many bottom up processes) -> individuals often act as multipliers

## Organisational impact Effects and changes (I)

### Professionalism in (international) youth work

#### Module (A)

- Benefit from the participants' professionalisation (doing their job better; managing limited resources better)
- Enlarge the working areas/fields

#### Module (B)

- Clear evolution for European/international youth work (i.e. new target groups, new professional networks and/or collaborations) -> not only directly related to the attended training/activity (different influences) and sometimes unexpected
- Intensified youth work beyond the youth field (i.e. at schools)
- Specialisation of staff members (i.e. in youth; NEET youth) but in most cases participation in the training/activity was not related to the job or to a long-term strategy of the organisation
- Expressed intentions to revise implemented methods and approaches in terms of the acquired new ones
- Despite of missing effects on daily activities, positive effects are considered on the image of the organisation (i.e. verification of the quality of work through the exchange of experience and practice)

## Organisational impact Effects and changes (II)

### Network & partnership

#### Module (A)

- Specific purpose and interests foster collaborations

#### Module (B)

- Collaborations sometimes refer to existing funding procedures in organisations, more often on short-term projects and concrete activities
- Seldomly, a lack of suitable partners for future collaborations is stressed
- Better/improved network
- Maintaining professional dialogue and/or professional/personal contact via Facebook

#### Modules (A) & (B)

- Mostly collaborations/networks for project activities; less at political or inter-institutional level

### Unexpected effects

#### Module (B)

- Defined priority of international/European youth work within organisations (i.e. board/management set up a European strategy; create a place of coordinator)
- Spreading and attraction of local initiatives through decentralisation of activities as a network

## Organisational impact Effects and changes (III)

### Organisational support

#### Module (A)

- Seems to be not very distinctive but available (i.e. appreciating, motivating and/or helping participants in administrative application matters; treating the participation like a business trip)

#### Module (B)

- Seems to be more extended for the transfer into practice than in module (A) (i.e. provision of infrastructure/equipment, resources like possibilities for the application of outcomes)
- Limited support in small organisations (i.e. one wo/men organisation; interviewee is leader of the organisation) and in case of different priorities of the organisation to the outcomes
- Absence of expected/required support of organisations for the transfer of the learning outcomes into practice may cause frustration/tiredness among some interviewed participants; others initiated their own dissemination activities or did not expect any support (i.e. private/individual initiative)

## Organisational impact Effects and changes (IV)

### Transfer strategies

#### Module (A)

- Knowledge transfer mostly with colleagues
- Submission of international youth projects
- In a few organisations, the outcomes were used to draft a new strategy within the organisation (i.e. increasing communication processes)
- In most cases a lack of strategic approach became evident

#### Module (B)

- Creative methods for the dissemination of the training/learning outcomes (i.e. theatre play)
- Better network, circulation of trainees and more reflecting phases in different activities (i.e. EVS projects)
- Implemented strategies aim to foster organisational development (i.e. decentralisation of activities as a network; promoting youth mobility in different regions)
- Increased recognition of organisations as good practice by the EU

#### Module (A) & (B)

- Dissemination activities concern workshops, trainings, reports, sharing/discussing results in meetings and informal settings
- Lack of systemic strategies within organisations, depending often on the engagements of individuals
- Stand-by mode of some interviewed participants: share training/learning outcomes on demand
- Outcomes are provided via 'open access' to add and use respective outcomes

## Organisational impact Effects and changes (V)

### Obstacles

#### Module (A)

- Less impact for small organisations (not relevant)

#### Module (B)

- Expected effects could not be proceeded due to a lack of sustainability
- Position of participants and size of organisations may have an influence on available resources for attending trainings/activities as well as opportunities for the application of outcomes
- Difficulties to switch between multiple institutions/workplaces
- Structure of the E+/YiA programme for grant regulations (i.e. excluded specific types of organisations; requires personal resources for long processes of submitting/implementing international youth projects)
- In some cases unawareness about changes/effects in organisations (i.e. professional focus does not refer to organisational development; working in big organisations)

#### Module (A) & (B)

- No chance/opportunity for the application of outcomes due to a lack of relevance/innovation for daily business; lack of resources; instable/not consolidated organisations; changed political situation; lack of infrastructure/capacity in the organisation/residence country; lack of relations to organisations

## Organisational impact Effects and changes (VI)

### General conclusions

#### Module (B)

- More differentiated perceived effects/changes than in module (A)
- Limits on the analysed results:
- A substantial share of interviewees does not deliver any responses for/against effects/changes on organisations
- A handful interviewees does not provide further explanations for their assumed lack of changes/effects on organisations
- Some perceived effects/changes are considered to be an accumulation of acquired outcomes from different influences (i.e. study, trainings, practice)
- Defined transfer strategies of learning outcomes into the organisations may contribute the extension of impact and benefits for organisations
- Hindrances in the formal sector for the application/implementation of the NFL approach/methods
- Newly founded organisations may imply greater learning needs than experienced organisations
- Lack of organisational expectations to include respective outcomes into strategic processes

## Effects and changes on the environment

### Actors of the environment

#### Module (A) & (B)

- Social environment (friends; acquaintances)
- Professional environment (i.e. inter-/national (specific) networks; colleagues outside the organisation who are involved in similar topics)
- Cooperations with the national, local and regional environment (i.e. local community partners/professionals; relevant national actors; rural organisations)

### Dissemination activities

#### Module (A) & (B)

- Knowledge/materials from the attended training/activity
- Sharing international experience and practice with other organisations
- Implementing work clubs and workshops with practical activities
- Organising visits to potential employers
- Organising similar trainings
- Attract a wider and external public by defining an outdoor campaign

## Youthpass

### Application

#### Module (A) & (B)

- Benefit especially for inexperienced people with lower formal degree level
- Positive effects for personal recruitment or for the labour market (but this is controversially discussed)

### Critical remarks

#### Module (A) & (B)

- Certificates in the NFL sector
- Doubts about the value of a certificate without quality criteria
- Weak importance at the labour market/potential employers, despite the fact that the recognition of Youthpass may have been increased over time
- Implementation may cause time constraints (complicated; strange wording)

### Summing up

#### Module (A) & (B)

Judgment of Youthpass is controversial

- Unexpected and impressive experience
- Valuable learning instrument/reflection tool for validating acquired knowledge, skills and attitudes
- Certificates are not conformable within the NFL approach
- Limited visibility at the national labour market -> more useful in combination with volunteer work and working experiences abroad (international level)



## Unintended side effects (I)

### Network & partnership

#### Module (A) & (B)

- Loss of potentials: remain passive; loose interests; lack of resources
- ‘Closed’ networks/partnerships
- Established often in self-organised/informal settings
- Lack of appropriate partnership building

### Roles of trainers

#### Module (A)

- Influence the ‘success’ and quality of the training/activity
- Not always well-qualified

### Training approach

#### Module (A) & (B)

- Lack of concepts (i.e. ICL; NFL; youth policy)
- Lack of discussions/definitions of European norms and values
- Lack of innovative methods: ‘package method’ and solid set of toolbox
- Mismatched participants (experienced/repeaters versus newcomers)
- Lack of follow-up activities
- Tensions between formal and non-formal approaches despite (international) youth work implicates an innovative, inspiring and important role within society and across sectors
- Marginalisation of digitalisation and digital skills

#### Module (B)

- Lack of in-depth/specialised knowledge (i.e. prison system; closed institutions) and specialised vocational training settings

## Unintended side effects (II)

### Obstacles

#### Module (A)

- Personality may have an influence on the outcomes, like being shy and reactive/passive

#### Module (B)

- Challenges to recall the respective training outcomes several months after the activity
- Long-term effect of perceived training/learning effects: decreasing after the training/activity
- Variations in terms of appropriate duration of trainings/activities, depending on working circumstances, motivation/interests and experiences

#### Module (A) & (B)

- Time constraints
- Lack of language/English capabilities
- Impact often remains on the individual level
- Shaky connections between organisations/individuals and training/activity topics
- Potential dissatisfaction about the outcomes in case of concrete expectations and from ‘experts’
- Cross-sectorial interests require further financial resources

## RECOMMENDATIONS | IDEAS TO CONSIDER

### Effects and changes on the individual level

#### Module (A) & (B)

- Foster the transfer of training/learning outcomes from individual to the organisational and environmental level
- Provide appropriate resources for dissemination activities by the organisation
- Provide applicable and relevant learning outcomes for daily work and overcome perceived obstacles such as lack of new/innovative knowledge/methods, time constraints and political changes
- Support individuals without an organisational background to share their learning outcomes with an interesting youth work community

#### Module (B)

- Continue and foster opportunities for intercultural learning/international experiences, which may contribute to valuable experiences for future (international) collaborations
- Foster communication processes to improve the quality level in international youth work

### Effects and changes on the organisational level

#### Module (A)

- Provide concrete and relevant learning outcomes ('products') to change daily business and to promote the transfer into the organisational practice
- Support organisations to disseminate the outcomes to their environment/community at local and regional level

#### Module (B)

- Include/invite the leadership for disseminating/implementing the training/learning outcomes
- Provide closer connections to local and regional authorities/communities within the E+/YiA programme through expanded networks

#### Module (A) & (B)

- Support organisations and networks to develop strategic approaches to personal and professional development and to international youth work (i.e. further institutionalisation of organisations through division of roles/working tasks)

### Youthpass

#### Module (A) & (B)

- Reconsider the wording and usability to meet the needs of the target group of unexperienced people with lower formal degree level
- Foster a revision in relation to the NFL approach and the value for certificates without quality criteria
- Promote visibility at the labour market at national level

### Unintended side effects

#### Module (A) & (B)

- Provide more diversifications in trainings, such as duration of the training, in-depth/specialised vocational trainings or follow-ups for reactivating networks/partnerships and deepen the learning outcomes
- Include approved concepts and innovative methods targeting the youth and societal challenges in the training approach
- Focus on an appropriate/balanced matching of participants in terms of professional backgrounds, expertise, age and nationalities
- Provide further support for the preparation of the training/activity if needed (i.e. English language skills)
- Ensure well-qualified trainers
- Reconsider further financial resources in the youth sector to meet increased cross-sectorial interests in NFL

## 8 — FUTURE PERSPECTIVES AND OUTLOOK

### Transfer into practice

Module (A): competence development | Module (B): transfer into practice

### Youth work ambitions & perspectives (I)

#### Ambitions & perspectives

##### Module (A)

- Future perspectives are often linked to the personal situation
- Further plans are mostly influenced by educational/professional backgrounds as well as passion/motivation for youth work
- Training impact is used as decision making aid for future planning (i.e. to take further steps in youth work/initiating new projects; to join or leave youth work).
- Different foresight from short term goals (2-3 years) to several years (i.e. in higher position)

##### Module (B)

- Training impact is used as starting point for specialisation in a certain topic or for the European dimension of youth work

##### Module (A) & (B)

- Ambitious, motivated, inspired and enthusiastic about continuing their own youth work
- Change of a certain aspect of work but not the youth field (i.e. the organisational background; the position from paid to voluntary work; from youth work to refugees or international projects outside Europe)
- Change of personal goals outside youth work (i.e. travelling or counselling)
- Further interests in attending other E+/YiA trainings and workshops in the youth field

### Youth work ambitions & perspectives (II)

#### Professional development & career perspectives

##### Module (A)

- Age is considered as limited factor for future steps in youth work (youth realities require younger youth workers) -> regular cross-generational exchanges and networking possibilities among youth workers would be required
- Foundation of an association or leading training activities

##### Module (B)

- Not every interviewee shows interest in a youth work related career
- Changed career aspirations (i.e. changing organisation; new working field; start studying)
- Unchanged ambitions/career aspirations

##### Module (A) & (B)

- Inspirations for future activities in the youth field
- Increased interests in creating new projects within and outside the youth field
- Stronger focus on the integration of an international perspective in youth work/planning projects
- Increase of career perspectives

## RECOMMENDATIONS | IDEAS TO CONSIDER

### Youth work ambitions & perspectives

#### Module (B)

- Provide access and resources for further trainings in E+/YiA and workshops in the youth field

### Professional development & career perspectives

#### Module (A)

- Provide national training settings similar to the international trainings for reflection, exchange and networking
- Provide trainings/activities for youth workers with a higher age to get in contact with life realities of younger youth workers

## 9 — ORGANISATIONAL EFFECTS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

### Impact of training and support activities on organisations

Module (C): systemic effects at organisational level

#### Impact on organisational development (I)

##### Impact on the organisational level

- E+/YiA contributes to organisational development in indirect and long-term ways.
- E+/YiA influences are different between newly and “older” established organisations
- Overall, more profound effects are perceived at an individual level, effects in organisations are visible and important but remain unstable and often unstructured.
- here is an influence of E+/YiA but the question is under which conditions?
- To bolster organisational development, beneficiaries need to develop long term strategies that facilitate organisational change.

##### Organisational strategies

- Most of interviewed organisations do not have strategies for sustainable effects for organisational development.
- If there is an understanding about the need for strategical management and how to support employee, there are good chances that E+/YiA activities have higher impact on sustainable systemic effects/ organisational development.
- Participations in E+/YiA training/activities are considered to be beneficial but gaps and weaknesses became obvious with respect to supporting participants in the transfer of learning/training outcomes:
  - larger organisations seem to start implementing explicit strategies for the transfer of outcomes but still rely on ad hoc initiation of strategies
  - implicit strategies seem part of the culture of youth organisations. There is an indicated implicit ethos of sharing BUT this cannot ensure the sharing of outcomes.
  - Peer learning needs to be purposeful and relatively systematic rather than entirely informal.

#### Impact on organisational development (II)

##### Increased visibility and recognition

- Increased recognition and acknowledgements of the organisation in the youth sector through implemented activities at local and national level
- Better visibility and recognition of the youth sector and in the youth field through the participation in E+/YiA
- E+/YiA contributed to an increased visibility and positive perception of non-formal education and youth work

##### Professionalism

- E+/YiA is appreciated and used for the professional development of staff members through increased competence development):
  - Innovations and new methods the application of non-formal methods
  - new partnerships and networks and wider network of contacts (partners are seen as “source” of tools and for establishing new projects);
  - best learning ground to develop intercultural knowledge, attitudes and skills (i.e. foreign language);
  - better in project management, preparation and implementation of projects;
  - enhanced the ability of staff (and volunteers) to pass on the benefits directly to young people
  - challenges and “stretches” staff, taking them outside their comfort zones that is beneficial to the organisation and young people

## Impact on organisational development (III)

### (Inter-)National projects

- E+/YiA trainings/activities are external source for organisational change through funding opportunities for youth projects and participation in international trainings.
- These trainings:
  - Allow organisations to expand and create European and global networks
  - Encourage young team members to put their own ideas for new projects forward
  - Strengthen work in organisations through widening relationships and allowing for the acquisition of new knowledge

### Entrepreneurs in the youth sector

- Continued involvement in E+/YiA creates and sustains the motivation of actors to become and establish entrepreneurs in the youth sector and develop European youth work and run such projects
- According to some organisations, their organisation is formed by the training and support activities in the programme Erasmus+: Youth in Action and has turned it into the organisation it is now -> be the most important learning opportunities for these organisations.

## RECOMMENDATIONS | IDEAS TO CONSIDER

- E+/YiA should focus on societal issues and changes in the future.
- The lack of systematic approaches cannot be automatically assessed negatively as there is an indirect and long-term impact of E+/YiA trainings/activities indicated but much more attention is needed on the follow-up of trainings/activities. Need to better develop strategies for organisations to share, disseminate, sustain and build on learning outcomes within the broader context of E+/YiA.

# MAIN FINDINGS OF THE TRANSNATIONAL ANALYSIS OF MODULES (A), (B) AND (C)

## 1 — INTRODUCTORY REMARKS AND STUDY DESIGN LIMITATIONS

### 1.1 Introductory remarks

In this chapter, research relevant conclusions as well as assumptions are discussed based on the results of the transnational analysis focused on module (A) and (B) interviews (2) (two months after the activity) and interviews (3) (twelve months after the activity), contributing to further considerations with respect to the research approach of a longitudinal qualitative study. Findings of module (C) on systemic effects have been woven into the analysis throughout.

The analysed results sometimes indicated/reinforced trends based on the frequency as well as quality of the interview statements. In addition, there are also some remarkable attitudes of interviewees expressed in their interviews or described from national researchers, which are worth mentioning for further analyses, the methodological approach and/or the interpretation of the presented results.

As a result, the summary provides further critical insights and reflections on the transnational results at the meta level and therefore implicates important additional aspects for this evidence-based research on competence development and the transfer into practice.

### 1.2 Consequences and limitations of the study design

One methodological aspect with an impact on the interview results can be concluded from the time period of around twelve months between the end of the activity interview (2) and the conducted interviews (3).

The first important key finding on the meta level refers to the consideration that the time period of twelve months after the activity sometimes seems challenging for several interviewees (3) to

recall concrete outcomes of the attended training/activity in question. Despite being unable to report concrete outcomes, a few interviewees claim that the training had an influence. In most cases perceived effects refer to highlighted/applied 'aspects' of learning outcomes into practice, like acquired knowledge, methods and contacts.

The second key finding on the meta level implies additional influences on the perceived effects as reported from different interviewees, such as previous/further attended trainings/activities, study, life, youth work practice and/or other experiences. Overall, no causalities can be derived from the analysed interview results due to the fact that multiple influences have an impact on the outcomes, such as 'satisfaction' in the current job (i.e. tasks, time resources, career aspirations), change of the organisation or busy professional environment in combination with time constraints as well as a routine in daily work with regard to 'other priorities than the training topic'.

“At the moment when I came, it was very fascinating, but the rhythm of life is so fast (...) three months after the event very positively, then basically get blurry a little due to the fact that one is focused on other things”. (Efs\_TCA1ii3)

In addition, the occupational status (i.e. function and responsibilities) within the organisation may have a further influence on the knowledge about changes and effects on the individual/organisational level. As a result, the assumptions can be drawn that the daily work (workplace learning) and previous experiences may influence the self-perceived learning outcomes.

It has also become evident that the conducted interviews enforced further reflection processes for the interviewees through the initiated retrospective by looking back the last months after the attended training/activity. This kind of reflection processes may have also an impact on the perceived effects and outcomes from the interviewees through the semi-structured interview setting (i.e. interview questions and/or independently researchers' subquestions).

Referring to the longitudinal study, some long-term effects occur across different cases with respect to the transferred/applied outcomes in interviews (3), implying a turn-around of statements (this may not be the case for competence development, see paragraph below). Negative statements turned to more positive ones through the unexpected inclusion of acquired exercises in the activities of the organisation or awareness raising on benefits many months after the activity. Positive statements seldom turned to negative ones in interviews (3). Statements in other cases remain the same or were reinforced in its indicated tendencies from interviews (2).

In the context of competence development between interviews (2) and (3) it seems noteworthy that some outcomes of the transnational analysis of interviews (3) may verify the indicated trends in the interviews (2): negative or positive reported statements for competence development in interviews (2) remain predominantly negative or positive in interviews (3).

Another methodological key aspect for the self-perceived competence development refers to the feedback from different national researchers as well as some interview statements. The division of knowledge, skills and attitudes/values in the interview questions seems challenging for the self-assessment of developed competences. As a result, it can be assumed that this kind of division is more an analytical than an empirical approach.

In other cases, interviewees describe their competence development in the context of being 'fit' for the job, which means having the needed competences of all three aspects (knowing, doing, being). Thus, they avoid differentiations and provide a 'holistic' approach of competences by using the term 'fit for the job'.

A further remarkable impact on the results concerns the attitude of interviewees with high-qualified competence profiles. Some of them perceive questions about acquired competences to be not appropriate in the interview and therefore did not respond these questions. Conversely, other interviewees described their acquired competences most frequently with professional as well as personal development, a observed trend from interviews (2) despite one difference. Professional development seems more frequently addressed than personal development in interviews (3), implicating the following assumptions. First, the daily business and coming back to routine may foster the focus of professional development. Therefore, professional competences are much

more present in the interview statements than personal development twelve months after the activity. Second, the assessment of the training/learning outcomes may correlate with professional development and therefore professional development results are assumed to a greater extent.

With reference to specific competences it becomes evident, for example, that concrete outcomes for intercultural competences are reported in a reduced quality in interviews (3) in comparison to the statements in interviews (2). In interviews (3), intercultural learning/competences are often addressed in the context of effects of the international training experiences on the individual as well as organisational level.

One assumption for this observed gap between interviews (2) and (3) can be attributed to the changed research focus from competence development in interviews (2) to the transfer of the training/learning outcomes into practice in interviews (3). The research approach in interviews (3) emphasises the impact on individuals/organisations after the attended training/activity and is not focused on concrete developed competences. As a result, addressed statements rely quite often on the individual/organisational impact with respect to new contacts, networking, partnership building or peer learning/exchange of experiences and do not address explicitly acquired knowledge, skills and attitudes/values.

Another assumption can also be drawn to the observed trend of a reduced number of interview statements (3) in terms of intercultural learning/competences. In chapter training and support activities a substantial share of interviewees criticise a lack of presented and discussed theoretical concepts for intercultural learning and/or discourse. On the one hand, as a result of this missing theoretical approach, the personal impact of acquired intercultural competences may be limited and therefore reduced results of the third round of interviews twelve months after the activity. Conversely, impact is also focused on the impression of relationships with international peers during the training/activity. This may weaken the level of impression by the majority of interviewees over time, especially when they do not apply any effects from these relationships in their daily business (i.e. missing follow-up meetings). Overall, it can be assumed that the present approach in the international trainings/activities may imply limited long lasting effects with respect to intercultural competences or even interculturality.



Another highly interesting pattern between both interview rounds is that the development of attitudes/values takes time and it is part of the reflection process.

Interviewees address outcomes more easily when the acquired knowledge and/or skills are more immediately visible. On the other hand, changes are harder to make explicit, for example right after the training/activity and this may indicate a difference to the acquisition of knowledge or skills. Competences are slowly growing through experiences and practice, through the analysis of competence development it can be assumed that time and reflection are essential factors.

A further assumption, with regards to perceived changes of attitudes/values in the interviews (2) concerns the training focus. Where attitudes and changes are focused on, discussed and worked on in the training/activity, respective outcomes may be more present and conscious to the (interviewed) participants. For example, as reported in one interview, many attitudes were revised, regarding European identities in particular, by learning and discussing various attitudes of other participants. In contrast, the awareness on changes of attitudes/values do not seem so obvious and transparent when this issue is not addressed in the training/activity. The final assumption from interviews (2) for rare changes in terms of attitudes refers to the participation in similar activities/training in the past. Unfortunately, no evidence based data is available in the interviews (3) to draw further conclusions on this assumption.

## 2 — EXPECTATIONS AND MOTIVATION TO ATTEND AN ACTIVITY

This chapter is focused on personal and organisational expectations and motivations to attend the international training/activity. Referring to the structured protocol<sup>1</sup>, categories are taken into account about reasons for participation (including motivation), needs' analysis, as well as personal and organisational expectations. With respect to personal expectations, analysed themes include expected (practical) knowledge acquisition, building networks and partnerships, exchange of experiences and learning opportunities in addition to personal and professional development. Organisational expectations are analysed in a broader sense encompassing needs' analysis, knowledge transfer and support of the organisation to participants, networks and partnerships. It should be noted that a few interviewees do not have an organisational background, therefore these interviewees could not be included in the transnational analysis of this chapter.

Generally speaking, there is an interrelationship between personal and organisational expectations. Personal ambitions, especially in terms of receiving respective mailings or sharing experiences with colleagues/friends who attended similar trainings before, are often the starting point. On a meta level, the priority of expectations implies personal and professional expectations of competence development (see chapter: personal and professional expectations). In some cases, the personal and organisational expectations are harmonious, such as in the mentioned context of mentoring and community building. Quality in youth work of the national organisation is appreciated and interest in increasing the quality of training practices in youth work is also pointed out.

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<sup>1</sup> See Appendix A for an overview of the structured protocol.



## 2.1 Personal expectations

**“***First, because of its topic, that is youth exchange. Second, I always search for opportunities like this to travel abroad, I have found it a good way of learning: for a very low cost you can go to an international environment, you can share your experiences, you can learn many new tiny things during this one week. And it is easy to build good relationships, to find some partners and, last but not least, the venue is always nice.”*(Ifs\_TCA5uh1)

“The main thing” (Emh\_TCA2ta3): He would not have considered the option of taking part in the EVS if he would not have been there. He learned about that option from another participant who was there and thought this could perfectly combine with – and add value to – the activities of his association– this was “the strongest impulse, I mean, this is not little for a seminar lasting three days” (Emh\_TCA2ta3).

Some of the interviewees sent their applications for participation in the training/activity without specific preliminary considerations due to lack of time for reflections. They report that their curiosity about international learning settings encouraged them to send the applications. Others carried out analytical processes to find an appropriate training/activity by matching the topic with the own working task.

For other interviewees, it is not easy to reconstruct the reasons for this training/activity or if some needs’ analysis was made. Similarly, some interview responses about interests/motivation were vague or non-transparent. There may be several reasons for these assumed unprecise organisational expectations, such as a lack of communication or shaky connections between staff members and their leaderships (see chapter: transfer of learning/training outcomes into practice/short-term effects on practice).

**“I didn’t know what to expect or what we would be doing so it was completely new for me, but it was brilliant”.**

(Dfh\_YWM2ei2)

Two reasons became obvious for interviewees with unclear or no personal expectations. First, newcomers (those attending for the first time) may formulate expectations more on a general basis (i.e. establish contacts, exchange experiences) with more concrete/in-depth expectations intended next time due greater familiarity. Sec-

ond, vague expectations may be used for a specific purpose, such as raising the chances of being positively surprised about the learning outcomes and experiences or avoiding any disappointments as self-protection. Interviewees with concrete expectations (i.e. reasons for excluded people with disabilities in organisations or why the percentage of women within the group of refugees is lower) are not always satisfied after the training/activity because their expectations were not fulfilled. However, many interviewees report that the outcomes or experiences, more often in relation to the well-structured programme/activity or the selection of participants, were far beyond their expectations.

Finally, the fact that the participation is free of charge has a positive impact on the motivation for attending the training/activity. It increases the access possibilities to the training/activity and creates high appreciation of this opportunity among several interviewees.

### 2.1.1 Topic and approach related reasons

Although not all interviewees mention explicit reasons for their decision, most of the time the topic was crucial for their decisions to attend the training/activity (similar statements can be indicated for interviews (3)). However, specific topics are not always articulated for further trainings/activities. Rather a more wait-and-see attitude is present therefore potential attendees wait for a training activity that seems interesting/relevant for daily work (‘supplementary training’). Thus, it is stated several times that the daily hustle and bustle within/outside organisations (i.e. combine (project) work at the organisation, volunteer work, studying and family obligations) made it impossible to follow other training activities. It has to be added at this point, that some interviewees became aware that people who are employed by the organisation have more resources available to go to such trainings/activities. Additionally, the importance of more trainings and knowledge gain are pointed out beyond the working field, such as in the field of education:

**“***I want to participate as much as possible. I want to work in my field, that is, in the field of education, I want to naturally expand my knowledge and deepen it [also] beyond [my field], but this is the main focus”* (Ifh\_KA11is3).

If there are further explanations provided, the reasons imply a perfect matching of professional and/or personal interests or realities.

Addressed topics in interviews (1) covered:

- mediation in intercultural environment;
- migration and inclusion: changes and challenges;
- youth work in rural areas/countryside connected with interests in learning from other experienced participants who already work in this field in order to start E+ projects (EVS) in the local community;
- knowledge acquisition and exchange experiences about peace building in different nations;
- personal and professional interests on theatre and drama (excellent method to work with young people);
- youth participation „(...) to provide a broader view on things in my field“ (Jfs\_TCA9xe1) on general youth work and youth policy topics;
- European experiences and good practices of working with young people and children in closed institutions;
- international youth work: how to use European projects to take socially disadvantaged youth abroad;
- knowledge acquisition of E+ programme and initial experience in international trainings and projects;
- the venue (intercultural interests);
- gain professionalisation in youth work (nothing learned during her studies).

In interviews (3), the following indicated specific topics for further trainings/activities were carried over:

- to contribute to the development of youth policies;
- to explore drama and theatrical methods in non-formal education;
- to apply IT tools in youth work;
- to learn more about (intercultural) communication;
- to deepen professional and personal skills for implementing youth activities/projects.

Another reason for attending the training/activity refers to the intention to implement a similar seminar on this topic. Thus, there is an expectation to potentially gain concrete training techniques and tricks, expand their network, as well as practice foreign languages (English, German, Russian). A similar statement in developing a training about immigration/integration/inclusion issues is presented from statements of personal interests and core ideas from a previous youth exchange. Another motivation is based on the intention to become an expert in the respective topic. Thus, the lecturers and respective topic (i.e. course for

skilled E+ leaders) may play a crucial role in the selection of the training/activity.

The interview statements of experienced participants were analysed with special interest (experts in this respective training/activity topic). Overall, the topic of the training/activity seems relevant for attending the training, even though interviewees are ‘experts’ in this field based on their specialisation in daily business, studies and/or personal interests. The following topics were of particular interest to experienced participants:

- concept of NFL and corresponding methods;
- focus on art in the training;
- music therapy (interest, work, study fields).

The motivation may belong more to strengthening their expert knowledge, sharing experience with other professionals in an international context and implementing further international youth projects. Positively, experienced participants report more often after the training/activity that they were satisfied with the training/activity because of the enriched views from participants from other countries and seldomly in terms of knowledge acquisition (see chapter: training and support activity).

A special emphasis is drawn on the approach of non-formal education/learning in the transnational analysis of the interviews. Interview statements are focused on the relationship between the non-formal and formal approach in education and business. In relevant cases, further motivation to transfer and apply the outcomes to his organisation/country is expressed by the interviewees. Furthermore, non-formal education methods are considered impactful as an interest/motivation particularly as it relates to socially excluded young people at school or active participation of young people in the society and/or in activities.

### 2.1.2 Exchange (international) experiences and learning opportunities

#### a) Interests in intercultural learning

A special motivator and advantage for almost all interviewees is that trainings/activities provide opportunities to share experiences with international professionals and young people from other countries, corresponding with intercultural interests and curiosity (i.e. drumming therapy connected with getting in contact with young people from other countries; active participation of young people in combination of curiosity to hear new points of views and learn from others).

**“***This is a seminar that is on the active participation of young people. This is a topic we hear a lot about, and it's a subject I'm really sceptical and critical. So, I'm curious as to what will happen, what is going to say, as the perception of others, because there are other countries, including Armenia stuff, so I'm curious to see also what it means for them active participation of young people, what it means to them in their country, and that's it. It also has projects around the active participation of young people, and now, suddenly, I am hyper curious to see what will unfold there on this subject then”* (Afs\_KA1rf1).

Experience in a different cultural setting as well as new perspectives of different cultures and challenges may influence intercultural learning in a positive and ‘automatic’ way (“we had a chance to experience Turkey outdoors as well” (Bfs\_KA1zc2)) (see chapter: (international) youth work competences). Nice venue/training settings with interesting participants (i.e. entrepreneurs) and field trips to organisations created motivation in trying to be an entrepreneur oneself. Additionally, some participants may act as role models/testimonials for peers. Thus, a few interviewees who did not articulate concrete expectations were especially satisfied with the training involving the exchange of information between participants (intercultural exchange) and learning from others’ experiences.

The important aspects are “learning in a different country” (Bfs\_KA1zc2), “learning how to think differently” (Bfs\_KA1zc2) and language skills. Basically, a high motivation in learning and improving English language skills are reported for better dissemination of the activities’ outcomes:

**“***I'm curious of the other participants' experiences, in what should be paid attention to after a youth exchange, how it should be concluded. I often see that when we finish an event, the project stops. No more talking about it, there is no marketing, no publicity, and no promotion. Dissemination is missing. So I would like to see how this can be done differently. Because if you put it on the website, on your profile, I'm not sure that everybody can see it, maybe just friends. ... So I hope that there will be many sharing of practices”* (Ifs\_TCA5uh1).

Further expectations of sharing experiences refer to collecting good practices and practical knowledge through learning from other international participants (peer learning) and European

countries/organisations in intercultural learning. Intended effects refer to increasing the cultural dialogue and knowing European culture better such as learning how non-formal education activities are implemented in other countries, identifying the differences in implementation, and using them in the residence country. Furthermore, there is a wish to support the youth parliament in their hometown by seeing/hearing good examples in other countries.

### **b) New experiences/experience-based learning**

Another key aspect in terms of expectations refers to the word new in combination with content relevant for their daily business and work life or for personal development. Interviewees responded with an interest in new inspiration, new experiences, new contacts, new knowledge, new skills, new ways to settle different matters, new partners or new ways of implementing different topics. While content-related issues for daily work concern communication procedures, European handicraft, evaluation of projects and relevant issues of project applications, knowledge about international youth work, international experience, sharing experience, learning more about youth exchange and dissemination, contacts for future cooperation and networks, NEET-youth, reasons for the exclusion of (young people) with disabilities in organisations and/or personal development regarding group dynamic, intensive feelings, and human experiences (see also chapter: knowledge acquisition).

Learning from others’ experiences and sharing good/bad practices in an international learning environment to increase professional development is often addressed (see chapter: applied training approaches and methods):

**“***First the sharing, sharing experiences with others and getting to know about others' experiences is enormously valuable.... Because you can learn about the theories as much as you want or whatever, but the truth is that, if you have gone through it practically then ... sharing it with others. I like then other people also gain something from the event”* (Bfs\_TCA5xe1).

Especially for newcomers, experience with people is mentioned to be the best aspect of the training. It is viewed as very impressive and motivating and contributes to the feeling of working in the right field. Such positive impact on professional development may also occur for experienced par-

ticipants, which is addressed by one interviewee in terms of youth work/project management.<sup>2</sup>

In the cases that these expectations were met after the training/activity, the outcomes are assessed very positively. Responses such as the project gives another opportunity to evolve or coming back with good emotions, good ideas and new knowledge were reported (see chapter: transfer of learning/training outcomes into practice/short term effects on practice). To sum up: “It contributed to me more than I expected, it caused changes in my life” (Ifs\_YWM3rt2).

### c) ‘Sense of community’: To meet people with similar values

A type of trust and security between the participants is noted. It can be observed that the ‘real interests’ are to share practices and personal analysis and to think about present challenges in youth (i.e. to find answers about radicalization). There might be some general expectation to exchange experiences and practices with people with similar interests and values, to meet colleagues from the same working field (i.e. disability and social inclusion or creativity) across Europe or create a sense of community:

“*I have expectations to meet creative people who are willing to share their knowledge*” (Bmh\_YWM1ei1).

This sense of community may encourage exchanging practices regarding difficulties, tools, methods, reflection about one’s own youth work, as well as giving inspiration and motivation through meeting other people from the same working field. For some interviewees, this sense of community applies also outside the training and is expressed by exchanging information with colleagues after the training.

## 2.1.3 Knowledge acquisition

### a) Practical knowledge

The acquisition of practical knowledge through exchange experiences between peers and/or other countries are highly valued and expressed more often in the interviews: “we are not in training to study a book” (Dmh\_TCArf1).

In particular, practical knowledge as it relates to the E+/YiA-programme (running an interna-

tional training/seminar for volunteers, methods of non-formal learning, dealing with diversity, interculturality and logistics aspect, or organising a youth exchange after coming back from the attended training/activity (see chapter: applied training approaches and methods) or know-how about European youth projects, including social inclusion from YPFO/YPSN and finding European partners, is emphasized. The exchange of European/international youth projects proposals (practical knowledge in project writing; learning the details that make a youth project application fundable), the implementation of KA3 (structured dialogue) and methodologies to explore the theme of project evaluation and establishing a network (good/bad practice) seems to play a crucial role in this regard. Furthermore, relevant practical issues are NEET for youth and additional knowledge about different target groups in youth work, know-how for political and social projects/campaigns, as well as for social entrepreneurship. Finally, knowledge about techniques/tools/methods to mobilise potential participants has been addressed.

Thus, the training/activity are expected to be an opportunity for discussions between experts and European youth workers to obtain practical, new know-how and tips on how knowledge can be improved. It seems important to meet new trainers and to have the space and time to acquire new perspectives and think about their own practice. Overall, the expectation is to stay informed/updated about developments in the youth field and raise professionalism.

### b) Conceptual knowledge

“*I managed to develop my management and communication knowledge, I think I am more concise in activities I carry out and I succeed to transfer better the information, also during the training course I noticed my level of adaptability in working with new people whose background is quite different from mine*” (Lfh\_YWM1ro2).

Expressed expectations in the context of learning could be allocated to various, common concepts within the youth field. The follow articulates the clustered, expected learning topics of the interviews with further explanation (if applicable):

#### Non-formal approach

- to learn about the concept of non-formal and global training methods (after the training/activity: The training offered much more than the interviewee had expected);

<sup>2</sup> Something to reconsider: Learning from others seems one dimensional: I learn from someone else’s experience; what about sharing own experiences with others? To share own experiences with others is self-expressed explicitly, while the wording SHARE implies a reciprocal learning process.



- to learn new participative, active learning methods in a non-formal context;
- to learn new methodologies on how to raise peacefulness among young people;
- to learn as much as possible from the best practices examples of the participants in order to influence national policies for the recognition and transfer of learning outcomes achieved in non-formal and informal contexts.

#### Project development and implementation

- to obtain/update knowledge about E+ programme/offers and international youth work (see further explanation below);
- to gain new knowledge about project management;
- to learn how to develop and implement projects;
- to learn methodologies (i.e. evaluate projects) and realise exchanges on projects (i.e. create a network);
- to gain know-how about conflict resolution to coach volunteers (concrete tools and methods are missing in volunteers' organisations);
- to learn organisational and innovative thematic content models (after the training/activity: Expectations are satisfied because good practices (satisfied models) from innovative topics were learned through exchange experience);
- to gain a European mobility experience and be informed about European unemployment; to discuss employment realities;
- to speak English and learn from/with others as much as possible about efficient communication from others' experience (after the training/activity: expectations were met through the exchange of best practices with other professionals in the field of communications and through networking);
- to learn everything useful or necessary to do international youth work (after the training/activity: Expectations were fulfilled and interviewees are satisfied, but one interviewee had to leave the organisation and know-how was lost);
- to inspire colleagues with expertise in simulation games by showing achievements, and receiving inspiration from others to develop some new simulation games during the training/activity.

One expectation dominates the mentioned issues in terms of frequency: To obtain knowledge about E+ programme/offers and international youth work. After the training/activity a lot of new

knowledge about E+ programme/offers and international youth work is acquired. This outcome is perceived as a result of the general training approach and the participants of the training/activity.

#### Inclusion and active participation/citizenship

- to improve know-how in working with youth, receive new ideas of enhancing the quality of working with youth through reflection about one's own work and finally to receive inspiration and motivation to go on;
- to acquire specialised knowledge (i.e. about working with young people/children in closed institutions; social inclusion) through exchange of good practices/European practices;
- to learn methodologies and exchange information with other practitioners working in the field of social inclusion;
- to learn more about people from disadvantaged/special needs groups and how they can be aided;
- how to work with people being disproportionately under-represented;
- to understand the issues of people with hearing deficiencies and how they can be helped;
- to propose alternative activities to young prisoners;
- to continue to enrich work with tools and reflexions about the intercultural public or those with less opportunities (social, economic difficulties);
- to explore the themes of gender, gender-based violence and violence against disabled people in a European context;
- to improve knowledge about drama methods and techniques (independently, if previous knowledge is available or not);
- to acquire theoretical and methodological tools in the context of European citizenship.

Unfortunately, the expectation regarding European citizenship are not delivered after the training/activity as more in-depth knowledge was missing (i.e. to receive details and understand the working of the main EU institutions (Parliament, Commission and European Council)). The challenge seems to address specific content-related expectations accordingly in the training/activity, especially when the discussions were not of personal interest. In comparison to the inclusion of content-related expectations within the training/activity (i.e. emphasis on using social media and new technologies in youth work to reach young people), high satisfaction could be obtained by the participants.

### c) Digital knowledge

Digital issues are treated more or less with little attention in both the interview statements or training/activity. When digital themes are addressed in the interviews, then the expectations refer to social media, simulation games (on Facebook), apps and the potential of digital methods to reach young people. To understand the digital logic better and its role in the life of young people, see the chapter: (international) youth work competences.

### 2.1.4 Building networks & partnerships

**“I went there to get some new information and to get acquaintanceships from all over the Europe”**

(Bfs\_TCA5xe2)

Reported intentions in the creation of (inter-)national network/relationship include:

- finding partners for interesting cooperation (interview (3) results suggest this was satisfied with the training)
- pushing forward the international exchange/project within the organisation
- promoting the organisation/country within the training/activity
- presenting corresponding international experience (see chapter: organisational expectation)
- developing affinities and confident work relations, mostly for the individual.

Special emphasis was given to meeting other people who are involved in similar working fields, are easily approachable, sociable and provide moral and emotional support by sharing similar values. Through these interactions, private networks were formed based on interests for a few interviewed participants. A closer inspection of existing networks and partnerships makes transparent through the interviews that previous positive cooperation encourages participation in future project partnerships. Thus, the expectation is expressed to re-establish previous networks.

Further cooperation in the field of European youth work is requested in counterpart to the current political situation in Europe. Thus, in some interviews potential partners without previous international project experiences are sought for future cooperation (i.e. EVS). Notably, expectations to meet potential partners with specific focus (i.e. partners from Scandinavian countries) did not happen automatically (i.e. scope of activities from

participants differed too much) (see chapter: effectiveness of the training/activity).

### 2.1.5 Personal and professional development

#### a) Personal development

Personal development seems to be a very important expectation for the interviewed participants, which sometimes imply a long-term desire to participate. For example, the professionalism of the Salto activities leads to a high level of motivation for participation. Most of the time, an explicit search is carried out to find appropriate training/activities that could contribute to personal needs and capacity. Furthermore, experts would like to strengthen/deepen their competence area of personal development: to get even more motivation, excitement, and confidence in the own working field.

In addition, being a volunteer in a European/international learning situation is appreciated and provides opportunities for personal competence development. Personal development is addressed in several areas, mainly in dealing with emotions (own/others'), communication processes (to know the best standards in communication to speak in public; language skills), (self-)confidence in being a youth worker, new perspectives and broaden horizons (see chapter: personal development).

#### b) Professional development

Expectations of professional development, such as increasing professional competences, working on the own professional growth or increasing professionalism, are stated in the interviews many times. Professional development predominantly relates to improve capabilities for implementing international youth work (projects) or international exchanges such as:

- developing organisation, management and pedagogical skills (not framed as organisational expectations);
- improving/building (English) language skills or communication skills (i.e. dissemination of the activities' outcomes; non-violent communication; presentation skills);
- updating knowledge of E+ programme and involved networks and entities;
- acquiring skills and knowledge of youth participation/engagement through exchange experiences;
- learning new information on how to help clients more effectively, interactive methods, inclusion of youth in the projects as potential lecturers or youth workers;
- learning professional development in digitalisation (fostered by a few interviewees);

- acquiring detailed knowledge of how to apply, prepare and implement a youth exchange;
- mentoring skills for young people with fewer opportunities or for incoming volunteers such as conflict management or dealing with challenges (i.e. linguistic barriers, discrepancy of expectations, volunteer's homesickness);
- meeting European partners for networking and working together;
- meeting experts for projects (very important for newcomers, who have no experience in international youth work until now);
- being informed about the demands of the labour market.

After the training/activity one interviewee reports that this expectation is partly fulfilled because of good personal relations with some participants. In interviews (3) it becomes evident that expectation/motivation from participants for the attended training/activity are often focused on professional development. In the case these expectations could not be fulfilled, the training/activity is assessed more negatively due to dissatisfactions with the learning/training outcomes (see chapter: training and support activities).

Occasion-related/event-driven situations, such as being in charge of activities, implementing an international summer camp, creating an international opportunity for young people (youth exchange; professional exchange of prison staff members) or submitting a strategic partnership project, may also have an impact on the motivation of attending an international training/activity for international professional development.

Another relevant aspect was the desire to increase their own career perspectives or job opportunities through participation in the training/activity. The training/activity is perceived to be an opportunity to compensate existing competency deficits in youth work (i.e. coping with different/unexpected situations appearing in daily work) or to provide new possibilities for self-development. As a result, high professional performance is expected for intended future professions after the training/activity. One interviewee, for example, who is currently not active in youth work, expects to gain expertise in youth work, expertise in the topic and finally support from trainers:

“(...) As I don't have a youth worker background, I had no idea actually what the youth work is and in that training I acquired skill how to carry out at least practical games – a thing

*that I previously read from books and only tried to implement. But there, these activities are carried out permanently. These methods are used. So this assured that I AM a youth worker and I am doing well as a youth worker” (Efs\_TCA1xe1).*

Further expectations in professional development concern non-formal approaches and methods: to learn methods from non-formal education or to gain ideas and skills in order to combine non-formal and formal education more systematically. These expectations relate to learning how the recognition of learning outcomes achieved in a non-formal or an informal context can be done. More specifically, drama and similar creative activities are perceived to be an excellent non-formal education method and needs to be strengthened.

## 2.2 Organisational expectations

“Our organisation aims to support young people's development in whatever way ... I am also young myself, so [taking part in that training] for broadening my worldview, this training is one possibility. .... /.../... OK, I am the one who really participates and I kind of gain the most ... I get the new experience from it, but others gain too ... could I bring something along from there .... In general, in our organisation participation in trainings is by all means good” (Bfs\_TCA5xe1).

“And then to have the support, according to the nature of the project, have institutional support, a minimum. I think it is important to have ... whether it be local institutions, municipalities or ... here, put them in the loop projects.” (Dmh\_TCArf1).

**„It is in our strategic objectives to develop more European partnerships“**

(Afs\_TCA1ei1).

General speaking, organisational expectations are not always addressed as some interviewees are not aware of them. Some organisations did not define expectations as the idea of attending the training was an individual decision and the organisation was informed afterwards. One interviewee confirms the absence of any expectations of the organisation inviting the National Agencies to inform organisations of the importance of the feedback presented by the operators.

It is noteworthy that organisational expectations rarely become evident for participants who are

volunteers in the organisation. However, a lack of organisational expectations does not automatically refer to a missing transfer of learning outcomes into practice. This depends on the participants' engagement and organisations' interests in providing opportunities and openness to the learning outcomes. One interviewee explains that a plan will be drafted within the organisation to follow the way the competences achieved during this course can be integrated in order to increase the quality of the communication process with the young participants in the activities, especially for EVS (see chapter: effects and changes on the organisational level for more information).

In other cases, expectations of organisations are articulated on a low basis by writing a report on the degree of satisfaction of the training experience. This expectation is focused on the degree of satisfaction but not on the learning outcomes! Another organisational expectation refers to fulfilling the obligatory number of learning courses per year (i.e. according to Czech law).

In the case that the expectations are defined, then the expectations between individuals and organisations are almost consistent (i.e. professional development) and are connected with the usefulness in work (working tasks) or with organisation's activities. This refers to:

- topic-related decisions (i.e. in line with interests and abilities of the interviewee);
- getting inspiration by other youth workers;
- learning new techniques, effective methods and tools of communication for engaging young people;
- raising professional competences (i.e. for mentoring incoming volunteers in a professional way);
- acquiring new (practical) knowledge (i.e. project strategies; solving problems)/all sort of knowledge to stimulate changes;
- obtaining issues in the context of digitalisation;
- receiving knowledge about Youthpass;
- diversifying the range of international projects in youth work and submitting new projects (youth exchange; EVS);
- contact-making, networking, strengthening existing partnership and establishing networks for future cooperation.

It could be assumed that in some interviews, personal expectations become expectations of the organisation to a certain extent, especially when there is a strong identification with the organisation.

After returning, knowledge transfer in the form of expanding company know-how is intended in some organisations (i.e. colleagues; facilitated group) through preparation/organisation of a training course, promoting Europe and European mobility and acquiring appropriate tools/methods to improve this developed training. Several positive effects are reported of this kind of organised training course. For example, they may try hosting EVS in the future. A closer inspection of expanding organizational know-how is concerned with a more active role in youth exchanges, learning from others' experiences of best practices in Europe (how things are done in different European countries), gaining new (international) perspectives, clarify questions about implementing international projects/activities, professionalisation with regard to job duties, writing a report and applying practical tools in daily work.

Notably, the decision for attending the training/activity is rarely related to the organisation and/or organisation's work, but the effects are remarkable after the training/activity. For example, one interviewee mentions interesting career perspectives after returning, such as being the representative for the international umbrella organisation and not just being involved in the national division anymore. Another interviewee explains that an existing cooperation between sending and hosting organisations of the activity could be consolidated (see chapter: organisational expectation).

Finally, country-specific cultural differences towards the expectation of the attended training/activity were addressed in a few interviews. One interviewee concluded that "less developed countries expect less from trainings" (see Gfs\_TCA7xe2).

### 2.2.1 Needs analysis

Interviewees report that they do not know if a needs analysis was conducted or what kind of process was done by the organisation to select their respective training/activity. The needs are mostly set by the employees themselves and supported by the leaders. Despite no real needs analysis performed before the project, the training outcomes contribute to the development of the represented institution rather to the interviewee's own personal and professional development.

Moreover, a needs analysis requires funds and resources which are not provided/evident in each organisation of the interviewed participants. In the cases that needs analysis was carried out, the processes are described as:



- an analysis of the needs concerning the knowledge and skills are carried out in working groups and respective training plans are set for involved people;
- an annual evaluation meeting and planning of activities of the association are organised, and before the activity the director of association meets the participants;
- needs analysis are carried out within the executive board to discuss the aim and timing of the activity as well as what happens after coming back;
- the organisation will implement a strategy for the selection of projects/international initiatives connected with the strategy for the selection of training courses.

Explicit organisational needs are expressed in the interviews for youth work and youth projects. A target-oriented approach is expected in the training/activity concerning the needs of participants. Moreover, realised through an exchange of experiences in EVS projects, there is a search for a new generation of participants:

“Our main goals still remain – sustainable development, consumer awareness – but, as time goes by, we become older, and we have realised that sustainability means we need a new generation to go on. And, it seems, EVS is a good way to attract young people” (Afs\_TCA1uh1).

## 2.3 Organisational approaches to the selection of training/activity

The following sections provide an overview of the organisational decision-making process for the selection of trainings/activities. First, a summation of who is involved in the suggestion process is presented. Then, how the decision is made within the organisation regarding the selection of the training/activity is given. Next, the criteria the decision is based upon is examined. The final section briefly discusses obstacles to attending trainings/activities at the organisational level. Overall, Interviewees from module (C) report similar processes, motivators, and obstacle from modules (A) and (B) in the organisational approach to the selection of trainings/activities.

### 2.3.1 Who makes suggestions?

Organizations are very open to suggestions regarding potential trainings/activities from a variety of actors. Suggestions can come from team members involved in different networks sharing the call for a training/support activity; manage-

ment level; the organisation's board; local network partners; or individuals, inside and outside of organisations (i.e. volunteers). The type of suggesting actor is often influenced by organisational type, as seen in the case of public organisations often receiving suggestions from management, board members and their network. While organisations with a formal management and human resource structure tend to have suggestions emerge from these offices:

“It would depend, normal training and support activities would be in the realm of supervision between the youth worker and their team [leader] depending on the area of work that they're in. Training would be offered out to all members of the team or they'd do it in a staggered way so that it could be available to all members of the team. Sometimes through the HR function the opportunity would go out, that would be more ad hoc.” (IE\_03)

As noted by some interviewees, trainings/activities are initiated upon request in close cooperation with international project partners, local stakeholder, or by one or more experts on behalf of the target groups. Ultimately, organisational support for self-development becomes apparent through the suggestions of training/activities.

### 2.3.2 How is the decision made?

The selection of the training/activities follow two indicated procedures: top-down versus bottom-up.

“A bit all the staff members especially the project managers suggest activities and then together in the group we make the decision whether to carry out a project or not: so we talk a lot among the staff” (ITwaef\_8we)

“Training and support activities are generally in the hands of the human resources managers and me for members, within the organization or in Italy. If we speak instead of the training that has to do with the international aspect, then there I do it with my manager of the international area at the base there is the involvement of the network ...” (IT\_fdrte5d6)

In larger organizations top-down with components of bottom-up mechanisms are implemented in the choosing of trainings/activities. Discussions with team members, management and board members can occur, sometimes informally. Request typically originate from four actor clusters: boss, steering committee (i.e. bodies with the trainers and the regional delegation direc-

torates), chairing committee (decisions are taken collectively), or employee charged. Managers typically identify similar purposes from interview participants from modules A and B by suggesting trainings/activities based on points related „the topic“ or “to be inspired by the methods.” Managers often focus at the individual level, but bear in mind the overall structural objectives of the organization. Through self-reflection/evaluation from employees coupled with formal meetings and career talks, training/activities are suggested. This allows for some inclusion of bottom-up mechanisms whereby individual employees or volunteers can suggest trainings that are supported by experienced staff members.

On the other hand, smaller organizations rely on the combined roles of staff and emphasize the development of individuals. In one small organisation primarily involved in international activity in the European youth work field as a provider rather than participant, suggestions came from network of partners through conversations with the international partners and young people. Overall, in the case of smaller organisations partner networks may have the function of “recommenders” and receivers of information.

Furthermore, the type of activity plays a role in the decision-making process. The decision to attend trainings are decided by the individuals, with consideration of the previously mentioned aspects from modules (A) and (B). The decision to implement training are typically made by leadership while remaining broadly open to both the desires and proposals of volunteers that follows principles of inclusiveness. Projects, on the other hand, are decided by the management/board of an organisation. They are organized collectively, but typically build from previous projects. Further influence factors for projects come from discussions with the NA, balance of national/international financial resources, needs of local governments, experiences of organisations and development plans of youth work and relevant studies or follow inter-/national priorities.

### 2.3.3 What is the decision based upon?

“Our team focuses on three benefits while making decision. The first, which is a must, is social benefit and responding to needs. The second is the contribution of the action to the organisation. And the third is the contribution of the action to individual development. If these three are absent we don’t engage in the action. There may be some exceptions, but the main point is to have this three-pronged contribution” (ese42\_TR).

Similar to modules A and B, interviewees specifically mentioned the choice to attend a training/activity is based upon the desire to gain expertise, further internationalisation, foster projects and cooperation, and the appeal of particular training topics. Gaining expertise is often referenced within module C interviews, however the purpose varies. Well-structured larger institutions are often interested in expanding the skill base of their workers, while smaller organisations with more flexibility seek to reinforce existing skills. Internationalisation is often referenced in regards to the E+ program, where interviewees emphasized the possibility of internationalisation through experience exchange. Furthermore, topic choice remains a highly relevant influence. Personal interest and enthusiasm remain key drivers in the selection process of training/activities. Most referenced other influences include:

- trainer;
- methods;
- target groups;
- time;
- venue (Venue seems particularly important for newcomers just starting their careers as youth workers or within international youth projects.)
- attitude of management toward training/activities;
- size;
- available funding and resources;
- pre-existing networks and actors;
- expected outcomes.

However, the needs of different stakeholders at the organisational level are carefully considered by interviewees in module (C) that varies by organisational type. In public institutions, there is a perceived collective approach where the needs are assessed informally by the top but ultimately selected and decided by team members. In small and medium organisations, focus is placed upon the needs of their staff in terms of personal development and capacity building for further projects. In larger organisations, there is an integrative approach balancing the interest of staff members, needs and priorities of the organisation, and the perspectives of young people and volunteers. The aims of the training/activity are highly diversified among beneficiaries, including:

- increased training resulting in rewards in salary
- Space/time for disseminating expertise
- Time dedicated to the guidance of a young participant
- New partners and projects
- Importance of the topic
- Take inspirations from methods

- Time to “respire”, take distance from activity and think about the evolution

#### 2.3.4 Obstacles

As previously mentioned by interviewees in modules (A) and (B), systematic approaches in the decision-making process are not explicitly stated. Many of the common obstacles mentioned by interviewees in module (C) reflect those mentioned in modules (A) and (B). Common obstacles at the organisational level in making the decision to attend a training/activity include:

- Lack of time resources
- Workload and limited human resources
- Lack of financial resources
- Insufficient capacity
- Visibility and flexibility of training offers
- Lack of knowledge
- Language skills

Interviewees suggested the lack of time was even more influential than the topic for the decisions to attend a training/support activity. This goes hand in hand with full-time staff members having heavy workloads and limited human resources to participate in training/activities or develop project ideas.

The perceived shortage of systematic decision making is further complicated by a lack of sufficient financing. Structurally speaking, several organizations mention their difficulties to project themselves into the long-term and develop a sustainable strategy as financial contribution from public subsidies are shrinking and unpredictable. Project-based subsidies, competition between organizations and precarious wage conditions limit organizations in their support for development and skills upgrading.

In addition, insufficient capacity and a lack of visibility and flexibility possibly prevents organisations from adopting strategies in their decision-making process that limits the professionalisation process. E+/YiA training is differentiated from vocational training and is often marginalized. For some organizations, these trainings do not fall within the scope of training that has relevant content to the professionalisation process. As a result, professionalisation based projects are rather attributed to the Erasmus + Education and Training Agency because these are long-term projects taking into account the organizational deadlines inherent to the training courses and recognized formally as professionalization projects. Finally, a lack of knowledge and limited language skills hinder the decision to attend a training/activity. A lack of knowledge about the E+/YiA pro-

gramme and the weight of the administrative procedures for implementing this programme do not foster the inclusion in professionalisation strategies. As mentioned in the report of modules A and B, the language constraint is a factor of exclusion for a large number of interested participants in English-language training. This language obstacle is particularly present in rural areas, amplified by difficulties in reorganizing daily schedules to accommodate being away for two or three days. On the other hand, this obstacle is totally absent for specialized structures in international mobility projects since each employee speaks English and has a strong mobility capital.

## 2.4 Summary expectations and motivation

### 2.4.1 Personal and professional expectations

It is worth mentioning that most of the interviewees have not articulated concrete expectations in the interviews before the activity, which may in some cases be caused by self-protection strategies to avoid disappointments from the learning outcomes. The most frequently articulated expectations refer to exchanging experiences/good practices, acquiring practical knowledge and building networks and partnership. In the analysed revisited expectations, it is often reported that the outcomes of the training/activity were much higher than expected leading to high motivation and inspiration for continuing their daily work (mostly in the youth field) and enthusiastic feelings among many interviewees.

Another reason for participation is topic related with respect to personal interests, working areas, expertise or/and organisational tasks. Participants expect to gain practical information, application-oriented outcomes and concrete examples of best practice, tools and methods. The main focus concerns professional development. However, personal development, while not explicitly stated, is implied. Personal development is addressed with respect to dealing with emotions, communication processes and (self-)confidence. It can be concluded that personal development can never be too much, and in some cases expectations in the context of personal development could not always be met. Exchange of experiences and learning opportunities are raised in the interviews more frequently in terms of personal expectations. In particular, the expected diversity of participants in an international training/activity seems highly attractive for the interviewed participants and meet the interests for intercultural learning/exchange.

Professional development in international youth work is another key issue within the expressed expectations, encompassing acquired knowledge and skills in digitalisation, language and presentation skills, practical knowledge for project applications and implementation or youth participation, and inclusion of YPFO/YPSN. Apart from that is the expectation to be able to improve career perspectives, the quality in youth work as well as gain new perspectives.

#### **2.4.2 Organisational expectations**

Notably, the expectations between organisations and individuals are aligned. If the attended training is related to project outcomes, organisational expectations are clear/precise. One essential aspect for meeting training needs refers to providing useful material to work, and matching participants and learning concepts to the participants' function/role in the organisation.

It can be assumed that concrete (learning) outcomes increase the satisfaction of the attended trainings as well as agreements for knowledge transfer after coming back (planned/discussed before the meeting). However, there is a lack of systematic needs' analyses. Nevertheless, positive results are expected for the organisations by the interviewees regarding their own developed professionalism as well as the intention to share information after the attending training/activity with colleagues.

#### **2.4.3 Organisational approaches to the selection of training/activity**

From an organisational and systemic effect perspectives, there are a number of interactive factors often mentioned in modules (A) and (B) that were taken into consideration for the suggestion and selection of the training/activity. First, the cost, benefit quality of the training, and the attitude of the management (EE) are crucial factors for the decision of attending trainings/activities. Overall, the needs of different stakeholders may play an important role for the selection of trainings/activities, such as needs of teams, the organisations and the wider network/target. Seldomly are individual needs only taken into account. Second, the decision is never an individual one and consultation occurs throughout the process. The process involved formalised procedures in the development of proposals made by key actors and staff members, furthered by discussion of teams and supervisors and ends with a decision from board or executive officers. The entire decision process is also influenced by the activity (training versus projects) and organisational structure and size: smaller organisations tend towards participatory

mechanisms and a bottom-up process, while bigger organisations adopt formal mechanisms and top-down mechanisms. In order to potentially improve results, it should be kept in mind that precise and better descriptions of the training/support activity in the call are considered to be important for the selection process (i.e. central subject, goals and/or applied methods).

## 3 — INVOLVEMENT IN THE YOUTH FIELD

### Introduction

This chapter summarises the involvement of interviewees in the youth field. It provides an overview about the professional positions and organisational contexts of interviewees, and suggests typologies for both the professional and organisational background of participants of training and support activities.

### 3.1 Organisational background

The vast majority of interviewees were actively involved in a youth organisation, institution or network at the time of the training/support activity they attended. A small number of interviewees attended their training/support activity with support from an organisation they were relatively loosely associated with. Generally, this was due to a lack of possibilities to join non-formal education activities (e.g. teachers) or due to the transitional nature of their engagement in the youth sector (e.g. students).

The organisational background of interviewees reflects the diversity of youth work in Europe and implies country-specific differences of organisations. The implied country-specific differences of organisations in the youth field should be kept in mind when clustering the interviewees' backgrounds broadly into the following types of sectors:

- (1) Organisations in the public sector
- (2) Organisations in the third sector
- (3) Individuals in the third sector

#### (1) Organisations in the public sector

The interview sample contains a wide variety of public sector organisations at municipal/local level, provincial/regional level, and federal/national level:

#### Directly in the youth field

- Provincial Ministries
  - Provincial Directorate of Family and Social Policy
  - Provincial Directorate of Ministry of Education
  - Provincial Directorate of Youth, Sport and Social Inclusion
- Municipal Government, Youth Section
- Youth (work) centres
- Youth representative bodies

- Family day care centres
- Youth services
- Advisory centre
- Youth forum (federation of youth organisations)

#### Related to the youth field

- Body close to Federal Ministry of Education
- Schools (Primary School, High School)
- Education Centre and Evening Art School
- University
- Psychology and Development Centre
- Prison
- Chamber of labour/commerce
- Company
- National Institute for Culture
- Municipal culture house

#### (2) Organisations in the third sector

The interview sample contains a smaller number of civil society organisations, which also showcase a smaller variety of organisational typologies. No immediate conclusions can be drawn from this distribution since the interview sample was not designed to be representative. The question whether public sector organisations in the youth field (can) pay more attention to the professional development of their staff, compared to civil society organisations, is an interesting aspect that should be explored through monitoring data and qualitative research projects in the RAY network.

In the interview sample of RAY-CAP, the following third sector organisations can be identified:

- Associations
- Foundations/umbrella organisations
- Cooperatives
- Mutual benefit organisations

#### (3) Individuals in the third sector

The interview sample contains a small number of individuals who, while active in the youth field, have little or no active connection to an organisation. They only sought organisational support to attend the training/support activity they were interested in.

These are either individuals who have a connection to the youth field, but no organisation covering their specific interest (e.g. teachers who were involved in a youth project but have no organisation to join (yet). Or they are individuals whose engagement in the youth field is transitional. The latter group is often more generally in a transitional state. For example, students who have left their hometown for their studies, but remain loosely tied with an organisation they previously were active in. Or as another example, unem-



ployed young people who have become active in an organisation to bridge the time between the end of their education and the anticipated beginning of their initial employment. However, these are only two examples and the interview sample is too small to draw universal conclusions.

## 3.2 Professional background

### Before the training/activity

The interview sample contains persons both directly and indirectly involved in youth work and they are either employed (full-time/part-time) or working as freelancers for a youth sector organisation. They are typically responsible for support structures and administrative work in their organisation. The sample also contains persons engaged in the youth field as volunteers in combination with a regular job (e.g. teachers, managing director of company in educational field etc.) or in association with high school/university. Interviewees who did not fall into any of these three typologies were defined as ‘others.’ With respect to occupational status, the remarkable combinations of multifunctional roles became obvious. Several interviewees mention they are employed outside the youth field but are volunteers inside the youth field, or are employed inside the youth field and are volunteers in another organisation (see chapter: methodology).

### a) Students

There are various motivations for involvement of students in the youth field. Most students are highly motivated and passionate about working in youth work/the topic area. Students are predominantly involved on a voluntary basis and are not employed. Some use „youth work/voluntary work“ for personal reasons such as, to get a scholarship, to be able to participate in YiA, or for professional development to increase their chances of finding a job. Students can also be involved through a student association. Many students involved as volunteers are unsure if they are going to stay in the youth sector.

TCA/YWM seems attractive for university students in order to improve their career perspectives or professional development, and English language skills. Remarkably, study backgrounds indicate a high diversity and range from medicine to political science to cultural/social anthropology.

### b) Experienced youth workers

Experienced youth workers have a tendency for a ‘long(er)’ record of involvement in the youth field and often employed. Notably, the forms of experience

may differ among this group. Some of the interviewees’ experiences in the youth field are due to long-term commitment to the practical work. For others, experience relates to their professional background (not only in youth work but also in other fields) or can be due to their educational background in international training/activities (‘repeaters’). TCA/YWM is often understood to offer opportunities for training by this group of interviewees.

### c) Newcomers

In comparison to experienced youth worker, there are some persons who can be characterised by low levels of experience in the youth field (< 1 year) and/or attended an international training/activity for the first time. TCA/YWM is often understood to open career perspectives or to improve personal or professional development by this group of interviewees.

### After the training/activity

After the third round of interviews, occupational status has not changed much and the following typologies continue to be identified:

- (1) Directly involved in the youth field
- (2) Indirectly involved in the youth field
- (3) Engaged in the youth field as volunteers alongside a regular job or high school/university
- (4) Others (i.e. unemployed)

Job changes are rare for people have worked steadily in the youth field before the training, in particular for people in groups (1) and (2). Sometimes there are opportunities to be promoted within the same organisation or to move to another however they remain mostly within the working field of youth work. This is different for group (4) and especially group (3). The latter group often consists of people in their twenties looking for something that gives them satisfaction alongside their regular school or university training. Continuing their work in the youth field does not always persist, they tend to go back to their field of studies or move on to a new field of interest that might better suit their career path.

In addition, there are also people who took over more responsibilities either in their former organisation or after having changed to a new one. Some gained more self-confidence, motivation or knowledge to work in the youth field. Some decided to shift from youth work to research and evaluation of youth projects. Other interviewees also report they had to stop working because their contract expired or they had been unhappy with the set-up of youth work (e.g. too much doc-

umentation). Finally, some had a personal need/wish for a professional change or wanted to establish their own (youth) organisation.

## 4 — CURRENT YOUTH WORK PRACTICE AND CHANGES

The intention of this chapter is to better understand the daily work of youth workers/youth leaders. Particular focus is placed upon the strategies or standards of project/activity preparation or implementations that are perceived as most important in (international) youth work. Topics range from implementing youth projects/activities, the inclusion of young people (with fewer opportunities/special needs), to networking and partnership building. Interviewed participants were asked about their approach to (international) youth work before and their self-perceived changes/effects after the training/activity.

In addition, statements on the image of the European Union and discovered European issues are surveyed in the interviews two months after the activity (interviews (2)) and revised 12 months after the activity (interviews (3)). The aim was to analyse effects and changes (if any) on the interviewees through their involvement in international youth work and the international training/activity.

### 4.1 (International) youth projects/activities

“Actually, when we talk about the people who work with youth ... then it is extremely important that they believe in the youth” (Cfs\_TCA4xe1).

**“International youth work is more important than ever before, must continue and must be extended”**

(Ems\_TCA5ed3).

In interviews (1), youth work is frequently characterised by the skills and ability to listen, relate, and empathize with young people as well as their commitment to their job. Moreover, youth work is also understood to permit young people to go through a learning process, to reflect and discover new talents and promote new knowledge at home. Another important factor for youth work seems to be open-mindedness and flexibility to the needs of young people or new challenges that might occur. This is particularly poignant when a participant points out that the salary does not matter so much:

“Out of the sense-of-mission (...) that is why I am here. The director asked me if the salary is not too little and I told that [sic] how come it

*is little, that I don't care about the salary that much. Yes, this is not the most important thing. When other people work for salary, then I (...) I definitely does not do it [sic]" (Ams\_TCA3xe1).*

Impressively, the preconditions and expertise for the majority of the interviewed participants in the training/activity represent a high level of knowledge, skills and attitude/behaviour regarding democratic citizenship, human rights, solidarity and social change. Some of them founded an organisation for human rights or their organisations are working for social inclusion or freedom. Furthermore, others study political science or are activists for social justice, against violence, against racism for many years. Other interviewees shows/express evidence for a consistent socio-political commitment, are interested in the recognition of cultural and social minorities, promote solidarity action, engage in the diffusion and realisation of human rights, or they are trainers at European and international levels in the field of empowerment and involvement of young people. As a result, most of the interviewees (1) seem very active, motivated and committed, although some orientations are more concerned with social rather than youth-field-related issues.

However, in one interview (3) an interesting observation/change is addressed in terms of the perception of youth workers' professional profile. So-called Erasmus+ youth workers, among them many young people calling themselves youth workers, are described as having a lack of requested competences:

**“***They don't have these soft skills, they don't have the experience and the idea and they believe they can also run these trainings (...) I think this is irresponsible" (Mfh\_TCA10ed3).*

In interviews (3) a radical change of the perspective or professional environment for working internationally in the youth field is rare but noted. More specifically, a change in the youth work practice of “work-camps”, which is not directly related to the attended training but is a result from experiences in their daily work. Referring to a refused project application from the NA, this interviewee analysed the general work-camps practice and became aware that many elements did not take into account the particular demands of non-formal and informal learning. As a consequence, a new training module was developed, combining elements of youth exchanges with elements of work-camps and theory and practice (extensive changes and effects on the individual

level were reported in a few cases, see chapter: training and support activities).

However, self-perceived changes for international youth work could be indicated in several interviews (3) in terms of active participation of young people, non-directive educational approaches, and for an increased focus on the needs of young people. In addition to that, further changes refer to more openness for the submission of projects or a confirmation of own approaches to work internationally. It is expressed by these interviewees that the activity widens horizons and leads to both new projects, new research about the topic, establishment of new youth associations as well as acknowledgements of other (international/sectorial) environments, such as participants from Central Europe, Northern Africa and the Balkans. Moreover, a changed focus/a clearer view of youth work internationally and planning/implementing youth projects with EU funding could be perceived by other interviewees. However, there are still interviewees (3), who do not perceive any change in their values or attitudes (see chapter: (international) youth work competences and development/changes; changes and effects on the individual level):

**“***I don't know. For that matter, I have otherwise travelled a lot just the same and this kind of openness towards foreign cultures is anyway due. At the same, in my opinion the people in Europe are not that much different. So I cannot say that somehow now (...) I am suddenly more tolerant or not" (Dfs\_TCA6xe3).*

Overall, it appears in the third round of interviews that self-perceived changes with respect to international youth work might be stronger for interviewees/institutions with little experience. Additionally, changes occurred on a more personal or relationship level (see chapter: training and support activities; effects and changes on the individual level) through the establishment of:

- Personal contact/exchange with people/organisations (new ideas/methods);
- Networking with possible partners (important for the initiation of projects);
- Surrounded by people with different professions/cultural backgrounds (inspiring; widening horizons).

It seems noteworthy that one interviewee (3) adds that competence development for international youth work is an element of progress, which is increasing through experiences:



**“***I think that this is a skill that is built slowly, not in just one such international cooperation, but in more of them, so slowly the experience is growing ... we are slowly becoming more and more independent in our interpersonal contacts. It was one of my first projects in which I participated, I might have been more reserved, or I tried the field more carefully than I would have most likely now, when I have participated already in several such activities” (Ifh\_KA11ii3).*

While, an experienced interviewee (3) in implementing international youth projects declares that the acquisition of knowledge about classical youth work or youth in general does not automatically refer to changes of perspectives on international youth work. In cases where no changes could be reported, the training was judged to provide good networking possibilities, further interests in participating in more (international) trainings (see chapter: training and support activities), as well as professional development not only in the youth field (i.e. improved career perspectives in other fields).

#### **4.1.1 Preparation and planning of (international) youth projects/activities**

It is important to state that not all interviewees were able to provide information on how to prepare a project because of their lack of involvement and/or experience in organising projects. This circumstance is still an issue in the third round of interviews, therefore some interviewees (3) could not report any changes for planning youth projects.

Some interviewees (3) acknowledge the level of competences from youth workers as specifically important when it comes to planning a project. This is the case for the management of time, flexibility (i.e. needs of the public) and the importance of informal time, active listening/communication skills (i.e. paid attention to the linguistics and the diversity of the participants), digital skills, a variety of NFL methods (i.e. open space and energizers) and the consolidation of solid and trustful partnerships (clarification of expectations, resources, expertise). It is pointed out several times that the planning of projects requires the active involvement of partners from the beginning to develop projects in actual collaboration with the partners (see chapter: (international) youth work competences and development/changes). Difficult project planning due to inexperience of the youth worker and special project setting (e.g. prison) underlines the importance of listening to

and talking with young people. Some interviewees point out that the projects need to be of use for participants to empower young people, create a learning environment enabling friendships, learn from each other, and think beyond boundaries. This involves pedagogical work.

Most projects in the youth field are organised based on a need's analysis of the project's target group. Therefore, most youth workers want to make sure projects are either based on their needs or planned in collaboration with target groups. In interviews (3) it is reported that the attended trainings have been an inspiration to better understand how to include the needs and interests of the target group in the planning process. One interviewee describes that she is more proactive when planning a project by approaching (possible) participants openly and provides whatever is possible for their active participation before and during the program. Another interviewee considers that he learned the importance of group preparation activities for processes of knowledge, self-awareness, and teamwork such as accepting differences, respecting each other's opinions and exceeding one's comfort area. Only a few think they know best based on their experience of how to organise a suitable project.

Furthermore, it is stated that ensuring gender equality and paying attention to the age category are key elements for planning/preparing youth projects/activities. With respect to precise planning of projects, the importance not to exclude potential participants and their parents is stressed (for example, summer camps for Roma girls and boys).

Interviewees before the activity consider active citizenship as a major goal of youth work (it was also experienced through a simulation game when they did the debriefing and the transfer to a societal level during the attended training/activity): to spread one's experiences and convince other people to be more active in the society. It may be essential to support learners' reflection on such issues as solidarity, social justice, promotion and protection of human rights, discrimination, dignity and equality, etc., in relation to the context of the activity. With respect to youth policy, one interviewee addresses:

**“***[youth policy] is very important, in my view. And it is not well emphasized. In my opinion, Hungarian young people don't really take their fate, their future into their own hands, not at national level, and even less at European level. So they don't think (...) of the future of the Euro-*

pean Union, or of their European identity. Almost everybody focuses on their own problems, own environment. So this should change, and now we [the organisation] try to contribute to this.” (Jms\_TCA6uh1)

**“**The biggest challenge is to raise awareness, to spread the message that they can control their future, this period of their life, it isn’t just a fad, or fun, passing the time (...)” (Jms\_TCA6uh1).

Furthermore, the training is a good option of peer-to-peer learning of new skills, methods and knowledge, especially for unexperienced youth workers to learn and gain courage to initiate activities/projects. As a result, some interviewees (3) are highly engaged in organising (international) youth activities/projects in the future (see chapter: effects and changes on the individual level):

**“Well there would be no exchanges without this training! I wouldn’t have had the courage to do this on my own”**

(Ifs\_TCA7if3)

In some cases, the training activity has triggered a change (un-)consciously toward incorporating new approaches (i.e. visit place before actual exchange takes place; in-depth attitude towards young people) or a new understanding that situations can be experienced differently by participants therefore multiple options in the design of projects are recommended. Others improved the way projects are planned, such as increasing awareness of the importance of budget management, facilitating the expression of young people or in the use of new methods (i.e. online survey tools). There are also cases reported in interviews (3) where nothing has changed in the methods being used or the working environment does not provide any possibilities for planning activities/projects (i.e. concerning the specificity, organisational structure and/or people’s attitudes in the organisation) (see chapter: effects and changes on the individual level; effects and changes on the organisational level).

Overall, essential planning aspects in most cases aligns with the values of the organisation, efficiently identifies the target group’s needs and interests, and consider the sustainability of the project (i.e. dissemination). However, not all interviewed participants could give a clear response to defining gold standards for planning projects, either due to a lack of experience or because they are not involved in the planning. Although in Ire-

land several respondents made explicit mention of the National Quality Standards Framework and the child protection standards for all those working with children and young people, as the provided E+/YiA guidelines are perceived as complex.

#### 4.1.2 Implementation of (international) youth projects/activities

Youth workers often do not distinguish between youth work and international youth work, but these two sides could be seen as extra factors for European/International projects. Collaboration with partner organisations and local authorities when possible may play a vital role for the implementation of successful projects.

Thus, it is recommended to first find suitable and trustworthy cooperation partners and second to find appropriate funding opportunities. A solid partnership is assumed to be most important factor but is not always easy to achieve. Supportive factors for partnerships include setting realistic goals and aims, discussing and mapping expectations and sorting out financial issues before implementing projects.

Different forms of collaboration to make sure a project is successful are mentioned in the interviews. In this regard, collaboration between the non-formal and formal education sector to recruit interested participants or politics and non-formal education sector are reported. Furthermore, interviewees also mention cooperation implementing projects with previous partnerships in the interviews before the activity. In general, networking is assumed to be necessary to implement successful international projects (see the next subchapter: networks and partnerships). Another factor of success refers to needs analyses and the early involvement of the participants/partners/target group, as indicated in some interviews (3) (see chapter: (international) youth work competences and development/changes):

**“**Most of all, during the training we have looked at how to organize a youth program from your partner. It was aimed at youth exchanges, but it could also be used for other programs. What we didn’t practice before the training was the needs-analysis and the early involvement of the participants. In that case, they are not the passive subjects of the project anymore, and the participants can shape the project from the beginning. So, from the perspective of a year, this is what I remember the most, that is, that was the most useful and, of course, understanding the whole process and follow-up process of youth exchange” (Jms\_TCA6uh3).

The procedures for the organisation of projects on a local and international level are described as very similar with the exception of finances. For the implementation of European/international youth projects the organisations are much more dependent on external financial resources. Continuity and sustainability of results is especially important in European youth projects established through feedback from project participants. Joining international projects is easier because everything is already organised by the coordinator and youth workers carry out the tasks according to their role in this process.

Additionally, communication is considered a valuable tool in the implementation of projects. As stated in different interviews, there are three stages of communication identified: before, during and after the activity. The communication beforehand is characterised by promoting the project and trying to communicate with future interested participants. The communication after the activity is described as advertising the project in newspapers, on websites and social media networks in order to realize more projects in the future. This phase is often a starting point for future projects. Thus, it helps to evaluate the former project and to draw lessons for future collaboration. With respect to DEOR (dissemination and exploitation of results) as part of the communication process after the activity, one participant critically assumes if the project is useful for young people then message will spread and circulate quickly without extraordinary dissemination activities.

However, in interviews (3) it is requested that the Erasmus+ programme be more widely communicated in order to offer all young people the opportunity to have intercultural experiences. This is particularly relevant for the inclusion of more disadvantaged young people's involvement in the E+/YiA programme. It is further added in interviews (3) that innovative approaches and methods have been learned on how to implement a project. Cooperation through communication channels like social media seem common. It is important to mention that digital youth work is perceived as the future by several interviewees. Digital effects concerning Facebook as a communication platform, information on websites or platforms and the use of apps are considered very useful. Some of the interviewees want to go completely digital and increase the possibility to plan more in the future. Another effect refers to the inclusion of youth leaders/workers as web designer in order to reach young people more easily. Staying close to the target group and using online tools to

attract young people is considered to be fundamental in the current stage of youth work. Thus, introducing modern technologies are expressed as one main goal in order to reach young people as the internet and social media play an important role for them.

#### **4.1.3 Inclusion and participation of young people/young people with fewer opportunities and/or special needs**

When it comes to inclusion and the participation of young people, there are various approaches to assure a good outcome of youth activities according to different interviewees (1). An experienced participant in interviews (2) states that there seem to be many wrong approaches in the youth field due to a lack of understanding of what is possible today and how young people grow up. Another interviewee (2) perceives bureaucratic structures as counter-productive. Instead, young people should be offered information and support. This approach should be guided by empowerment, understanding young people and respecting their choices:

**“***Even though I said this before, but attitude is very important. You have to treat young people as partners and you have to pay attention to the whole picture. When I work with a teenager, I try not to concentrate on their weaknesses (...). We are not friends, it is a different relationship, but we are partners (...) and every day is a new day of our collaboration, and I have to be flexible, if one way didn't work out, I have to find another (...). And maybe this is something I've got from this training, where we had three minutes to act in a situation and that's all” (Hfs\_TCA8uh2).*

Approaches should consider the inclusion and empowerment of young people in the planning process, the role of youth works and structures, emphasis on informal learning, and finding effective ways to engage YPFO/YPSN.

First, the inclusion and empowerment of young people in the planning process from the beginning encourages them to take responsibility. That means not only being involved in the planning process for projects but also taking over tasks during the implementation of projects. At the same time, the use of Facebook is pointed out as an exchange platform for the participants and between the youth workers and participants concerning organisational things. In interviews (3) it is emphasised that the involvement of young people from the beginning of the activity/project is one of the key factors for inclusion. Others state that fun is important and that learning should be or-

ganised in a way that is not obvious for the participants, such as involving young people in the process of application writing and giving them project leader positions to keep them active. The interviewees enjoy working with young people throughout the entire process, but it needs to be in line with budget and time restraints. The general approach is to treat them as partners, build trust and promote initiatives from young people.

Second, listening to the wishes of young people and taking them seriously are equally important. This is in line with the views of a youth worker who stated this demands patience, but also acceptance of different views. In turn, youth workers should keep the diverse backgrounds of young people in mind when including them in the projects. A variety of different methods are stressed in order to get the attention of the young people. This is in line with the view of a participant who sees standardised approaches as problematic and stress that young people need to identify themselves with the project. In all interview rounds engaging, activating and motivating young people are estimated to be one of the challenging points, especially for long-term commitment:

**“***I'm more of a pessimist than my colleagues about the involvement of young people, because, as I see, if we can't attract a certain circle, or someone doesn't give a positive opinion, and really sacrifices their spare time to come regularly, it's very difficult to motivate and involve youngsters” (Ifs\_TCA5uh1).*

Another aspect of inclusion focuses upon utilizing principles of non-formal learning designs in activities for young people, such as a 'learner-centred approach', 'transparency', 'democratic values', 'participation' and 'social transformation'. Various approaches are required to be taken into account regarding non-formal learning structures. This includes values and consolidated practice of non-formal learning, the way of constructing group relationships (peer education), role playing and technological tools, and curiosity about learners' needs. Furthermore, simple techniques are learnt to unlock young people's creativity and potential for creating active participation among young people (see chapter:s: (international) youth work competences and development/changes; training and support activities).

Creating a good group atmosphere seems important as well as evaluation and feedback to find out if the activity was helpful for the young people or not. Further acquired methods refer to creating group cohesion, stimulating motivation, and the

involvement of youth from the NGO in the design of project activities (application of the dramatic exercise is attended to understand how a young person might feel), being confirmed several times in interviews (3). Labyrinth theatre, storytelling and group dynamic methods were mentioned as most interesting. Overall, the more active and engaging the method, the higher the interest of young people. Thus, preferences for interactive learning settings, participatory methods to be applied in activities with youth (combating conflicts, raising self-assessment), and skills related to adult education as well as practical activities apart from playing games have been addressed. In some cases, an increased interest in facilitating and training groups in the future emerged.

Criticism from interviewees concluded that participants are sometimes selected/recruited after grant approval. Because of this, a lack of involvement of the target group becomes apparent during the preparation phase of youth projects. While the interviewees are in favour of a participative educational approach from the first planning, they cannot bear the entrepreneurial risk to do any preparation without having the grant approval. Further critical statements are raised in interviews (3) referencing a barrier for disadvantaged young people with non-international-experiences, an unrealistic approach of equal opportunities for all or the influence of will and money with respect to the inclusion of YPFO/YPSN (see Dmh\_KA1-YWM2ta3):

**“***That's how it usually goes that those with a lot of international experience are those for whom it is a smaller step to go, and they are also the ones that automatically apply there (...)” (Bms\_TCA2if3).*

**“***This debate will always remain open, because equal opportunities for all (...) it may be unfair to talk about equal opportunities for everyone because this is not realistic. In some ways, youth work breaks this, that is, it gives equal opportunities to young people at the time of projects, when they actually [work] together, when they meet, they actually have all about equal opportunities, including learning opportunities” (Afs\_TCA1ii3).*

Nevertheless, the inclusion of young people may require enormous engagement and motivation by the youth workers, as indicated by some interviewees (3). One of these interviewees shared the experience that it is not easy to activate young people after the training/activity, but she tries harder and harder to come up with ideas that



could attract young people. Other interviewees (3) realize that it is important to take young people abroad (even though it is not easy) and the attended training/activity stimulated them to encourage young people go abroad more because it is enriching, interesting and it brings benefits.

Moreover, needs analysis for young people in terms of organisations, structures and information are perceived to be relevant in the context of solidarity and social change. It is important to identify goals, develop strategies and organise individual and collective action for social change as well as develop power-sharing. In any case, developing professional skills and knowledge about youth participation did not always happen as some relevant topics were dropped or changed during the training, and other topics were expected (see chapter: training and support activities).

A very important achieved learning outcome concerns the importance of the Erasmus+ projects in the field of youth for the inclusion of young people in society, as reported in different statements of the second round of interviews. Especially for YPFO/YPSN, it seems relevant to develop specific opportunities (meet the needs) in terms of adapting the language, providing financial contribution, showing empathy and openness as well as implementing appropriate/new methods and examples (i.e. theatre and drama, simulation games). As a result, effective ways of working with YPFO/YPSN and the inclusion in E+ projects could be acquired. The importance and necessity of activities for YPFO/YPSN and provided joint work among young disabled and non-disabled peers becomes apparent. Increasing the capacity to meet the needs of disadvantaged young people, to identify and better understand their training and socialising needs and the need of belonging to a group are revisited in some statements of interviews (3). Nevertheless, one youth worker stated that not only young people with disadvantaged backgrounds participate but those coming from the middle class.

When revisiting interviews (3) it became apparent that issues of YPFO/YPSN do not seem to play a central role. Only half of the interviewees responded to questions for YPFO/YPSN (with different quality of outcomes). Moreover, just a quarter report that issues in the context of inclusion of YPFO/YPSN were actively addressed and discussed in the attended training/activity while a handful interviewees could not remember if this topic was raised at all. Notably, a few interviewees (3) state that they could raise their awareness on YPFO/YPSN despite the fact that these topics

were not actively addressed within the training/activity.

Another addressed topic in the attended training/activity often referred to refugees/migrants with future perspectives on challenges (i.e. bureaucratic obstacles) or to recommendations when working with disabled youth (i.e. application for more money because of the required wheelchair or personal assistant):

“When you’re taking immigrant youth from one country to another, then all these passport and visa things become a big issue, and if some of them also have special needs like big trauma, then it’s a whole new world. There were good instructions for such situations as well” (Ifs\_TCA7if3).

Some of these interviewees perceive their learning outcomes with respect to awareness raising on YPFO/YPSN as well as acquisition of respective methods and language through experiential learning (i.e. field trips, simulation exercise or peer learning about the own initiatives/practical experiences). One interviewee points out that she wishes to continue her work with migrants, with acquired competences that she has developed herself “through better understanding and awareness” (Gfh\_KA11ii3). Another one perceives that the course contributed to reinforcing the importance and necessity of working with socially, culturally and economically disadvantaged young people, giving this interviewee further motivation to try to give youth a real chance for active participation in the community. Moreover, as a result of the training/activity one interviewee gained a comprehensive picture on the subject of the NEET youth based on the presentations and discussions of empirical and theoretical studies. The training/activity gave her inspiration and encouragement to initiate discussions and action in relation to NEET youth in her organisation, with her colleagues and environment. They have organised work clubs several times, workshops with practical activities, and visits to potential employers. Another interviewee understands NEET youth as a societal as well as personal problem for the youth, recognizing how important her work actually is and that it requires personal contribution:

“Well, it (attending in the training) asserted for me how important our work is. Really. When I go to the schools and give lectures to the youth, then how important is the message that I deliver. It is not that I just do there something for the 45 minutes, but it has to be efficacious” (Cfs\_TCA4xe3).

In contrast, almost half of the interviewees (3) perceived explicitly that they did not consider any competence development with respect to YPFO/YPSN. A quarter of them add that they were aware that inclusion of YPFO/YPSN is a relevant/important issue which has already been taken into account in their daily work. A marginal number of interviewees point out that they do not work with YPFO/YPSN. Finally, it seems that for the majority of the interviewees (3) inclusion of YPFO/YPSN is a kind of business, an important issue for their (daily) work and therefore very common to implement it. Some of the interviewees perceive themselves as highly qualified professionals/experts for the inclusion of YPFO/YPSN and that is why they could not improve any competences or nothing was mentioned. It could be interesting to revise this key finding in the conducted interviews with beneficiaries of module C.

## 4.2 Networks and partnerships

### 4.2.1 Networking/partnerships at project level

**“There were a lot of more experienced youth workers there, so I got more perspective on how in the end easy things are to organise over here”**

(Emh\_TCA4if3)

In several interviews (2), concrete outcomes or steps are reported for networking and partnerships during and after the attended training/activity. Interviews (3) made visible that networks and partnerships are seen as essential for establishing new projects. For some the training/activity facilitated the building of personal networks and partnerships in informal settings (see chapter: training and support activities):

**“Well, the people and contacts are the most important, because with some of them we still communicate. It is not work related, but just so.(...)”** (Dfs\_TCA6xe3).

In almost all cases of the second round of interviews, the potential to establish networks/partnerships for (further) collaboration is impactful on the individual level and present (international) youth work. This result could be seen in the development of perceived new establishments of larger connections, collaborations or project partnerships in the international/local professional networks as stated in many interviews (3),

in combination with the opportunity facilitating collaboration beyond the framework of Erasmus+.

However, it is stated in the second round of interviews and confirmed in many interviews (3) that projects are already under preparation (i.e. youth exchange on immigration; KA2 strategic partnerships with rural youth; EVS). For these interviewees (2) the main objective for their organisations was to strengthen or reinforce established partnership and to capitalise on new methods, particularly in regards to long KA1 project with many planned seminars. Thus, these study visits could also be assumed to provide optimal opportunities to visit potential partners, discuss relevant issues and empower locality.

In some cases of interviews (2) and interviews (3) explained collaboration with NGOs outside of the EU are planned and partnerships with ‘new’ countries are intended after participants met during the training/activity. One interviewee (2), for example, explains that she met some participants coming from Eastern Europe and from non-EU countries. Before the training/activity she had never thought about working with them, but now she does in order to grow her network in this direction. Another noteworthy point is that collaboration is intended among ‘similar’ partners in terms of working methods, values, and financial resources:

**“(...) and as a result of that training I also understood it myself, that strategical cooperation should take place between partners whom you know very well. And that you (the partners) should have very concrete shared expectations. Not that one organisation is the ringleader and applies, while it only asks others the mandate letters, instead there should be very broad mutual will for collaboration”** (Gfs\_TCA7xe3).

However, a few interviewees (2) were surprised they found partners to start international co-operation projects. In particular, partnerships with state institutions was surprising because the implementation of these projects tends to be more difficult to organise in terms of bureaucracy:

**“Since I am representative of the public sector, I didn’t expect that such an offer for co-operation would come so quickly, as usually this connection emerges between NGOs, or at least it seems that they have more options in this field (...). It was a pleasant surprise...”** (Ifs\_TCA10xe2). In contrast, many networks/partnerships could not report any concrete outcomes. This could be due to no interests from organisations, dif-

ferent interests among participants (no coherent business focus; exclusive attention to university studies), a lack of capacity to enlarge international projects/activities because the organisation is small (has already reached the maximum of two EVS-volunteers), participants without power relations within their organisations (mostly newcomers without decision power or responsibilities), a lack of organisational background, and funding obstacles or no interests in EU grants (i.e. established cooperation operates with national grant). In the interviews (3), the trend of passive networks/ partnerships due to a lack of concrete outcomes is reinforced. Notably, most of the time this is not assessed negatively giving the implication of re-activating future cooperation (see chapter: transfer into practice).

The estimated opinion of re-activated networks/ partnerships in the future should be treated with caution. In a handful of interviews (3) it becomes evident that not all anticipated projects can/could be continued because sometimes after the training the potential networks/partnerships did not last. Furthermore, in some cases the contact person of the project partner changed organisation causing the planned collaboration to disappear altogether. It seems that projects initiatives are strongly connected with individuals who are engaged and motivated to implement (international) projects. With their departure from the organisation, relevant ambitions, interests, know-how and potential are lost for future collaboration/ partnerships. Further evidence-based research would be highly recommended in this matter, which could be provided and further analysed in module C (see chapter: effects and changes on the individual level; chapter: effects and changes on the organisational level; chapter: unintended side effects).

#### 4.2.2 Network/partnerships at a political level and/or inter-institutional level

Existing political engagement, interests in politics or/and youth policy and the organisation's interest in adding new or further partnerships may play a crucial role in the establishment of networks or partnerships at the political level.

Notably, it is reported in a few interviews (2) and confirmed in some interviews (3) that political networks or partnership have been established since or during the training/activity. If these political networks are available, it is most frequently at national, local or regional level, and seldomly at the European level. Nevertheless, a handful of organisations could establish a collaboration with another European organisation if desired. One in-

terviewee explicitly expressed the wish to reinforce the establishment of a European network in order to bring political discussions decisively forward.

As noted in the second round of interviews, implementing international projects/activities only works if the whole community is involved to support the goals of the project/activity, especially if one project partner is a small organisation. Active communication processes are initiated to engage and encourage community members (i.e. local habitants; schools) to work with them, as also indicated in interviews (3) (see chapter: impact on the environment). Further ambition refers to creating a network of young people to get involved in youth policies, which could be achieved by attending the training/activity.

Another form of collaboration is expressed through sharing practical knowledge from other countries and promoting E+/training with the Policy Minister aiming to find solutions for societal problems. Furthermore, (oral/written) conversations with politicians about the situation of youth work with socially disadvantaged people are another cooperative action, although have yet to show any considerable effects. As pointed out in the results of interviews (3), activities/projects at political level very often concern dissemination operations with local/regional politicians, local youth centres and/or ministries. Seldomly, it is reported that these projects could be initiated (see chapter: impact on the environment).

In the cases of youth policy organisations, political youth representation, or an international voluntary organisation working with the political environment, coordinating a working group within international structures, or promoting young people's political/societal engagement are quite usual and part of the daily work.

### 4.3 Indicated European context from interviewees' perspective

**“** *To learn more about the EU, which is extremely important, to see the positive aspects also, that there are extremely many positive things and that is what I became more aware of, also because there were so many (...) young people from a number of diverse countries, [allowing for] sharing experiences, getting different impressions, this is what motivates me to do something [like that] again, because it is not only momentarily inspiring thematically, but one can also find new friends, meet people, and form e this – con-*

*necting – is the main gain – and to be in another country” (Ifs\_TCA5ta3).*

Country-specific differences in youth work (i.e. organised structures; starting a project), current political circumstances and sensitive issues (i.e. human rights; corruption) may cause challenges in working professionally in international settings.

As perceived by the majority of interviewees (2) as well as in some interviews (3), different cultures bring different values, attitudes, perceptions, definitions, and approaches. These differences may become apparent through sharing experiences and discussions about internationality, the history of international volunteer work and how it's connected to politics and values as well as how different countries can have different customs.

However, there was some recognition of European identity and similar shared values in the group (see chapter: (international) youth work competences and development/changes). Though a common understanding throughout Europe is still missing and approaches to make the situation better varies significantly. One interviewee feels cultures are too different to create a common set of values among Europeans. As a result, interesting discrepancies regarding similarities versus differences in a common ground of values and a European approach in youth work become evident among the interview statements (2 & 3) (see chapter: (international) youth work competences and development/changes). Cultural differences are perceived to be more important for international youth work and projects than for national youth work. Cultural diversity is identified to be one of the difficulties of project planning and a major challenge for the foundation, especially when respective communities are segregated, isolated and sometimes do not share the values and norms of society.

Thus, intercultural learning (ICL) becomes an important aspect for some interviewees to understand country-specific differences in exchanges between the realities of youth workers and their job situation, social responsibilities and state responsibilities. Furthermore, issues of European identity, rights and citizenship for young people reveal the multiplicity and coexistence of varying political, economic, cultural and social perspectives in a geographical space called Europe and institutional structure called Union, as perceived by one interviewee (2). Finally, ICL is interrelated with political, religious, socio-political and economic discourses in international youth work and

collaboration (see chapter: (international) youth work competences and development/changes).

Some interviewees (2) perceive an increased openness and enthusiasm towards European youth collaboration and/or international youth work, despite the image or perception of the European Union not changing. The funds of the European Union are seen as an excellent opportunity for young people, especially in the rural areas.

Nevertheless, there were also critical statements in terms of European projects such as observed changes in the selection processes of applicants, which are assumed to be unclear by one interviewee (3). Another interviewee criticises a lack of European issues in the projects. This interviewee refuses to work on differences and is convinced that working on strengths and similarities should be reinforced in the projects; her engagement is focused on universal values. Even with regard to culture specific differences this interviewee criticises that too much would go wrong.

#### 4.3.1 The image of the European Union (EU)

**“As a consequence, this raises the interest on the work of the EU, on the political happenings”**

(Jfs\_TCA5ta3)

A few interviewees (3) indicate high political engagement, the importance of humanistic values and awareness on positive effects of the European Union (EU) on young people (i.e. through Youth Exchanges) and civil society. Often those aspects have not been directly related to the attended training/activity but it may indicate the new emerging impact of the EU on more and more youth worker. More specifically, positive interview statements of the image of the European Union regard support of international opportunities to meet people from different countries in the field of youth work or within the EU framework and policies (i.e. social policies). A few interviewees appreciated the E+/YiA programme (i.e. EVS) and its opportunities for young people. In particular, EVS is expressed as being highly valuable for young people, especially from less privileged backgrounds, to get a chance to go abroad. As a result, interviewees revealed a more positive perception of the EU:

**“***I was thinking of the EU as a capitalist community, that dominates the world with capitalism, as a competitor to the USA. I now see that it is a bit different than that, the EU is trying*



*to achieve something in line with an objective, especially when we look at the money it spends” (Ems\_TCA5rt2).*

Not all interviewees assess the image of the EU positively because they criticise the absence of effective measures for different vulnerable groups, such as efficient protection of women against violence or the response to the situation of refugees. At the same time observations are raised that more and more people are realising that all these challenges are not of a personal, but structural nature. Thus, the need for more coordinated and structured European level activities becomes important in order to bring the issues of gender-discrimination and inequality on the political agenda. Another negative EU image is of bureaucrats in Brussels, but this image changed as respective members working for the European Union attended the training/activity to let attendees see a bit of their job, daily work, and concerns:

“*It was a big surprise for me, that there were people from Brussels and they emphasised the understanding of European values and its application in the communication” (Ffs\_TCA4uh2).*

#### 4.3.2 Discovery of European issues

Themes covering immigration, migrations and borders as well as radicalisation are perceived to be ‘hot topics’ and produced disgraces throughout Europe and beyond. The actual European situation about migrants/refugees is a common problem across different youth work realities. Moreover, the refugee crisis has become more tangible in cases where the training/activity took place in countries or where peers came from regions where the refugee crisis is part of their everyday life (i.e. Mediterranean countries). In some training/activities’ settings, participants may have space for sharing experiences about political issues, to be educated about citizenship, and how and for what to be confront:

“*The purpose of this training was that we have found ourselves in the situation with these migrants and let’s look for solutions. We were motivated for some concrete solutions (...) let’s do something from this, that’s why I say action, integration and engagement – this [the latter] is a good key word” (Hmh\_KA11ii3).*

The topics of migration and solution against radicalisation were addressed several times and still seemed important for some participants in the third round of interviews. Through these experiences, one interviewee became aware how little

she really knows about international youth work possibilities. Another interviewee (3) stresses that the training/activity has made clear how important the political approach is towards finding a solution to radicalization. In his opinion, this insight cannot be fully attributed to the training, but the training was certainly the starting point for developing these values. It has contributed to more openness for a certain view he did not share enough in the beginning. This approach has resulted in a broader view towards the subject.

It is noteworthy to add that European values, issues or the image of the European Union were seldomly addressed directly in the training/activity. With the perspective of prevention, discussion of European values, issues, and images mostly appeared during various conversations within the context of (young) refugees, migration, integration, populism and violent radicalisation. Whether European topics were on the agenda or not became a question of participants’ profile and interest from the perspective of one interviewee.

Opportunities in the countries of the European Union are different. As a result, it was discussed what kind of effects different conditions have for people from different countries working in the youth field and implementing international youth projects/activities. As indicated by some interviewees (2), youth participation was given a lot of weight in discussions, as some of the countries actually do youth work without listening to young people.

Another effect on participants involved in European/international youth work refers to identity and the question of being a European citizen. Some interviewees (3) perceived changes, not always without criticism, in the meaning and consciousness after the attended training/activity or since they have been involved in E+/YiA programme:

“*Being a European. When I was out, that was the beginning of a refugee crisis. And then these things suddenly had got a very different meaning. Until then, this was an obvious thing, but it was the first serious crisis when the Union was not united. There were people from Hungary, Germany, Austria, but our government didn’t act the same way. We talked a lot about it, not in the training itself, but in coffee breaks, free times” (Afs\_TCA1uh3).*

“*It has the effect that one is feeling more like a European citizen, not only as a citizen of Salzburg, for instance” (Afh\_TCA1ta3).*

For others, European identity and the tools used to reflect on the identity dimension within the attended training/activity does not seem to be a challenge, but rather raises awareness on the diversity of understanding Europe and European identity:

“*The first part of the activity was to define our identity and then our European identity with pieces of newspaper, making a billboard. And I think I will use exactly the same thing*” (Ems\_TCA3ti2).

This interviewee, prior to participating in the training course, attributed European identity to citizenship and the use of a number of services to ensure many rights. Confronted with other operators, a much more complex and problematic European identity emerges: the simultaneous presence in one geographical space of multiple cultures, religions, traditions, languages, and histories. From their point of view, this represents various meanings of the concept of Europe and European identity.

Another effect from international experience is the development of ideas on Europe and more interests in European topics. Furthermore, a clearer impression is perceived in terms of the relevance of non-formal learning for national and European youth work. Generally speaking, in several cases an expansion of views is reported in terms of European issues and the role of the European Union:

“*I thought I had a realistic view, but it was further enriched through the confrontation with quite different views. (...) yes, we are all different, but the European Union is providing a framework for improving our lives*” (Gfs\_TCA3ta2).

Referring to the quoted case, it is noteworthy that the training improved strengths than compensated for its weaknesses. Her previous experiences were focused on continental Europe and were expanded to approaches more commonly applied in the Anglo-Saxon world.

## 4.4 Summary of present (international) youth work: changes and effects

### Before the training/activity

Youth projects/activities are characterized by a high level of commitment by youth workers towards young people and work in the youth field. The inclusion of young people in the planning and implementation process of projects and activities is often anticipated. The goal is to give young people tools they can use in the future as well. It is important to note that generally speaking the interviewees did not distinguish much between local and international projects. However, two aspects seem more important in the organisation and implementation of international projects: Collaboration with partners and the financial aspect.

Due to many external political and societal changes, NGOs often find themselves taking over responsibilities that should be provided by the respective government. Due to a lack of financial and personal resources, many tasks are fulfilled by volunteers. But these capacities are limited, therefore there is a need for more financial support from the respective governments as well as more EU involvement in order to support NGOs in fulfilling those tasks.

### After the training/activity

In the revision of interviews (3) it became evident that a total change of the perspective or professional environment for implementing international youth activities/projects are rare and the attended training/activity is one factor among others. It seems that a majority of interviewed participants already have a positive attitude and/or experience towards international youth work. In addition, a handful of interviewees (3) report explicitly that they are still not interested in international youth activities/projects due to their professional focus (i.e. working on the local level; beyond the youth field). In such cases, no change of the perspective/professional environment is perceived.

However, self-perceived changes predominantly refer to personal and/or professional development for more openness, engagements and interests for working internationally, a clearer view of youth work across Europe, and as planning/implementing youth projects with the needs of the target group in mind (see chapter: international youth work competences and development/changes; transfer into practice).

#### 4.4.1 Planning/preparing of (international) youth activities/projects

##### Before the training/activity

Including the needs and interests of young people in the planning process of projects seems to be an important factor for many youth workers. This makes it easier to reach the young people and achieve the envisaged outcomes. Three different approaches can be observed when it comes to inclusion and participation of young people. (1) An empowering and inclusive approach, (2) dominant role of the youth worker and/or prepared structure and (3) no possibility of including young people in the planning process because participants are recruited once the grant is approved.

However, not all interviewed participants are able to provide information about planning, either because they have too little experience or are not involved in it. Planning projects is limited to a core group in the respective organisations, but youth workers should stay flexible and adaptable to new situations and the young people. Finally, the provided E+/YiA guidelines are perceived as complex.

##### After the training/activity

Referring to the revised statements of the third round of interviews, the attended training/activity has triggered (un-)consciously changes in several cases. Thus, new approaches and/or methods have been taken on board for the planning/preparing process like embedding multiple options in the project design to include different needs and interests of participants or raising self-awareness on in-depth attitude towards young people. Nevertheless, there are still some interviewees (3) who consider no changes because nothing has been planned/prepared so far or the way of project planning/preparing remain the same (i.e. used methods have been already known) (see chapter: transfer into practice).

Furthermore, different levels of competences are acknowledged for planning/preparing/implementing youth projects/activities successfully, such as dealing with temporality and flexibility (i.e. to respond to the needs/interests of the target group or new situations), communication skills (i.e. active listening), digital skills as well as building solid and trustful partnerships (i.e. involvement of partners from the beginning of the planning/preparation process) (see chapter: international youth work competences and development/changes).

#### 4.4.2 Implementation of (international) youth projects/activities

##### Before the training/activity

For the successful implementation of projects, solid collaboration among different partners as well as regular communication and exchange of information are important aspects. Different forms of collaboration are mentioned in the interviews to make sure a project is successful. The collaboration between the formal/non-formal education sector to recruit participants and cooperation between politics and non-formal education sector can be observed as well.

The way and the timeframe of communication between project partners has an impact on the current and possible future projects. It seems there are several stages of communication: before, during and after the activity. As mentioned above the organisation and implementation of local and European projects seem very similar but more finances and a stable and trustworthy collaboration is essential. Often, participants described joining then preparing international projects as easier due to the extra effort that needs to be put in the international projects.

##### After the training/activity

In some interviews (3) improvements for the implementation of (international) youth projects/activities are considered such as:

- New approaches/methods how to implement a project
- Need analysis: Involvement of the target group
- Solid and trustful partnerships/collaboration
- Clearer division of roles when implementing a project (more efficient)
- Personal development (i.e. new skills/ person reflects more/critical)

With respect to communication procedures it is pointed out that more disadvantaged young people should be involved in international activities/projects within the E+/YiA programme. Thus, more appropriate communication seems to be required to reach a wider circle of young people, including online tools, internet, social media and apps. As a result, digital youth work is stressed to be very crucial in this regard.

#### 4.4.3 Inclusion of young people/young people with fewer opportunities and special needs

##### Before the training/activity

It is worth mentioning that some interviewees add critically that not each youth worker is fo-

cused on the inclusion/participation of young people. Moreover, the selection of participants is carried out sometimes after grant approval. Thus, no inclusion/participation of participants is possible during the preparation phase of the activity/project.

#### **After the training/activity**

In terms of professional development, raising awareness could be developed on the importance of the inclusion of young people as well as of YPFO/YPSN in activities/projects. In the majority of cases, it can be indicated that the inclusion of YPFO/YPSN is already state of the art in the daily work and therefore this issue does not play a central role in the interviews (3). In contrast, others perceive a lack of professional development about youth participation although it was expected based on the training/activity topic, but interesting topics were unexpectedly dropped or changed during the training/activity.

Overall, it is reported that appropriate methods such as new techniques and games for the inclusion of young people (with fewer opportunities/special needs) could be transferred into practice and specific needs should be included (i.e. financial and/or language contribution). However, enormous personal engagement and motivation from youth workers seems to be required to encourage and activate young people to go abroad.

Empowerment and critical thinking for the youth involvement are reconsidered in several interviews (3) to be highly relevant in social and political systems as well as for organisational strategies. According to this, it is stressed that wrong approaches may become apparent in the youth field: a lack of understanding and knowledge about the world of young people (with fewer opportunities and/or with special needs). Further critics in the third round of interviews refer to an unrealistic approach in terms of equal opportunities for all, the influence of will and money for the inclusion of YPFO/YPSN as well as advantages for people who have already made international experience (the more international experience you have, the easier the participation becomes in international youth projects/activities ).

#### **4.4.4 Networks and partnerships**

##### **Before the training/activity**

Issues of networking, building partnerships and/or initiating (international) project collaboration seem to be the most important themes in international activities in the youth field based on the interview statements.

In comparison to the focused networks/partnerships for (international) project collaboration, issues of network activate on a political level and/or inter-institutional level are rarely mentioned in the interviews. It becomes obvious that existing political engagement of the interviewee and/or the organisation may influence the political network activities. Without an organisational background, the impact on the political and inter-institutional activities may potentially be on a low level.

Networks and partnerships are estimated to be essential for implementing international youth projects and are indicated as one of the most important outcomes from the attended training/activity on the individual level. Furthermore, building partnerships are intended not only within but also outside the European Union. While professional and/or social networks could be established based on the contacts from the attended training/activity. As already stressed in interviews (2), in interviews (3) it is estimated again that different established networks imply the opportunity to be utilised in the future and/or facilitate collaboration beyond the framework of Erasmus+.

As a result, the trend of passive networks/partnerships seems to be reinforced in the third round of interviews. The most important difference in some statements of interviews (3) compared to interviews (2) is that the estimated re-activation of passive networks does not seem so easily feasible anymore due to (see chapter: transfer into practice):

- no lasting effects of anticipated projects (i.e. a lack of interests/capacity from individuals and/or organisations after coming back to routine; a lack of power relations from the peer),
- the contact person changed the organisation,
- unexpected funding obstacles (i.e. a lack of capacity in small organisations).

Thus, the considered passive networks and partnerships of interviews (2) remain inactive in a few cases of interviews (3). Nevertheless, in these cases it is stressed again that they could be reactivated any time if necessary. Notably, the question is if this implicitly “easy” reactivation of passive networks and/or partnerships are the reality in practice, especially after a long time period has elapsed.

Networking/partnerships at a political level and inter-institutional level still seem to play a marginal role in interviews (2) and (3) (see chapter:

(international) youth work competences). A relevant factor for implementing projects/activities at the political level can be assumed to be reassured: in cases where organisations/individuals have already been active in this regard, they will continue their engagements and initiate further projects/activities at a political level. In other cases, new projects with actors at the political level have been instigated seldomly. Most of time the engagements refer to (dissemination) activities on the national, local and regional level (infrequently on the European level) or involve community members and/or different actors in the youth field (see chapter: impact on the environment). Finally, one conclusion can be drawn in the end: the national level seems the starting point which pass over to the international level.

#### 4.4.5 Indicated European context

##### After the training/activity

The majority of interviewees in the second and third round stress a positive, relatively unchanged image of the European Union. International youth projects/activities within E+/YiA are especially highly appreciated where most of time more enthusiasm and openness could be perceived towards European youth collaboration. The current problematic political situation within and beyond Europe is mentioned critically and with worry in both rounds of interviews after the activity.

In general, the image of the EU turns out be positive in interviews (2) and is confirmed in different statements of interviews (3). First, interviewed participants assess the financial help from the EU as beneficial, especially for young people and civil society. EVS, for example, is valued at a high level to provide opportunities for (disadvantaged) young people. Second, the youth workers get the possibility to exchange and network with youth workers from other countries on a European level. As a result, some of them perceive an increased awareness on positive effects from these activities, such as new developed ideas on Europe, more interests in European topics, new (inter-)national projects and/or clearer impressions for the importance of non-formal-learning for the national/international youth work. Finally, expansions of views for European issues and the role of the EU can be indicated based on the analysed statements of the third round of interviews.

In regards to the discovery of European issues, one aspect dominates this matter in many interviews (2) and partially in interviews (3): country-specific differences in the youth field). In interviews (3) most of time it is reported that

current societal challenges like the refugee crisis, migration or solutions against radicalisation seems to have a strong effect on the self-perceived impact from the attended training/activity. Among some interviewees (3), this impact causes a turn-around of knowledge from abstract to experienced concrete challenges (i.e. refugee crisis) and/or a raises awareness on the importance of political approaches within the EU.

Another discovered European issue concerns European identity, which is addressed controversially in interviews (3). For some interviewees it has the connotation of identification and consciousness; others criticise a lack of discussion and precise definition. Further critics refer to perceived unclear selection processes of applicants for EU projects or a lack of European issues in projects.



## 5 — YOUTH WORK COMPETENCES AND THEIR DEVELOPMENT

### Introduction

This chapter is based on self-perceived (international) competence development/changes of interviewed participants within the E+/YiA programme (TCA; YWM), representing the main chapter of module (A) with revisited outcomes of module (B).

The following section predominantly refers to acquired knowledge, skills and attitudes/values (including learning strategies) before, during and after the training/activity across all cases in the interviews (1), (2) and (3) (surveyed before the activity, two months and twelve months after the activity). The subchapters concern gained knowledge about the E+/YiA programme and project application/implementation as well as youth work. Acquired skills are discussed regarding communication/language and digitalisation. Changes of attitudes/values are described in terms of awareness raising of interculturality, youth work, inclusion of young people/YPFO/YPSN as well as European values, issues and image.

Additionally, specific topics are separately analysed referring to knowledge, skills and attitudes/values like participation and active citizenship, intercultural learning/education and identities/discourse, non-formal education/learning or personal development, which were addressed most frequently in the interviews.

many overlaps between the perceived youth work competences in the interviews (1) and the developed RAY-CAP conceptual framework for youth work competences within E+/YiA, indicating coherent assumptions and requirements for competences in the (international) youth field.

However, one remarkable difference can be pointed out. The conceptual framework is developed more sophisticatedly than the reported competences in the interviews (1). Thus, critical questions can then be raised; either a reduced number of competences in the (international) youth work practice are sufficient or some competences are less developed or underrepresented (such as political dimension)? Furthermore, it seems relevant for the transnational analysis, if further competences could be developed during or after the attended training/activity, which were not addressed in the interviews before the training/activity. This seems especially interesting in terms of the addressed challenges in (international) youth work in the previous chapter. The youth sector is influenced by societal, political and economic changes, which require reviews of requested competences on a permanent base. Based on this, perceived developed competences (knowledge, skills and attitudes) from interviewees during and after the attended training/activity are further analysed, discussed and presented in this chapter.

### 5.1 Indicated (international) youth work competences in practice

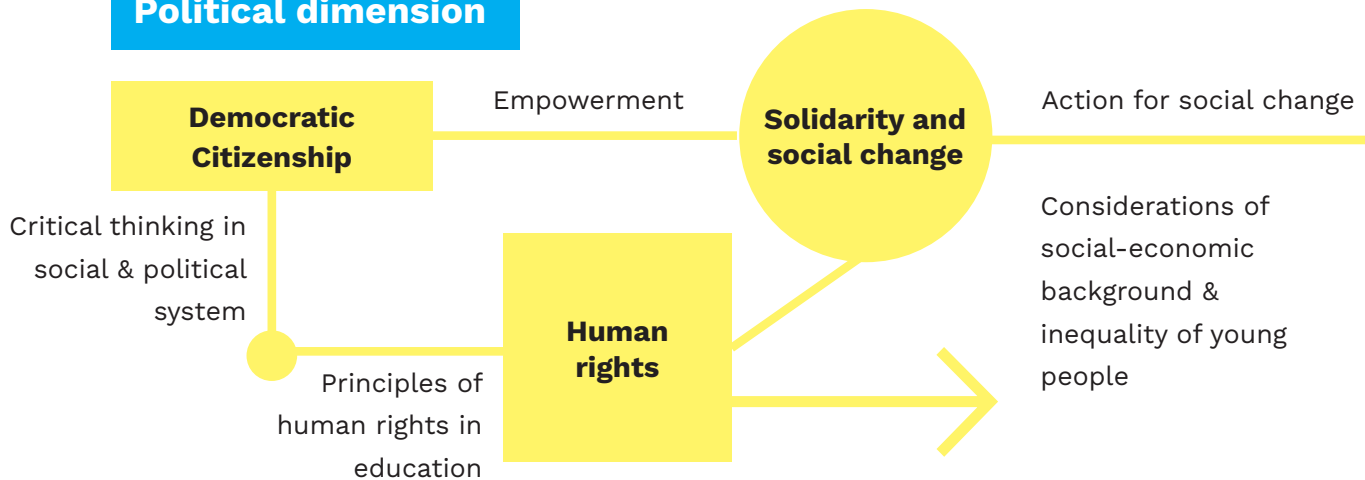
#### Before the training/activity

**“**People who work with youth need to be happy and satisfied with their own life in the first place. They need to be such sparkle-eyed persons (...). You cannot hate your job. You need to love your work; you need to have high motivation. You need to have a clear world-view. Before you can help someone” (Cfs\_TCA4xe1).

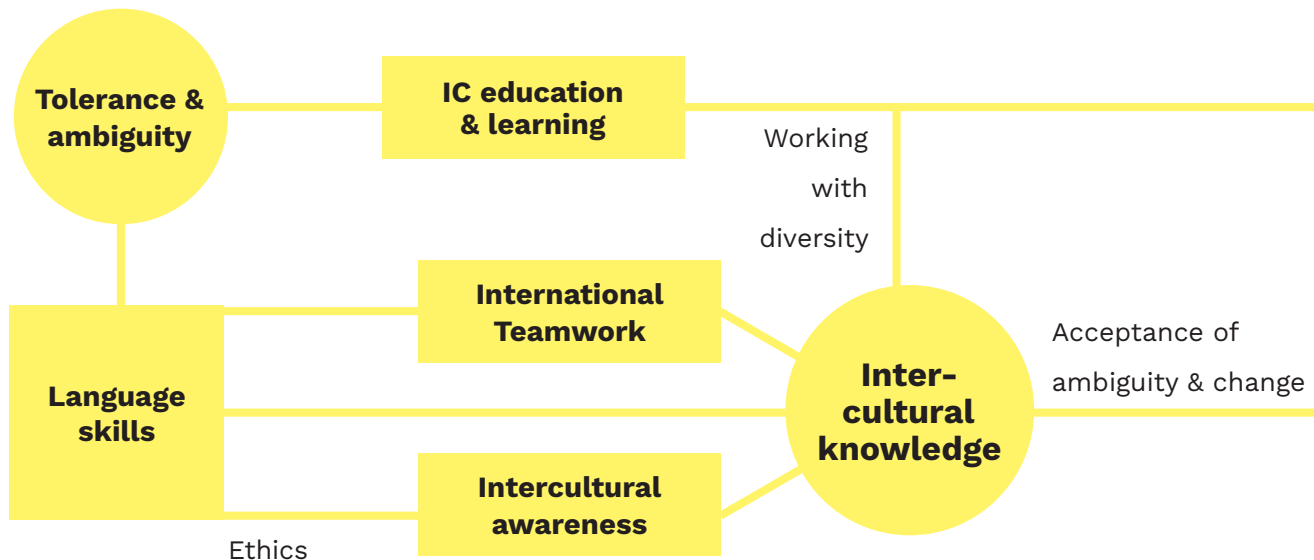
The division of the interview statements into political, intercultural and professional/quality dimension refers to the RAY-CAP conceptual framework for youth work within E+/YiA (see respective chapter in the appendices). There are

## YOUTH WORK COMPETENCES

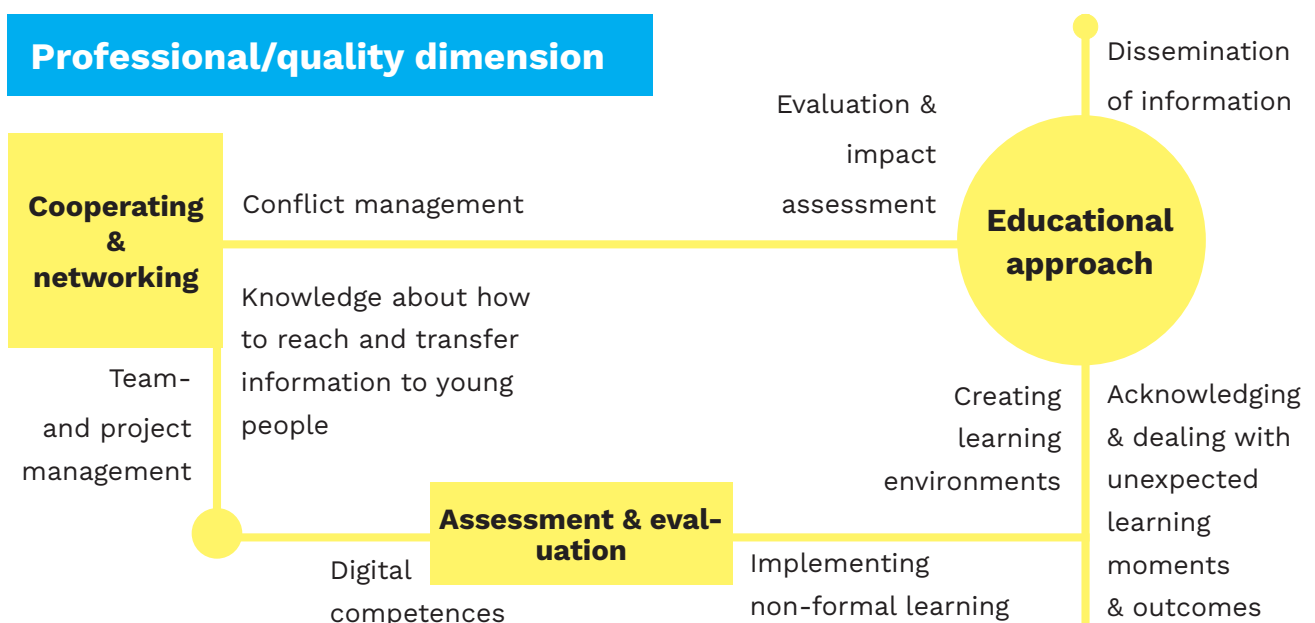
### Political dimension



### Intercultural dimension



### Professional/quality dimension



## 5.2 Acquired competences (knowledge, skills & attitudes/values)

“I think it is more important that competencies and values can be easily passed by these trainings. It provides a basis for knowledge that can be deepened. But as these trainings work by learning by doing, knowledge is not the most important thing, because all you need is a google, and you can find anything factual. But it is more difficult to develop the competencies at home alone. As far as values are concerned, due to the internationalization of trainings, it is very cool that so many people come together and come across so many different points of view, but still everybody is somewhat similar to each other, share the same attitudes, values” (Jms\_TCA6uh3).

### 5.2.1 Knowledge acquisition Before the training/activity

“If I need something concrete, I just take out the contact list of the participants, and I send an email to ask how it works in their organisation. So, it is possible and even beneficial to keep alive the connections. I like this way of operation and I would like to build this practice into our NGO as well” (Ifs\_TCA5uh1).

Knowledge acquisition in daily work through practical settings has been surveyed in the interviews. Based on this, peer learning happened via Internet and modern technology, as well as through the exchange with other organisations/youth workers on a local and European level.

Others consider self-learning as a key factor of youth projects. Non-formal methods like role plays on history enable participants to gain knowledge and facts by doing. At the same time, participants state that social skills can be learned through working in a team and communication in foreign languages. The crucial factor is to enable learning on all levels without using formal principles. For some interviewees content is more important than method.

Some organisations are mainly involved on the European level and have a strong focus on intercultural competences. Learning with a focus on intercultural competences is also possible through the sharing of experiences of staff members with migration background or through volunteers from other countries. For instance, one interviewee viewed group dynamics, especially with diverse people, as an important factor. Another

interviewee felt there are people who are involved in creating youth policies but lack the direct contact with youth work. Yet another believes that it is more important to use the information, experience, and the network after the training.

### After the training/activity

“I think the method of distributing information through constant interaction with participants was beneficial and helped participants to be more secure and more efficient in practice. Practical cases helped us to assimilate much faster theoretical information provided by trainers. I want to approach this method of constant interaction, both during the presentation of the theoretical part and practical part of the course” (Lfh\_YWM1or2).

According to the analysis of the interviews (2), tensions between formal (i.e. theoretical input) and non-formal approaches (i.e. exchange of experiences) among some participants can be assumed in interviews (2). In interviews (2) as well as in interviews (3) most of interviewees assess the combination of theory and practice to be highly positive. It is reported that this combined approach such as, the knowledge of dog therapy or existing knowledge in the field of arts (theatre of the oppressed) and the capacity and knowledge of the organisation could be increased.

Furthermore, input from an external researcher was appreciated. Participants gained theoretical knowledge that connected with professional realities, such as radicalisation. The need for more theory and European practical knowledge on radicalisation is appreciated and would increase confidence.

Acquired knowledge as perceived by the interviewees in interviews (2):

- knowledge of presentation and dissemination
- knowledge about E+ programme and opportunities (exchange; mobility; EVS; job shadowing; KA2; Youthpass)
- knowledge about project applications, fund-raising website and different country legislations
- knowledge about history of volunteering (highly appreciated)
- knowledge on immigration and training games; but youth work was not focused on; radicalisation
- knowledge about organising events/trainings



- knowledge about entrepreneurship (i.e. avoid beginners' mistakes in starting an own business)
- knowledge about disadvantaged children and young people and inclusion

With reference to revisiting learning outcomes in interviews (3), it is noteworthy that a few interviewees had difficulties remembering concrete learning and knowledge outcomes from the attended training/activity. Some of them perceive the development of knowledge as an accumulation of acquired knowledge over time based on previous trainings and experiences in practice. Interestingly, other interviewees could not remember anything concrete but later became aware on their knowledge gains from the training/activity during the interview process.

The most frequently acquired knowledge of the interviews (3) refers to the E+/YiA programme and the context of project application, preparation and implementation such as:

- project management (fundraising, submission of projects);
- opportunities for young people within the EU;
- knowledge on the NEET of youth and
- inclusion of young people in the project (see also chapter: (international) youth work).

**“***I gained more knowledge, more grounding, more experience in youth work at a European level. It is not something that a lot of [our organisation's] staff would have experience of or grounding in. I gained a lot of that and am more confident at looking at European opportunities” (Afs\_TCA1ei3).*

A handful interviewees (3) report that they gained a comprehensive knowledge on the subject of the NEET youth based on the presentations and discussions as well as through personal stories of representatives of NEET youth:

**“***I went there with knowing that I have heard something about it, but I had no information, I had no idea what the concept actually represents, how it actually works. Who are the youth, what it (the category) precisely is about, what is their background, why they run into it and how we could proceed with them” (Cfs\_TCA4xe3).*

In addition, interviewees (3) perceived an improved specialised knowledge, for instance the recognition of different roles and tasks in the own youth work; dog therapy; handicraft techniques; pedagogical methods for the work with

YPSN; body work; coping with stress; global environment; social entrepreneurship; media literacy and online tools/games. Nevertheless, one interviewee adds that acquired knowledge needs to be deepen further before it can be embedded into daily work.

It is noteworthy that entrepreneurship/organisational knowledge acquisition was an expectation in some interviews (1) (see chapter: personal expectations) but plays a more marginal role within the learning outcomes in interviews (2). For example, interviewees refer to entrepreneurship knowledge as being inspired by role models and participants who are social entrepreneurs. As a result, entrepreneurship is perceived as an attractive one with creativity and independence. In addition, confidence is gained around the possibility of working in the field of social entrepreneurship. Another enterprise aspect refers to the understanding of the work of NGOs, and this knowledge could be acquired through a field trip to a well-equipped Youth centre. There are some financial mechanisms behind NGO's that provide attractive alternatives for improving infrastructure, such as renting the room for weddings.

Some critics, although this was expected, mention that a deeper/sufficient understanding for organisational frameworks could not be gained through the attended training/activity. Furthermore, the own organisation is addressed critically regarding its attitude towards volunteers, who are not treated kindly and carefully, implicating the need for more democratic values. Lastly, it is reinforced in some cases (3) that during the training/activity, new acquired knowledge was limited because the presented content was rather like reacquainting the previous knowledge (see chapter: effectiveness of the training/activity).

#### **a) Knowledge about the E+/YiA programme**

Acquired knowledge about opportunities in the E+/YiA programme refers to options within its framework and formal requirements, as well as institutions that can offer consultations. Moreover, new approaches (i.e. LLL), project applications and grant opportunities within the E+/YiA programme (E+ projects) could be adopted, implying practical knowledge and techniques, and sometimes also conceptual knowledge (i.e. gender approach). Many trainings/activities were focused on sharing information and knowledge amongst the participants, which is stated again in the interviews (3). Knowledge was transferred from participants who had previous experience submitting project applications for a youth exchange and the event format was designed as a

forum to make connections, share and transfer ideas.

On closer inspection, project applications and processes of the Structured Dialogue in different countries were learnt. For example, a simulation was initiated for international youth exchange. Information on the practicalities was combined with a dramatic exercise on how to organise a youth exchange. In other settings, trainers used frontal methods by providing information, explanations and paid attention to assessment and evaluation. Finally, it is reported from some interviewees that they are now ready to teach/apply the successful application and implementation of the YE programme.

In comparison to this, gained knowledge on KA2 application differs between participants after the training/activity. Responses range from 'feels now capable to write successful applications' (at the end of the training a draft for the first project was available) to 'limited new knowledge about KA2 related to administration'.

With respect to Youthpass it is reported from some interviewees that they examined this instrument carefully and learned that it is a process of self-evaluation and process-evaluation (see chapter: Youthpass).

In terms of further education, following an international training, a national training is required. One interviewee stated that all the information regarding exchanges was brand new and therefore an additional national training was needed to ensure further understanding. Finally, some interviewed participants expressed the importance to see how partners deal with the know-how they gained within the process. For example, how PR was approached in different countries, 'follow-up' SD activities taken, and continuity from the preparation, through the activity phase and eventually to the utilization of the new know-how.

#### **b) Knowledge and skills about project application, preparation and implementation**


Issues of project management in terms of applications/preparation and implementation of projects/activities in E+/YiA programme were addressed in different trainings/activities, such as the project life cycle (application, preparation, implementation), crisis management and improvisation/dealing with ambiguity, needs analysis, evaluation and presentation of results. Many interviewees of the second round of interviews perceived that they were able to acquire respective knowledge and skills. For example, some of them

could return to their organisations with concrete outcomes, such as a draft version of a project application to submit.

This perceived acquired knowledge and skills are also present in interviews (3) (see chapter: effects and changes on the organisational level). In addition, interviewees received affirmation of their project management skills (positive feedback as a project-coordinator) and gained tips for successful application/administration or improved organisation and management of training projects through workplace learning (acted as coordinator of the training). In such learning settings, the training/activity was perceived as a very positive experience overall. Furthermore, information on potential projects would be appreciated, not just in youth exchanges but also benchmarks and access to/share respective information (see chapter: effectiveness of the training/support activity).

#### **Project application**

It is considered a pity that project applications tend to have as short a project life span as possible because of budgetary reasons. Before the training/activity some interviewees had the expectation that writing the applications was very difficult. During the training, this tension was resolved and they became less afraid of the application process. In some cases, they learnt how to write a project through stages, such as identifying a problem, developing solutions, identifying activities, involving young people, creating the programme and working in groups. Some interviewed participants of the third round interviews reconfirm the importance of acquired knowledge with respect to project applications, especially for fundraising.

 *Fundraising entered into my life after this training, [otherwise] I would not have such a potential" (Gfh\_YWM1rt3).*

#### **Discussed/integrated topics for project applications (as mentioned in second round interviews):**

- funding of the project
- feedback and evaluation of a work plan
- inclusion of disadvantaged groups and young people already in the planning stage of the project
- inclusion of European values
- evaluation processes in European countries
- needs analysis (how important is a need analysis with all stakeholders including the young people when planning a project)

Some critical statements address experience-based sharing of practices was expected rather than particular technical guidelines for writing projects. However, a practical approach seems recommended, which includes feedback from peers, learning from others' mistakes, and 'how to' practical guidelines on implementing, creating aims, planning and setting deadlines for projects.

### Project implementation

Overall, as a result of training/activity, interviewees in both round of interviews were highly motivated to apply knowledge acquired to practical design and implementation of projects. Some interviewees expressed that project preparation and implementation was better understood and, as a result of the experiments in the training/activity, different types of problems were covered that could be encountered during project planning and implementation.

In some interview statements (3), professional development was also considered. Not only in terms of planning realistic time resources, but also being more consequent with the objective of empowerment (participatory methods), team management as well as using new technologies. It is worth mentioning that one interviewee (3) states the following changes in project management through application of practice and experiences since the last interview:

- small project team;
- effective communications;
- flexibility (i.e. risk management; needs of the target group);
- reserve a buffer with respect to time resources.

Others indicate that they did not learn much about the implementation phase. It is perceived that the quality of implementing (learning) activities could be improved after attending this training/activity, for example by learning realistic and flexible planning of training activities. Nevertheless, some interviewees report that the presentation of a concept for project implementation was missing during the training/activity.

### c) Knowledge about youth work

In various interviews (2), a lot of knowledge was gained on youth work and NGOs both inside and outside of the EU. This kind of knowledge acquisition is also affirmed from many interviewees (3) (see chapter: present (international) youth work practice and changes/effects in the youth field).

*“Well, I certainly got to know more (about international youth work), because actually I had no experiences beforehand ... no direct contact with international youth work or... /.../ So sure, I learned through the workshops and contacts ' experiences a lot about it... a broader picture" (Ifs\_TCA10xe3).*

There was some surprise that in many countries there are no special academic study programmes to train youth workers. Thus, some interviewees were very interested to learn about theoretical approaches and various academic programs for youth work training. Acquired knowledge regarding participation theories, study programs and/or youth work in rural areas abroad were assessed to be very useful. The history of volunteering was also reported to be very interesting (and something completely new), as well as social work in the youth field. These social issues concern psychological support; social inclusion models for disadvantaged groups; services provided for young people and women or the support of the European Commission of young people in closed institutions.

### 5.2.2 Skills development

*“We had workshops there [in the activity], we had simulation [exercise] and for example we ask for money from the municipality. I use the knowledge I learned there in all my interviews. There I learned how to approach people. I try to be careful about some key aspects and I use such innovative techniques [workshop techniques and simulation] in my own trainings" (Gfh\_YWM1rt3).*

In several interviews (3), revised self-perceived developed skills were addressed in terms of professional, organisational and methodological skills:

- acquired methods/exercises/activities for the youth work such as giving feedback, recruiting process of volunteers, adaptation of activities including needs of young people, time and pedagogic objectives;
- skills and tools to design training initiatives;
- methods to elaborate and develop ideas;
- new working methods – games that can be used in the work;
- more collaboration skills;
- skills in using social media;
- techniques in art/artistic education;
- skills for learning to learn (learning goals and self-evaluation of learning);
- lobbying skills.

However, in interviews (3) various acquired skills could be improved for project development and implementation such as:

- skills in understanding the project logic and writing/submitting successful applications (were granted; searching for relevant information/calls);
- skills for team management;
- skills for time management;
- skills in organising events;
- skills in administration;
- skills in implementing youth projects such as negotiation, influencing, teamwork, contacting collaborators and putting forward own ideas and plans, including young people in the early stage of project preparation, adapting time and pedagogic objectives with respect to the beneficiary and the needs of the target group.

Acquiring new skills by ‘learning by doing’ and learning new methods/exercises are valuable and articulated often in interviews (3). The training inspired one interviewee together with another peer, for example, to think about methods for NEET youth in combination of youth mobility. Another interviewee “was able to organise an event, (...) because the trainers there have worked with us” (Gfs\_TCA3ta3). Another interviewed participant with previous experience in group work learned a lot about the uses of “group contracts” in non-formal settings.

“I learned the value of introducing a group contract at the start, especially if you are talking about human rights issues or gender equality, that it is a safe environment, that you are creating a space where people can openly talk and in a non-judgemental way that people should be listened to” (Bmh\_YWM1ei3).

In addition, it is frequently reported in the third round of interviews that either nothing could be improved, could be recalled and/or that acquiring skills was not the primary goal of the training/activity. For instance, some of the interviewees state they had already applied respective skills before attending training/activity (acquired and applied a long time before or perceived themselves to be experts).

“I knew beforehand how to go and communicate with youth and things like that. So (...) I did not gain any, so to say, concrete skills from there” (Bfs\_TCA5xe3).

#### a) Language and communication skills / Presentation and dissemination skills

According to the analysed interviews (2), emphasis was given to issues of language and communication issues, including presentation and dissemination skills.

##### Language skills

Language skills in international training/activity settings can be assumed as another key issue for participants, particularly in terms of obstacles and access to the training/activity. Many interviewees in the second round of interviews mention that English is/was difficult (i.e. to express oneself in English) and considered it to be an obstacle for attending the training/activity. They did however manage it and helped each other when any language barriers occurred (problems in understanding). It was expressed, for example, that trainer support was nice. A supportive atmosphere was created through team-building games, participants could ask questions at any time, and a lot of visual support was used in order to improve understanding. Due to this, it was much easier to overcome this language obstacle than was expected.

“I had difficulties but in this sense it [the activity] contributed a lot. My incompetence did not affect my learning; I only had difficulties in expression myself. I made use of technological programmes to understand the discussions. I did not have a big problem at the end” (Ems\_TCA5rt2).

Another contributing factor in terms of overcoming language barriers was the understanding and acceptance that not everyone’s language skills managed to cover professional vocabulary. There were quite a few people who were confronted with a lack of skills in their second language. They were however able to communicate by explaining themselves in more words than one, and by sharing their feelings of English as the second language.

Before the training/activity, the self-perceived language barrier may be increasing when the majority of participants attend the training/activity in their mother tongue. It is important to note that sometimes, the English language skills are estimated at a lower level than experienced in practice during the international training/activity. It is explored, for example, that it was relevant to overcome the personal comfort zone of communication, which is also perceived from a couple of interviewees of the third round of interviews (3).



**“***I went a little from my comfort zone because it was basically everything in English, I also did not have any colleagues of Slovenes” (Cfs\_TCA2ii3).*

Nevertheless, it should be noted that some interviewees claim that their limited linguistic abilities and problems in understanding content of the training/activity caused restrictions to learning outcomes. Overall, the learning outcomes seem remarkably high after the training/activity as indicated in both rounds of interviews (2) and (3). Participants used the language almost daily, which indicates benefits in language development: to implement a workshop in English; to give a presentation in English is imaginable, to respond to questions and debate appropriately; to communicate with various people; speak more fluently; accumulate more (specific youth related) English vocabulary especially related to digital youth work; to feel more confident and comfortable to speak in English in a professional environment/in front of a public audience; and to work in a multinational team. Language can develop better when you are in action, when you live through it. As already mentioned, there was also a high level of support from peers and trainers to help others in case of language obstacles, especially in terms of expert/specific vocabulary.

Acquired language skills predominantly refer to improved/developed English communication competences, which is again emphasised several times in the interviews (3). Languages other than English are rarely addressed, such as German and Russian. Finally, intentions were expressed to pursue English language further, mostly through informal learning (English subtitles, English movies, etc.).

### Communication skills

Communication is an essential aspect in daily and professional life and to increase professionalism in work with young people. New techniques of communicating efficiently were learnt such as ‘pitching’ (expressing yourself in a short time period) and self-expression. Communicating a variety of institutional goals to the public and dealing with ambiguity was assessed positively for the acquisition of linguistic competences by several interviewees (3). In addition, it is reaffirmed that skills for self-presentation and for self-confidence were acquired. For example, an interviewee of the second round of interviews chose non-violent communication to overcome some difficulties in the communication processes. She

felt better able to communicate and to understand where conflict could arise. She felt more confident to act, to discuss, to communicate, and to face conflict more immediately. Another example of an acquired communication skill involves the concept of ‘communicating meaningfully’. The skill and knowledge acquired by the interviewee concerned self-knowledge and meaningful communication via the ‘village method’ or non-verbal communication. This interviewee seeks to integrate this learning into the work of the organisation (see chapter: effects and changes on the individual level; effects and changes on the organisational level).

The general atmosphere of the training/activity fosters tolerant and constructive discourse, and further emphasised the importance of active listening in community building and negotiating disagreements.

**“***Because when we know each other well, we are used to arguing, but people we don’t know so much ... So, that requires listening to the other. (...)” (EfhTCArf2).*

The reviewed statements in interviews (3) may verify that active listening could be further fostered through intercultural and professional situations.

### Presentation and dissemination skills

The motivation behind performing/presentation tasks is to raise professional development for working in international settings, which requires English language skills and presentations skills. Presentation skills acquired include, graphic facilitation and methods for presenting the organisation, public speaking and speaking in a second language. Leading presentations on behalf of the team, facilitating a session or leading a workshop improved presentation skills and/or English language skills. Even participants whose first language was English found in interviews (3) that there was valuable learning about making presentations:

**“***Looking back, it certainly helped to improve my presentation skills, in terms of presenting to an international audience of youth workers from around Europe, with different levels of fluency in English” (Afs\_TCA1ei3).*

The acquired learning outcomes are intended to be implemented in the organisation/used in the future in daily business, which is confirmed in several interviews (3) (see chapter: transfer of learning/training outcomes into practice).

In interview (3) it is reinforced that presentation skills could be further improved through intercultural and professional situations during/after the training/activity such as:

- using every opportunity to practice presentation skills in the workshop and apply them in studies;
- learning particular digital presentation techniques;
- engaging with the audience during the presentation.

It is also emphasised in several interviews (2) that international skills are sometimes missing among staff members in organisations. This could be a career perspective for participants who attended an international training/activity and improved respective skills for international work.

## b) Digital skills

**“Young people put too much trust in the internet. They don’t have the habit to check the information in several sources”**

(Cfh\_YWMIp2)

In general, digital skills may be underrepresented in the interview statements, as well digital issues/topics seem to be marginalised in the provided training/activity. However, it is reported for example, the know-how on virtual mobility was shared, and/or a closed Facebook community was created to share useful materials. Additionally, new tools, such as apps, games on Facebook or open source technology were discovered and learnt. ICT is also used within the training programmes and/or presentation of projects through interactive and web-based options. Awareness was raised on the potential of ICT (i.e. new Internet programmes on communication; creating and administering web pages) in youth work. Prior to the project, one interviewee thought the Internet was a threat to youth work but the digital project changed this perspective.

**“The Facebook-based simulation game that we developed during the training opened my eyes and made me realise that the internet can also be a tool used in youth work”** (Imh\_KA1lp2).

The training/activity encouraged further exploration into the role of online games and trends in the youth field, especially as the role of online games in the life of European young people seems highly important. Trainers used very creative methods, and also demonstrated the use of

games. However, online games (and their use for specific purposes) demand deeper technological knowledge and ICT competencies prior to embedding them in daily work.

In some interview statements more integration, knowledge, confidence and experience on digitalisation are requested in the following areas:

- digital competences;
- better use of social media and digital apps for daily things in own personal life, e.g. Internet banking, buying bus tickets, etc.;
- the need for digital youth work, including country-specific differences and approaches to face-to-face interactions;
- the need to involve more social media in youth work. Young people spend most of their free time with their telephones and computers and youth workers need to operate in the same space on the internet.

**“It has become very evident to me, that in addition to ‘the traditional methods’ it is really important to open up. So, it is really true that some young people can be reached only by internet, only, ... we cannot ignore this fact, we should evolve, develop new competences, I should be much more open to this new world”** (Efs\_TCA3uh2).

Professional development in digitalisation in (international) youth work is an issue that should be reconsidered. Digital skills are rarely addressed in the responses of interviews (3). There is only one interview statement that refers explicitly to developed competences for social media. This interviewee acquired digital skills through the project, she uses social media in youth work and also analyses the type of approaches work with young people. Further statements with respect to digital competences could be analysed in the next chapter about changes of attitudes and values.

## 5.2.3 Changes of attitudes/values

### Before the training/activity

This section explores self-perceived changes of attitudes in daily youth work. As a result, the following conclusions can be drawn based on the interview statements.

NGOs in the youth sector are taking over responsibilities and tasks that should be provided by the government/state. Much of this work is organised through the help of volunteers, but there are limits to the extent volunteers can be asked to be available or participate.

There is however, a positive change concerning the image of the EU. Among interviewees, there is a link between a positive image of the EU and training, engagement and implementation of an international/European project. Firstly, the EU's resource allocation for projects or the financial support for EU member countries are appreciated. Secondly, the European youth work supports a better understanding of youth work in other regions/countries.

With regard to political topics, some interviewees question the effectiveness of the EU and dealing with refugees. One interviewee highlights the change of political discourse around Islam after terrorist attacks and a greater focus on religion. Discrimination against minorities and particularly Muslims became a topic across European countries. According to the interviewed participant, values should be freed from religious aspects or European territory and be more general (see chapter: (international) youth work competences and development/changes).

The training itself seems to have a positive impact on initiating new projects on a local level, sharing gained experiences with other organisations and inspiring other youth workers. Some were already positive about the EU and considered its social work practice in line with EU standards. Realising how many possibilities exist, interviewees would like their institution/ministry to implement similar international to local projects (top-down).

### After the training/activity

**“***Value of International Youth Work, was a segment of the activity program, which reinforced my idea of the importance and necessity of working with socially, culturally and economically disadvantaged young people, and gave me an extra motivation to try to give our youth a real chance for active participation in the community”* (Dfs\_TCA1or2).

**“***During almost every activity we were divided into mixed groups to learn from each other and to learn the realities of each country and it changed my image of the European Union, which I now look upon with more interest”* (Gfh\_YW-M1or2).

Changes of attitudes are predominantly expressed through raising awareness on a variety of issues, the societal context of youth work and developing discourse. In interviews (2) youth workers give more importance to solidarity than economy, and a greater importance of community spirit. Per-

ception change was also noted by one interviewee who was better able to appreciate and see the potential of the young people she is working with. She was unaware how active young people were until she witnessed it in rural areas in the hosting country.

Another interviewee appreciated the trainers' motivational attitude, addressing participation in the training and being able to motivate participation. As an outcome of the training, the interviewee values the importance of participation as an overall aim of youth work in general and as well as developing a more participatory approach with young people.

Other examples in interviews (2) for change of attitudes concern:

- inter-culturality and sustainable development (achieved through the presentations of social entrepreneurship mini-projects presentations and the open way of interaction between the participants);
- exploring issues from another perspective (obtained through a simulation game, experiencing different roles in a fund-raising activity);
- communication between the NGOs, companies, and the community (positive change);
- importance of collecting and using information;
- exchange of experiences of participants outside of Europe ('cross-cultural realisation');
- increased commitment to provide (international) activities with disadvantaged/disabled young people, and efficient services to young people in prison;
- learning to live together with migrants in harmony and transferring this to the local community (realised throughout the discussions on project preparation).

Overall, in the reviewed statements of interviews (3) long lasting effects of international experience can be observed in the context of developed attitudes and values such as:

- decisions to work in the youth field
- being a social/youth worker
- improved motivation on own work and to implement changes (i.e. own business, in the work with YPSN/YPFO, NEET youth)
- enthusiasm for European/international youth projects

Gamification (online games) is also a new acquired approach to youth work. Some interviewees (3) had to overcome their doubts whilst others embraced the value of simulation games.

“These are technically barriers, but we are the main obstacle. I believe that while young people have unlimited access to these tools, we, people at my age, must learn this kind of operation, these methods and these tools. We ought to understand that it is increasingly the only effective way to reach out to these young people. And anyone who works with these young people is confronted with this. We should adopt to this situation and evolve” (Efs\_TCA3uh3).

In order to reach young people, youth workers need to speak their language and use their communication tools, such as social media. One interviewee believes there's still a lot to be done as far as the connection between youth work and social media is concerned. Especially on the internet, it can be difficult for youth workers to keep up with young people. Some recommendations were to showcase good practice examples of using social media in youth work from other countries and to meet some partners for future projects.

Several interviewees improved their awareness of different values, backgrounds and/or a more comprehensive view on youth work through contact with peers from different countries (related to intercultural competences) (see chapter: (international) youth work). One interviewee indicates that he is more open minded since this first mobility experience, which could be useful for his future job. However, another interviewee explains his attitudes and values have not changed but rather his idea of the sector has changed. The training made him aware that he does not know the youth sector very well.

The international experience with peers of the E+/YiA programme seems impressive for some interviewed participants in raising their awareness on the importance of taking the opportunities and initiative. Further positive effects with respect to developed attitudes/values could be partly reaffirmed in interviews (3) such as: improved openness, solidarity, tolerance, active listening, expressing oneself, cooperation, commitment, engagement to democratic dialogue, critical thinking, improved attitude towards non-formal learning, awareness raising on subjectivity, diversity and YPFO (i.e. open attitude towards young people, trying to understand and accept differences more easily). Openness and tolerance are considered by many interviewees to be the foundation of an exchange relationship as well as being open-minded to diversity and to different ideas/thoughts, such as “this posture of welcoming and non-judgement” (Ffs\_KA1rf3).

Awareness raising with regards to prejudices and stereotypes are another key aspect for developed attitudes/values. One interviewee (3) breaks down stereotypes and personal prejudices against transgender people and learns to consider people from a new perspective. Another interviewee learned, for example, how to leave aside their own prejudices and approach people in a more transparent and reconciliatory attitude, gaining a further respect for diversity and cultural differences.

In interviews (3), changing attitudes/values could be initiated through:

- sharing attitudes and values with each other;
- reflecting on personal perspectives, life and work
- experiential learning (i.e. experienced the pressure of a game situation as a ,player‘);
- learning through role models (i.e. impressive experts and/or trainers of the attended training/activity).

Nevertheless, aspects of no changes of attitudes/values are raised in the interviews (2), indicating the importance to revisit these statements within the third round of interviews twelve months after the activity. In the transnational analysis of interviews (3), it becomes evident that a lack of changes remains an issue for several interviewees. Attitudes and values are “confirmed, let's put it this way” (Bfh\_YWM1ta3) rather than changed (see chapter: general assumptions and conclusions for interviews (2) and (3)). Despite the fact that no change of attitudes/values are perceived by the majority of the interviewed participants, existing humanistic values could be reinforced, which correlate with European values or creating a (differentiated) perspective on European identity by some interviewees (see chapter: present (international) youth work).

In other interview cases nothing concrete is mentioned with respect to developed values/attitudes because the attended training/activity was too short for any changes or the question was not addressed/raised during the interview. Some discussions of attitudes and values may occur, especially about European values, but the impression is discussion rather than something applicable for daily work.

#### a) European values

European values seem to be difficult to understand and talk about in particular interviews of the second round. This can be seen with respect to the current status of European values: differ-



ent understandings and definitions occur, indicating a common set of European values is missing. It may be that more common goals exist, rather than shared values. Thus, a concept of European values is required, which should be distributed and known among (international) youth workers. Nevertheless, equality seems to be a value shared by all.

European values came up mainly in discussions (in a more global context also from perspective of non-Europeans) or in the form of goals (i.e. intention to become more international), raised predominantly by trainers at the beginning of the activity/training, in order to compare situations and discuss differences between countries and across/beyond Europe (but not entirely dealt with, which was confirmed in a handful interviews (3)). In interviews (3) European values were not a topic or subject in the training but in some cases informal discussions about refugees and EU policy happened. One interviewee critically raised the lack of concrete discussions and definitions of European norms and values, although the term European values is used quite often in the society. Thus, global citizenship rather than European identity is possible for this interviewee because he is acting in a global context.

‘Europe’ is perceived as something very central but also constricting. In some interviews (2) it is addressed that different youth workers from different countries have somewhat different values. Values may differ among European youth workers, while youth work is assumed to have similar issues in all countries by one interviewee. Nevertheless, other interviewees realise different definitions of ‘youth’ or youth work across countries (see chapter: intercultural learning/education and identities/discourse). One interviewee (2) comments that the increasingly proactive role of the state in youth work in her own country (Ireland) was viewed with unease by participants from other countries, for historical and cultural reasons: “...in some countries there is a fear around government influence and a real resistance to it, and that really came across at the seminar” (Afs\_TCA1ei2).

With respect to different definitions and perceptions, some examples are summarised from the interview statements (2) in the following (see chapter: participation and active citizenship):

- Europe is civilised, people are hard-working and they are respectful of people;
- equal, careful treatment in the training/activity, independent from the country of origin or any language accent;

- democracy (perception that EU countries could establish a good system of democracy);
- peace (believed to be also ensured in Turkey);
- human rights;
- active citizenship (exchange and discussion raise country-specific differences, depending on political influence);
- freedom (but freedom and democracy are not exclusively connected with Europe).

For others, European values remained the same, especially when different trainings/activities have been previously attended within the E+ programme (i.e. student mobility). This could refer to one assumption that the personal impact of European values may correlate with the level of experience and awareness raising.

European values themselves were not new, however the way in which they are perceived by others was completely new to some interviewees (i.e. discovering own European values). Participants learnt (to accept) that there are different perspectives. “How- and why-questions – [the reasons] why the EU is fighting for those values” (Gfs\_TCA3ta3) were clearly addressed at the training.

However, a substantial number of interviewees of the second round of interviews address European values with diverse issues and discourses. They became aware of the importance of European values, and to mobilise people to be more active in this regard. In a handful of statements in interviews (3) this trend is strengthened in terms of raising commitment towards European values and the importance of political approach for issues of migration and/or radicalisation. For one interviewee an increased commitment to European values may be indicated, for example by strengthening democracy and action against any racism.

In addition, another interviewee is doing many projects within the European Citizenship Program. European aspects are always ‘at the heart’ of these projects despite many critics concerning some EU policy and they are planning an arts project on European themes. In the same respect, another interviewee now pays more attention to European values as mentioned in the Paris Declaration and focuses on political aspects. These are emphasised in his daily work and shared across networks.

### 5.2.4 Personal development

“The things I heard there, had impact on the ways of how I look at certain things. (...) It [the training] was one milestone in my process of growing up and shaping my personality. I started to apply for other projects, I started thinking a bit differently, I became more active in the organisation EPEKA in the field of youth work” (Hmh\_KA11ii3).

General statements on personal development are perceived in the interviews though attending training/activity, such as;

- becoming a more tolerant, patient, calm and open-minded person (interviews (2));
- broadening world-view (interviews (2)) and openness for other cultures (interviews (3));
- taking initiative and team work (interviews (2));
- developing self-confidence in English, encouraged and self-confident to teach and communicate (interviews (3));
- relating to people and building trust ('convincing them')
- discovering strengths (interviews (2))
- being present and in contact with people (interviews (3))
- developing ability to express own culture (interviews (2));
- gaining self-confidence through group work (interviews (2));
- continuing to be positive and making the best of the experience even if own expectations are not achieved (interviews (2));
- following group dynamics and objectives (interviews (2)); positioning oneself in a group (interviews (3));
- being more enthusiastic and motivated in continuing the youth work (interviews (2));
- acting in a foreign country without the personal network (interviews (3)).

No personal development is seldomly reported in interviews (3), although the frequency and quality of the statements were reduced compared to the responses in the second round of interviews. However, some positive effects on personal development may not transfer over to daily business, as explained in one interview:

**“I am more open for other cultures: 10 days of working together, eating together, many things together, that gives us time to get to know each other”**

(Gfs\_TCA3ta3)

Despite the positive experience of interculturality with peers, the interviewee did not transfer this methodological approach to the entrepreneurship event she organised (see chapter: transfer of the training/learning outcomes into practice).

#### a) Confidence in youth work

Interactive methods seem to encourage participants to be active and carry out self-reflections (individual thinking and reflection), which has had an effect on some interviewees' personal development such as increasing (self-)confidence. This refers to, for example, becoming more confident in performing in front of European peers and management staff; using theatre in organisational settings; improved ability to exchange experience; loss of shyness; developed capacity to address an audience and get their attention; and performing music therapy.

In interviews (3), similar statements confirm personal development in terms of improved self-confident, such as being present and expressing oneself as well as being more oneself. In addition, an increased confidence in doing own job (i.e. international youth work; drama methods entrepreneurial activity) is also confirmed in several statements of interviews (3). In the case of one interviewed participant, a volunteer, the difference in confidence and self-presentation between interview (1) and interview (3) was particularly striking, so much so that the interviewer commented on it to the interviewee and asked her if she agreed. She responded, “Oh yes, in the first one [interview before the training] I hadn't a clue but then when you come back and start using what you learned it makes a complete difference” (Dfh\_YWM2ei3).

There was some surprise among a few interviewees (2) that every experience was welcomed in the training/activity and the whole experience provided a lot more confidence or self-confidence in international youth work.

“At the end of each activity we were encouraged to freely express our opinions regarding the experience itself, and the debates took place during breaks or at the end of the day depending on each one's interest” (Hms\_YWM1or2).

The training itself may not provide enough stimulation for concrete skills, for example developing skills to act as a mentor. Only when feedback was received regarding professional work or in specific sessions, could a positive impact on their confidence in youth work be perceived. One interviewee was able to showcase how well she

works in a group. She was given certain tasks and responsibilities because of her vast experience in youth work. She felt trustworthiness was one of the reasons everyone wanted to work with her. This participant was full of motivation and excitement after the training.

Younger participants with less experience expected some tools and methods from more experienced participants, to learn from other's experiences and connect these with their interests. Several interviewees learnt a lot from the other participants, whose professional confidence helped to improve their own knowledge and competences. Less-experienced interviewees also received good feedback from other participants in terms of applying their knowledge in European youth work. Listening, giving feedback, and being ready to accept critique are deemed to be essential in this context. One interviewee in the third round of interview still feels that she has become more confident in what she does because she received good feedback on her work from others at the training.

#### **b) Self-knowledge; self-discovery; identity**

Applied methods to encourage self-reflection and self-discovery refer to either regularly organised reflection processes within the training/activity (mostly daily reflections), visualising personal development together with good and bad examples, developed personal learning plans to reflect on the own strengths and weaknesses, or areas and ways of improvement. Through daily reflection processes, self-knowledge and self-discovery may cause several effects on personal development such as identity construction (i.e. age and experience) and alterity, increasing curiosity and openness to improvise and experiment, realising the importance of active listening, learning own learning style, becoming aware of own role and place in the group or create the sense of belonging to a group, becoming aware of the own strengths and weaknesses, and exploring own identity and dealing with the resulting potential emotional. In addition, awareness raising on being an innovative person is highlighted in interviews (3).

As an outcome of the training, one interviewee is exploring her identity and future goals. The training initiated a new process of self-discovery. Another interviewee overcame her shyness to become a spokesperson. A further interviewee appreciated the feeling of belonging to a group that works for peace. Finally, an interviewee 're-discovered' how to be tolerant, to fight fixed ideas, to question her convictions and to go further

in what she already knew. She also learnt 'again' to reach out to others. In general, an improved self-knowledge or personal development are assessed positively in almost every interview after the training/activity.

**"I knew myself absolutely better in my teaching life and in youth work. I wasn't aware of it before. Now I know better what and when I have to do for my weaknesses, and it makes my job easier"**

(Ffs\_TCA6rt2)

#### **c) Emotions; empathy; dealing with emotions/ conflicts**

In general, empathy and dealing with emotions are assessed by several interviewees in the second round of interviews to be two of the most important pedagogical competences, which are also highly relevant in (international) youth work.

Empathy and emotional discourses were indicated as important parts in the training in various interviews (2). Participants learnt to handle emotional and content-related conflicts, and how to take care of people who could not withstand such situations.

**"...we did a very interesting workshop where we took things from the local to the global and looked at human rights, equality, general respect and empathy. Empathy was a very strong thread throughout the whole piece...and how empathy can nurture awareness as well"** (Bmh\_YWM1ei2).

The ability to take on the perspective of others is constantly illustrated and emphasised in the interviews (2). Taking part in the mobility allowed some interviewees to develop empathy for those in difficult situations or with fewer opportunities, and learnt tools and methods to support volunteers more professionally. Some methods are designed to improve empathy, such as dramatic exercises to feel like an EVS volunteer (i.e. homesick; feeling alone in the hosting country) or exercises with disabled young people. Some changes of attitudes could be indicated after the training/activity regarding how to deal with EVS volunteers, for example explaining what is expected and using a common language to improve communication processes. These methods are perceived to be helpful for developing respective competences by some interviewees.

As a result of taking part in the course, one interviewee developed more empathy towards people with special needs. Another interviewee explores

her learning with regards to her style of support, and how to let volunteers express their feelings.

A few trainings are described as being emotional, participants shared a lot of experiences and concrete cases as a group. In one training session there were conflicting experiences, one interviewee felt supported whilst another criticised the training approach as going too far within an educational context. During another training, an interviewee tried to influence the programme by demanding more reflection about course. This led to a conflict with the leading team but in the end the methodology was changed. It is assumed by one interviewee that intervening in discussions chaired by many people is an emotional obstacle difficult to overcome.

Conflict management became a major interest of another interviewee, to develop conflict resolution skills and to learn how to deal with conflicts arising from mentor and mentees different expectations. Knowledge about conflict (triangle schemes, conflict steps, resolution strategies) was helpful for some interviewees in the second round of interviews to better understand their own job. Conflict theory presented in the training/activity was new for one interviewee, and the learning outcomes were strengthening and consolidating her competences. Finally, conflict was also explored as a concept of 'well-being', as it is an opportunity to express and listen to different arguments and find a common solution.

### 5.2.5 Non-formal learning and non-formal education

Non-formal education/learning tends to be a main focus within international trainings/activities, which have different effects on the interviewed participants. A strong motivation to learn more about non-formal education becomes obvious, especially in an intercultural context. Even when the non-formal approach is not personal preference, the success of simulation method encourages participants to use it within their own activities. The application of active learning methods based on the non-formal approach in daily business is indicated by several interviewees and is often confirmed in the third round of interviews.

In the training/activity it is also learnt that youth work should be based on non-traditional, creative methods, rather than academic. The use of creativity and methods for learning, individual and team work as well as how to work with young people becomes a crucial point. New methods are learnt from non-formal education, concepts

and methods, including implementing international training and learning about Europe, which is also mentioned in some interviews (3). Some of these acquired methods (not only at theoretical but also at interactive level) refer to ice-breaker games, for example labyrinth theatre and storytelling method were mentioned as most interesting in working with young people, as well as drumming therapy in working with children with Trisomy 21 and those with autism.

A few interviewees discovered the importance of evaluation – “without evaluation you should not call it an educational activity” (Kfs\_TCA9de2). Self-management and considering participants' needs were demonstrated by sharing coordinator, trainer and facilitator responsibilities within the group, as a method of shared responsibility and to ensure an inclusive learning process. There is a desire to create an optimal learning environment and to increase the quality of learning activities. Techniques are developed to include non-formal methods into formal education, in order to create a cohesive learning environment for young people. Some interviewees applied such methods in their activities, for instance ice-breakers, team building, or the walk of power, which were used to develop awareness and reduce discrimination.

“*I can only repeat myself, for me this has resulted in a great change, that I have tried this different kind of learning experience on myself. It is worth experiencing and then you can really understand it. Obviously, I was interested in these methods before and I was motivated to go deeper*” (Gfs\_KA2uh3).

The training is designed as a non-formal approach to traditional pedagogy. One interviewee in interviews (2) had a high appreciation of the learning experience, realising non-formal education can have a much larger impact than the formal one practised in schools. Another interviewee was transformed by the non-formal activities, and following the training he organised many extra-curricular activities for students with respect to fairness, punctuality, reliability, transparency in communication and the ability to develop methodologies in the field of youth activities. A further interviewee widened her perspective towards new methods such as theatre and drama.

However, not all interviewed participants in the second round of interviews viewed the non-formal approach as a positive experience. One interviewee felt the training could be improved by paying more attention to participants' needs, and using learning tools more relevant for adults.



**“***I can accept that the non-formal learning has its limits. But I always encourage my students to speak, to signal if we are not in the right direction. So when they said it is not OK for them, I took it seriously and I thought through it again. I realised that first maybe we should learn to cooperate and work together. I stepped back and gave them more space. Now, I am deliberately trying to support this, I trust them better”*  
(Gfs\_KA2uh3).

A substantial share of participants in the interviews (3) considered the non-formal approach as part of the training/activity but it was not the main focus, nor explicitly addressed. However, many of the pedagogical methods, games or exercises may contribute to professional development in the youth field. As reported by a few interviewees, there was an increased confidence in applying non-formal methods. One interviewee, employed in the formal education sector, stressed in interview (3) the use of non-formal methods in formal settings:

**“There is a great value in bringing the non-formal approach back into the formal education system...the Erasmus Plus experience has been a huge benefit”**  
(BmhYWM1ei3)

### 5.2.6 Intercultural learning (ICL), education, identities and discourses

“Intercultural and peer learning has been achieved through interaction among participants both in the activities provided during and outside the training course, being able to discuss, adopt and understand different visions” (Lfh\_YWM1or2).

Intercultural knowledge is mentioned most frequently in the interviews (2), indicating that intercultural learning/education may be one of the key aspects within international trainings/activities. The learning outcomes refer to:

- developing critical thinking and avoiding stereotypes, as well as accepting diversity, learning new knowledge to be used in future work;
- considering cultural differences (i.e. legal arrangements for the age) for the planning of a project;
- understanding multiculturalism in teams in terms of differences of thinking and the risk of misunderstandings;
- obtaining a broader view of intercultural dialogue and communication methods;

- developing skills to communicate with other partners from other cultures, introducing culture through words, smiles and even body language;
- experiencing ways to approach inclusion, social integration and multiculturalism.

In addition, new knowledge could be acquired on cultural youth work and its arrangements in other European countries through initiated cultural exchange and presentations of the residence country during the training/activity. Intercultural exchange among peers was focused on discrimination, non-formal learning or conflicts in respective countries as well as on refugees/migration in Europe (see chapter: present (international) youth work).

Knowledge may also be acquired when observing/talking to colleagues or mentees, and personal life experiences have a significant, although implicit effect on ICL (see chapter: training and support activities).

Returning attendees of international trainings/activities indicate that previous training outcomes/experiences influenced personal development regarding self-awareness and openness with others. Participation also had positive effects such as motivation for own work (more energy and inspiration) and developed social skills. Interviewees made new friends/contacts, had nice/new experiences and understood the venue countries' culture/people better. Previous attendance in an international training/activity (i.e. long-term EVS program) motivates participation in further international events (see chapter: training and support activities).

Another relevant aspect for ICL concerns behaviour or personal attitude towards interculturality in the interviews (2), such as motivation and willingness of the participants to contribute their views or develop skills to behave in an inclusive way amongst the participants. Developed behaviour towards participants included using English rather than national language, avoiding prejudices about other countries and cultures and dealing with any conflicts carefully in an international setting. ICL influenced participants own behaviour such as sitting with a participant from another country and some interviewees experienced that it was easier for them to show their creative side and express themselves in an international context. Being in contact with people from different cultures and religions fostered more sensitivity towards others and broadened perspectives to overcome prejudices. Relationships between countries become closer, which

makes further collaboration easier. Following the training, an interviewed participant became more aware of the potential for intercultural learning across the whole country of residence: “I have suggested to my colleagues that we have some kind of cross-border learning programme, I think it would be very beneficial for the older youth club in particular” (Cfh\_YWM2ei3).

Avoiding prejudice against other countries or cultures and dealing with any conflicts with care is an intercultural learning featured many times in interviews (3) (see chapter: changes of attitudes/values).

Intercultural competences are an important part of practice in youth work, these competences help to break down stereotypes, bring people together who might not otherwise come together and supports explicit discussion/reflection on intercultural issues. ICL competences in interview statements (2) are summarised as:

- openness to look at culture as a dynamic and multifaceted process;
- dealing with power mechanisms within and between groups;
- working with diversity;
- encouraging exploration of own identity and dealing with the resulting emotional potential;
- learning concepts and theories (in a(n) (inter)cultural context);
- learning theories and concepts of power relations;
- integrating socio-political & economic backgrounds;
- facilitating intercultural meetings.

However, some interviewees were not able to acquire intercultural competences because it was not addressed and discussed explicitly during the training/activity and they missed respective discussion and reflection. In interviews (3), intercultural competences are not addressed to the same extent as in interviews (2). Intercultural learning experiences are described in interviews (3) more so than specific competences. The learning outcomes predominantly refer to effects, influences and changes on the individual and/or organisational level but seldomly to the development of competences (see chapter: effects and changes on the individual; on the organisational level).

Increasing constructed nationalism in some countries across and beyond Europe may cause further challenges for future international partnerships and impact intercultural learning experiences, identities and discourses. (see chapter: participation and active citizenship). However,

working with international peers caused some participants to positively change their attitude toward particular countries, such as Turkey.

### 5.2.7 Participation and active citizenship

“Human rights are more important in Europe; they live freer and they are more democratic. They have what we miss. ... You imagine whether you cannot have this or not. You envy to be like that. ...I wish we could self-criticise ourselves. You want to start struggling for that. ...They give thought to how they can develop themselves further, how they can contribute to society” (Cfs\_TCA3rt2).

Differences between democratic citizenship, human rights, solidarity and social change are theoretical, in practice these three categories are often interrelated. Interviewees (2) indicate having a wide range of knowledge, skills and attitudes/behaviours for political and/or social engagements (i.e. being activists; studying political science; engaged in promoting/supporting YPFO/YPSN). In their statements, values/attitudes are addressed in terms of peace, freedom, equality, social justice, democracy, political participation, active citizenship, migration, refugees, inclusion, etc. All of which are part of the three categories of democratic citizenship, human rights, and solidarity and social change. Interview statements imply a combination of acquired knowledge, skills and attitudes. An assumption can be made that competences of participation and active citizenship operate at an emotional level (being: attitude/behaviour), followed by knowledge (knowing) and skills (doing). Therefore, competence development in terms of (political) participation and active citizenship is presented as topic related, which includes knowledge, skills and attitudes/behaviours. Country-specific discourses within and across Europe should also be taken into account, as well as levels of expertise or engagement of interviewees in (political) participation and active citizenship is not coherent.

For some interviewees the training/activity had an effect on their competence development such as:

- raising awareness on social needs and need for solidarity;
- understanding rights of disabled people;
- empowering young people to foster/reinforce democratic citizenship;
- changing attitudes towards European values due to further understanding human rights of children and the rule of law;
- raising awareness on the freedom of movement as a human right;

- taking into account socio-economic background, equality and action for social change;
- inclusion of disadvantaged groups in terms of human rights and tolerance.

Some interviewed participants (2) learnt about democratic values, political participation. They experienced and understood the meaning of democracy, freedom of speech and active citizenship, and/or realised the practice of human rights and rule of law, regarding the legal rights of disabled young people in other countries. In addition, a project was developed on migration and migrants, depending on the problems experienced in the home country. In interviews (3), topics in terms of migration/refugees are frequently addressed. Integration of refugees and migrants are perceived as highly relevant for (international) youth work, including attitudes of becoming more tolerant towards refugees' matter or initiating change. Among a couple interviewees, there was also a strong motivation to work on radicalization prevention. Some interviewed participants (3) showed a strong sensitivity to human rights, and consequently, the willingness to be involved in the fight against prejudices and discrimination beyond the topic of migration (i.e. solidarity with AIDS). Other cases of interviews (3) indicate improved participation and engagement for the civil society as well as NEET of youth in society.

However, more awareness on issues of gender violence and the rights of the disabled could be gained from the attended training. Additionally, there is a need for more solidarity on a global scale and not just European solidarity (see chapter: present (international) youth work).

**“We were all Europeans at the training course but the values we were discussing were global as well”**

(Bmh\_YWM1ei2)

After reflection on active citizenship, interviewees are starting to ask themselves: To whom do I belong (solidarity with the residence or origin country)? What kind of identity do I have? One interviewee (3) emphasises these effects of the attended training “(...) that one is feeling more like a European citizen, not only as a citizen of Salzburg, for instance” (Afh\_TCA1ta3).

With respect to humanistic values, some diverse effects become apparent in interviews (3). One interviewee (3) reflects that their values have not changed, rather they have been reinforced or re-

affirmed after the training. Another interviewee perceived humanistic values as respect, fraternity, shared humanity and taking up responsibility for the society in which you live.

Finally, required competences proposed for youth workers can be:

- openness to assist young people to identify and take responsibility for the role they want to have in their community and society;
- stimulate democratic and active participation;
- contribute to the development of their organisation and to making policies / programmes work better for young people.

Overall, the effects of competence development in the context of participation and active citizenship seem on a lower level. One reason for self-perceived low effects on competence development in many interviews (2) could refer to a lack of presented and discussed political concepts and frameworks within the training/activity (see chapter: training and support activities). Another explanation for this could be the high engagement/commitment and expertise of the interviewed participants. The majority already have highly developed high competences in this area. Social citizenship as well as solidarity and social change are part of the current youth work discourse in the home country, and therefore new competences were not acquired.

**“Furthermore, those values were simply “too obvious” (Afh\_TCA1ta2) for her”.**

Nevertheless, a few interviewees (3) raise critical remarks towards European policies. One interviewee describes her experiences with young refugees in her city as being problematic. People are no longer open to discussing European values and welcoming refugees. A fear of terror attacks makes it very difficult to convey these values. Another interviewed participant thinks that Europe, as an affluent continent, does not do enough in the current refugee crisis. Finally, one interviewee (3) poses an interesting question,

**“I think the central question in my work being important is the question: where is the limit of freedom of opinion and where starts contempt for human beings” (Fms\_TCA6ed3)?**

### 5.2.8 Networking and partnerships Before the training/activity

In a few interviews (1), highly qualified ‘networkers’ become evident. These participants have long-lasting experiences in networking and in-



volvement in different partnerships, such as European network and partnerships on social entrepreneurship. In reference to their interview statements, relevant competences in networking and advocating can be summarised as follows:

- knowledge about youth work reality on a local level;
- skills to identify relevant local European youth work (and vice-versa);
- appreciation for duality of local and European youth work;
- motivated to connect/combine European wide and local level;
- committed and motivated to implement international youth projects.

In addition, partnership competences are articulated such as:

- understanding the needs of target groups/team members;
- developing methods for team building;
- communicating such as language skills and open and direct communication;
- using appropriate resources;
- evaluating partnership and projects possibilities.

Finally, recommended organisational steps in building partnerships are:

- presentation of organisations and access to information about structures offered;
- introduction of peer education to manage training workshops;
- direct involvement of partners in discussions on organisational issues;
- simulation of joint projects between organisations working in the same field;
- creation of partnership networks and information sharing between participants;
- structuring collaborative relationship between partners;
- clarification of working values, resources and methods.

#### **After the training/activity**

From several statements in interviews (2) the following competences (knowledge, skills, attitudes/values) are highlighted in terms of networking and partnerships at project level:

- creating trustworthy and reliable partnerships with 'similar partners' in terms of working methods, values and financial resources;
- team building in intercultural settings;
- dealing with cultural diversity;
- communication and language skills.

For example, as a result of the activity/training (simulating lobbying to the city mayor for support), one interviewee developed competences to efficiently lobby the advisory working group regarding the statute and funding of youth organisations at the Ministry of Youth and Sports in his country of residence.

Developed competences for networking and partnerships are articulated more often with regards to effects and/or impact on the individual and/or organisation level interviews (3) (see chapter: present (international) youth work practice and changes/effects in the youth field).

With regards to youth policy organisations, political youth representation or international voluntary organisations, working within the political environment, coordinating working groups within international structures or promoting young people's political/societal engagement are all part of daily work and therefore quite usual.

At inter-institutional level, commitment to collaboration with stakeholders and colleagues exists, but the focus is on sharing knowledge with colleagues (see chapter: impact on the organisation/environment).

## **5.3 Summary (international) youth work competences**

### **5.3.1 Summing up competence development Before the training/activity**

Competences are seen as important by many interviewed participants and the interview statements before the activity. Competences are divided into political, intercultural and professional/quality dimension, in reference to the RAY-CAP conceptual framework for youth work within E+/YIA.

Youth work competences (international) within the political dimension include critical thinking on social and political systems, consideration of social economic background and inequality of young people. Within the intercultural dimension, competences include diversity, ethics, and acceptance of ambiguity and changes. Finally, conflict management, dissemination of information and creating learning environments are reported within the professional/quality dimension.

#### **After the training/activity**

In both interview rounds (2) and (3), learning outcomes for competence development emphasise new practical knowledge (including methods), established networks and/or partnerships, and pro-

ject application/implementation, which are indicated for professional development. In interviews (3) gaining self-awareness, (self-) confidence, dealing with emotions, being empathic, and intercultural learning and identities are discussed as competencies for personal development. Empathy is perceived as a core pedagogical and youth work competency in interviews (2), and is related to communications skills, active listening, self-confidence and dealing with emotions, conflicts and needs.

In reference to the drafted RAY-CAP conceptual framework for competences in youth work within E+/YiA (see appendix F), results of the transnational analysis of module (B) indicate some new aspects for competence development.

Firstly, interviewees' statements emphasise the importance of collaboration for submission and implementation of (international) youth projects/activities. Competencies for collaboration could be further emphasised within the RAY-CAP framework, such as creating reliable and trustworthy partnerships and teams in intercultural settings, dealing with conflicts and/or cultural diversity in cooperation/partnerships and networks, open and direct communication in foreign language(s), as well as identifying/transferring local youth work reality with European youth work.

Secondly, digital competences are addressed several times interviews before the activity but feature less during and/or after the training/activity (see chapter:s expectations and motivation to attend the training/activity; indicated (international) youth work competences in practice; training and support activities). Digital issues may play a crucial role in the international youth work practice but are underrepresented in international trainings/activities. Therefore, it is recommended to increase the presence, importance and frequency of digital issues to acquire respective knowledge, skills and attitude in international trainings/activities.

Overall, the training creating a setting that allowed participants to reflect, acquire self-knowledge, self-confidence, self-discovery, and develop identity and intercultural exchange. Personal encouragement and personal motivation were also increased through peer learning/exchange as part of the training.

Some interviewed participants (2) perceived themselves as advanced in comparison to others regarding their professional expertise, experience, or age. As an outcome, increased self-knowledge,

self-confidence and peer learning were developed through peer feedback. Personal development seems to be the most satisfying outcome of the training in interviews (2). This trend is slightly reduced in interviews (3) as personal development is not immediately transferred into practice (see chapter: transfer into practice).

In addition to content, experience and exchange possibilities with other youth worker was emphasised as an important aspect of the training. For many participants, maintaining contact with youth workers from the training enabled further learning. The exchange of youth workers from different organisations on both a local and European level enabled participants to learn from each other and develop future projects, which strengthened and developed intercultural competences.

Newcomers who attended an international training for the first time or were new to youth work seem to benefit most. They were able to learn a lot from experienced youth workers through shared experiences within the training. Furthermore, interviewees with low or vague expectations perceive their learning outcomes on a similarly high level, with various effects in terms of improved communication, project management, and intercultural and networking competences.

Nevertheless, not every interviewed participant acquired competences. This was due to a lack of acquiring new knowledge within the training (methods; approach), missing relevance for practice in combination with a lack of documentation (i.e. closed institutions; prison system), or an absence of an involvement into the youth field (to improve youth work competences are estimated to be not relevant in this context). Learning was also problematic for some interviewees, who felt the time allocated to the knowledge between the organisations was significantly limited. In fact, "I was expecting to learn more things. I expected to have more handouts, to have indications on the regulations [...] the theoretical-legal references I was expecting them but we don't have them" (Ifs\_TCA4ti2).

Additionally, experienced interviewees (previous attendees at several international trainings/activities or were involved in the youth field for a long time) further express that they could not acquire new knowledge or skills, however many indicated positive learning outcomes with regards to establishing contact or personal development (confidence, motivation and inspiration for continuing youth work). Furthermore, cross-generational

learning with younger youth workers is perceived to be an enrichment for the own daily business.

### 5.3.2 Knowledge acquisition

#### Before the training/activity

In some interviews, the acquisition of knowledge into practice had several facets. These were indicated as direct interaction between the youth worker and young people, as well developed from experience and non-formal methods used in the project. On one hand, young people learn through the interaction in the group or through the use of foreign languages. Youth workers on the other hand learn from the young people, for example using modern technology.

#### After the training/activity

Knowledge acquisition is often addressed in interviews (2). This may indicate that acquired knowledge could be easily or more immediately realised in comparison to changed attitudes or values. Changes of attitudes or values are addressed more frequently in interviews (3).

The combination of theoretical and conceptual knowledge with practical knowledge (experienced-based; exchange/share experiences) seems successful, and was highly appreciated by many interviewees (2). Preferences among a few interviewees may differ between theoretical and practical approach. A lack of specialised knowledge (i.e. prison system; closed institutions) and in some cases of in-depth knowledge (superficial; nothing new) are addressed in interviews (2) and reinforced in different statements of interviews (3).

Project management, in terms of applications and implementation of international youth work projects, with in the trainings/activities are important topics emphasised in both rounds of interviews (2) and (3). Information about the E+/YiA programme, exchange of practice, simulation of developing/writing a project are indicated as key topics. As a result, skills for crisis management, project life cycle (planning, implementation, dissemination), team building, improvisation and dealing with ambiguity are mentioned to be acquired during the activity.

Further importance of training/learning outcomes become evident in interviews (3) such as, acquired knowledge on NEET youth, youth work or Youthpass. For some interviewees, acquired knowledge would require more in-depth-knowledge for the application into daily work. A few interviewees had challenges in recalling concrete knowledge outcomes for the training/activity.

Some perceived their outcomes as an accumulation of knowledge across various influences from life, study, practice and other trainings/activities.

### 5.3.3 Skills development

#### After the training/activity

In both rounds of interviews (2) and (3) presentation and language skills, facilitating skills, project management skills and knowledge/skills for YPFO could be improved. Communication skills were reported many times by interviewed participants (2) and (3). On the first day, English might be an obstacle for some participants of the second round of interviews such as being shy, reactive or passive. After a while, self-confidence in speaking predominantly in English increased, and participants became more active. Also, sensitivity toward communication (i.e. avoiding stereotypes in an intercultural settings) was for some interviewees (2) as well as (3) very impressive. Improving language and communication is a successful outcome of international youth work. Some training approaches/methods support this process through interactive methods, establishing contact with peers and field trips.

Organisational and/or entrepreneurial skills play a more marginal role within international youth work activities as they are not explicitly addressed, apart from field trips and study visits. In several interviews (3) professional, organisational and methodological skills could be further developed. However, acquired skills for the development and implementation of youth projects/activities are reaffirmed from the results of the second round of interviews.

Digitalisation and digital skills still are not often raised in interviews (3). In cases where digital skills are included in the activity, interviewees report very positive impacts and effects. Some interviewees mentioned the importance of using digital techniques in the youth field to reach young people and provide access to young people and their world.

### 5.3.4 Changes of attitudes/values

#### Before the training/activity

From the analysed statements before the training/activity there is a positive change in terms of the image of the EU through the financial support for projects or for European youth work. Another relevant area are political topics in combination of values (i.e. discrimination against minorities and particularly against Muslims; religion; European territory). Finally, implemented youth projects/activities as well as international trainings/activities are considered to have an impact on the

involved actors in terms of changes of attitudes/values through the shared and collected intercultural experiences.

#### **After the training/activity**

Attitudes/values are not easily recognisable to interviewees, these require processes of reflection and raising awareness. Some reflection processes were initiated within the training through emotional experience (i.e. addressing emotions through simulation games; discussions), or through writing a report about the attending training. In comparison, during interviews (3) different changes/effects due to the acquisition of attitudes/values had a greater impression. The long lasting effects of international experience on attitudes/values can be greater identified as a result of a decision to work in the youth field and/or being a social worker, as well as an increased motivation for the own work (i.e. greater enthusiasm for European/international youth projects) and changes with own business (i.e. work with YPSN/YPFO or NEET youth). Nevertheless, a negative change is addressed with regards to projects at the European level and selection/recruitment of participants. However, a variety of interviewees (3) report that they raised their awareness on the importance of using the opportunities for E+/YiA programme and using their own initiative.

Another effect on attitudes/values relates to sensitivity towards prejudices and stereotypes, as well as awareness on diverse values and backgrounds. These were developed through the contact with peers from different countries and a more comprehensive view on youth work could be observed. Various attitudes/values are reported in interviews (3) such as improved openness, solidarity, tolerance, active listening, expressing oneself, collaboration, commitment, engagement to democratic dialogue, critical thinking, an improved attitude towards non-formal learning and awareness raising on subjectivity, diversity and YPFO. Furthermore, the community spirit (focused on solidarity instead of economy) and active listening encouraged an inclusive learning setting, which contributed to change or reinforced attitudes/values. Knowing oneself and self-awareness are highlights for changes of attitudes/values. In other cases, no changes of attitudes/values were mentioned.

Statements about common European values are diverse and sometimes contradictory. Some interviewees (2) notice shared European values, others neglect a common ground of European values and insist on the exchanged values among participants. However, across interviewees a rais-

ing of awareness on country-specific and global-different European values can be indicated.

A lack of concept of European values was criticised and this maybe one explanation for the diverse and contradictory interview statements. Concepts or further clarifications about European values are perhaps missing, not presented or discussed during the activity. Some critical remarks are raised towards a lack of concrete discussions and definitions about European norms and values (although the term European values was often used). For instance, one interviewee developed a more global citizenship (acting in a global context) rather than a developed European identity.

These diverse and/or contradictory statements of interviews (2) become less prominent in interviews (3). The results of interviews (3) indicate more self-perceived attitudes/values in the context of active citizenship, such as high political engagement, humanistic values and awareness on positive effects of the EU on the civil society as well as on young people, for example through Youth Exchanges. Furthermore, an awareness raising or commitment towards European values and importance of political approaches in terms of migration and/or radicalisation/deradicalisation are stressed many times within the interviews (3).

The observed missing change of values of the interviews (2) is repeated in interviews (3) but with some remarkable differences. The assumed lack of changed values can be identified to a lesser extent than in interviews (2). Additionally, some interviewees (3) perceive reinforced existing humanistic values, correlating with European values or creating a European identity by themselves. In other cases (3), nothing could be reported as the time period of the attended training/activity was estimated to be too short for any changes or the question was not addressed/raised during the interview (see chapter: general assumptions and conclusions for interviews (2) and (3)).

### **5.3.5 Non-formal learning, intercultural learning and participation and active citizenship**

#### **After the training/activity**

Participants in interviews (2) were impressed with the non-formal learning/education approach and personal and emotional learning effects, especially through the gained knowledge/skills around the inclusion of YPFO/YPSN and active participation of young people. These effects may remain the same twelve months after the activity.

Self-experienced participatory as well as creative and interactive methods (i.e. simulation games) encourage several interviewees to apply and adapt them for the own activities (i.e. formal education sector). In addition, methods for evaluation/reflection and learning from others/peers are perceived to be highly valuable for the own competence development as well as applying them in daily business. However, some interviewees in both rounds of interviews (2) and (3) reported that there was a lack of new and innovative methods in the training/activity (i.e. ICT).

ICL was reported several times in the interviews two months after the activity and seemed important and effective among many interviewed participants. The international learning environment in combination with a high diversity of participants and cultural differences may contribute to different kinds of competence development. Nevertheless, such ICL competence development requires appropriate behaviour such as openness to examine culture, working with diversity or integrating socio-political and economic backgrounds. Further effects were perceived for increased quality of activities with respect to avoiding stereotypes, broader view on intercultural dialogue and respective communication methods or dealing with inclusion, social integration and multiculturalism.

Nevertheless, not all interviewees (2) could acquire or improve their intercultural competences. This was indicated as a lack of explicitly discussed or addressed concepts/issues or in some cases where they were already experts of intercultural discourses, which is further emphasised in several interviews (3). In addition, interviews (3) ICL is predominantly described with respect to the impact on the individual and/or organisational level and seldomly with concrete outcomes for competence development (see chapter: general assumptions and conclusions for interviews (2) and (3); transfer into practice).

Interviewees, who addressed democratic citizenship in the interviews, represent active citizenship and participation in the society and/or show high political engagements. For these individuals, these issues have high priority and importance. Simultaneously, they have strong interests to empower young people in their participation and active citizenship, which seems unchanged between the two rounds of interviews (2) and (3).

However, in the trainings (i.e. addressed topics; training topics) issues of participation and active citizenship seem to be marginalised/play a minor role. Additionally, in interviews (3) it is reported

that there was no change but a reinforcement of values, for example humanistic values, became apparent through the attended training/activity. It is worth noting that a few interviewees raised critically remarks towards a lack of clear democratic manifestation within European policies. Furthermore, it seems that categories of democratic citizenship, human rights, and solidarity/social change are interrelated on a content-level: similar/same statements were transferred to these categories by researchers, and they were also mentioned in the interviews. It can be assumed that these three categories are only able to be differentiated at an analytical level. In practice, these categories become evident in combination and could be considered as a conglomerate or a triangulation.



## 6 — TRAINING AND SUPPORT ACTIVITIES

This chapter is focused on statements of interviews (2) and (3) with respect to training and support activities. To address the different time dimensions during and after the training/activity appropriately, research results are divided respectively with headings.

The first sub chapter deals with the perceived effectiveness of the training/activity in question. Aspects of ICL and critical statements to provide inputs for possible recommendations of improvements are explored. Applied training approaches and methods are presented in the next subchapter as reported in interviews (2) and (3), if available. A highlight of the most important and frequently mentioned training approaches and methods in the attended international trainings/activities will be presented. The second subchapter address the outcomes for building networks and/or partnerships at the project at the political and inter-institutional level within the training settings. The impact of further trainings/activities and the phenomenon of training hoppers are taken into account to evaluate effects of the attended training/activity more precisely. The final subchapter combines a summary and further considerations for conclusions.

### 6.1 Effectiveness of the training/activity

**„I think what I learned in the project was beyond my expectations, because we were given a lot of information that we will use in the future“**

(Gfh\_YWM1or2)

**“This was the 5th project I have ever participated, and it was the best one. (...) People were really professional”** (Cfs\_TCA3rt2)

#### After the training/activity

As mentioned in previous chapters, the effectiveness of international trainings/activities seems high for the majority of interviewees in terms of the perceived valuable outcomes, benefits (i.e. (foreign) language improvements; self-discovery and self-identity; intercultural learning) and their motivation to apply them in the daily business.

This is underlined in a substantial share of interviewees in the third round of interview:

**“All entrepreneurship events were oriented to results and this [training] was process-oriented, and I liked that! (...) It was so interactive– group work – and there we learned a lot!”** (Gfs\_TCA-3ta3).

**“Well, SALTO and all these courses have been absolutely vital for my life”** (Ifh\_YWM1ed3).

These interviewees are an example clearly demonstrating how important such European training and further measures can be for personal development/self-identity and stability of self. The European context in which the interviewee is studying, working and living is significant for their personal and professional development.

Some interviewees (2) interviews perceive that the learning outcomes were more than expected, as the programme was well-structured (i.e. gave a nice overview of mobility projects), they went through a youth exchange, were given a lot of information and paid attention to assessment and evaluation:

**“I attended this course as a novice to youth projects, especially since the NGO I activate in [sic] is a new one, activating locally since November 2015, and I can say that I understand very much now how they operate and what better fits the target group and the members of the SNS organisation I belong to. I have learned much from the experience of the trainers and the other participants in the course, and have established relationships with potential partners in order to achieve such youth exchange projects (for starters)”** (Dfs\_TCA1ro2).

As a result, the majority of interviewees express their preferences for a practical approach over a theoretical approach in the training/activity. However, there were tensions between theoretical and practical approach initially that were later reconsidered in a handful of interviews (3). For example, one interviewee points out the training involved both information and developing skills through lectures and activities. While “Some lectures were dryer than others” (Emh\_TCA4if3), a big part is the sharing of experiences, as also indicated by another interviewed participants.

Training/activity effects may have the most important impact on newer or inexperienced interviewed participants who attended an international training/activity for the first time. It is reported



in interviews (2) that these effects predominantly refer to professional and personal development, such as:

- collected smart ideas of how to use Youth-pass or EVS experiences;
- unexpectedly involved in the preparation of six different youth exchanges (one exchange is a partnership between five different countries);
- awareness about 'unity with other Europeans' (but no obvious changes or effects are perceived).

In a few interviews (3) it is reiterated that the gain of international trainings/activities is highest within experienced group settings:

**“***Seminars, in YiA, in this domain, life of the participants – sharing experiences, knowledge – and the more people, who know, there are, the more one can gain (...) and I guess that one can really gain a lot in an experienced group” (Dmh\_YWM2ta3).*

It can be assumed that high interests for attending additional trainings/activities could be an indication of sustainable effects of international trainings/activities. The undergone training inspired one interviewee to look for new courses to improve her working skills with young people. Furthermore, previous positively experienced participations may have an impact on further implemented projects/trainings. In one interview, it is stated that the core idea of the training (immigration/inclusion issues) came from a prior youth exchange. Another interviewee explains that he gained good experiences in a similar project in the past, and therefore he would like to repeat this success with a larger partnership. A further interviewee expressed her long-lasting impressions about her participations in a previous EVS project as well as in a Leonardo project of the former YiA programme:

**“***I would say two things. There is one that is rather the values, the values with which it has gone and the values we wish to defend, and not to turn away, to not forget them, and stay fixed on it. And second, why now, two years later, I feel competent in my field, it is because I am accompanied by peers, I am accompanied by people who also know what they do around me, where we exchange” (Afs\_YWMrf1).*

In addition to that, one interviewee explained that youth projects were not seriously considered previously, but now he has changed his mind due to how well prepared he perceived the project.

Next, interviewees expressed concern with the non-sufficient transfer of knowledge as the learning setting requires more than the simple acquisition of knowledge. The learning settings consists of introductions, developing a fun group dynamic, informal settings, and attending study visits. Thus, such trainings/activities provide many more learning opportunities and higher requirements on the learners than the simple transfer of know-how. As a result, enough time to be involved in the training in order to create trust, a comfortable personal learning environment, compatibility with daily work (content; date; venue) or the duration of the training/activity raise the possibilities of adequately participating in the learning environment. Moreover, it is pointed out in several interviews (2) that the provided accessibility to the training/activity through low costs is very important

Generally speaking, preassigned durations and/or time constraints for attending the training/activity seem to be one of the key aspects for international training/activities that should be reconsidered (see chapter: unintended side effects). Some tensions can be indicated between different interests of stakeholders. It is reported that the time period for the training/activity was reduced by the funder, leading to problems and challenges in managing the training within the shortened duration. Referring to project development with partners, it is critically stressed that the provided time for developing a project of two days during the training/activity is perceived as not sufficient. This trend becomes evident again in different interview (3) statements:

**“***The keywords would be discovery, sharing, (coldweather), exchange, after a little also frustration in relation to the lack of time to deepen certain things, because it was fast enough over four days and it's complicated to really go to the bottom of the topics. There was very little follow-up” (Cms\_KA1rf3).*

On the contrary, for others a participation in the training/activity longer than three days is impossible due to their restricted employment conditions. It is assumed that long-term EVS are not always possible due to employment restrictions. However, TCA trainings imply the required compatibility with workplace time constraints.

Finally, promising key factors based on the interview statements (2) that may contribute to the success of international trainings/activities, could be summarised as follows:

- professional/qualified people;
- well consideration of recruiting participants with ‘interesting’ professional and/or organisational backgrounds;
- well-qualified trainers;
- well-organised and well-structured training/activity, implying (sufficient) informal settings;
- learning opportunities for improving professional and personal development (international environment; peer learning; learn new things; build good relationships);
- concrete material outcomes, interrelating with the working field/profession;
- free of charge (i.e. provide access to the training/activity);
- does not take place during school holidays.

In the reviewed outcomes of interviews (3) it is emphasised again that the relevance of the training/activity correlates with the daily business: The more the addressed topics of the training/activity is coherent with the daily work, the higher the transfer and added value of the outcomes. Nevertheless, it seems that the impact at the organisational level is limited and can be predominantly indirectly observed through the improved qualifications of their staff member(s), highlighting multiplier effects (see the chapter below; chapter: transfer of learning/training outcomes into practice/effects on practice).

In several interviews (3) the importance of the training is reaffirmed in terms of future collaboration and intercultural learning. In a few cases the outcomes concern more personal gains for their personality and job/career, rather than any gains within the context of youth work (see chapter: future perspectives and outlook). On closer inspection, it is stated that the training/activity created lasting sustainable effects such as (inter)national networking and/or partnership building with other organisations for (future) collaboration, building personal relationships and increased communication processes. In addition to that, the attended training/activity was one motivating factor for implementing international youth work as a profession or starting PhD/continuing studying. Moreover, it contributed to job opportunities/job decisions for implementing international youth projects, doing international youth work as a profession, becoming engaged in education because of the way the tutors were teaching and approaching education of youth:

“That training helped me to understand that I really want to be engaged in teaching, as I saw who the young trainers taught there and they

also talked about their experiences and about how they became teachers and stuff like that and it all gave me a lot of additional motivation” (Ams\_TCA3xe3).

This quoted interviewee perceives the attended training as being the source for his knowledge and know-how needed for this task, but it also gave him the idea for this initiative and the courage to realise his ideas. Another interviewee points out that she learned from the attended training how to motivate youth and how to engage them through alternative methods:

“In this sense that, when we instruct youth, then it should be done in a way which is appealing. And he/she could do it appealingly. With us. And I think this is a very important aspect in that. If you cannot motivate youth to do something, then (...) they won’t do it” (Efs\_TCA1xe3).

Nevertheless, in some interviews (3) there is a perceived reduction in impact several months after the activity due to a lack of follow-up meetings, collaboration between participants, or returning to their daily work routine (see chapter: critical statements below; impact of further trainings/activities; transfer of the learning/training outcomes into practice).

#### a) Intercultural learning (ICL)

ICL is addressed during the training/activity setting through the selected venue and hosting country reinforcement of a multicultural environment and cultural diversity is addressed. In the international activity/training, everybody felt comfortable regardless of their country of origin, language or accent. The prevailing tolerant, active listening, community spirit was appreciated:

“As I mentioned before a propos of Finnish people, I appreciated a lot the tolerance in their attitude. We talked about equality, democracy but the tolerance was the most important thing that I can recall” (Jms\_TCA6uh2).

There were stimuli to reflect critically on identity and culture from different perspectives; discussions about their own perceptions/openness to diversity of other participants, stereotypical constructions of reality, and their adequacy in the youth field and raising questions about discriminating attitude of youth workers. In group settings, there was a kind of ‘common culture’ created through membership: everyone has his/her specific place and role in the group with specific tools and methods used to face current problems in the youth field (i.e. radicalisation). However,

openness, open-mindedness, tolerance and multiculturalism were supported throughout the training/activity, reinforcing views that “every culture has something interesting” (Dfh\_KA1zc1). One of the main objectives in youth work is addressed to enhance positive attitudes about cultural diversity taking into account intercultural identities.

Others point out that ICL happened ‘naturally’ with international trainers or participants from different countries in informal settings like coffee breaks and evening gatherings or during the training/activity setting in experience exchanges (i.e. how things are done in different cultural contexts) and group work. Simply being in a culturally mixed group represented valuable learning for respondents who had little previous experience with diversity, as in the case of one volunteer who had rarely travelled outside her own rural region:

“*I haven’t mixed with any other cultures before and [the participants] were just so easy to talk to and if you were sitting on their own they would make it their business to come over and mix with you” (Dfh\_YWM2ei2).*

ICL occurs ‘automatically’ and creates intercultural curiosity, especially when not too many people from the same country are involved in the same group. The effects of intercultural learning/interests are based on the diversity of the group’s cultural/international background and age (matching of peers). It is important to meet with diversity (i.e. religion, militant, feminism) as strong ideas and differences are more relevant when brought together with the expression of people’s needs and solutions (i.e. conflict management and dealing with diversity). The high degree of the diversity of the group is highlighted after the training/activity in different interviews (2).

In some interviews, it is indicated that there was a lack of ICL approaches and concepts since it was not a subject or special point during the training/activity. Another critical statement refers to a lack of provided concepts for dialogue on peace and a lack of appropriate methods to raise intercultural issues properly. This interviewee searched independently on the internet for tools to address this issue with young people. In the case of intercultural debates in the training setting, appropriate methods, concepts/approaches and qualified trainers are required; otherwise there is a risk that an intercultural dialogue does not create positive effects (i.e. reinforce the gap/tensions between different countries/notions/religions).

On the other hand, a highly diverse group may cause restrictive, passive participation. Thus, participants greatly appreciated knowing others very well beforehand. For example, two interviewees (one of them a senior staff member and the other a volunteer) from the same organisation who participated in the same training event found that they provided valuable support for each other. They also appreciated the fact that the trainers set up a Facebook page so that participants could begin to get to know each other in advance (“... and then when you got there you knew them...and it was hugs and the whole lot” (Dfh\_YWM2ie2)). It is worth mentioning that in the case that the group or training/activity does not show a high diversity of international participants, ICL was not as widely discussed. Additionally, some interviewees perceived intercultural discourse and identities as not relevant in the training/activity as participants are already experienced and aware of intercultural aspects.

Independent of these alternative points of view, ICL seems to occur in the training/activity when working with people with different cultural backgrounds in an international environment. Moreover, discussion about globalisation in an international training setting creates intercultural answers. With respect to this, ICL can be assumed to be unavoidable and happens all the time ‘in between the lines’ (see Bms\_TCA2fi2; Emh\_TCA4fi2).

### b) Critical interview statements

Despite several positively assessed outcomes of the training/activity previously mentioned, some critical interview statements are added as potential suggestions for improvement.

First, there was a lack of providing timely training information. Some of the interviewees were not fully informed about the content of the training in advance. In other cases, the topics of the training were changed or dropped without prior announcement or discussion. As a result, expected training issues were no longer addressed leading to self-perceived deficits in competence development:

“*Well, in terms of content... it was not very good training practice, in my mind. Well, some topics that I had hoped for and were introduced before the training, and which were potentially interesting, were dropped, or some changes were made. So these topics were not addressed and because of that it remained somehow shallow or... I just expected some other topics” (Jfs\_TCA9xe2).*

Furthermore, too little involvement of participants in preparation and follow-up is assessed critically. Follow-up trainings/activities are insisted to allow opportunities for all participants to meet a second time to exchange their new practices (i.e. radicalisation prevention) and study cases on E+ training. In some interviews (3), considerations in terms of specialised or follow-up training settings with sufficient time to go further on the thematic are even readdressed to deepen existing knowledge and/or provide new knowledge for experienced/advanced participants:

“It helped more to navigate [or: jump – literally: dive– into] the subject, but once someone jumped in s/he perhaps would need more” (Afh\_TCA1ta3).

“*I’ve always been international, I have a lot of friends all around the world, but I still went to get something more*” (Dfs\_TCA3if3).

Second, a lack of diversification in terms of topics, duration and thematic in-depth knowledge could be indicated. In particular, specialists (i.e. working in closed institutions) and/or experienced/advanced participants in youth work with expert knowledge, found a lack of new knowledge and the perception of being underchallenged. Similar to the interviews of round two, some interviewees add critically within interviews (3) that the provided knowledge in the training was not new to them and they did not learn too much. One interviewee, for example, addresses that “she could not take away any new insights” (Bfh\_YWM1ta3) but only acquired knowledge on people from and prevailing living conditions in Armenia. Another interviewee assumes that “it was certainly nice to get to know a new country, (...) new people, (...) but in terms of content I did not learn too much” (Cmh\_YWM1ta3). The workshop offered “more a repetition” (Bfh\_YWM1ta3) to her. It was good for young, rather unexperienced participants, but offered “not too many new insights” (Bfh\_YWM1ta3) to her (...).

Nevertheless, repetitive knowledge is not always assessed negatively. Some of the (experienced) interviewees consider that repetition of knowledge provides further learning opportunities. To give an example, one case refers to a very experienced interviewee in the youth field who has implemented more than 15 international projects and she is not able to count the national ones. She claims that each training and project brings a value to her. Even if she does not learn anything new, she can always question if what she does is right. She also tries to question her methods and for her, any meeting with other professionals is a gain. Another interviewee considers that “learn-

ing also happens through repetitions” (Dmh\_YWM2ta3). So, he would say he “deepened” (ibid.) his knowledge: The training “expanded my understanding, which has gone full cyclet here” (ibid.). Such statements seem especially interesting in terms of the NFL approach. Within the NFL discourse repetition of knowledge may not be considered as a requested outcome and may refer more precisely to the FL approach. As a result, the assumption may be drawn that such statements imply requested social attitude from interviewees to modify negative assessed learning outcomes into more positive results.

Furthermore, some interviewees felt under-challenged in the ‘slow-motion’ training approach (too much free time – too many breaks; wasted time by doing nothing; too superficial because too short) and the lack of sufficient consideration of individual learning expectations or information. Moreover, a lack of time to get to know people better and exchange experiences of their youth work practices in different countries are reassessed critically in several interviews (3). Further criticism refers to the formal lecture format of the training that did not allow much discussion or exchange of experiences.

Third, a lack of clarity on concepts may become apparent. Rarely it is reported that profound concepts (approved within the youth field) are used or presented within the training/activity. According to this, ethics and integrity, if at all, are only indirectly addressed. Additionally, a kind of expert approach (inviting experts for theoretical or professionalised inputs) seems to be more or less excluded. In the third round of interviews a handful interviewees state again a dissatisfaction with the methodology of the attended training and request a proper training concept. The addressed approach (i.e. psychological focus) may respond only to a small portion of the problem and therefore the approach of the training activity was too limited and rarely applicable in daily practice. A preventive approach and/or historical/sociological inputs, which was not discussed in the training activity, seems (more) important.

Furthermore, others criticise that the training was not related to the daily work (i.e. youth exchanges are not a priority for the young people she works with). A few interviewees of the second round of interviews, for example, mention that democratic citizenship was focused on the context of participation or solidarity, social change on inclusion of disadvantaged groups and tolerance (i.e. migrants, refugees, YPFO, YPSN) in the training/activity. Seldom did the training/activity refer ex-



plicitly to the context of (political) participation and active citizenship. Finally, it can be assumed that any attempt to discuss the political dimension of European youth work in the interviews was sometimes limited because of recognised difficulties for some interviewees to connect experienced situations with conceptual reasoning.

Fourth, there was a perceived comfort in the use of known tools and methods through a solid toolbox of methods with a strong focus on peer learning such as ice-breakers, exchange of good practices, getting to know people, and also networking and partnership. This meant digital tools and/or spaces and external inputs were marginalised.

Fifth, despite the training/activity often being (re) assessed as inspirational and motivational for new projects, their own youth work, or for attending another international training, trainings may not address structural problems as the focus is placed upon the individual. It is emphasised that a lot of the problems are often structural and therefore it is not necessarily relevant that people need to be changed. There is a stronger need to change processes, which should be focused on in the future.

Sixth, the role and impact of trainers on the ‘success’ of the training/activity seems to be enormous. In cases where trainers are perceived to be not well qualified, the training settings and outcomes are assessed negatively. More specifically, NFL or NFE is assumed to be not implemented properly in some trainings/activities because approved concepts were not being used. As a result, one interviewee declared that the training was an example of how a NFE situation should not be organised. The implementation of the ICL approach is explored in a similar way: the use of concepts was missing and intercultural aspects/identities were examined unprofessionally. Furthermore, clarifications and considerations of expectations are not always the case in the training/activity setting (learner-centred approach; target-oriented approach is ignored). As a result, some frustration could be observed among a few interviewees or the other way around where some preferences for specific trainers are noted. This is particularly emphasized by one interviewee that stated she was quite certain not to participate in any trainings (had enough), but after this training he/she was more willing to take part in trainings held by the same trainer.

## 6.2 Applied training approaches & methods

“I think that most of the things, I consider important and useful, have been very practical trainings (...)” (Gfs\_TCA7xe1).

“The activity answered both professional and personal training needs. We received a lot of information and examples about Youth projects proposals, about the concept of ,gender‘; I participated in a team to organize activities under the Erasmus+, in which I lived experienced the specifics of Spanish culture” (Efs\_TCA1or2).

“All the approaches and methods of training (presentations, activities in teamwork large and small, debates) were important for my part, but the one that seemed most useful, and that I definitely use, is asking questions at the end of the presentation in order to get quick answers from participants” (Gfh\_YWM1or2).

“What I really liked was that we were learning something new all the time, even in the coffee breaks, during the lunch or dinner by continuing the discussions, the sharing” (Ffs\_TCA4uh2).

### 6.2.1 Application oriented approach

The most useful approaches are non-formal methods, field trips or study visits, and inviting experts (i.e. E+ project experts). Furthermore, appreciated applied training approaches concern collaboration and networking, openness to team processes and team building, and its recognised importance or interactive activities (team building games; energizers; discussions). Most of the interviewees consider the applied training approaches/methods as innovative or had no prior experience before.

Upon closer inspection of statements in interview (2), an application-oriented approach, including appreciated practical knowledge and activities with a kind of fun factor, can be noticed. This application-oriented approach can emphasize learning by doing, workplace learning, peer-learning, or process-oriented learning. In interviews (3), the indicated trend of the implemented application-oriented approach in international trainings/activities could be considered a gain for the interviewed participants in terms of:

- experiential learning & peer learning: exchange of experiences, practices and knowledge between peers;
- experienced NFL education;
- learning by doing methods (i.e. new handicraft methods).

One interviewee recalls that the training was largely focused on sharing information and knowledge amongst the participants. This was due the nature of the whole event, as it was a forum: “The whole nature was to make connections, sharing and receiving ideas” (Bms\_TCA2if3).

#### **a) Learning by doing/experience-based learning**

Some training settings/approaches focused on learning by doing: Everybody had to participate actively and present their own experiences and ideas, building a kind of sharing-concept (discussions instead of lectures) of inclusive practical exercises (carrying out mini-projects). As an example, sharing experiences by EVS participants is considered as a ‘learning by doing’ approach that was highly appreciated in the training/activity. This kind of learning through experience and discussion may contribute to an experience-based learning environment rather than formal learning. Generally speaking, interviewees in the second round potentially expect more experience-based sharing of practices rather than particular technical guidelines (i.e. for writing projects).

Experience-based learning occurs in intercultural learning settings through meeting interesting/international people or getting to know other participants’ working attitude during teamwork. It is most frequently reported that the diversity of participants’ backgrounds is inspiring and new perspectives could be discovered, although not all participants could be active from the very first start of the training/activity (but after warming-up processes). Therefore, the diversity of the group is perceived to be an advantage and encouraged experience-based learning. Furthermore, the exchange of (national) good/bad practices in an international learning environment motivated them to learn more about youth work from other countries by allowing the exchange of experiences, figuring out challenges, discovering new ways of working with specific subjects, and overcoming national identities by focussing on the discourse of human beings.

Experience-based learning may enable the acquisition of practical knowledge, which is highly valued and expressed often in the interviews. In the case that this part is not sufficiently included in the training/activity, there is an articulated need to share more experience-based practice. In the revisited interviews, sometimes it is explained that nothing new could be acquired through the participation, apart from sharing experiences with others (see chapter: (international) youth work competences).

#### **b) Workplace learning**

It is stressed several times in the interviews that practical knowledge, exchange, and sharing experiences are the most valuable learning strategies. Practical knowledge could be acquired through field trips (study visits) and experience made in the hosting country, for example:

- to visit and experience organisations who specialise in youth work (i.e. working with youth in the countryside);
- to experience legal and practical work with disadvantaged youth by visiting a youth centre;
- to see youth workers’ engagement into the formal education through visiting schools.

**“***If it wasn’t for this training, I wouldn’t have a chance to visit so many different places and look from up close how other organisations work with young people” (Hfh\_TCA1p2).*

Learning through field trips/study visits seems very practical for knowledge acquisition in regards to the limited time resources of the training/activity (three to four days).

#### **c) Peer learning**

Peer learning seems to be one of the most important and innovative approaches in international trainings/activities. Peer learning is described as providing opportunities for learning by doing to increase motivation and inspiration for the own youth work through the exchange of experiences. Consequently, peer learning is initiated through group work, testimonials, team building, reflection processes and discussions, learning in teams, mutual learning but also self-learning and individual learning. To implement a successful and enriching peer learning environment, it seems essential to consider a proper matching of participants (experienced/unexperienced). Newcomers (less experienced in the youth work; less background knowledge about youth work; participation in the training for the first time), especially reported that they benefited significantly from other participants (peers). Thus, in case of difficulties in understanding the concepts due to inexperience, peers assisted in explaining concepts. Strong interests in contributing to others’ knowledge building and motivate others, become obvious indicating a social attitude/approach among the interviewed participants.

Cross-generational learning is seen as another advantage in terms of peer learning. Hence, a lot of motivation, inspiration and impulses from other participants and from trainers could be gained. In particular, inspiration from young participants



could be acquired because they are involved in a lot of things, indicating enthusiasm and appreciation towards the younger generation.

#### d) Process-oriented approach

A process-oriented approach consists of interactive methods for active participation and different learning formats (i.e. workshops; presentations), depending on the needs of the group/peers and the learning/training focus ('learner-centred approach'). In interviews (3), one interviewee expresses this approach in terms of progressive learning that allows her to have a more active participant posture (free speech). Nevertheless, some criticism is raised in the interviews (2) that the potential or the needs of peers are not always considered accordingly. Some participants needed more time to overcome shyness or others were interested in more conceptual-based inputs or professionalised reflection processes (structured; theoretically embedded).

#### 6.2.2 Learning/training methods

Most interviewees experienced the training as very interactive either because of the used methods or allowed discussions. The used methods in the training/activity are described as meaningful include communication (village method), Communication Wall, Guess My Passion, drama methods, workshops or aircraft method for establish collaboration. In addition, some presentations of

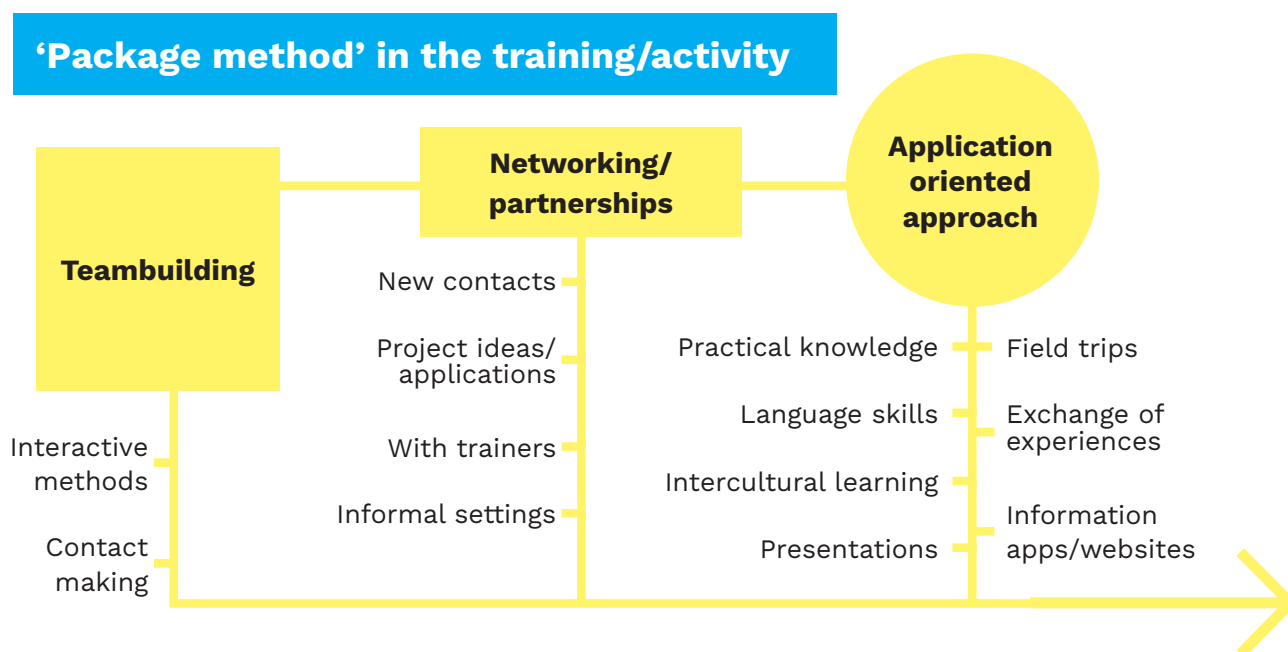
projects are assessed as not very (inter-)active and sometimes a bit too long.

#### a) Contextualisation of non-formal learning in the training/activity

According to the raised methods and topics for the attended training/activity within the interviews, applied learning and training strategies in the context of non-formal learning can be drawn as the 'package method' (see figure 6 learning/training strategies):

- target-oriented/learner-centred approach: considering the needs of the participants in the training/activity (mostly applied);
- training settings to provide opportunities for teambuilding and networking/building partnerships (contact making);
- informal learning settings are initiated: social occasions during the training events (breaks, mealtimes etc) are explicitly highlighted as learning opportunities;
- peer learning as part of an application-oriented approach: exchange and share experiences and practices (intercultural learning); reflections (individual, organisational, international);
- exercises/games: interactive and application oriented, group dynamic, ice-breakers, creative methods in terms of arts/psychology and (digital) scenarios;

FIGURE 1 Learning/Training strategies



- knowledge transfer through field trips/study visits: lack of theoretical input; focus on practical knowledge (presentations; information).

Furthermore, this package of methods ranges from workshops on group work to field trips/study visits aiming to gain practical knowledge through workplace learning (learning from good/bad practices), learning by doing, peer learning and learning by emotions (see chapter: application-oriented approach; see figure 1 learning/training strategies).

Despite positively assessed training approaches/methods, some criticism is raised in the interviews in reference to the quality of the implementation:

- from too much time was taken between different topics or exercises, to too many breaks, very busy and a lack of breaks, to not enough time for informal learning;
- nothing new: no new knowledge or no effects of special methodology (i.e. themes were too large scaled and/or superficially discussed);
- trainers not qualified in dealing with ICL professionally/actively, causing motivation in 'doing it better' ('learning by bad practice');

Furthermore, it seems valuable to apply practical methods complemented by theoretical inputs. It is reported that disappointments in previous trainings were not repeated, based on the above-mentioned expected outcomes regarding theoretical inputs, well-qualified trainers, and exchanged experiences.

Another critical point concerns digitalisation. This issue seems to be marginalised in international training settings in implied content, addressed topic or applied training methods within the training/activity. In addition to that it is stated that digitalisation is very important to reach young people and provide access for young people in terms of (international) youth work.

## **b) The role of trainers**

The main conclusion can be drawn that trainers have an important role within the training/activity. They may influence the training atmosphere, team spirit, peer learning, and quality of the learning outcomes at a general level. Trainers are described to be engaged, motivated, and carried out several roles: expert (giving inputs), facilitator, instructor (and not teachers), mentor and coach (support participants whenever possible). Most of the trainers predominantly implement NFL approaches in their attitudes: empowering

participants and providing learning opportunities by using games as an educational approach in combination with presentations. The importance of trainers being skilled and experienced in managing diversity within groups also emerged from the findings. In the third round, one interviewee points out that the tutors were very efficient as they used methods that were thought-provoking and made the participants actively take part in the training. Another interviewee perceives that there was an identification to the trainers and she learned from the observation of the trainers (positioning, facilitation) during the project. Finally, the development of methodological skills and knowledge is a precondition in peer education and well-performed trainings. As a result, intensive personal relationships with trainers could contribute to developing strengths and overcoming weaknesses.

In contrast, in the case of missing feedback, inputs or interventions from the trainers' side and the quality of the learning outcomes may be reduced. In terms of ICL, one interviewee declares that there was a lot of ICL "because so many people from different countries...and very nice people...there was a lot of interaction" (Mfh\_TCA10de2) but without any feedback regarding the trainers' side.

### 6.3 Networks & partnerships

**“One of the best parts of the activity was that all participants were ready to prepare projects”**

(Bms\_TCA2rt2)

“I’m very lucky, because I build relationships very easily. So I was sure, that at least, that would work well for me. And it would indeed! I came home, and I can say that I have now a brother in Russia, because we had such deep discussions. And that I have a sister in Iceland because we became so close, and now I know how they feel, how they live. And this can open a new world, you understand if they can do something, you can do it also” (Ffs\_TCA4uh2).

“I didn’t have this kind of expectation before, but I see that these short trainings are very good for networking. Otherwise, how could I meet a Finnish girl or a Lebanese...Networking was really encouraged there, and as I see now, these Erasmus+programmes are not just for fun or for thinking together, but also to create something together maybe (...)” (Hfs\_TCA8uh2).

“This is what I retrospectively gained, i.e. the contacts, more than anything else” (Jfs\_TCA5ta3).

In almost all interviews it is pointed out that contacts with people/networking could be established or the opportunity was provided during the training/activity. Most of the interviewees (re)assess contact making/new contacts/new partnerships and creating a network apart from international experience as the most important and valuable result of the attended training/activity (especially in cases where they could not recall anything concrete), which correlates with the expressed expectations before the activity (see chapter: expectations and motivation to attend the training/activity). It is seldomly reported in the interviews (2) and (3) that no relevant outcomes could be perceived in terms of networks and partnerships.

The training/activity provide opportunities for networking, establishing international partnerships for the implementation of European youth projects, meeting future partners for sending organisations and clarifying project partners’ competencies in advance (i.e. before sending young people to them). There are also interests assumed in building special networks, such as volunteers interested in recruiting and keeping touch or being more successful in community building. With re-

gard to the quality of the networks/partnerships, interviewees report different effects based on the outcomes of interviews (2). While mostly emphasised in interview (3), some interviewees explain that (inter-)national networks could be expanded, deep relationships could be established through the attended training/activity and concrete projects/ideas with international partners could be presented (for future collaboration):

“Yes, in terms of spreading connections [networks], knowledge, consolidating some already created connections, deepening relationships” (Ifh\_KA11ii3).

“The contact-making part, that’s what’s really positive for sure. Because it consisted of two parts, one was the gamification, the other was a networking part. Actually, I stay in contact with some participants, this is more than professional, official contact, we follow each other’s projects, and if something arises, we send materials to each other, at least, I keep in mind that this is a good thing and can be good later for something. This is, I think, definitely a gain. And basically it had a methodological diversity which certainly gave a lot” (Efs\_TCA3uh3).

Furthermore, one interviewee of the third round considers he has met interesting people and acquired plenty of knowledge of KA2. Thus, making a more intensively involved, great experience. Another example refers to identified partners with whom her organisation designed and submitted projects for youth in disadvantaged areas:

“[To me it was] especially important that I have got [access to] some new network or contacts of people working on very similar projects. So that this personal experience of knowing organisations or people” (Bfs\_TCA1ii3).

Others report in the second round of interviews that more time would be needed to develop potentially concrete and deeper project partnerships or networks. It is further emphasized that it is important to not just start accumulating partners because there has to be a common ground, there needs to be a purpose for collaboration e.g. music, theatre, project application (see chapter: unintended side effect). Different networks/partnerships could be established:

- exclusive international networks with experienced practitioners (only);
- national networks/cooperation (i.e. with experienced youth workers in E+ programme; continuing TCA dynamic of exchanges);

- international networks with entrepreneurs to support each other;
- partnerships to start a project application;
- reliable partnerships for further collaboration; reinforce long-term partnerships (i.e. for three years)
- networks for potential international collaboration in the future (with countries of high reputations because of their openness for collaboration);
- networks with organisations from the same field;
- European network (i.e. sharing experiences with colleagues across Europe; is estimated to be a pre-condition for realising international projects; for youth ambassadors for structured dialogue: ‘SD Young Ambassadors Network’);
- specialised networks, i.e. for disability, gender and equal rights; for social entrepreneurship;
- networks with National Youth Councils from other countries or with the National Agency.

It is seldomly stated in the interviews (2) that there were already established ‘closed’ partnerships, which limited/closed the access to join these groups. A few interviewees (2) and (3) claimed that they were not interested in building networks/partnerships because:

- they do not intend to implement international projects/activities but know potential partners for collaboration;
- they are not involved in the youth field and therefore collaboration is not foreseen;
- they have already reliable partnerships;
- they are only interested in some people or in technical skills;
- for personal reasons (be an ‘ephemera’ youth worker).

According to one such case:

**“***My primary goal was to learn new handicraft techniques. I don't think I will ever organise any international activities for young people, so I did not make any contacts”* (Dfs\_YWMLp3).

This interview case is an example of a very pragmatic approach to international youth work trainings; the interviewee wished to learn particular technical skills and completely ignored the potential of an international project. She did not make any contacts for future activities because she was not interested in and had never before implemented any international projects. The fact that she took part in the project positively influenced her daily work and contributed to develop-

ment of her professional skills as far as handicraft is concerned.

In interviews (3), some examples can be illustrated for the variety of networks and partnerships. One interviewee perceives that she gained “many contacts” (Jfs\_TCA5ta3) with two national participants she regularly meet on a private basis in particular, but she could contact other participants as well if she needs something. Another interviewee initially wanted to establish contacts with foreigners working with youth on the countryside, but in the end, she ended up meeting national youth workers, which turned out to be a great experience as well. A further interviewee considers her established professional network, both local and international to be most significant as it facilitated collaboration beyond the framework of Erasmus+. For one interviewee who was still in regular contact with two other participants a year after the training event, the main thing she had learned was how important personal contacts and relationships are in sustaining exchange: “If you make good links with somebody and they are committed and competent, that's all you need, links between strongly committed and competent people” (Efs\_YWM3ei3).

### 6.3.1 Training setting for building networks and partnerships

#### During the training/activity

Everybody was very cooperative at the training and seemed open to future collaboration, according to one interviewee. Another interviewee felt that all of the training methods had the purpose of making contacts as “The whole four days was [sic] for making contacts” (Ifs\_TCA71if2). Facilitators were very focused on the fact that everyone had someone they could partner with and were actively participating. It was rarely criticised that no opportunities for networking or establishing partnerships were planned or foreseen. Nevertheless, networking opportunities are initiated more often in informal settings and happened ‘naturally’ (i.e. personal discussions and relations with other participants; in non-structured conversations and interactions during meals and evenings; trips (cinema trip, city trip; sightseeing trip)).

It was not always the case within the training setting that particular exercises or activities were implemented specifically for building networks or partnerships. If such activities are prepared, they are often minor games to better get to know each other and establish collaboration, such as the aircraft method or the partnership building activity (i.e. social dating). This is also used in daily work for organising meetings among young people and

policy makers from a few interviewees. Special emphasis was given to the activity ‘global village’ (intercultural evening), where groups presented their cultures and cooked cultural-related food. Furthermore, the topic of training/activity and the background of participants helped to bring people together and encourage networking. In group work, some feedback or suggestions were given to improve the project ideas or applications. As a result, further projects emerged. In another case, it is explored that networking seemed to happen almost by accident due to high interests of peers to cooperate with one respective country of the training/activity.

Building networks and partnerships require appropriate time as addressed in the previous chapter, which is not always provided within a three- or four-day training/activity (mostly fully packed with organised activities/intensive programme; three days are too little to get in contact with around 40 participants for networking, causing frustration). As expressed by several interviewees, there is a need for ‘free moments’ to network and form potential partnerships or deepen the relationships. Furthermore, by leaving the familiar working environment to meet other people, participants get out of their comfort zone. This experience may create/foster a sense of community among the participants but requires sufficient personal contact to know each other well (i.e. through Facebook group), which did not happen in every training/activity):

“It was nice to see that people all over the world try to do similar things like you” (Afs\_TCA-1zc2).

“It is always good, if you have contact with the same area people, whom you can ask for advice or just share experience. Or just ask how he/she is doing” (Dfs\_TCA6xe1)

## 6.4 Impact of further trainings/activities

**“I want to learn, I want to develop. I want our work to develop and it has”**

(Hfs\_TCA5if3)

“The feeling is that I develop from year to year; I steadily realise that I learn from the training courses (...) from all these trainings what is

good for me and what I apply in my youth work” (Jfs\_TCA8ed3).

“There’s all sorts of interesting trainings out there (...) but I just don’t have enough time!” (Hfs\_TCA5if3).

### After the training/activity

In general, the impact of additional trainings as well as the motivation to attend more trainings varies among interviewees (3) regarding interests in personal and professional development to travelling across Europe. For those who attended further trainings/activities, only a couple of interviewees could not recognise any impact of previous attended trainings/activities. Most of them did not provide any further explanations for this self-perceived gap of impact but one interviewee stresses bad experiences with YiA trainings.

Several interviewed participants (3) indicate that further trainings had a positive influence on things such as handling youth projects (more knowledge/methods) or creating new interest in social enterprises (i.e. resulting from a special training of the Ministry). As a result, their participation influenced their personal and professional development as well as career perspectives positively. Moreover, the training can be seen as an inspiration to initiate their own projects, take over more responsibility and/or use new methods. Interestingly, it has been mentioned that the impact of the training/activity might differ depending whether attendance was voluntary or involuntary (e.g. employer wanted interviewee to attend).

The further trainings/activities of those who attended more than the initial training/activity refer to international, national and/or local training opportunities such as study visits, workshops, conferences and/or seminars and even beyond the E+/YiA programme (i.e. internships; internal further trainings with one organisational network partner). With respect to national trainings, a couple of interviewees express that these trainings/activities are very useful. More specifically, one interviewee states that she attended an extra national training organised by the National Agency for Education for Youth Exchange application and several other national trainings in relation to her work outside international youth work. This interviewee understands the annual participations in several trainings is part of a youth worker’s job description. Another interviewee participated in a few local trainings not related to E+, but would be interested in going on another Erasmus+ training (i.e. about youth unemployment and employability in Spain):



**“***It would be nice to see what other European countries are doing, so that would be good, but I didn't have the guts to ask my manager”* (Ffs\_TCA2if3).

Moreover, further attended trainings show a big variety of topics. As already discussed in previous chapters, specific and/or thematic trainings/activities would be highly appreciated. For example, one interviewee points out she would be interested in attending more thematic and specific trainings regarding international youth work, though she also expects to learn a lot through the exchanges themselves:

“Some more specific or thematic training in international youth work, as we have a lot of immigrant or refugee background young people here and would be great to expand on that knowledge. There is a clear need for us to learn how to support them and integrate them...” (Ifs\_TCA7if3).

Nevertheless, she should not attend trainings for trainings sake, but would rather focus on her need to update and increase her knowledge work (i.e. globalisation and internationalism).

It is noteworthy that the majority part of interviewees did not participate in further trainings/activities, despite some of them wishing to do so (i.e. time constraints; changed date of the training/activity; applications were refused). Others feel themselves too old or assume that the training topic would not be interesting/attractive for them (i.e. nothing new; not relevant):

**“***Although I must say, if I would have been able as I wished, there would have been several, but this must then work out with private and professional obligations”* (Ems\_TCA5ed3).

**“***Well I'm not sure, maybe I am too old (laughs). I really feel that the others were so young and then they were handing out those youth passes, so I got the feeling that maybe I don't belong there”* (Ffs\_TCA2if3).

#### 6.4.1 Training hoppers

The term ‘training hoppers’ was defined with respect to the assumption that some of the interviewed participants may attend several trainings/activities within the E+/YiA programme during the survey period between interviews (2) two months after the activity and interviews (3) twelve months after the activity. It was assumed that offered training opportunities would be highly attractive for a few interviewees and therefore this issue should be taken into account in the third round of

interviews for several reasons. First, the impact of further trainings should be discussed critically in the results due to the methodological challenge in analysing effects from the attended training/activity in question on the interviewed participants (and not be mixed with other attended trainings/activities). Second, one assumption was drawn that the outcomes from interviewees who attended several trainings/activities in one year may be in reduced quality. For example, the argument could be made that motivation to attend is focused on travelling and not on competence development. Furthermore, it is considered that it seems rather difficult to remember concrete outcomes from different attended trainings/activities. Finally, the definition ‘training hoppers’ was set for interviewees who have attended more than five trainings/support activities/youth worker mobilities during the last year (between interviews (2) and (3)). For these ‘training hoppers’ a specific methodological approach was developed, including specific questions during the interview (3).

A handful of researchers argue that the term ‘training hopper’ would not be applicable for a couple of their interviewed participants as trainings were chosen carefully, organised most of time by these interviewees themselves or the decision for participation in the trainings concern the motivation to improve the own competences as well as the own occupational status:

**“***I participated in a leadership training organised by AEGEE, in a youth conference about the European situation (populism, weakening of democracy), I participated in an E + training where motivation was concerned and one about the project management but from a different approach, I went to a training in Portugal as a teamleader (what does it mean to be a European) and I participated in the organisation's own programs. It was an intense year”* (Jms\_TCA6uh3).

After the third round of interviews, few interviewees participated in further trainings/activities apart from the training/activity in question. From interviewees that did further participate, between one and four additional trainings/activities have been attended but not all of these trainings/activities referred to the E+/YiA programme. Moreover, some of these interviewed participants could no longer remember the exact dates or names but only the content of the additional trainings/activities (see previous chapter: impact of further trainings/activities).



In the end, only one interviewee could be assumed to be a training hopper based on the developed definition for this study. This interviewee stressed that she has participated in several trainings per year since 2004.

## 6.5 Organisational preparation for/of training/activities

This subsection examines the organisational preparation for/of trainings/activities. First, an examination of how different support before is offered by different organisational cultures is presented. Next, is an examination of how organisations support team members while they attend training/activities

### 6.5.1 Supporting training/activity preparation

“All the team is involved in hosting a training. There is always lots of organisational aspects to do, so we need all handson deck here. But what is even more important is the content-related help. I try to allow every employee to have their say as far as the programme or training activities are concerned. Preparing the training is also a learning and reflection process for all of us” (yyPL\_65fve).

The focus of preparations for hosting a training/activity are loosely based around the idea of “teamwork” where preparation is conducted as a team. Typically, some administrative tasks such as arranging travel are centralised. The structures to set up E+/YiA trainings include non-formal education courses in the professionalisation strategy, but this objective has to be evolved over time. Thus, the preparation of the trainings refers to existing tools of research (i.e. platform Salto-Youth) and the exchange on the selection of the training within the team. Online tools provide a valuable addition in the preparation of training/activities. Tools for online communication are useful for organising on-site meetings with organisations.

There are diverse methods of support for attendees offered before the training in various interpretations such as informal or practical support, preparatory meeting, or pre-activity phases over multiple days or evenings. Some organisations established well defined support mechanisms for participants before and during their participation in the activity, such as making online information available about the training/support activity; disusing materials for the activity in advance and special preparations of logistics and intercultural aspects for YPFO/YPSN. Expertise plays a vital role in support for the training/activity preparation. More experienced organisations or those with

experienced staff seem to have the best handle on preparing their employees or volunteers for a training/support activity as well as following up with the results afterwards. Preparations are a structured process for most of the interviewed beneficiaries, depending on the needs and previous experience of individuals/participants:

“We arrange meetings on an issue or a project that we intend to. The core team deals with the issue, three to five persons gather frequently, but when they deem it necessary they invite other board members and volunteers to their meetings to solicit their views. They talk about what needs to be done”(fji9\_00jkTR).

Furthermore, there is a discrepancy between activity types and preparation support. Trainings are often less discussed, while projects are discussed in detail during the process of writing applications. Preparatory assignments are required for different trainings and in some organisations, but too much preparation can be off putting as some interviewees reported doubts about the added value of some preparation activities. The overall impression from the interviewees in module (C) suggest compulsory preparatory meetings within the organisation.

### 6.5.2 Support for team members during the training/activity

Organisational culture also plays a role in how organisations support team members participating in the training/activity. Larger organisations operate with standardised procedures and support, while smaller organisations have more minimalistic approaches. For paid employees, promised subsistence rates were received however this came with the trade-off of a large workload to catch up on once they returned from the training/activity. In organisations where these training/activities are often viewed as part of the organisational culture, similar procedures and rules can be summarised:

- matching of personal and organisational interests;
- needs analysis may be initiated by a specific reason or part of regular work planning;
- no resources to replace a person in training or organise the work differently during absence;
- different formats for the transfer of the learning outcomes into practice;
- an implicit strategy for the participation in trainings/activities but a lack of explicit strategy can be indicated due to understaffed professionals;
- collective process of training hosting.

Organisations have internal resources to support team members before the training/activity. The participants are provided documentations and internal resources that have been shared over time to raise their awareness of the topic and share it with other participants in the future training. However, support during the training is less common. Sometimes, reflection time (especially for “first timers”) in most of organisations is provided during the training/activity that is considered quite helpful for the learning process (this was similarly state in modules (A) and (B)).

Perhaps the most emphasized method of support is the redistribution of work while a team member is attending a training/activity. While organisations try to support their employees the absence of a member is always challenging: “/ ... / we are still a small organisation, for example, no one is employed, so we do not have some systems [of redistribution] set up” (Slrxs\_87r).

“We often share tasks among us. If a group member is in somewhere else in that process some other undertakes his task, so we share things for a more planned way of work” (45t64\_TR1).

“We have our double support system. We try to have at least two persons in charge of each work. A back-up system let’s say. So there is back-up in cases where we cannot fulfil responsibility” (rf32TR\_8fjie).

When the workload is discussed in advance, some organisations establish “double responsibility” or “back up” to follow each other’s tasks in the absence of their colleagues. In public organisations, expectations exist that participants arrange the workload and schedules according to the needs of the organisation, like being in contact with others of the organisation via internet-based communication and if the workload allows the participation. In urgent matters the participant is replaced by colleagues while in the training/activity. In all other cases the work will be finished or continued after coming back from the training/activity. In smaller organisations and where work is in close contact with the youth, the question of the workload is more acute. It is particularly not possible to attend the training/support activities during busy periods as work has to be done.

## 6.6 Summary training and support activities

### 6.6.1 Effectiveness of the training/activity

#### After the training/activity

After the training, most of the interviewees of the second-round report being enthusiastic, inspired and motivated in doing (international) youth work and/or submitting and implementing international youth projects/activities. These sentiments are repeated in different interviews (3).

Many potential contacts were made for future collaboration. Nevertheless, concrete collaboration with submitted international projects or implemented projects are hardly ever realised in the interviews (2), contrary to statements in interviews (3) where many interviewees report that they submitted and/or implemented international youth projects/activities. Most frequently reported effects of the attended training/activity refer to an individual impact of personal and professional development, i.e. learning from peers how to promote activities, recharging own batteries, new ideas for the project, learning through role models (trainers did their job well); clarifying own role in business and career aspirations; new knowledge; new connections/ collaboration.

Generally speaking, several interviewees (2) point out they are impressed and overwhelmed by their experiences and the outcomes of the attended training/activity. The international training/ activity setting may imply many benefits, especially in terms of intercultural learning for participants such as new perspectives through international exchange of good and bad practices. This trend still becomes evident in the analysed interviews (3) and may underline the strong interests to repeat the training/activity. ICL/intercultural knowledge seems to be one of the key results of the learning/training outcomes in interviews (2) but was not focused on in the same extent in interviews (3). It is reported that these topics predominantly happened naturally with international participants and trainers with diverse backgrounds (excluding the working field) as ICL requires a diversity of participants. It is pointed out that ICL has to be actively taken into account from professionalised trainers with conceptually solid backgrounds.

Seldomly are ICL issues directly addressed or dealt with (i.e. topic of the training; presented concepts). Thus, some criticism is articulated based on the implemented ICL approach in the training/activity setting, such as focus and con-

cepts are missing, they are not dealt with well (too personally), learning happened through only due to the cultural diversity of peers and exchange of cultural differences, and the venue was outside the residence country.

Unexpected effects in different statements of interviews (3) are reported in terms of positively changed perspectives regarding Youthpass, difficulties to recall the respective training/activity or learning, and bad practices experienced in the training setting. Furthermore, little impact/less valuable outcomes are perceived by a few interviewed participants. They claim that no new knowledge and/or skills could be acquired or expectations were not met (wrong topic; wrong participants (not motivated) but it took a lot of time and energy. Others are very satisfied with the training/activity setting because they could practice or improve some important aspects (i.e. language skills).

Most of the time critical interview statements do not differ between the two rounds of interviews (2) and (3). On closer inspection, a lack of diversification in terms of topics, duration, and thematic in-depth knowledge is critically addressed within both interviews. In particular, specialists and/or experienced participants in youth work potentially criticise a lack of new knowledge, skills or relevance for the daily business and frequently feel underchallenged. Thus, a lack of clarity on concepts (i.e. ICL; NFL; ethics and integrity) and specialised/thematic training/activity settings for experts may become apparent, while a confident use of known tools and methods through a solid toolbox of methods can be observed with a strong focus on peer learning, networking, and partnership. On the contrary, digital tools and/or spaces and external inputs are marginalised. Moreover, another criticism is raised predominantly in interviews (2) regarding the training/activity settings and implemented approaches due to a lack of well-qualified trainers or a heterogeneous peer group (too much diversity in terms of professional backgrounds). In addition, reported diversity belongs to international backgrounds and age of participants, but not to the working field or thematic priorities (i.e. working with youth; being a youth worker). With respect to this, it is expected to provide professional similarities among the peers to ensure exchange of experiences and outcomes relevant for the own daily business. The recruiting of peers/participants may have an impact on the success of the training because of the effects of peer learning in an intercultural and generational environment, and in terms of creating a 'sense of community'.

In addition, it is criticised that training information is not always provided for the participants in advance, with little inclusion of participants in preparation and follow-up. As a result, cancelled or changed training topics without pre-announcement are not valued, as this causes a lack of relevance for daily work. Furthermore, a need for follow-up trainings/activities are explored in both rounds of interviews and would be appreciated in terms of deepening the learning outcomes, reinforcing networks/partnerships, and providing in-depth trainings/activities on specific topics.

Finally, it is critically added that trainings may not respond to structural problems through their focus on individual levels, while a major challenge in international youth work is actually widely seen to be found in structural problems.

### 6.6.2 Applied training approaches and methods

#### During the training/activity

Generally speaking, most participants report that they could acquire competences (skills; knowledge) through the applied training approaches/methods because the whole training seems to contribute to the development of competences. In addition, some interviewees experienced the NFL approach for the first time, which had impressive effects on them (changed opinion about NFL; considered to apply some methods in the formal sector). Preferred learning strategies by the interviewees can be assumed as follows:

- learning by doing/workplace learning: role of a group/team leader; learning through good/bad practice;
- learning through peers: cross-generational learning; peer learning; experienced-based learning; learning in teams and mutual learning;
- self-/individual learning;
- learning through field trips (study visits): Practical exercises and practical knowledge.

The role of the trainers may also have a strong impact on the learning/training outcomes and influence the success of the training with their professionalism regarding support, attitude and interventions (i.e. provide follow-ups). In some cases, it is criticised that trainers focused on NFL, did not always act target-oriented or learner-centred and did not deal with intercultural learning/identities professionally. Further critiques refer to a lack of innovative, inspirational and/or new approaches. Some participants already were familiar with applied training approaches/methods. In this case, newcomers (participants in internation-

al training for the first time; no knowledge about youth work) benefited the most as everything was new and interesting for them. Moreover, a lack of application of the learning/training outcomes in daily business is criticised as the working field differs from the applied training approach (content; methods), or the training approach did not tackle the training issues.

Another critical point of view can be assumed regarding indicated tensions between a non-formal versus a formal approach. Based on several interview statements, theoretical inputs and concepts as part of formal education are rejected, from several interviewed participants and some trainers. Furthermore, the focused NFL is predominantly focused on peer learning and the exchange of experiences. While this approach correlates with expressed expectations of the interviewed participants, the question is if this approach is sufficient as a focus in terms of required digitalisation and intended professionalisation in international youth work. Furthermore, does this approach deliver the expectations and needs of the majority of experienced youth workers/participants ('experts'), who pointed out that they could not/marginally improved their professional development due to a lack of 'new' knowledge? Moreover, it should be considered that experienced combinations of theoretical and practical approach within the training/activity were most frequently highly appreciated in the interviews.

### 6.6.3 Networks and partnerships

#### During the training/activity

The training/activity contributes to networking, making contacts and building potential partnerships for future collaboration. Networks or partnerships are sometimes built according to country-specific reputations. Some countries are highly popular, others not (depend on the reasons for creating a network and relevant project partners/partnerships; also, the background and experiences of participants). After the training, many potential contacts/partners for future collaboration are established. Many interviewees perceived themselves to be successful in these areas, and some already arranged study visits to exchange experience. In various cases, networking was the focus of the training. A lack of opportunities for networking is rarely reported. More often it was the case that networking happened naturally in heterogeneous group of people and informal settings during the evenings. In addition, some networks are reinforced through existing partnerships (implemented project(s) previously). Both informal and training settings encourage

networking. Furthermore, not only are international networks reported to be relevant, but national networks are also important.

According to the re-visitation of the theme building networks in the interviews (3), it can be summarised that concrete interests in further collaboration for youth projects/activities still exist and partnerships could be mostly built. For several interviewees (3), it remains a highlight of the training/activity to meet many interesting people with different international backgrounds. Finally, it is stated again that professional people and a well-organised activity have an impact on the success of the training/activity.

### 6.6.4 Impact of further trainings/activities and training hoppers

#### After the training/activity

Overall, the majority of the interviewees (3) did not attend further trainings/activities, despite some of them expressing their interests in doing so. The most important hindrances seem to be time constraints, changed dates of the training/activity, refused applications, feeling too old or no relevant/interesting training topic being offered.

Interviewees who participated in additional trainings/activities report quite similar effects/no effects on their individual impact as for the training/activity in question. Summing up, the quality of the training, the link to the current occupation and exchange possibilities with other participants of the training and/or voluntary/involuntary participation may be identified as essential. The attended further trainings/activities did not only refer to international youth work but also to national, regional and local ones beyond the E+/YiA programme. Generally speaking, there seems to be a high motivation among many interviewees (3) in attending further trainings/activities.

Referring to 'training hoppers' (interviewees, who attended more than five additional trainings/activities during the last year), it is worth mentioning that in the interview sample no training hoppers could be identified explicitly. Only one interviewee can be assumed to be a training hopper regarding their activity since 2004. Several others participated in more than one training/activity over the last year (between two and four trainings/activities). Additionally, it should be taken into account that a couple of potential training hoppers were not described as such because they chose, decided or organised the trainings carefully in order to improve the own competences as well as occupational status.



### 6.6.5 Final summarised considerations for further vocational trainings/activities

These requests are deduced from several interviews (2) with regards to critical statements of the training/support activities and the need for in-depth trainings/activities. Notably, experts would like to improve their specialised knowledge requiring in-depth, follow-up or specialised knowledge in terms of further vocational training but rarely find the respective learning circumstances to meet this expectation. The critics refer to the fairly limited offerings for further education related to specialised working fields/profiles (i.e. youth work in closed institution). Furthermore, special topics, such as digitalisation and youth work (i.e. youth participation and e-participation) are marginalised.

In addition to the required specialised trainings, there is a need to deepen the acquired understanding of Youthpass and international youth work through specific exchanges (in-depth training). Also, an in-depth training in the field of conflict management, how to understand peers (i.e. when they feel homesick), and how to react accordingly in the role of a mentor in daily business is proposed. Finally, further interests in practical information (methods; access to youth) about NEET in other countries and the successful application of NFL in the youth field have been addressed in the interviews.

A balanced mix between theoretical inputs (also from experts) and self-experimentation/expressions are reported to be interesting, although many interviewees emphasise that they are more interested in exchanging examples of good practice (tips and tricks) and not in theoretical lectures. It should be taken into account that this issue is discussed controversially among the interviewed participants. Some are more interested in practical knowledge, while others point out the importance of also including theoretical approaches and more real-life actions/experiences in the training. Another interviewee reports disappointment due to expectations of to learning and participating in a hard-working training sessions:

**“***It was a bit easy for me. Of course, we didn't go there to change the world and make it happen in one week, we went there to think together. But, because I have learned about this a lot, I wanted to hear more of concrete actions. (...) I thought there would be more theory, but it was much more creative, flexible, I was surprised and I appreciated it. So I'm not disappointed, but it could have gone deeper. It is great for 18-21-year-olds*

*who have just started to work with these issues”* (Hfs\_TCA8uh2).

### 6.6.6 Organisational Support during training/activity

Organisational culture supposedly has a strong impact on the type of support for attendees of the training/activity. Organisations with more experience in these training/activities are perhaps far more likely to provide internal resources of support. However, during the training/activity support is suggested to be far less common, at most culminating in a reflection process during the event. Online tools are considered important for support in the planning of trainings/activities, as well as for team members to remain in contact with college during the training/activity. When training/activities are considered a necessary part of organisational culture, implicit strategies of support became evident but a lack of explicit strategies can be assumed in many organisations apart from organisations involved in international/European youth work. In particular, the perceived greatest concern of interviewees was in regards to the redistribution of work. Typically, this does not occur and support from organisation during the participation is considered less common.

## 7 — TRANSFER OF LEARNING OUTCOMES INTO PRACTICE

This chapter focuses on the impact of the learning/training outcomes on individuals as well as organisations/environment after coming back from the attended training/activity. The transfer of learning/training outcomes into practice is analysed, including self-perceived effects and changes, applied learning/training outcomes, support of interviewees as well as organisations, experiences with Youthpass or perceived unintended side effects based on the attended training/activity.

In this section, statements from the second round of interviews two months after the activity (interview (2); module (A)) provide the database for the transnational analysis. In addition, the reviewed statements of the third round of interviews (3) (module (B)) can be seen as another essential database for this chapter, providing further in-depth transnational analyses. Thus, it is possible to draw conclusions on long-term effects through the defined approach to interview participants again for the transfer of their developed competences twelve months after the activity. As a result, the following chapter relates on the content level to module (A) as well as module (B). In addition, issues about impact on the organisational level (including environment) will be further addressed within module (C) on systemic effects.

### 7.1 Effects and changes on the individual level

*“I believe what I learned is directly applicable to daily work. We are in the final phase of the organisational process of an international summer university, and I try to pay more attention e.g. on the direct communication between partners” (Jms\_TCA6uh2).*

#### After the training/activity

At the individual level, the outcomes are frequently seen as being relevant in daily work after the training/activity. In particular, satisfaction existed among the majority of interviewees (2) with respect to the delivered personal expectations, the acquired personal development, and established networks/contact making. The training/activity outcomes provided ‘new aspects’ for many interviewees and changed their daily business to be more playful.

*“The course opened the doors to a new field of which I had no information” (Kmh\_YWM1or2).*

With regards to personal development, interviewees (2) report outcomes had an impact on their daily business by being more enthusiastic, motivated and inspired in own youth work (i.e. volunteering work), and increasing intercultural awareness (avoiding stereotypes; differences and similarities within/across Europe). This increased motivation is a result of meeting interesting and experienced international people, who were quite impressive, and developing networks that reinforced motivation (see chapter: expectations and motivation to attend the training/activity).

Impact on individual level for personal and professional development could be reassessed in the analysed interviews (3) and may play an important role for many interviewees, although for a marginal group of interviewees the activity did not have much effect on professional development. For example, one interviewed participant critically reviews that the attended training/activity helped him less as a social entrepreneur (for social entrepreneurship he needed funds that he did not have) and more as a consultant for those who needed support for entrepreneurship and / or international mobility issues. Another interviewee will use the acquired knowledge not for international youth work but for writing own thesis for academic studies, and a further one criticises the quality/extent of information:

*“I feel like all of the information that I learned is something I could have just asked from my manager or from another youth worker who has experience in the matter” (Cfh\_YWM1if3).*

As a result, concrete effects or impact of the attended training/activity may not be able to be identified precisely. However, some effects can be assumed for interviewees who reported limited effects/changes, for example, initiating a longer process of reflection and exploration, seeking different commitments in and for civil society or experiencing international trainings/activities (i.e. questions the own methods in youth work or meet other professionals).

Apart from critical statements, a majority part of interviewees gained more transparency and certainty for profession and professional life as well as personal development in terms of:

- international youth work (i.e. exchange of practices and experiences in youth work between countries; new ideas for projects; working with volunteer/volunteer relations; donor relations; lobbying; emotional infrastructure; activity rather than project; support rather than money);



- application of (international) youth projects (KA2; EVS) and to know where all formal requirements are available;
- learning from peers how to promote activities and working with volunteers (i.e. potential problems that might arise);
- inclusion of different stakeholders/target groups in educational projects;
- entrepreneurial initiatives (i.e. foundation of own organisation);
- concrete interests in professional development with respect to specific methods (i.e. handicraft methods; drama methods; to elaborate the model of competences for international youth worker) but not always interest in implementing international youth projects (no value, no time, no competences), loss of international potential;
- increased social awareness about social problems and gained self-confidence to solve social problems with different methods (i.e. theatre and drama methods to work with children with fewer opportunities);
- learning through role models (i.e. trainers did their job well);
- increased self-awareness about the own body (i.e. acknowledging the own body; self-awareness of the own body; body-work);
- discovering oneself (i.e. realising being an innovative person; methodology how to find an inner peace)
- recharging own batteries.

Further examples can be selected to illustrate the professional impact among several interviewees (3): One interviewee developed his expertise in dog therapy from national to international level, another interviewee became an attentive social media youth worker, and a further interviewee was inspired to organise/implement a similar international training for another target group (farmers).

**“***My perception of internet and social media has changed completely – I considered it before as a threat, now I learn how to use it and how to use this space where almost all young people are present nowadays” (Cfh\_YWMLp3).*

As a result of personal and professional development, the quality of youth work/personal qualifications could be improved, which was indicated by

- new contacts, networks and/or partnerships;
- more international youth projects;
- applied specific acquired methods/techniques (i.e. new methods of critical thinking for analysing information in media; ‘aircraft’

method for establishing collaboration; professionalised dog therapy in street work);

- dissemination activities (i.e. cooperation with rural organisations, federal government, members of specific clubs or with young people);
- improved flexibility.

Improved personal/professional development on the individual level also effected organisational level, as organisations could benefit in the context of validated quality in their youth work (i.e. validate the used methods in the organisation with the applied ones in the training/activity). For example, as a result one interviewee (2) changed strategy for resource allocation within her organisation. In line with the objectives of the training, she understands theory and practice, and makes strategy more realistic (see chapter: effects and changes on the organisational level).

‘Sense of community’ had a further motivating impact on interviewed participants (2). For participants it was and is still encouraging to know participants/peers who share the same values and have similar challenges/problems (i.e. limited resources). As well, raises awareness of organisations that have similar problems but also understanding country-specific differences/challenges (i.e. structures of national organised youth work). A better comprehension of one’s organisation’s role in youth work in comparison with other countries’ institutional systems is addressed to have another impact on a personal level. The importance of receiving positive feedback from peers about profession (quality of work) is emphasised in different statements of interviews (3), which improves self-confidence in daily work, in practice, in the direction of thinking and awareness that a variety of peers are confronted with the same difficulties (see chapter: (international) youth work competences).

**“***I think it is more important that competencies and values can be easily passed by these trainings. It provides a basis for knowledge that can be deepened. But as these trainings work by learning by doing, knowledge is not the most important thing, because all you need is Google, and you can find anything factual. But it is more difficult to develop the competencies at home alone. As far as values are concerned, due to the internationalization of trainings, it is very cool that so many people come together and come across so many different points of view, but still everybody is somewhat similar to each other, share the same attitudes, values” (Jms\_TCA6uh3).*

Further impact on personal development is reported in terms of changes in the self-confidence between interview (1) before the activity and interview (2) two months after the activity and the positive influence of the training/activity. During interview (1), one interviewee (not very experienced; young) was very optimistic and idealistic about youth work in the countryside. In the second interview (2), she stated that it is very difficult to involve and engage young people living in rural areas with any kind of activity. The training supported her by developing ideas and inspiration on how to overcome these challenges, and how to better involve and engage young people. She was grateful for having the opportunity to participate in the training and gain such support. Additionally, a few other interviewees perceive more self-confidence on a general level about what they are doing, or by using English language at the workplace.

**“***I have become more self-confident to work in English, I think I will manage to organise and coordinate a small international activity” (Gfs\_TCA1p3).*

Processes for self-evaluation is an essential part of a training project in choosing appropriate career paths. A new experienced self-discovery process might help to clarify future private and professional life concepts. Additionally, in the interviews (3) further clarifications of the own role in business (i.e. improved self-confident for the own practice and/or function/role such as being a mentor vs. tutor in the organisation) and further career aspirations are stated in this context (see chapter: future perspectives and outlook).

Further examples of the second round of interviews may underline the impact of exchange experiences after coming back from the training/activity. One interviewee describes, for example, that she explores with other volunteers from the association how intensive TCA was, how interesting it was to meet people/future partners, and to learn many things about non-formal education. As a result, she intends to include her experiences in her preparation of the next international training. Another interviewee expresses that he felt closer to such youth projects, especially considering the EU support to the projects with disabled young people.

Further impact on the individual level was addressed with respect to applied communication concepts such as conflict management or meaningful communication in the attended trainings/activities, indicating impressive learning out-

comes for some participants of interviews (2) as well as interviews (3) (see chapter: (international) youth work competences).

On closer inspection, one interviewee is concerned with the growth of training practices in youth work, and attending the course which took an integrated approach on the concept of “communicating meaningfully” which has changed her perspective on this, and she seeks to integrate what she has learned into the work of the organisation. Another interviewee points out his acquired new communication skills including respective theories of communication such as introducing himself and his ideas in two minutes. Now he is putting it into practice in terms of “get out of your comfort zone” (Ams\_TCA1\_tr3).

Finally, the non-formal learning approach in the training/activity may have produced impressive effects on daily business, which can be indicated, for example, through awareness raising about non-formal learning methods and own attitude in formal education:

**“***It gave me a lot of inspiration, when you do the same job with the students but instead of controlling you try to shepherd / accompany them, like: go on, try this too, or search for this also...As I see, here the role of the teacher, or the youth worker is really different than usually, you just have to be there, in the background” (Gfs\_KA2uh2).*

In interviews (3), this approach is reconsidered by different interviewees. Some of them consider their changed perspectives for non-formal learning education, for example, and applied/transferred respective methods into practice, sometimes beyond youth work in the formal sector.

**“***The major impact on me was how a supportive environment can promote shared learning among educators. I’ve learned so much about myself as an educator, and I would recommend it to other educators, not just in youth work” (Bmh\_YWM1ei3).*

**“***That more than fun and games are happening within non-formal learning, that there are objectives which you don’t see immediately” (Kfs\_TCA9ed3).*

This interviewee is sure that European non-formal education will become her profession. When starting the interview, the interviewee explained that she prepared herself by looking back at the last year – what has happened and what she has

done. This interviewee now works differently with the volunteers when it is about mid-term and final assessment; she tries to work in a way that young people can realise: it is about our life and our experiences.

Others greatly appreciated the broad and comprehensive (educational) approach offered by non-formal education, which could be recalled 12 months after the activity:

**“***It is the content, but it is also the context, the people you meet. So here I am, it's more this sharing that I remember what, all that is interculturality, the discussions we had, the exchanges around the cultural differences that can be within the European Union itself and Europe, all that is tolerance (...)*” (Bfs\_TCArf3).

In interviews (2), the international environment seems to have changed or broadened the working field by receiving a new stimulus to work at European level among several interviewees (see chapter: training and support activity). Such acquired international perspective may also have an impact on the competences needed to work with young people. In one interview (2) changes could be perceived, by better understanding the peculiarities of youth work in other European countries, how youth work is supported and financed there, and how youth workers are trained (see chapter: present (international) youth work). In a handful of interviews (3), this result can be reconfirmed with respect to the acquired international perspective for the youth work from the experienced environment:

“I didn't learn anything concrete, but I would say I gained some experiences. [...] [what I experienced is] It doesn't count where you're from. The only important thing is, that you want to participate. No matter what it is about, but you want to be a part of the team. It really doesn't matter your nationality, or your background.

The only important thing is that you wanted to be there. Everybody has something to share, to add” (Bfs\_TCA7uh3).

As a result, in interviews (3) international experience/interculturality is addressed as one of the main benefits with respect to cultural exchange of other countries through international peers (interculturality) or acquired knowledge about country-specific differences in youth work (see chapter: international youth work competences). The biggest benefits of E+ trainings were summarised by one interviewee as follows:

- the transmission of competences and values;
- the possibility to work in an international team during the training, and the possibility of learning by doing.

Further outcomes could be indicated, which may have an impact on the individual level, as reported in the interviews (2):

- stronger interest in conflict management;
- intention to go abroad and enjoy project work;
- learning that non-violent communication is important for oneself and effects other positively;
- learning more about recruiting (i.e. EVS volunteers);
- applying knowledge for EVS accreditation and behaviour
- learning to convince the business world/to use some of the business-related knowledge;
- using the provided exemplifying material in everyday work;
- the notion of “street working” become broader after the project;
- learning how NGOs work in practical terms (field trips);
- new workshop model is designed and implemented for young people;
- learning the importance of group preparation activities, such as for teamwork, accepting differences, respecting each other's opinions and exceeding one's comfort zone, etc.

One interviewee of interviews (3) sums up that the most important gains from the attended training are a broader view of minorities, the elimination of stereotypes, and a more effective communication.

### 7.1.1 Application of acquired learning/training outcomes

With respect to application of acquired learning/training outcomes into practice, some could already be applied in the work with the target group or are intended to be applied, as emerged from the interviews (2). This includes, for example:

- applying methods and tools (i.e. group exercise for self-organised camps; team work exercises to search for partners for a national project; ice-breaker exercise; developing training projects for unemployed young people and adult; simulation games; in the work with students);
- using now the daily reflection method in the daily work;
- using drawing more creativity in order to support young people;

- more tools being available and there is a growing confidence to use them;
- using of the offered model of youth worker's competences;
- using some of the problem-solving activities with volunteer groups.

**“***I learned how to work with young people and how to approach many situations and new methods of practice in music” (Jmh\_YWM1or2).*

Several interviewees (2) report acquired methods or tools are relevant for their daily work, but have not had the chance to apply them as of yet. The majority of them believes or intends to use new methods or approaches for future activities. The following plans for applications are raised in the interviews (2) (two months after the activity):

- will use the learned methods and approach in future activities (i.e. nature/outdoor sports; short movies; communication processes; inclusion of children in activities);
- motivated by giving opportunities to young people;
- want to transfer the new capacity into practice with role-playing and more playful methods;
- feel aware about one's own learning process and would like supporting others;
- try to transfer the ambience of the training into practice („maintain the same attitude/atmosphere“);

As a result, in the revised statements of the interviews (3) it becomes obvious that different learning outcomes could be applied such as:

- developed and submitted youth projects, including fundraising;
- improved presentation and communication skills (i.e. working with volunteers, refugees; English skills for writing letters, job applications, project applications and/or international publication in English, or giving presentations);
- improved selection process for volunteers;
- acquired methods and exercises (i.e. simulation/digital games, handicraft techniques, team or group building, group exercises, ice breakers to get to know each other, drama methods; methods to build trust; applying feedback for experiential learning);
- gained knowledge on NEET youth problem (i.e. which needs to be tackled also at national level);
- emedded aspects of NFL approach/NFE in the work with young people;
- emedded aspects of attended training/activity in the own training activities.

**“***I had the opportunity to put into practice, finally redo games and activities that we had done” (Bfs\_TCARf3).*

**“The Erasmus + has given me a toolkit of training techniques, a survival kit of working with groups, and I have used it for different purposes”**

(Bmh\_YWM1ei3)

Another interviewee learned about gamification and its importance, but she only uses this part partially. However, she emphasised many times that she had much more aversion when it came to Internet and online games and, thanks to the training, she started to accept this new “approach”. A further interviewee expresses that she is working more playfully in activities now, including the body and creativity. Another interviewee states that “it's not tools that I reused, it's more this aspect of tolerance, communication, exchange sharing” (Bfs\_TCARf3). She implements values in her work with refugees.

In a few cases of interviews (3) a turn-around of statement can be observed as a long-term effect: some training/learning outcomes were much more appreciated than in interviews (2) through the (unexpected) application of some exercises in activities of the organisation or raising awareness on the impact of the addressed issues in the training/activity (see chapter: general assumptions and conclusions for interviews (2) and (3)).

In other interview cases (3) no change in daily practice is claimed, while certain aspects of the training/activity were applied in daily business, such as small scale projects or exchange projects, specific exercises and methods, new contacts or partnerships.

Despite these positive perceived applications of learning/training outcomes from the majority of interviewees (3), it is worth mentioning that others have not applied anything in their daily business (see chapter: obstacles and recommendations to overcome the obstacles on the individual level).



### 7.1.2 Support of the interviewee

Overall, many interviewees are motivated and engaged to transfer the learning/training outcomes into their practice. In several interviews a 'social approach for sharing the learning/training outcomes' within the organisation as well as in the environment can be indicated. There is a demand to distribute impressive effects among colleagues within and outside the organisations, friends or collaboration partners (see chapter: effects and changes on the organisational level; impact on the environment). The effort and motivation to apply some learning/training results in daily business may correlate with the dimension of the individual impact: in case, the output is not perceived to be relevant or new, the individual activities for transferring the outcomes into practice are limited.

The assumed trend of motivation and engagement from interviewees in interviews (2) may be reaffirmed in many statements of interviews (3) in terms of highly supportive individual initiatives. Such initiatives refer to implementing own ideas, activities or being engaged for transferring the learning outcomes into practice, implying many bottom up processes:

- acting quite often as multipliers such as presenting and implementing the outcomes inside as well as outside the employer organisation (i.e. donors; colleagues; young people);
- making changes in mobile youth work practice;
- taking initiatives to tackle the NEET youth problem both through her daily work in the organisation as well as via collaboration with other parties;
- supporting the organisation in mentoring the volunteer.

Further examples underline these comprehensive initiatives. One interviewee points out that the training gave him encouragement, socialisation, communication, negotiation and teamwork skills, which have all contributed to more initiatives from his part. A further interviewee expresses that his negative attitudes towards the business world and the perceived damage it gave to people through capital and money changed positively. Some other interviewees emphasise more the personal progress and/or better contribution to the Association's work:

**“**Yes, well, there is a difference in that I realise that I need to give up some things which I'm doing (...). I need trainers doing these things (...) and I started to bring in some young trainers (...) I took two of them out of training of trainers

*I'm running so that they can train their skills”*  
(Lmh\_TCA10ed3).

In the second round of interviews it is stressed that international youth projects were developed or submitted by several interviewed participants. This was reemphasised in the interviews (3) as well as the implementation of such projects. Furthermore, fundraising was focused on and respective infrastructure organised. Finally, sharing experiences, knowledge, thoughts, contacts and ideas for further international collaboration to colleagues seem to be relevant activities from many interviewees.

Similar trainings, a new training module for the organisation or a summer school were implemented, and finally new organisations were founded in the youth field (i.e. alone; with friends). Peer education model and active participation in discussions of the training/activity are perceived to have a personal impact on the realisation of workshops and training projects. In interviews (3), accumulated knowledge and skills were included in the own trainings, several workshops for young people were conducted including the learned skills and methods or trainings/workshops with colleagues were implemented within and outside the organisation.

**“**I would say in the sense of this non-formal gathering with my colleagues, with my partners, that I then transferred these ideas forward” (Ifh\_KA11ii3).

In various interviews (2) it is reported that through the implemented activities, the benefits and effects on organisations and the environment could be increased. One interviewee points out for example: The more projects she implements, the more she has to share with others, indicating positive influences on people from her organisation and fellow teachers in the high school (see chapter: effects and changes on the organisational level; impact on the environment).

Support for transfer into practice was an existing 'organisational culture' (i.e. strategy/rules for staff members after coming back from trainings/activities; suggestions of changes as a result of participating). In cases where transfer into practice was not successful, a kind of frustration or tiredness may appear among a few interviewees. Some report that nobody responded to their suggestions and ideas for change based on the learning/training outcomes. This rejection occurred despite self-perceived openness to share the learning outcomes if requested or demanded or imple-

mented efforts, in order to apply some acquired methods into practice (see chapter: effects and changes at the organisational level).

**“***It was a great experience for me. I still think it was a super-organized, thought-out program, and the association was very sympathetic. I was very enthusiastic, and I was really disappointed, when I noticed that I wanted this more than my students” (Gfs\_KA2uh3).*

One respondent says, that the specificity of her employer organisation (youth jail) does for example not allow the carrying out of youth projects, as the body of inmates changes quite quickly. Apart from that, there are a lot of other activities consuming the prisoners’ time, so that they do not have much free time left for such organised activities. Besides, there are very strict limits on their movements (spatial) and there are several defaults in the communication and management of this organisation, which means organising anything there takes a lot of time, so many different officials have to say their word, give their approval, and so on. That is why she has not initiated any projects or applied anything new into her work practices.

On the contrary, another interviewee did not expect any further support beyond the usual mutual support among colleagues because her employer organisation is a small institution with a flat hierarchy. In other cases, it becomes evident that no support was provided from the employer organisations in transferring the training/learning outcomes. All the attempts were the interviewees’ own initiatives.

A handful of interviewees indicate the possibility of being more supportive for the transfer of the outcomes into practice after finishing the running project. Another interviewee did not feel she was in a position to make any big decisions, so that she could just start doing something with the other participants. A further interviewee classified it as an “international experience” and only close colleagues were interested in the training/learning outcomes:

**“***I’m not a trainer, but a lot of trainers worked at my workplace, and as I was a training coordinator, I thought that my experiences could be useful as they came from an international training. It is a different approach, a different mechanism, different attitudes, anything. (...) So once I made a workshop to explain what I saw there and about my EVS. No one was interested in,*

*only my close colleagues, who came for me (...)” (Bfs\_TCA7uh3).*

In some statements of the third round of interviews the question of the support of the interviewee was not applicable with respect to no organisational background; left the organisation; flat hierarchy in the organisation; the only staff member; shaky connections to both organisations; sub-unit of big institutions or it is the main job to develop international youth work and take care that all branches are actively and qualified involved.

Additionally, one interviewee states that his attitudes changed in theory but not in practice. He had difficulties transferring outcomes into attitudes. Another interviewee did a lot of initiation of activities but he could not re-use it because there were not enough resources for the implementation process.

### 7.1.3 Obstacles and suggestions to overcome the obstacles on the individual level

#### a) Obstacles

Despite the fact that many positive effects are reported from the training/activity in the interviews (2), not every interviewee perceives impressive learning/training outcomes. As a result, it should be considered that in some cases little or no outcomes for personal relevance or personal development could be perceived for daily work, more often related to critics on the training approach (not appropriate; more specific methods would be required) (see chapter: applied training approaches/methods; effectiveness of the training/activity; unintended side effects).

Interviewees who claimed that the training/activity had no effects on them, effects become evident at a later stage (i.e. writing the official report to the sending NA), and not immediately after the training. One interviewee, for example, stressed several times the diversity of the group (in terms of age, experience, institutional roles and affiliations etc.), which might not have been anticipated in advance. Experience in direct interaction with the volunteers was perceived retrospectively as a developed strength, when attending the training/activity. This might be interpreted as a learning effect, despite the fact that it was not consciously perceived. In interviews (3), such (long-term) effects become evident: in a few cases, the appreciation of the outcomes turned around to be much more positive than in interviews (2) or turned around positively during the



interviews (see chapter: general assumptions and conclusions for interviews (2) and (3)).

A substantial share of interviewees declare they are confronted with obstacles when attempting transfer of acquired learning/training outcomes into practice. The most frequently addressed obstacle refers to time constraints in daily work. Most of time, there are no further resources available to implement (international) youth projects.

Another hindrance is related to the regulations in the E+/YiA programme such as distance to local and regional authorities, complicated evaluation paths for the NFL sector, generally observed misunderstandings in terms of the options of the programme or complex/complicated grant regulations and its implication of required long-term preparations for new projects.

**“***YiA becomes less and less flexible and more and more complex and complicated – big institutions are joining in – [which] makes it difficult for a small organisation to exist in this programme” (Dmh\_YWM2ta3).*

**“***One has to finance a lot in advance”, that also implies “a lot of voluntary work in small organisation” (Dmh\_YWM2ta3), particularly when writing the application (which was not the case in his former institution).*

**“***The regulations concerning accommodation expenses are not adequate for [some] regions” (Dmh\_YWM2ta3), which is particularly the case for the interviewee.*

A similar proportion of interviewees criticise a lack of organisational support and/or stability or overall destructive reactions within the organisation (i.e. lack of motivation/restrictions for changes). Furthermore a change in the organisational background often causes problems in transferring the acquired outcomes into the new workplace (see chapter: involvement in the youth field) as well as general little/no impact from the attended training/activity or limited English skills reduce the opportunities for application. Single statements with respect to obstacles concern challenges to use new/unorthodox methods, further expanding networking activities/opportunities (requested but not possible), lack of stability at the national level and the training setting. Another claimed obstacle refers to tensions between professional goals within the formal sector based on an involved university project and activities of the field of NFE.

## **b) Suggestions to overcome the obstacles on the individual level**

In interviews (3), some articulate suggestions to overcome the perceived obstacles. One proposed recommendation refers to fostering the opportunity to take part in cultural exchanges and get to know new people, countries and organisations from another point of view (i.e. get to know their legislative and financing system). The comparisons of the national and foreign non-profit environments are indicated to be very useful for future collaboration. Another recommended outcome is the communication processes, which is perceived to have a new, higher level of quality.

## **7.2 Effects and changes on the organisational level**

**“***Coming back to the daily work environment, we discussed with the colleagues from the association, we synthesized the training experience, we offered the study materials received, we shared impressions. My colleagues have responded positively; I thus have diminished some of the areas in need of improvement of the activity of the organisation” (Dfs\_TCA1or2).*

The reported statements of interviews (2) can be mostly confirmed in many cases of interviews (3). However, for the reviewed statements of the third round of interviews a special approach is implemented: to analyse qualitative dimensions for the reported (no) effects/changes on the organisational level.

### **After the training/activity**

Professionalism in (international) youth work from interviewed participants of the second round of interviews is perceived to be one of the most important positive effects on organisations. In interviews (3), professional development is also perceived quite often on the organisational level such as personal changes, specialisation of staff members (i.e. in youth or NEET youth), intensified youth work or now more reflecting phases in many activities (i.e. all EVS projects) as well as revision of used methods (i.e. to organise trainings better, to review and improve communication practice within/outside the organisation as well as with volunteers). Different individual statements for further professional development are another colleague attended as well as will attend a similar YiA activity, establishment of the own organisation focused on community art or an estimated solidification.

“Maybe it’s solidified certain motivations, when we realised that these are important in a wider context as well” (Bms\_TCA2if3).

“It also motivates some of my colleagues to leave as well, to do intercultural training on topics that correspond to them or that may interest them, that they will be able to retranscribe after in their daily work with young people” (Jfs\_TCArf3).

In several interviews (2), organisations benefit from the interviewee’s professional development because the job is done better than before. In some interviews, participants feel more like an expert after the training/activity. In addition, this evidence-based result can be confirmed by the interviews (3). A handful of interviewees state that some organisational effects resulting from impact on the individual level such as to work more efficiently now, adapted methods for entering employees or the training/activity has nothing to do with the essence of the organisation but was very enriching at the personal level. On closer inspection, one interviewee trains youth workers in dog therapy, both from his organisation and from outside as well as from the employer organisation he has become an expert in using dog therapy in street work. They changed their methods slightly and started to introduce the permanent care elements to their dog therapy to show that animals are not toys and they need to be taken care of 24/7. Another interviewee explains how important it is what he learnt as theory and European perspectives of radicalisation, to be more confident, to discuss and teach to his colleague and to develop their training. Since they did the training for a municipal agent, the employer organisation has also become more popular and well known for radicalisation topic. A final example illustrates that as a result of the trainings she carried out in her organisation, they work on the topic of fundraising as a team to promote their organisation better and to strengthen their relations with the donors. After the activity, they gained more individual donors for the organisation.

“I transferred into practice the knowledge I learned from the activity, and I developed the individual and institutional donor relations of my organisation” (Gfh\_YWM1rt3).

Another interviewee (2) stresses that a higher identification with the organisation could be perceived by improved motivation for collaboration (to keep supporting and provide further

help). Further effects of developed professionalism concern the implementation of trainings or workshops for youth workers to specific topics (i.e. radicalisation prevention), or the improvement of the quality of projects (planning, monitoring, evaluation and redesigning of the activities through involving various experts and an external consultant).

One interviewee (3) highlights having participated in an Erasmus + event as a senior member of her organisation’s training staff, she was now much better placed to support her colleagues in preparing for similar events in future, and this was an important form of organisational learning: “I have a staff member going to present at a European conference and what has changed is I can draw on my own direct experience when I offer advice and support” (Afs\_TCA1ei3).

A substantial share of the interviewees (3) assume effects/changes on the organisational level for international youth work. Most frequently they assess a clear evolution of European/international youth work within the whole structure such as more implemented/submitted (international) youth projects/activities and/or intensified project collaboration, although a couple of interviewees point out that this was not only the result of attending a training. There were further actions implemented such as establishing a fulltime job with the main task of developing this field of youth work or using the gained experiences for developing the organisation’s content profile and getting new target groups involved.

“Yes of course. I think through these strategic partnership projects (...) it is also a recognition, partners see the listing with which organisation is now running such projects (...) there is increased visibility, that is why we can create the new job” (Mfh\_TCA10ed3).

A couple of interviewees (3) emphasise unexpected effects in the context of international youth work such as:

- board and management consider the work of international/European youth work very important and set up a respective priority;
- to work with Non-EU partners and to host their volunteers (because of the administration tasks);
- how fruitful collaboration turned out;
- the organisation set up a European project strategy and decide to create a place of coordinator.

Furthermore, the quality of learning activities of the organisation could be improved by organising a course with limited but well-managed resources. A new training course was implemented and the communication with participants was redesigned. Finally, the training/activity results enabled participants to organise target-oriented learning (youth) trainings/activities, help young people to fulfil their projects as well as support European partnerships in the youth field. In other cases of interviews (2), for example, the organisation starts working towards a collaboration project, starting to prepare a study visit, and has developed some dispositions towards the role of the organisation in the project. The level of awareness could be raised on mutual roles of organisations for EVS (sending & hosting organisation) or in terms of practice with juveniles in closed institutions (i.e. prisons), encouraging them to further develop the capacity on the topic by reading books, and to apply the learning outcomes in daily work.

With respect to organisational communication, a few changes are indicated by some interviewees (2). An increased level of realities becomes evident among some interviewed participants, such as one interviewee transferred her experiences “by increasing the quality of work” through “better understanding” (Gfh\_KA11ii3) which had impact on quality of work. In another interview (2) it is reported that it is relevant to develop knowledge and organisational communication skills to support processes of visibility, dissemination and exploitation of results in Erasmus+ projects and framing them in the context of the communication strategy of the organisation.

Finally, in some cases of interviews (3) effects can not only be indicated as directly but also indirectly related to the attended training/activity because further influences may have an impact on effects and/or changes within organisations. Thus, it is explained, for example, that many changes and approaches occurred but it is difficult to recall what of the attended training influenced the work today (see chapter: general assumptions and conclusions for interviews (2) and (3)). In one case, where two participants from the same organisation attended a training event with a strong focus on creativity, the ideas they brought back had a discernible impact on the physical appearance and decor of the meeting and training spaces in the organisation’s building, “the whole aesthetics you could say” (Cfh\_YW-M2ei3). The interviewer also noticed the difference in the appearance and “ambience” of the space a year after the training.

Despite these positive examples of the effects on organisations in terms of professional development in interviews (2), the impact is not applicable to all interviewees. In some cases they only indicate an impact on personal development. Nevertheless, interest in getting in contact with NA or other relevant institutions are stressed. Additionally, it is stated by some interviewees that skills in organisational issues are missing, while others claim they could acquire relevant issues in an organisational context.

A few interviewees (2) address that no changes in the organisation could be perceived. In particular, it is assumed that institutional changes could not be identified at this early stage, recommending further revisions within module (C). One interviewee expressed dissatisfaction that the trainers had undertaken to synthesise the ideas generated during the seminar and get back in touch with participants with suggestions for follow-up activities within (and between) their organisations, but “we have heard nothing since” (Afs\_TCA1ei2).

No organisational changes or effects are considered by more than a substantial share of the interviewees (3) after coming back from the attended training/activity. The reasons for this lack of effects/changes are addressed most frequently with respect to a lack of awareness or missing perception of any changes (i.e. focused more on the content and not on organisational activities).

**“***I will claim, yes, I’m better [but] I don’t know if my organisation is better because of it [coming back from the training]. [...] Somebody who is not in this organisation should answer this, I am subjective, not objective [unbiased] on this question”* (Bfs\_TCA1ii3).

Other frequently addressed reasons for a lack of effects/changes refer to organisational circumstances like no organisational background, loose connection to the organisation, left the organisation or the training/activity was attended without relation to the organisation (i.e. often weak ties/positions through more than one workplace/organisations).

Further statements focus on the gap between the outcomes and the workplace, for example, the outcomes are not innovative or not in line with the daily business as well as with the essence of the organisation or the interviewees’ positions within the organisation (i.e. missing involvement as volunteer or freelancer into the organisation). To a lesser extent it is stated that ideas/intention did not work out in the organisation because

of dealing with different issues was too difficult, being not ready to submit/develop a KA2 project, having not sufficient IT knowledge or working for big institutions.

Another reason is pointed out with respect to a lack of new contacts or professional network due to the fact that there were no possible partners for the organisations whose field would have matched with theirs so that there could be some possible collaboration. Other statements refer to the fact that they have had a push to move to digital or that the outcomes have already been settled within the organisation before the training and that is why no any organisational effects can be perceived due to the attended training.

Moreover, a lack of predefined strategies for the transfer of learning outcomes within the organisation can be also mentioned in this context of limited effects on the organisational level. The transfer into practice may depend on the willingness of the individuals and/or organisations, but not in any cases. In one interview case, for example, serious ambitions and actions were considered to develop the idea of EVS at the forum, providing new opportunities and content, and the employer organisation was heavily involved in this. Sadly the ideas they had at the forum did not work out, at least not yet, because the created ideas had already been raised before the forum.

Fewer interviewees report no effects on the daily activities in the organisation but on the image of the organisation because the quality of work within the organisation could be verified through the attended training ('quality measure') or because these types of activities are considered to be useful for the organisation's international representation and reputation.

Single statements for the missing effects/changes can be summarised for crisis period in the organisation, the national law or that international trainings/activities are treated as a kind of 'gift' for staff members but not directly used for the development of the organisational qualification. Finally, a handful of interview statements do not provide any further explanations for their assumed lack of changes/effects on the organisational level, causing problems in analysing the reasons for that fact.

In addition to the quite balanced proportion of interviewed participants who articulates effects on the organisational level on the one side and no effects on the other side, another substantial share of interviewees can be clustered, who did

not mention anything in terms of effects/changes in organisations. This group unfortunately do not deliver any arguments why they did not mention anything in terms of (no) organisational effects/changes.

## 7.2.1 Application of acquired learning/training outcomes

### After the training/activity

Several interviewees report in the second round of interviews that they already applied different methods in the daily work (i.e. energiser exercises; activity with cards to discuss feelings easier; role playing and playful dimension in youth work), which is mostly confirmed in the interviews (3). This application of training/learning outcomes are often combined with shared acquired knowledge and information with colleagues to improve collective competences about youth work in the organisation. In almost the same matter acquired methods are applied to ensure the visibility and dissemination of results.

*“We are still using all the working in nature aspects of the training, it is now a big, big part of how our summer scheme for children and young people has developed. Before the training it was mostly art and craft. There's now a lot of inter-generational stuff as well (...)” (Cfh\_YWM2ei3).*

*“We more actively involved refugees and migrants (...) we became more cautious (...) [we try to] sensitize our workers ever more and prepared them as much as possible for possible situations that can occur in youth exchange, especially if they are directly involved with refugees, migrants” (Ffs\_TCA1ii3).*

Only the implementation of internet or online games in the (international) youth work practice are assessed differently across countries. Thus, some doubts are articulated, if the practicability and relevance is provided in every country at this stage.

Special emphasis is given to the inclusion of methodologies of non-formal education in projects as well as the integration of NFL into the formal education sector. It is pointed out in the interviews (2) that the overrated formal education causes demand in non-formal education and is recommended for teachers (colleagues by interviewee), while the transfer into the own practice is not intended for now. In addition to that, another interviewee thinks that the integration of a non-formal approach into formal education is



relevant to his work and organisation. Generally speaking, strategic plans are developed to disseminate the outcomes in schools, to make presentations to co-workers or to apply non-formal education in closed institutions, directly related to the youth work practice:

**“***I am working with disadvantaged young people and children in the justice system; and frequently with those people working in the juvenile detention centres and prisons. What I learned here affects directly the services we offer to those kids” (Bms\_TCA2rt2).*

In the revision of respective interview statements (3), the application and/or transfer of the acquired NFE/NFL approach seems challenging for a few of interviewees due to different perceived hindrances in the formal sector, as reported in the next chapter (see chapter: support by the organisation). Apart from the formal sector, the application of the experienced NFE/NFL approach can be assumed to be effectively applied into different organisations within the youth field. A couple of interviewees address explicitly that the new friendly, open and active approach used during the training/activity as well as specific NFE methods are used and/or provided successfully at the organisational level.

**“***We primarily transmitted through non-formal transfer of knowledge, this is a conversation with co-workers about training, contents, methodology and the fact that the material is co-hosted, freely accessible to anyone in our organisation” (Bfs\_TCA1ii3).*

Another key finding in the revisited interview data (3) of applied outcomes in organisations can be indicated for effects in terms of international youth work projects/activities (see chapter: present (international) youth work). It is reported that the attended training/activity positively affected:

- the applications for funding/grants with own projects;
- the promotion of important topics in funding application processes in addition to missing ones of the national agenda;
- the identification of obstacles and to overcome these obstacles in writing and submitting project applications successfully (being granted);
- the implementation of new training courses;
- the organisation of study visits for young people (i.e. to make young people able to engage in activities of democratic citizenship);
- the understanding how young people communicate online and redesigning/using ap-

propriate instruments (i.e. content analysis methods and setting up new events via Facebook so that young people can join, share and upload pictures).

## 7.2.2 Support by the organisation

### Before the training/activity

As already mentioned in interviews (2), initiative to attend the training/activity is rather individual than organisational but in most cases active support is provided by the organisation. The extend of organisational support for the participation of the interviewees is reported differently, implying a various field of support. Thus, in some cases all the practical arrangements for the participation were made by the organisation (administrative staff). In other cases, interviewees were supported in writing the applications by the organisation or receive support from colleagues who attended the training before (contacts, information and personal impressions). Also, extra appointments are already arranged to ask for some kind of report upon arrival and after coming back from this training/activity, a questionnaire type of document will be filled in.

Another support refers to charging the time for participation like working hours or providing further financial support. More specifically, the organisation supports participation (paid the participation fee) and enables individuals to go there in the form of a business trip (as part of his/her job tasks and time), but does not cover any costs related to the trip (including daily allowances). It is worth mentioning that some interviewees did not ask for further compensation from the organisation (daily allowance/travel expenditures), although it would have been possible. This may be an attitude among some participants, that the organisation did a lot to foster their participation (i.e. changed the work schedule for the interviewee to participate in the training; paid the participation fee; charge it like a business trip) and that is sufficient.

In the interviews (2), almost every organisation supports the decision of attending this training/activity or encourage the participation (did not create any obstacles). As a result, positive attitudes of responsible persons within organisations can be summed up for attending international trainings/activities. Only in one interview is it stated that the manager does not care but appreciates her initiative.

### After the training/activity



In the analysed statements of interviews (3), the support is perceived as comprehensive for the transfer of the learning outcomes in providing the setting for a training (i.e. recruiting of participants, organising the venue, recommendation/decision for the participation), on a personal level through colleagues and finally as part of the organisational focus (i.e. implementation of international projects or host EVS volunteers).

“My organisation sent me to this training, [where] I also represented the organisation and presented to the participants what we are doing, in essence, this was opportunity for other participants to connect with us” (Cfs\_TCA2ii3).

One interviewee emphasises that she has received all the support she could ever wish for. Everyone has been very interested in hearing what she has learned and about the overall experience, which was already the case in the second interview. Another interviewee says that she received a lot of support from the organisation, also because “from [her] side, [outcomes] were presented as high quality” (Efs\_TCA1ii3). Members of the organisation were interested in the added value, what happened at the training and what can they use [at their work]. Further interviewees consider their received support by the organisations in terms of organisational infrastructure/logistic:

- established a project office and asked for new project ideas;
- provided respective resources for carrying out fundraising activities;
- providing practical possibilities of using acquired knowledge;
- requested a training session but provided some trainees and covered the small expenses of the trainings;
- providing equipment, co-workers and bureaucracy.

“[At our organisation] it was always highly advisable to take part in international activities, with this purpose, that the projects were actually started, driven and that there are some effect [sic]. [...] If I would apply for KA2 project, I would have all the support from my co-workers” (Afs\_TCA1ii3).

“The things that I took up for my own challenge, the organisation joined as a co-organiser, as an official partner and helped me with advice, experience, bureaucracy (...)” (Hmh\_KA11ii3).

Another positive example for the support by organisations can be presented for the formal sector. It is reported from one interviewee that the

school management has become more and more supportive of initiatives and activities of youth work, also more willing to cooperate.

“... In this sense, yes, the cooperation with school management has become much stronger and I think that it is due to that training, which gave me the skills of negotiation and ... and also the ability for teamwork, so that to do things together with a team, not to do everything alone of course” (Ams\_TCA3xe3)

In another case, the organisation facilitated „paired participation“ by both a paid and experienced staff member and a much less experienced volunteer, and the two participants strongly believed that this arrangement greatly benefited both their individual development and the transfer of learning back to the organisation.

“I think particularly for agencies that are new to international activity it should be allowed to have two people participating. The supports afterwards are tremendous” (Dfh\_YWM2ie3).

A lack of support by the organisation may be considered in case that interests in and/or recognition for the outcomes of the attendend training/activity is limited from the organisation's side. One interviewee had a real difficulty, for example, when she tried to use her knowledge in her daily work. The obstacles were coming from the other colleagues and the students as well. This interviewee blames the lack of motivation to change teaching methods, and also the lack of recognition of the non-formal approaches.

“I guess I even said before [2nd interview] that this [her knowledge, ideas about non-formal education] did not really have a strong echo. The majority of my colleagues are in or near the 50s. These approaches do not motivate them. There are only two colleagues who are open to this, and with them I can really share my ideas. I think here, in this school, we are not able to achieve a breakthrough. Both children and teachers consider this to be a game and not a learning tool. It is not enough if I see it differently. I like the Finnish example, I read a lot about it, I would like to try it, but I have to accept, that this rather can be done in the alternative schools” (Gfs\_KA2uh3).

The lack of organisational support becomes more transparent, when the organisation did not want to receive the transfer of experiences or did not call back for further volunteering or activities, as reported from another interviewee. Furthermore, when there is a gap between theory and practice:

valuable experiences for the current workplace in theory, but in practice no one has time for this.

Moreover, when the training was not related to the organisational focus or the professional working tasks of the interviewees, any support by organisations was not expected by the interviewed participants and their participations remain to be a private/individual initiative (i.e. to get new ideas). Additionally, in case the support depends on the course accreditation by the national ministry (mostly national courses), the training is perceived to be the own initiative.

In other interview cases (3), the question of the support by the organisation was not applicable because of

- a missing organisational background, change of the organisation or inactive organisation;
- a missing relationship with the sending organisation;
- the organisation is a 'one wo/man organisation' (apart from volunteers);
- the interviewee is the leader of the organisation;
- weak ties/positions in the sending/hosting organisation (i.e. several workplaces in different organisations);
- high autonomy in the job to develop projects independently from organisations' side.

#### a) Transfer strategies within organisations

##### After the training/activity

Most frequently reported transfer strategies of the learning/training outcomes are (re)addressed in both interviews rounds (2) and (3) in terms of reporting, sharing and discussing these results with colleagues, the target group, or with the supervisor/head of the organisation in regularly internal meetings, specially organised workshops or training days, through presentations, storytelling, report writing, writing blogs or publishing articles on the organisations' websites, in guides for fund raising, or other dissemination activities. Thus, it could happen that the whole team of the organisation attended the training and is involved in project planning and/or writing. Moreover, feedback is given and different materials (brochures, developed document about writing tools for using it in the future, power point presentations etc.) are delivered to colleagues, which is reconfirmed in some interviews (3). In some organisations, the tradition may be established that everyone provides feedback and shares materials of what has been learnt.

Additionally, in interviews (3) it is stressed that some creative activities were also implemented

for the dissemination of the training/learning outcomes such as a theatre play in the organisation was produced together with other volunteers in the association who participated in different activities.

Fewer interviewees (3) indicate effects/changes on the organisational level for organising information meetings (but colleagues were not always interested in the event) or reporting about the learning outcomes in the association's regular team meeting. Furthermore, better network and a better circulation of trainees or now more reflecting phases in many activities (i.e. in all EVS projects) are considered.

Overall, the exchange of experiences from peers of different countries and organisational backgrounds are perceived very useful and contribute to drafting a new strategy within an organisation. It is pointed out in different interviews (2) that organisational strategy is developed to integrate the achieved competences for increasing communication processes, especially for EVS. Also, inspiration is received from the training/activity to found a non-profit organisation and run several projects in the youth work field. As a result, in some cases the outcomes will be used for developing the organisation's strategy, but in most cases a lack of a strategic approach for the transfer into structures of organisations becomes evident (see chapter: obstacle).

In addition to that, in the reviewed interviews (3), a few interviewees state some implemented strategies for the transfer of the outcomes into practice, fostering the impact at the organisational level (although not always with a sustainable effect). First, there were actions as a network which allows some decentralisation of activities (local initiatives) and transferring defined responsibility to special projects. The spreading of this local initiative as well as the extent of attraction in such a short time was a bit unexpected for the interviewee. Other examples in terms of networking strategies refer to keep professional dialogue as well as professional and personal contact/partnership via Facebook or to involve different stakeholders within the employer organisation:

[Yes, we did transfer], we shared our experiences with, say, the leadership of the organisation, people working with this organisation, with the people who are responsible for networking, [you] just tell your experience" (Hmh\_KA11ii3).

Second, an increased recognition of organisations as good practice by the European Union leads to

further advantages for implementing other (national) activities and projects (made by respective organisations). Third, new staff members (younger generation) were recruited and the communication practice of the organisation renewed. Fourth, there is an organisational strategy set to develop youth mobility promotion by organising some events in the region.

Generally speaking, it is dedicated that motivation for the transfer into practice is important as well as the possibility to try out the applied training/learning outcomes.

**“***It is indeed harder to pass on [knowledge, competences, skills] at organisational level, and without any great motivation for the subject [of the training], it is not sure that he will be able to continue to convey what he had learned. But this works fine in AEGEE. First, we try to prepare our members before the training and after, we try to find opportunities for them to apply what they had acquired. Also, we try to use the training as a motivation tool: if you are interested in fundraising, OK, come to us, and if there is a possibility we will send you for a training abroad, and then the feedback is more positive. but, of course, even with the most careful selection, not everyone wants to join us... [laughing]. It's OK. And on a personal level, I think, every training gives you something interesting” (Jms\_TCA6uh3).*

In other cases of interviews (3), the transfer into practice does not precede to the expected effects. For example, one interviewee shares knowledge and experience with members of the student club that she is engaged into but no positive response from the sending organisation to the interviewee was realised with respect to her engagement to work on a voluntary basis for the organisation. Another interviewed participant explains that his previous workplace (the sending organisation) provided the environment for seminars, but it did not sustain.

Despite of several perceived actions for transferring the outcomes into the organisation as reported in this chapter, there seems some indicators that the transfer of the training/learning outcomes is still missing and/or limited (see chapter: obstacles and recommendations to overcome the obstacles on the organisational level).

### 7.2.3 Obstacles and suggestions to overcome the obstacles on the organisational level

#### After the training/activity

##### a) Obstacles

Obstacles for the transfer of the learning/training outcomes can be indicated for different reasons. In some interview cases (2), no transfer of the learning outcomes was undertaken so far due to a lack of resources (time; space), the outcomes are estimated to be not applicable for the daily work (i.e. in closed institutions), or the organisations do not expect or contribute to any knowledge transfer.

In interviews (3), these derived obstacles may be reassessed with respect to busy periods, time constraints or for other urgent priorities at the workplace. Another aspect concerns the outcomes which do not seem central to the locality, colleagues and the own organisation. According to that, a lack of innovative, relevant topics/outcomes and/or a lack of new knowledge are stated, causing the impression there is not much to share despite of talking about overall experiences. Moreover, no further feedback was received from the colleagues for the transmitted material of the attended training/activity.

Notably, there are managers within organisations who called the training a 'little adventure' because learning outcomes did not include notes from lectures or other 'concrete' outcomes. According to this kind of feedback from the organisations' side, the value and image of international training/activity settings seems in need of improvement.

In the case that the organisation does not provide an international youth work environment (i.e. appropriate structures), the transfer of the learning outcomes into practice is not possible. The training/activity encourages one interviewed volunteer to change the organisation regarding such missing focus of international youth work.

The position of interviewees in the hierarchy of organisations could be another obstacle for limited effects on organisations because of a) the participation of the training/activity was not possible (i.e. state officer is confronted with a lack of time), b) the organisations' expectations could not be delivered or c) the responsibility is focused on the contact with young people and not on the organisational development/processes. It is worth stressing that despite this assumed lack of organisational impact, some of these interviewees

perceives improved competences on the individual level (see chapter: effects and changes on the individual level).

However, it can be supposed that this challenge is a structural problem, depending on an organisation's culture. For example in one case of interview (2), the local organisation hosting the initiative is expecting that an interviewee is coming back from the training with new ideas for the general organisation's work, including ideas and proposals concerning European projects. But the interviewee had no specific mandate to fulfil. In comparison, the role/function of another interviewee (responsible for improving youth work through international projects) includes setting own working goals and choosing the means of accomplishing these goals. At the same time the support from organisation is guaranteed.

Sometimes the initiatives to attend the training/activity are based on the own decisions (private) because there is no organisational need for further expertise (already well established/staffed members) as well as the participation was not related to the job or any long-term strategy of the organisation (see chapter: effects and changes on the individual level).

In one case a deliberate decision was taken to send both an experienced staff member and a volunteer on the same training activity, which had organisational benefits as well as being a transformational personal development experience for the volunteer. „But I wouldn't have gone on my own“ (Dfh\_YWM2ei2).

Overall, experienced and/or successful organisations/interviewees are attending trainings/activities in topics, where the organisations/interviewees already have expertise (coming from the same field of activity). In comparison to experienced organisations, newly founded organisations may imply greater learning needs across multiple areas, focused on gaining knowledge of European/international youth projects as perceived by one interviewee.

There seems to be a lack of organisational expectations to include respective outcomes of the training/activity into strategic processes. Only in a few cases in the interviews (2), it is expected to get more input for drafting of their new strategy (see also chapter transfer of learning outcomes into practice). Often it is reported that no discussion happened about organisational expectation before the activity and therefore it is not clear when and how the learning outcomes could be

shared. Usually, participants are frustrated after returning from the training because of the lack of information sharing and recognition about the learning processes. Dissatisfaction, frustration and disappointments may arise because of the indicated missing opportunities to share/exchange learning outcomes with colleagues, despite some of the interviewees (3) reemphasising that they were highly engaged to share the outcomes/experiences in informal settings (i.e. coffee breaks), electronically or during the organisation's 'development day'. Apart from the effect that organisations lose enormous valuable know-how by ignoring acquired competences from their staff members, interviewed participants report that they are feeling alone because of the lack of organisational support (i.e. nobody cares about it; nobody really wants to listen) (see chapter: effects and changes on the organisational level). It seems there is a need to share experiences with colleagues/in teams and to have opportunities to make learning outcomes visible, which can be underlined through a few interview statements (3).

Furthermore, hindrances sometimes may occur in terms of specific organisational types, such as non-profit private limited company or public organisation funded by city budget as well as not finalised process of consolidating the institution. In one interview case (3), for example, she was considering with her colleagues to hand in a project before she left the organisation, but they realised that the organisational status of a "non-profit private limited company" was not favourable: "there you only get half of the budget" (Bfh\_YWM1ta3). A further example refers to public organisations. One interviewee mentions that there was no change in his sending organisation, since it was a public institution. Another interviewee who is working in a public organisation funded by city budget and that is why for them the strategical collaboration is not that important as for example for organisations operating in the third sector. Their organisation rather seeks for short-term projects, as the salaries and other vital costs of performance are steadily covered and they seek only funding for concrete activities.

Due to this hindrance of grant regulations, it may become evident that some obstacles concern the defined structure of the E+/YiA programme. In other interview cases (3), further critics are addressed with respect to the content-related preconditions of the programme for:

- misunderstanding of the E+/YiA programme as long-term projects;



- the rules of changing a partner during the lifetime of a project (complicated, difficult) in the E+/YiA programme;
- new solidarity corps and its relation to the EVS; financial equipment of the EVS and in particular the flat rate for living and accommodation;
- systematic criticisms for evaluation paths (value?!);
- lack of recognition of NFL in the formal sector -> lack of motivation, expectation and understanding to change teaching methods (teachers' & students' attitudes);
- criticalities from outside to include methods focused on individual needs;
- challenges to use new/unorthodox methods.

Further reasons of the second round of interviews, which could be mostly reassessed in the interviews (3) for a limited transfer of the learning/training outcomes into practice refer to:

- restricted opportunities without organisational backgrounds, inactive organisations, missing connections with the sending organisation or instable organisations;
- missing foci in the case of political changes or instable national circumstances (is not possible/on the agenda anymore; terror threats);
- missing systematic approach in organisations;
- different problems and infrastructures in organisations (application has to be adapted);
- restricted access to relevant software (i.e. transfer into practice was difficult because Facebook blocked the game; missing IT knowledge/infrastructure).

In addition to that, more obstacles for the transfer into practice could be indicated in the interviews (3) such as:

- a lack of respective project partners to submit and implement a Youth Exchange;
- difficulties to switch between multiple institutions/workplaces;
- acquired information of the training activity seems only relevant for a few colleagues;
- time constraints in attending further activities, in submitting further projects or getting involved in projects abroad;
- limited English skills.

Finally, a lack of transferred outcomes into practice is stated in a handful cases without further explanations, causing limited impact but in one case with promising future perspectives:

**“** *I was relatively short time employed at the Youth Centre after the training, but I am sure that youth would have a lot of benefit [from learned approaches at the training; they would have applied a really good project for youth]*” (Afs\_TCA1ii3).

### **b) Suggestions to overcome the obstacles**

An organised/coordinated knowledge transfer after returning may provide benefits for everyone within the organisation, as reported in different interviews statements (2) as well as reconsidered in the interviews (3). It is recommended to use existing dissemination processes like team meetings to share the learning outcomes within the organisation. In interviews (3), the involvement and commitment of the leadership for disseminating/implementing the learning outcomes are added to be another aspect for success, such as for the implementation of the acquired educational models in prisons.

With respect to the E+/YiA programme, a closer connection to local and regional authorities/communities would be highly appreciated from a few interviewees (3), such as expanding networking (activities/opportunities for networking).

Referring to international youth work projects/activities, proposed recommendations include further institutionalisation of organisations such as divisions of working tasks, because one year preparation for new E+/YiA projects requires professional perspectives and respective personal resources/qualified staff members. Lots of trust and autonomy to develop project ideas from organisations' side are recapitulated for recommended circumstances. Moreover, the support of young people in mobility/travelling as well as the implementation of Youthpass as a learning instrument are explicitly stated to be recommended.

## **7.3 Effects and changes on the environment**

**“** *I still argue that the Erasmus + program is indispensable. Without Erasmus +, young people would be much more lost, and opportunities would be three times less*” (Afs\_TCA1ii3).

In reference to interviews (3), the term environment can be clustered with respect to the involved actors in a social environment on the one side and in a professional environment on the oth-



er side. Examples for the social environment concern friends, acquaintances or social networks. The professional environment includes colleagues outside the involved organisations, members of the association (i.e. club), collaboration partners/partnerships, other national relevant actors (i.e. rural organisations, local professionals and local community partners) or professional networks.

The impact on the social and/or professional environment may occur quite often through dissemination activities for the transfer of the training/learning outcomes. In interviews (2), it is reported that activities for dissemination are organised on different levels (international, national and regional) with different stakeholders from a professional environment such as:

- town's mayor who is important for continuing the path for international youth work and networks across areas;
- co-workers and other youth workers from the city (further collaboration is planned);
- local youth centres (collaboration possibilities and gains of it in the organisation could be enlarged).

In interview (3), activities implying a cross-over of (inter-)national, regional and/or local level seem to be implemented as well. It is reported, for example, that a similar training in the context of a national study visit was organised for people at the regional level and turned out to be a success. Another example can be presented with respect to the disseminated experience of an Exchange project with different stakeholders:

“So we made a briefing note to the federation on this, on this exchange, a 4 pages with even a small central page that we shared with the network, which I distributed precisely on youth committees. I did a meeting around mobility too in June of last year” (Hms\_KA1rf3).

In addition to that, several interviewees stress that they organised and/or implemented seminars and/or workshops for co-workers and/or for other local youth workers about (European) youth projects as well as shared the learning outcomes with them. One interviewee, for example, works with a partner who is a local youth worker and she proposed some activities of non-formal education from the attended training.

Some of the interviewees (3) have also conducted different workshops for young people (i.e. two series of drama workshops), organised work clubs and workshops with practical activities and visits to potential employers or have spoken actively

about the own mobility experience, as reported by one interviewee:

“And the goal of this training was to come back and explain our experience to all the young people, who had to leave and who wanted to leave” (Gms\_KA1rf3).

Another one started the promotion of the Erasmus+ programme among women and youth living in the countryside.

Further activities for disseminating the outcomes were implemented through short movies, theatre play and presentations to share them with a wider public by organising an event and publicising it in the social media. Furthermore, an outdoor campaign was realised to apply the lessons learned and taking out daily news bulletins (during the training courses) to attract more an external public.

Experiences and information were either shared with collaboration partners, members of the association and/or within national trainers' network or involved networks. Within networks sometimes an exchange of information with special foci was carried out (i.e. working conditions and requirements when working with different NAs). Additionally, some contacts from the attended training were activated for further initiatives. Thus, the project manager of the training was invited to participate in an information event for collaboration and exchange of experience. One participant connected a peer from the attended training with representatives of national organisations from her country of residence.

Furthermore, the experiences and results are also disseminated with other organisations (giving presentations) and in one case of the interviews (2) it is reported that the outcomes are available on Facebook and everybody contributed to its completion. In another case, a report was written and shared with colleagues on Google Docs, and everybody who might need it could have access (i.e. colleagues working on a volunteer basis). One interviewee mentions in the interview (3), that there were follow-up meetings where new knowledge and competence model was presented to others.

“We have a draft of how they envisioned to create a European model, so how can we work out a model of competence for our organisation. We can help with what was their starting point” (Efs\_TCA1ii3).

In another case, seminars to colleagues working in different public institutions (such as public health directorate, courthouse etc.) are implemented to share the knowledge about project work and lessons learned of good practices.

With colleagues outside the organisation, who are involved in similar topics, the acquired knowledge, practices and experiences are also shared, such as with teachers at the previous workplace.

Moreover, it becomes evident that not only colleagues from the youth field are addressed with the training/learning outcomes. One interviewee considers, for example, that she is the only youth worker in the organisation but discussed the financial aspects with the financial department and gained a lot of meaningful insights from other youth workers for financial settlements of projects.

With respect to the social environment, the learnt experiences are shared in an informal way or with a narrow circle of respective acquaintances. Furthermore, friends are informed about the opportunity to attend international trainings/activities and are often encouraged to apply for it. Additionally, some of the interviewed participants also recommend the participation in international trainings/activities to their professional network.

## 7.4 Youthpass

Referring to the results of the interviews (2), it was considered that the following findings in terms of Youthpass should be treated with caution because these aspects will be revisited and surveyed more precisely/in-depth in module (B) (interviews (3): focused on the transfer of outcomes into practice).

After analysing the statements of interviews (3), it can be summarised that no significant evidence-based change may become apparent in relation to the interviews (2). Only an increased differentiation of argumentations can be observed between the results of interviews (2) and interviews (3).

### Before the training/activity

Youthpass was not known before the training/activity to several interviewees (1) or little knowledge on the Youthpass was available because it was never really taken into account before the activity.

### During the training/activity

They learnt how to use it (process of self-evaluation and process-evaluation), and it was only

given to the participants who wished to have it, which basically meant the younger participants, and they had a reflective session every evening in which they also filled in the relevant Youthpass sections, as explored in several interviews (2). In interviews (3), it is recapitulated that most trainings/activities within E+/YiA provide and/or explain the Youthpass.

*“Yes, I had the chance to gain it, I even think that I have it, or I did have it, but no one explained to me very well why it is actually [for]” (Ifh\_KA11ii3).*

### After the training/activity

After the training/activity, the applications of Youthpass do not seem to be clear for all interviewed participants of the second round of interviews (it was used in the training; but using in daily work seems unclear). In addition to that, in interviews (3) it is stated most of time that Youthpass seems well known because many of the interviewees have already had several Youthpasses or using them in their own working field with young people. One interviewee stresses that she has many and produced a summarising report about the development of her competencies: “someday I can submit a real fat application portfolio” (Jfs\_TCA8de3).

Just in a handful interview cases (3), no knowledge, awareness or no opinion on the Youthpass became evident (i.e. because of not using it).

*“I don’t understand actually what it is. Why it is for [...] What is it good for and how one could use it [...] That is why I did not finish it. It has not been brought home for me” (Ffs\_TCA2xe3).*

On closer inspection, some critical statements are pointed out for the implementation of Youthpass in the third round of interviews. First, Youthpass implies a strange wording which does not fit to the training or to people without practical experience (passive potential). Sometimes it seems difficult to describe the gained experiences appropriately. Thus, some interviewees have several Youthpasses in total, but only a marginal number of them was filled out properly or was used. As a result, it is assumed that it is rather hard to sell or transfer the idea or mission of its profits to the youth and the whole concept behind the Youthpass seems out of date and maybe needs to be updated.

*“I don’t see that anything is changing. I don’t know what to say to participants when they ask what can we do with it, I can’t give any advise” (Lmh\_TCA10ed3).*

**“***What was interesting about the play-on seminar, there were these badges and they are such an online badge. This is a very exciting thing for a lot of young people that it can be interesting, more tangible, easier to interpret, in a way, easier to understand than the whole youthpass process. There is a 30-40 page document, and I’ve met more colleagues who read it, and then they still did not know what this was all about”* (Efs\_TCA3uh3).

Second, the development of the Youthpass may require time, which is not always explained appropriately in advance. Thus, time constraints may arise during the implementation of the Youthpass due to a lack of communication and/or knowledge beforehand about the workload.

**“***What is a pity is, one has to say, that knowledge about it is not there. When I did it, I only was told the [very] last month that I should do that”* (Jfs\_TCA5ta3) *with the consequence that she “compiled it quickly, filled in all areas”* (Jfs\_TCA5ta3) *while it would be much more effective if one “could extend [engage with] this over [the whole period] of one year”* (Jfs\_TCA5ta3).

Emphasising the challenge of implementing the Youthpass, another interviewee expresses that he learned how to address the Youthpass in a more efficient way for young people. Still, it highly “depends on how receptive young people are for reflexive experiences. Many don’t realize what’s in it for them” (Dmh\_YWM2ta3).

Third, there are some overlaps with other tools indicated, such as Europass, LinkedIn or other organisational tools, limiting the application and practicality of the Youthpass. Due to this, one interviewee indicates that he hardly remembers Youthpass and he does not know exactly what it is. He remembers formulating goals, but after the training activity he did not use them anymore and he has serious doubts about the added value, the recognition and the usefulness of this. He thinks it is more useful to use existing channels like LinkedIn to clarify expertise. Additionally, the name “Youthpass” is irritating though, if it is handed in by an applicant who is not that young anymore (i.e. 30 years old).

Overall, there seems to be a slightly negative attitude against certificates among a few interviewees (2) because certificates are seen as being related to formal education, and are therefore refused. Learning in daily life without preconditions is preferred to a formal education approach, including certificates and diploma. This is read-

dressed in some statements of interviews (3), as critically questioning the value of a certificate in relation to the NFL approach in the youth field (for all target groups, including children). Nevertheless, there seems other interviewees, who appreciate the visibility of acquired competences through NFL very much.

**“***Non-formal experience that can be formally established [in some kind of official document], it seems to me [that Youthpass is becoming] more and more important”* (Jmh\_KA11ii3).

Moreover, it is reported in some interviews (2) that certificates are not as important as practical experiences made within the youth field, which is much more reliable for implementing a youth project. More specifically, one interviewee reports that he is used to working with young volunteers in entertainment, and they do not need to be professional but emphasises the visibility of developed competences of volunteers. Youthpass, for example, seems to be more interesting for younger participants and for long-term situations, i.e. EVS.

In several statements of interviews (2), the Youthpass is not perceived as an instrument for improving professional or social recognition (it is too unknown), and therefore it is not estimated to be useful for the job market (implicates too many pages). Youthpass is perceived as an administrative document that is not really recognised by the community. Thus, a limited application of Youthpass is assessed as a tool for collecting and evaluating acquired skills in non-formal education. In interviews (3) it is critically added that the quality of acquired competences is doubtful because first, everybody can use the Youthpass independently of their activeness/attendance within the training and second, it does not have quality criteria. It seems for several interviewees a useful tool when the self-analysis part really is properly done, otherwise it is just a proof of attendance and not so much valuable in itself.

**“***There are people who have 20 youthpasses because they participated in 20 training activities. It is great to put them in a map, but what purpose do they serve? It is not because it is stated on paper that you really have acquired those competences effectively. They are just a bunch of paper, but there is nobody that takes a look at them. It only says something about the number of training activities that you have attended, nothing about your competences”* (Fms\_KA2eb3).

Futhermore, another interviewed participant raises a critical remark towards the lack of an emotional dimensions in the Youthpass. When young people are in a positive mood and would like to continue what they just have experienced would not be captured by the Youthpass. That is why they deliver in addition to the Youthpass a proper certificate.

In comparisons to the claimed limited applications of Youthpass, other interview statements (2) attribute Youthpass with different potentials. Thus, Youthpass is perceived to have potential for becoming relevant for the job market, becoming useful for future job applications, and for the proof of the attended training/activity. Concerning some statements of interviews (3), it can be added that the benefit of the Youthpass depends on the experience and/or degree level of users, being not so valued in case of high experienced people and/or for people with high degree level in former education. For these interviewees, Youthpass operates in a kind of personal confirmation. Incontrast, Youthpass is considered to be more useful for young people who does not have a lot of work experience, as expressed for example by one interviewee as follows:

*“I always try to tell the young people, that come and help us out, that we’ll write them a work certificate” (Emh\_TCA4if3).*

Moreover, the potential of the Youthpass is considered as useful in combination with volunteer work and/or working experiences abroad in some interviews (3) because the importance and/or recognition from the environment have been increased over time and becoming more and more relevant for personal recruitment now. One interviewee refers to the international experience the Youthpass is demonstrating, which is the most valuable aspect for potential employers in his view: “it stands there well for sure, that I am internationally engaged” (Cmh\_YWM1ta3). Another one articulates quite similarly because of the perceived potential of the Youthpass for recruitment in public administrations or in some EU institutions but considers low recognition of employers at national level.

It is worth mentioning, that these positive assessed development of recognition towards the Youthpass in the employer environment is controversial among many interviewees (3). More specifically, some interviewees claim that the recognition at the labour market is limited because the Youthpass is unknown and neglected by potential employers or some employers are not fully or sufficiently aware about it. One in-

terviewee adds that “all of us who are active in the field of youth work, we need to make the key steps that essentially employers will understand and even know about Erasmus + programs for youth to start” (Ffs\_TCA1ii3). A further interviewee confirms what she already expressed in the second interview, namely that the Youth Pass should be adapted to the needs of the work market. Another interviewee reciprocates that “we have not been [...] in the business for a long enough time span” (Emh\_TCA2at3) to collect former participant’s experiences and reports on whether it was useful for a job application, although he is planning to find out more about this in the framework of ‘participant relationship’ (he argued that like customer relationship they are holding participant relationship in his association).

*“But what obviously is a key point – actually not only concerning the certificate –, but that they become engaged with and aware of to a higher degree, during the event, what that actually was [that they learned], and that’s an important point of the Youthpass, I guess” (Emh\_TCA-2ta3).*

Finally, some critics raise the issue of an observed holdup of the implementation of the Youthpass, also in youth organisations. One interviewee feels that Youthpass is “very useful tool, but unfortunately, in recent times, there has been a stagnation of the recognition of Youthpass as such by youth organisations” (Efs\_TCA1ii3). This interviewee also perceives that the “individual is not even involved in creating a Youthpass, Youthpass became a generic matter that is issued and has no added value. I think there’s still a lot of manoeuvring space for that” (Efs\_TCA1ii3). Another one reports that the Youthpasses are not so pried in her organisation so far, there is few people who know about Youthpasses.

Further potential for Youthpass is considered to reflect on and summarise the learning outcomes, and to use it as an interesting instrument/tool to support reflection processes (come together with the volunteers). In interviews (3), these statements were reemphasised in the context of being a valuable tool for facilitating the reflection on learning outcomes and a proof of the learning path. Thus, some interviewees are proud of their collection of Youthpass certificates.

Moreover, Youthpass is perceived as a learning instrument because it provides more visibility for the self-perceived outcomes, which were also addressed in interviews (2): Youthpass contributes to certifying the participation and acquired skills during the training/activity periods. Youth-



pass seems to be important, which is repeated by some cases of the third round of interviews:

**“***I am also working as a mentor and we are trying to focus much more on this, every month, every two months and we discuss about it. I think this is a good thing, not necessarily because it can justify many things. It is good because it makes the volunteer pay attention of this one year: what did I do and why? . I think it's okay if the volunteers think about it one year earlier, so they can be more aware of it, what they need to achieve and by which tools. Make them feel that this is a useful time of their life”* (Afs\_TCA1uh3).

In another case of the interviews (3), the attended training radically changed the attitude of one interviewee and her perspective. Before the activity, she “didn’t see the Youthpass often, but I didn’t really understand what is it actually good for. I thought this is such a writing task/exercise that is really dispensable” (Afh\_TCA1ta3). Now she is considering the Youthpass to be a very powerful ‘learning instrument’, as it is offering the opportunity to “reflect [for] yourself, what my competences are..., get aware of the process..., think about yourself, and you see what you have been learning for yourself: to perceive the development that is taking place within” (Afh\_TCA1ta3). She will start using the Youthpass with their volunteers in January 2018 as she thinks they will have become accustomed the organisation by then.

Moreover, a couple of interviewees perceive some values for the Youthpass, but think to have not enough experience with it to tell whether it turns out or do not seem to be very well informed about it. Others are not able to remember, if the Youthpass filled in/was received or not or if they have used it. Another interviewee did not apply the Youthpass but would use it actively when needed. A further interviewee shows an interesting differentiated attitude towards Youthpass: She thinks it is useful, but no practical benefit can be obtained from it.

Summing up, some recommendations may be drawn from the analysed interview statements and seem valuable for the development of the Youthpass: a) advertising the implementation of the Youthpass for increasing its popularity, b) revising the usability/practicality to reduce the technical effort and to ensure low-threshold accesses, c) update of the concept behind Youthpass and d) overcome practice from youth workers to describe the learning outcomes for young people. One possible example for such improvement of the practicality is explained by one interviewee

(3), who developed inside the European organisation together with colleagues a proper assessment system concerning skills development through EVS. It would be more understandable and the language would be more user-friendly. Similarities with Portfolio and Youthpass exist. There is a handbook for trainers how to use it. Additionally, participants in his trainings prefer to get a letter of reference.

Another example to overcome the practice from youth workers refers to an observed progress development in terms of delivering the Youthpass. One interviewee (3) points out that there is a huge difference between now and some time before when the question is about delivering the Youthpass: when she started the organisation’s staff would have described what they consider participants have learnt. Now they all would be happy when the participant would describe her / his learning process.

## 7.5 Unintended side effects

**“***I tried almost everything with my students, but not everything worked well. Even the students want a new approach, but they can’t always understand why and what it teaches them. For them learning means to sit in front of the book and learned it automatically, and that’s the way for being smart. So, I took back a bit and I try to combine them with the more traditional exercises”* (Gfs\_KA1uh2).

### After the training/activity

Referring to the interview statements (2), unintended side effects are analysed to add another perspective on the outcomes of the attended training/activity, and to make further indicated possible trends visible. In addition to the presented results, further indicated unintended and/or unexpected effects are included from the analysed statements of interviews (3).

The first indicated unintended side effect may address a professionalisation strategy for being able to work and/or earn in the youth sector. In the majority of interviews issues of acquired knowledge, skills and attitudes/values are raised in the context of professional and personal development. Through these developed competences, an increase of career perspectives is frequently perceived, in particular from unexperienced participants of the training/activity.

This international learning opportunity for professional/personal development is still used from a



minority of people without an organisational and/or youth work background, who appreciated the wide range of benefits. Interestingly, the identified target group of unexperienced participants in the interviews (2) may not play the same important role within interviews (3) because in the statements this was not pointed out anymore with the same extent. It seems that 12 months after the activity a change of the self-perceived level of experiences may become evident among some interviewees: only a handful of interviewees still consider themselves explicitly unexperienced; others perceive themselves/were perceived experienced now based on their collected working/training experience over the last year.

Another remarkable unintended side effect refers to the identified issue of specialised/vocational training settings in the analysed interviews (2). In the third round of interviews, this aspect is reconsidered in several cases. Specialised/vocational training settings would be required or should be discussed because of interests in specific topics (i.e. writing applications with regard to European youth work) as well as a lack of new knowledge or skills in terms of the training/learning outcomes, limiting the personal impact. In this case the attended training/activity is quite often perceived to be less valuable but took a lot of time and energy. Moreover, it is considered as a large sacrifice for a limited effect and one interviewee is in favour of more short-term training activities. One of the reasons for this dissatisfied unexpected effect may be indicated by the addressed topics/themes and/or the used methodology during the activity/training. Several times, it is reported that interviewed participants feel themselves confronted with too narrow minded/one sided or too much repetitive themes as well as the methodology did not allow much exchange of experience. A kind of learning through bad practice were assumed in such training/activity settings. Thus, the outcomes were reassessed to be not applicable, practicable or relevant for daily business, despite some turn-around of positive statements in this respect (see chapter: general assumptions and conclusions for interviews (2) and (3)). Notably, repetitive knowledge presented within the training/activity are not always judged negatively, which could be pointed out for another unintended side effect, especially in the context of the NFL approach, where repetition of knowledge is not originally part of (see chapter: effectiveness of the training/activity).

With respect to one noticed objective of international trainings/activities according to the E+/YiA programme and focused on implementing in-

ternational youth projects/activities, the question could be raised, if other groups of interested parties are welcome. This refers to people without organisational background and/or people who are not working in the youth field. Is it possible to understand the provided international trainings/activities as 'story of success' because of the interests and needs from different persons 'outside' the youth field to participate in such training/activity settings? How much 'openness' can be provided to include different groups of interested parties who indicate interests and motivation for participation, but do not show concrete results of sustainable effects for international youth projects/activities right after the training/activity?

In addition to the questions about inclusion of different groups to the training/activity, not every target group within E+/YiA programme is able to be involved in international projects, for example Roma people. One of the reported obstacles for this target group refers to the age limitation in E+/YiA programme (from 13 years to 30 years). For Roma people 12 years would be the ideal age. Afterwards they usually get married and have to care for and/or have other responsibilities (towards their children, parents or other family members).

Such questions about the openness of international trainings/activities within the E+/YiA programme to different groups relate also to the formal education sector. It seems that a kind of tension between the non-formal learning and formal learning sector may occur, when participants from the formal education sector attend an international training/activity from the non-formal sector. The reasons behind that may refer to an unbalanced allocation of financial resources between the formal and the non-formal sectors. The youth sector has to manage a low budget for several activities within E+/YiA programme in comparison to the well-financed formal education sector.

On the contrary, the non-formal sector in the youth field has more than ever the chance to inspire and enrich the formal sector with NFL. The respective methods enlarge their positive influence, and act as innovative and important tools, not only for the formal sector but also for the whole society. This could be the chance to foster and promote the high political and societal importance for the youth sector at European level and beyond, but more financial resources would be required for implementing such efforts.

Apart from the political/societal importance, the cross-sectoral transfer of non-formal learning methods into the formal education needs specific considerations/preparations, while the acquisition of NFL methods was highly appreciated immediately.

The common learning approach in formal education differs quite substantially from the NFL approach, and school students may be surprised and irritated regarding the completely new learning methods. Also, the attitude between youth workers (facilitator; coach; mentor) and teachers ('leader') are indicated as being completely different, which may require time for changes at different levels (pupils; teachers and environment), or a kind of adaptations of methods.

For international trainings/activities, language skills are stressed several times, indicating they are an important issue among the interviewed participants. An unintended side effect could be that especially English language skills are perceived to be an obstacle, if the capabilities are not sufficient in the training/activity setting for communicating with peers or understanding the presented content. As a result, self-perceived or experienced deficits in English language may be a selection/exclusion factor for participation. Furthermore, the dominance of the English language marginalised many other languages and a higher diversification of languages and some support for improving the English capabilities would be recommended (apart from English-speaking courses, courses in German, French, Russian, etc.).

A further unintended side effect may refer to an indicated shaky connection between activities and individual/organisational realities/strategies in case of more than one workplace or employer institution or of functioning as volunteer or freelancer, causing weak ties as reported in some statements of the interviews (3). This missing interrelation could cause limitations in applying learning outcomes, because they are perceived to be rarely relevant for daily work or impossible to be implemented (see chapter: changes and effects on the organisational level; effectiveness of the training/activity).

Another identified unintended side effect in interviews (2) concerns the treatment of the training/activity by some interviewees. It is reported, for example, that the training is more examined like a demonstration and promotion of Erasmus+ possibilities at local level, rather than a training in skills development. In addition to that, a handful of interviewees (3) did not expect a lack of moti-

vation to take part and learn during the training from a few participants because of their focus on travelling or meeting other youngsters. As a result, for a few interviewees their expectations were not met due to unmotivated peers in the training/activity.

**“***In my opinion, the utility of these trainings depends on the personal and the professional background of the participants and also on their motivations, because many of them arrives there without any real professional motivation, serious background and they participate in it in order to meet other youngsters, to see the world etc”* (Ifs\_TCA5uh3).

In general, a high motivation and engagement to share learning outcomes (at least) with colleagues can be indicated in interviews (2) and emphasised in interviews (3), although resources and/or spaces are often missing at organisational level. Interviewed participants represent a high 'social approach' for disseminating the learning/training outcomes with their environment as well as within their organisation and reported some frustration, if this plan could not be realised.

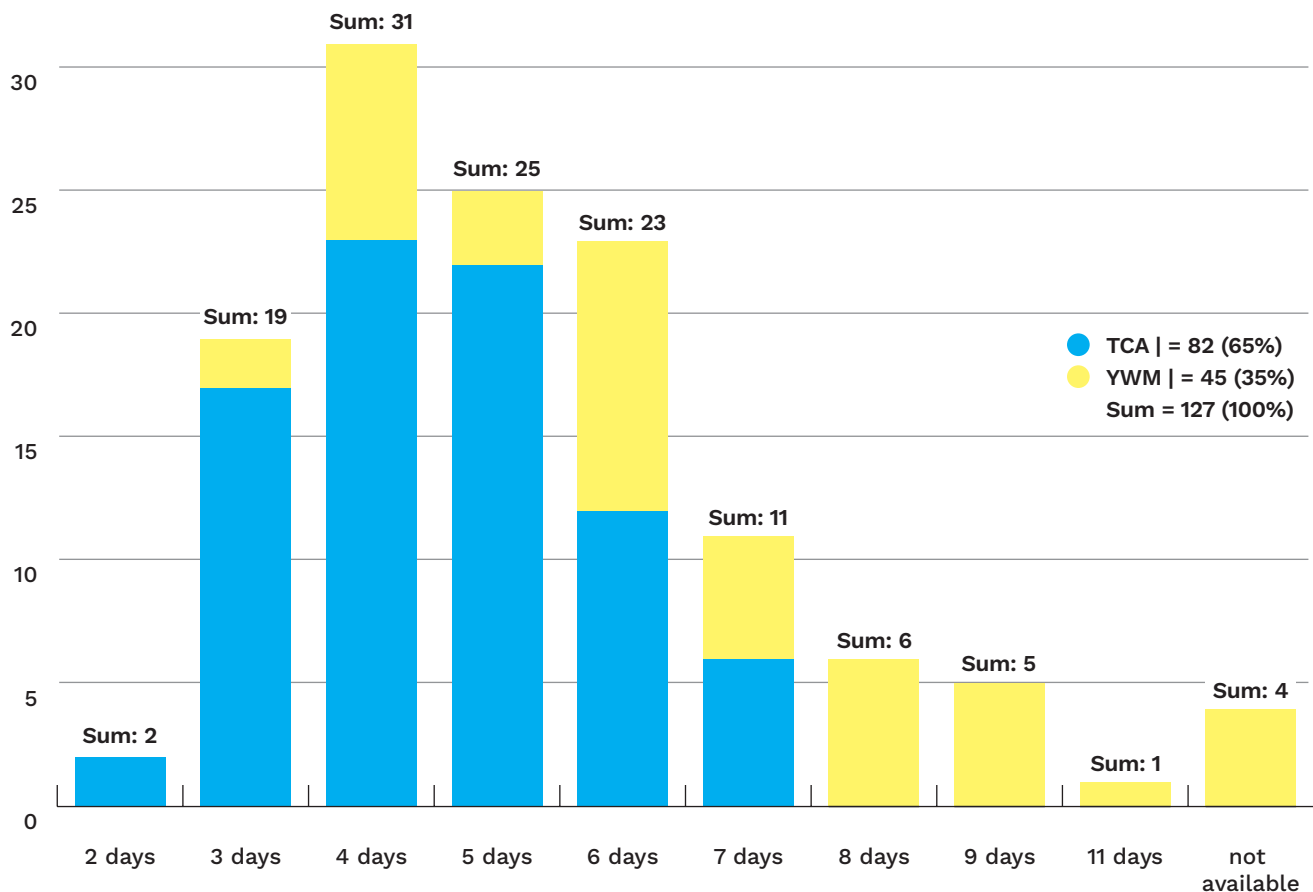
In addition, a remarkable political engagement also becomes obvious among several interviewees in both interview rounds. They seem to imply a need for reinforcing a 'sense of community' within the training/activity by meeting people with similar values, and by sharing experience how to react when they are confronted with radicalisation, extremism, racism, discrimination, inequalities. Other important aspects are defending democratic and social values as well as human rights (see chapter: (international) youth work competences).

Time constraints between attending the training/activity and regular work in the youth field seems another main obstacle causing stress. One effect of stress is that concentration on the training is not fully possible, which could be defined to be an unintended side effect. For some interviewees, it is challenging to participate in an international training because of the existing workload or being away from the regular work/the young people (target group). This is especially true if they felt forced into the training/activity and/or the training/activity did not respond to their working field. In such inconvenient circumstances, they may have the impression that their participation does not have the expected benefit for them. Furthermore, in cases where someone felt forced into the training by someone else, this could negatively affect attitudes towards the training/activity.

According to absent time of daily work it is pointed out that an absence of more than three days seems to be impossible, indicating a time pressure. Referring to some statements of interviews (3), the experienced training/activity may cause further limits on the individual impact in case the duration of the training/activity is too long or too short. At this point, some tensions could be identified with respect to appropriate training/activity durations, which seem influenced by different factors such as working circumstances, motivation/training interests, professional background/expertise or extent of international training/activity experiences (i.e. how often was an international training/activity attended).

At this point it seems relevant to analyse the duration of the core activities in the transnational sample of interviews (3) to create more transparency in the stressed recommendation for appropriate durations. On closer inspection it becomes evident that most attended trainings/activities imply durations between three and six days (98 (77%) out of 127). Most of time, the core activities of TCA take place from three to five days with a maximum duration of 7 days. On the contrary, the highest number of the core activities of YWM refer to four or six days, followed by 7, 8 and 9 days as well as sporadically to 3, 5 or 11 days (see figure 2 duration of the core activity across all cases of interviews (3)).

**FIGURE 2** Duration of the core residential activity across all cases of interviews (3)



In the cases that organisational support is missing due to a lack of financial resources, the balance between implementation of KA1 projects (i.e. being responsible for young people to host them every day) and participation in SALTO trainings is problematic.

Another notably unintended side effect may refer to a long-term effect with respect to the perceived training/learning outcomes. Referring to the analysed interviews (3) it can be assumed that during the first months after coming back from the attended training/activity, the effects of the attended training/activity seem high and present among different interviewees because this time is estimated to be most noticeable.

**“**Yes, definitely, specifically first months when get back (...) you are enthusiastic, it is a wave of new energy, knowledge, experience, new people (...). That is the time, it seems to me, that the effect of participation is most noticeable” (Efs\_TCA1ii3).

Since this time, the perceived effects from the attended training/activity may be decreasing among a few interviewees because of observed challenges to recall the respective training outcomes several months after the activity. One interviewee mentions that there were a lot of good games and exercises, but she can not remember them: “Should have written them down immediately” (Ffs\_TCA2if3). Another reason for a possible change of impressions with respect to effects may refer to an indicated accumulation of outcomes from previous trainings, expertise, actual work, life, study or other experiences. Thus, the perceived effects may imply multiple influences and not only outcomes clearly resulting from the attended training/activity twelve months after the activity, as already discussed in previous chapters.

### 7.5.1 Networks and partnerships

#### After the training/activity

Many new contacts were made but after coming back to routine, only a few potential partners wished to cooperate. It could be assumed that a lack of sustainability of energy for future collaboration is evident. A lot of built networks stay at the level of created ideas but no further concrete collaboration is planned. Very often, these networks remain passive and finally potential partners lose interests over time (lost potential). In the evaluation of partnership and projects possibilities, it could be assumed that there is the challenge to feed their relationship and to keep going the part-

nership dynamic. A demand was indicated, for example, with respect to support local partners in developing non-formal education and E+-projects and to reflect on project creation and methods. As a result, follow-up meetings (after six months) would be appreciated for reflecting about the network and practices or for reinforcing the established network, which was reemphasised in several cases of interviews (3). Additionally, concrete outcomes, plans, and intentions contribute to keeping the network active, such as developing a project idea for an application, organising study visits, or engaging in EVS.

In other cases, networking was done well, including contacts which are still ‘alive’ even after the end of the project. Nevertheless, after finishing an international project/activity, established partnerships are often not active anymore, and the submission applications for another project/activity is not possible because of a lack of time resources. Each youth project implies a big networking potential, which is quite often wasted once the project/activity is over, which was reemphasised in some interviews (3).

Challenges for partnerships could be identified through structural problems to plan concrete international projects (i.e. lack of PIC to submit a project application; lack of personal resources within the organisation). It is noteworthy that despite of many established partnerships, there are still some interviewed participants in the third round of interviews with a lack of partnership building. They report, for example, that they could not find appropriate partners for implementing a Youth Exchange.

Furthermore, long-lasting good partnerships are able to change, causing problems in further collaboration. It is concluded that a partnership most of the time depends on one person, and further efforts have to be made for partner building to reinforce the quality of a collaboration.

## 7.6 Summary the transfer of the learning outcomes into practice

### 7.6.1 Effects and changes on the individual level

#### After the training/activity

The impact on the individual level is positively assessed after the training/activity among the majority of interviewees in both interview rounds, implicating inspiration and motivation for daily work, or/and to use new knowledge and skills in practice. Also, the fact of contact making with

interesting and experienced international peers in the training/activity reinforces motivations for the daily business. Furthermore, awareness raising about country-specific youth work discourses and methods for intercultural youth work could be acquired, and this seems to have a strong impact.

According to that, established networks and partnerships are also mentioned to have an impact, not only on organisations, but also for the interviewees themselves because of a created 'sense of community'.

The individual impact of the learning outcomes for daily work may correlate with the training content and the present work (thematic priorities). In cases where there is a gap between the topic and working field, the impact seems limited regarding impact and opportunities for the application/the transfer into practice. This self-perceived limited impact may be reensured in several statements of interviews (3) due to a lack of in-depth training topics or not profound training issues. Nevertheless, there seems some benefit of the training although expectations were not met (positive attitude: each training and project have its value) or a turn around of statements appeared because of unexpected positive effects of the training/learning outcomes twelve months after the activity. As a result, there is an evident long-term effect and the former assessment about the training is completely turned around.

Overall, the impact in the context of personal development seems to be dominant in the interviews (2), followed by applied knowledge, skills, and attitudes in terms of professional development. These developments concern, for example, improved abilities in practical knowledge for project applications/submissions, intercultural awareness or communication, and presentation techniques.

In the interviews (3), there may be a change because the impact is focused on the professional development related to the frequency of statements. On the contrary, personal development is not so often addressed anymore in this round of interviews. On closer inspection, it is stressed that more transparency and certainty for the own profession and professional development could be gained in the context of international youth work through the cultural exchange of practices and experiences in youth work between countries (country specific differences) and international peers (peer learning) and/or the submission of (international) youth projects within the E+/YiA

programme or strengthen/validated the own expertise in youth work (i.e. dog therapy).

Further impact is recapitulated for new contacts and (inter)national networking or partnership building and future collaboration. Additionally, a change of perspectives for NFL education based on the made experiences and/or reinforced activities for the application of respective methods into the practice (i.e. learning by doing methods) becomes evident among several interviewees (3). Further impacts are considered for an increased participation and engagement for civil society or for NEET of youth in society. Additionally, a broader view of minorities, the elimination of stereotypes/prejudices as well as the integration of refugees and migration and a more effective communication are stated by different interviewees (3).

Overall, in many cases interviewees (3) act as multipliers due to the transfer of acquired aspects from the attended training/activity on the individual level, professional level and/or organisational level. Nevertheless, in some cases of interviews (2) and confirmed in the interviews (3), no outcomes could be applied due to a lack of personal development as well as professional development in terms of a missing relevance for daily business as well as time constraints. According to the gap between the outcomes and relevance of the daily business, it is worth mentioning that this was the case most of time when the initiatives for participation in the training/activity referred to the interviewees' own ambitions together with shaky connections to/weak ties in the organisation as well as to the own working tasks. Nevertheless, a few interviewees report that they did not transfer anything in their daily business but perceive improved competences at the individual level. According to this, it is recommended to interpret results with respect to a lack of applied training/learning outcomes in daily business carefully because the impact seems to be evident for many interviewees on the personal level.

Furthermore, several interviewees report that there were no/limited chances or opportunities for the application of the acquired methods or approaches because of the interviewees' 'lower' hierarchy/weak involvement in the organisation, changed organisational background, other urgent priorities within organisations, restrictions for changes within the organisation as well as little interests in the outcomes from organisations' side (i.e. students, colleagues, leadership). Nevertheless, many of them express their strong motivation and intention for the future.



### 7.6.2 Effects and changes on the organisational level

#### After the training/activity

In interviews (2), the impact on the organisational level predominantly refers to sharing experiences and materials from the training/activity (if provided) with colleagues and sometimes with the target group, the management of the organisations, via workshops/trainings, in regularly meetings, or electronically.

In interviews (3), the perceived impact on the organisational level concerns different effects and/or changes, most of time for European and international youth work. It is reported, for example, that a clear evolution/development for European and international youth work within the whole structure could be observed, although this is not only indicated to be directly related to the result of the attended training/ activity. At this point it is noteworthy that many changes and approaches are perceived but it seems difficult to recall precisely what of the attended training influenced the work today. Some of the interviewees (3) recapitulate that the impact is more or less an accumulation of acquired outcomes from different influences such as study/trainings as well as practice.

However, some effects for the observed European/international development in organisations are addressed for getting new target groups involved or building new contacts, professional networks and collaborations, focused on short-term projects and concrete activities (based on the organisations' funding procedures). In other cases, the defined priority of international/European youth work is pointed out to be an unexpected effect, for example, when the board and management set up a European project strategy and decide to create a place of coordinator. In other examples the work with Non-EU partners and hosting their volunteers (because of the administration tasks) or fruitful collaborations are considered unexpected and far-reaching. Further impact on the organisational level is articulated for intensified youth work beyond the youth field, such as in schools, or the specialisation of staff members (i.e. in youth and NEET youth).

In case no effects are perceived on the daily activities in the organisation, some further positive effects on the image of the organisation are claimed because of the verification of the quality of work („quality measure"). Thus, it is reported for example that through the exchange of experiences and practice with international peers in the

training/activity, it becomes obvious that a good approach in working with young people was already implemented in the organisation. Nevertheless, a few interviewees express their intention to revise the implemented methods or approaches with respect to the acquired new ones.

Overall, a missing systemic approach could be assumed for the transfer of the outcomes into practice in the interviews (2), which could be confirmed in a majority part of interviews (3). The activities potentially depend on the engagement of the interviewed participants. In the interviews, it is seldom stated that the organisation has already developed some strategies or common rules for the knowledge transfer after attending the trainings/activities. From the analysed statements of interviews (3) it becomes evident that defined transfer strategies within organisations may support the application of the outcomes and therefore the impact on the organisational level as well as the benefit for organisations. Thus, some cases stress for positive effects on organisations through developed strategies the transfer of responsibilities to trained young people and the decentralisation of activities (local initiatives), the increased image of an organisation through the recognition as good-practice by the EU, the recruitment of new staff members (younger generation) and the renewal of the communication practice.

In various interviews (2) the support of the organisations seems not to be very distinctive, while the support was assessed more positively in terms of expectations although the initiative for attending the training/activity was often taken by individuals but implicating in most cases a kind of organisational support. This support ranges from appreciating, motivating or helping participants to arranging or deciding everything, and to treating the participation like a business trip (provide time and/or financial resources). Additionally, in some interviews (3) the support of organisations can be assumed to be more extendend. It is stated, for example, that the organisation provided infrastructure/equipment, resources and/or possibilities for the application of the outcomes. The support was limited or not applicable in case the organisation was small sizes (i.e. one wo/men organisation; interviewee is the leader of the organisation) or the focus of the organisation was different to the outcomes.

Furthermore, it is reported that no organisation caused problems or was against the participation in the training/activity. Only a few main obstacles could be indicated from the analysed interview

statements (2) and reassessed in the interviews (3): the position of the interviewees in organisations or the size of organisations, which may have an impact on the available resources for participation, the access to the training/activity as well as on the opportunities for the application of outcomes. Also, the transfer of the learning outcomes seems to be problematic due to a lack of time, and structural resources after returning from the training/activity as well as limited innovative/new output or when the training has nothing to do with the essence of the organisation.

Thus, it could be assumed that there may be an absence of the expected or required support of organisations after coming back from the training/activity. In such cases, interviewees express frustration and initiate their own dissemination activity in informal settings (i.e. coffee breaks) or in an electronic way or have the impression to be in a stand-by mode: share the training/learning outcomes if demanded. On the contrary, other organisations seem very open and provide the outcomes via 'open access': everybody is welcome to add respective outcomes and use them, which is reassessed in some interviews (3).

Further obstacles for the transfer of the learning outcomes into the organisation can be pointed out from both interview rounds in terms of a lack of resources, a lack of relevance for daily work, a lack of organisational background or weak ties to organisations, instable or not finalised consolidated organisations, changed political situation, and a lack of infrastructure/capacity in the organisation as well as in the residence country. Another hindrance refers to the structure of the E+/YiA programme where specific organisational types are excluded from the grant regulations (i.e. non-profit private limited company) or enormous personal resources are required for the long process of submitting and implementing European/international youth projects/activities (i.e. cannot be provided from small organisations).

In a handful statements (3) it becomes evident that an unawareness of changes or effects in organisations occur because the interviewees were focused on more on content issues (i.e. working with young people as volunteer or freelancer) and not on organisational development.

### 7.6.3 Effects and changes on the environment

#### After the training/activity

In interviews (3) it is reported, that different dissemination activities are organised within the social environment (i.e. friends, acquaintances) as

well as professional environment (i.e. colleagues, project manager, cooperation partners, in involved networks, other national relevant actors (i.e. rural organisations, local professionals and local community partners).

On closer inspection, dissemination activities are considered in interviews (2) and (3) in terms of sharing knowledge/materials and international experiences/practice from the training/activity (if provided) with other organisations, colleagues outside the organisation who are involved in similar topics or friends in informal settings. Additionally, work clubs and workshops with practical activities as well as visits to potential employers or a similar training are organised.

Sometimes dissemination activities or cooperation with the national, local and regional environment (politicians; youth workers; co-workers; youth centres; NAs; national study visits for people from the region) are organised, but rarely at the European level.

In interviews (3), dissemination activities at the European level predominantly refer to promotion activities for the Erasmus+ programme, such as promoting E+/YiA among women and youth living in the countryside and giving seminars to colleagues about the EU projects and youth projects. Furthermore, in one case a collaboration with the project manager of the training in an organised event was reported in terms dissemination activities at the European level. To attract a wider and external public, an outdoor campaign is initiated and bulletins for daily news are taking out during the training courses. Further stakeholders are addressed within different networks to share knowledge and experience (i.e. within national trainers' network or other involved networks). Some exchanges in networks are initiated with special foci, like working conditions and requirements for the cooperation with different NAs.

Finally, recommendations are articulated to friends and colleagues and raise their awareness on the opportunity to attend such international training/activity. Referring to identified obstacles as reported in interviews (3), similar hindrances are stressed for the transfer into the environment as already summarised for the organisational level (see previous chapter summary and conclusions for the effects and changes on the organisational level).

### 7.6.4 Youthpass

#### Before, during, after the training/activity

For some interviewees (2) Youthpass was a new experience and was not considered before. In one case of interviews (3) the extent of such new experience becomes obvious due to the statement to include Youthpass immediately in the own daily business. Just in a few interview cases (3), no knowledge of the Youthpass is stated. However, it is worth stressing that overall the judgement of Youthpass is controversial among the interviewed participants, especially in the third round of interviews. There are interviewees who ascribe Youthpass big potentials for different stakeholders and the NFL approach; others raise different critics in terms of certificates within the NFL approach, missing visibility of acquired competences from a NFL setting or benefits for experienced and highly educated stakeholders.

More specifically, after the training/activity most interviewed participants from both interview rounds (2) and (3) explain that they understand Youthpass. Some of them consider it as a reflection tool as well as learning instrument to think about/validate acquired knowledge, skills, and attitudes. In their opinion Youthpass supports the visibility of acquired competences in a NFL setting, and is more relevant for young people but not for experienced youth workers. In addition, in a handful statements of the third round of interviews it is reemphasised that Youthpass is estimated to be a benefit especially for unexperienced people with lower formal degree level.

Further potential is recognised for job applications, but others argue contrarily. They claim Youthpass is not an appropriate instrument for the job market (i.e. already too many documents are included in job applications; missing importance/image of Youthpass for employers). This indicated controversial assessment among interviewees (2), seems to be reinforced in the analysed statements of interviews (3). Some interviewees (3) emphasise positive effects for personal recruitment or for the labour market. In their opinion the importance/visibility have been increased over time in the environment.

Others think that Youthpass is still unknown and neglected by potential employers. From these interviewees, some added that Youthpass maybe is useful in combination with volunteer work and/or working experiences abroad because at the international level Youthpass seems more recognised.

Additionally, certificates are seen critically because of their contradictions in the context of the NFL approach (assessed competences refer to the formal approach). Referring to the analysed interviews (3), doubts about the value of a certificate without quality criteria as well as within the NFL approach may be reinforced. It is criticised that everyone is allowed to use and complete it, independently from the engagement and motivation of participation in the training/activity.

Other critics in interviews (3) concern the implementation of the Youthpass, implying sometimes time constraints. The reasons for any time constraints are assumed with respect to complicated or strange wording in the Youthpass (i.e. does not fit to the training) or indicated overlaps with other tools (ie Europass; LinkedIn, organisational tools). Overall, the practicality seems reduced, limiting the application of the Youthpass and an update is recommended from them.

### 7.6.5 Unintended side effects

#### After the training/activity

An indicated loose connection between activities and individual/organisational realities/strategies could cause limits in applying learning outcomes, because they are perceived to be rarely relevant for daily work. Additionally, time constraints between the training/activity and the regular work seem to have another negative impact on the learning outcomes (i.e. impression expected benefit could not be gained). Accordingly, time constraints may limit also the opportunities for the transfer of the learning outcomes into practice, as indicated in the analysed interviews (3).

Further limits with respect to the training/learning outcomes are assessed for a lack of new knowledge and/or skills. Thus, specialised/vocational training/activity settings with appropriate time periods would be appreciated to meet expectations for specific interests and increased opportunities for the acquisition of new knowledge and/or skills. Moreover, training/activities with focus on digital issues are highly recommended to be included in the training proposals. Referring to an assumed passive potential of networks and partnerships, follow-up meetings with peers to provide possibilities for reactivating their established networks/partnerships or creating new ones with concrete ideas for activities/projects would be another essential point to be reconsidered.

As a result, it could be concluded and emphasised through interviews (3) that (international) youth work can be assumed as having an important, innovative, and inspiring role within the so-

ciety and across sectors (NFL; political engagement; dealing with challenges and discovered EU issues). Thus, international trainings/activities in the youth field provide interesting and valuable methods for interviewed participants in formal education, implying valued personal gains.

According to the important and innovative role of (international) youth work, appropriate financial resources become the crucial point to enlarge and foster opportunities and offers for relevant groups of interested people. With more financial resources, it is possible to amplify the responsibility to discover actual problems and find solutions within Europe and beyond.

The question is how open the international trainings/activities can be arranged in terms of the current limited financial resources, and how international youth work can respond and integrate the various interests from the different sectors. The non-formal sector in the youth field has now more than ever the chance to inspire and enrich the formal sector with NFL and its respective methods, offering innovative and important inputs for the whole European society.

#### 7.6.6 Systemic Effects and Organisational Development

##### Sharing the outcomes of activities

“[The participant] brings us summaries –or materials if there are- of the programme he participated when he comes back. He gives feedback to the organisation and we mostly work through the method of self-evaluation. We do field screening and try to enrich the library. When they return, persons we have sent out have to do these: The point is to have all benefit even if only one person has participated to a programme” (utv\_TR98im).

Outcomes are generally reported and discussed within the project team and with project partners. More detailed and practical information are usually discussed during the implemented activities and their results communicated internally. Initiatives are undertaken by team members but also from organisations with established mechanisms (not always formal mechanisms) for the transfer of the learning outcomes into the organisation. Organisations are committed to sharing training/activity results but smaller organisations face obstacles in transferring the results systematically. Most noticeably is a lack of financial and, consequently, human resources and time needed to fully dedicate to internal transfer of knowledge within the organisation. Therefore, smaller organisations most commonly share results among its

most active members involved in the organisation and its activities, and with board members during project and/or weekly meetings.

Transfer of learning outcomes and knowledge into the wider community were mostly the responsibility of the youth worker who participated in the training or support activity. For this reason, many stressed the importance of sending as many different people as possible to the trainings, to ensure the knowledge and expertise was not concentrated on a few individuals.

The role of the team for the transfer of the learning outcomes seems highly important for sharing the outcomes across team members and organisations. There are variety of ways and methods of follow-ups but ultimately it is the team who implements/acquires the outcomes. Thus, it is important to address how teams are supported through this process.

##### Formats for organisational sharing

“*I organised a meeting for my colleagues, where I talked about the new game I learned, that can be used for street work. I then invited two of my co-workers to join me during my street work and observe how I tried to use the game with the youngsters. The three of us then reflected what could be done better in this game – after all, I used it for the first time and I was really looking for their feedback” (Pz25r\_PLt).*

Typically, the use of existing/common formats in organisations provide the space for discussions and exchange of outcomes. In most of organisations, discussions and sharing the outcomes (experiences and knowledge) take place during formal and informal meetings with team members, internal communication with the board and wider networks, as well as dissemination to local communities and social networks via public communication. In some cases, written or oral reports, articles or testimonies are required by organisations. For example, in one case ‘training reports’ have been written, including all relevant learning/training outcome. Outcomes can be made available through analogue (printed material) or digital platforms, newsletters, producing movie/clips, in-house trainings or workshops. It is uncommon to share post training information with a wider network unless specifically required or relevant.



### Interests, vision and expectations for knowledge transfer

**“***It probably really depends on the organisation. And the project, what's expected... Yeah, and what are sort of the feelings at the end, how applicable it is, and whether it will stay with the participant's own work or whether it starts to spread into something that links into their networks and working community, but it really depends on the content (of the training)”* (nnmpo\_FI235).

Not all organisations have a clear or systemic culture on sharing ideas from the training but all at least have expectations that ideas should be shared by the participants through meetings or reports. Though knowledge transfer is not enough; there is a need for transformation. Actions for knowledge transfer can be spontaneous or ad hoc and a lack of specific approaches and/or mechanisms for building database of ideas or partners. Explicit strategy depends on the involvement of the organisation at the international level (i.e. application/implementation of projects) and the status of participant (i.e. employees or volunteers). Documented outputs depend on the organisation's interests, such as descriptive reports in terms of individual development vs. comprehensive report for organisational development (i.e. potential projects).

**“***... if it is more focused on the individual's personal and professional growth, then we are satisfied with the shorter report / ... / When the project is in the interest of the organisation / ... / colleague who participated in this training, she have prepared one short workshop, on what she thought was the most useful for us”* (ok83tp\_SI).

### Preserving the training/learning outcomes of an activity

**“The most successful way of preserving the learning outcomes is to use them in practice, in my daily work”**

(Yobx\_PLr6)

**“***During the training activity together with the group of participants, we produce materials that are shared, both on social networks, and on all the platforms, for example, of our partners. All this is collected and becomes a package of dissemination material, together with the detailed program of activities that we compile and at the end of the training. So, the program and*

*the dissemination material (photos, stories, video interviews or any materials produced) becomes a package: we collect it, we put it together, it becomes a sort of electronic publication booklet. This is sent to all the partners, to all the participants with the instruction to spread it, to give it visibility”* (xc27ot\_ITe).

Organisations maintain knowledge by way of archiving, creating and sharing materials digitally and integrating knowledge into daily practice, though they could be further improved and methods for sharing capitalised upon. In some cases, organisations have special storage spaces which are collectively used by all staff in the organisation. More structured organisations tend to have more digitized storage and websites are also considered to be a tool to store and share materials. Organisations use a variety of software solutions such as cloud-computing services (i.e. dropbox, google drive) for collective access, while materials that are more sensitive are stored on intranets or on their own servers or hard discs.

Digital archives are predominant and often supplemented with image, video and presentation materials from activities or protocols, journals/newsletters and the translation of materials in all languages involved in a project. For example, one organisation secured funding and has taken steps to make improvements for a ‘multi-purpose training room’ (i.e. library).

The most common way of using the materials are within the organisation's activities. Team members typically adapt materials to their own organisational objectives. However, preserved materials are often not used. Some interviewees are sceptical that these materials are or will be used by other team members. This is in part due to unawareness about the use of these materials by others. Project managers or people preparing a project may be more active in using already stored materials. Strategies for transfer into practice are not often communicated within organisations. Despite digital archive storage, the transfer and exchange of learning outcomes mostly depend on the personal engagement of individuals. Peer-learning was valued and emphasised but there is a need indicated for some structure or formality of sharing learning

**“***We have a difficulty with this. I think there isn't enough sharing. It's quite difficult to get everybody together to hear the outcomes”* (b72yts\_IE).

### Reflection at organisational level



**“***There is not one way, no. We are very used to reflecting. We do that a lot. (...) Reflecting on what happened, or on the group, or on the future or the past. No, it is certainly not fixed, the more diverse the better, to be honest” (v2ctv6\_BE).*

**“***We, as an organisation, try to reflect on a regular basis on our activities. We have regular team meetings, where we share the latest news and developments from the activities we carry out. The same with trainings: whenever we organise a training here, the reflection process takes place during the evaluation phase, but also, much later, when we use what we learn in practice. In my opinion, a complete reflection is a really long-term process which can last years after the training” (ab1ct\_P3L).*

Reflections before and after the activity are quite common but the format depends on the activity and the results. Reflection typically takes place in terms of new projects, new partner contacts, potential needs for a change in the organisation such as new division and distribution of work. Reflection is stressed as an important part of the training/activity as well as for organisations and are included in the documentation or new projects. Though many organisations admit there is little or no post-training reflection or systemic way to reflect in the organisation.

**“***I don't think there is a true reflection process on the level of the organisation. Of course, whenever I participate in a training I reflect on its results and how it can affect my work for the better, but I don't think there is an organisational reflection” (ty03top\_PL).*

Obstacles for transfer into practice are indicated as lack of resources such as time work pressure and lack of staff to engage in wider communication within the organisation, local community and general public. Time is also needed to adapt the training to the national context. Initiatives can often remain on the individual rather than organisational level. Three strategies could be recommended such as documenting the training activity while the activity is taking place; sharing (digitally); offering various forms of post-training opportunities, for example practice skills, methods, newly acquired knowledge.

## 8 — FUTURE PERSPECTIVES AND OUTLOOK

This chapter reports on future perspectives and outlook of the interviewed participants by focusing on youth work ambitions and perspectives. Several questions explored the ambitions and perspectives of the participants, including the intended and perceived competences concerning professional development and career perspectives. Additionally, interviewees had the possibility to add recommendations concerning the attended training or support activity.

### 8.1 Youth work ambitions and perspectives

**“***It's hard to imagine that digitalisation would not be a part of my work in the future” (Afh\_TCA1if3).*

**“***After I graduate, I want to actively take part in an association –well, for example how to write a project etc. (...) not only becoming a member, but I really want to actively do something. (...) I always thought of creating a portal. (...) preparing the project myself, writing it together with one or two more people, and hopefully making it accepted, I want to implement that project” (Ifs\_YWM3rt3).*

**“***Hoping that with the kids we now get the application going for next spring for the youth exchange. Hoping we get that EVS here and after that two more (...)” (Hfs\_TCA5if3).*

#### After the training/activity

Interviewees of the second round of interviews are mostly ambitious, motivated, inspired and enthusiastic when it comes to further plans in the field of youth work. Most of them show interest in improving their knowledge and skills to be able to better implement their intended projects, such as for offering more effective opportunities for young people on the local level. This is in line with the wish of some participants to create inspired environments at the local level to give young people enough free space to develop and encouraging them to bring in ideas. One interviewed participant stated in this regard to “let young people be” (Afh\_TCA1ta1). This goes hand in hand with the possibility of letting young people take over responsibility. Furthermore, the personal development of young people is considered as an essential factor in the transition phase to adult life. Therefore, a youth worker is interested

in creating a holistic approach in order to create an environment in which young people learn how to fit into society.

A few interviewed participants (2) seem to have different future plans regarding their forethought, which may remain unchanged in interviews (3). Some interviewees focus on short term goals (2-3 years) (i.e. internship at EU institution, with NGO or NA), while others aim at high positions and therefore count on a longer time period to achieve those goals. This may also implicate the demand for more secure occupational options for the future, as indicated from one interviewee that she wants to continue in youth work but wants a more stable job in a youth centre:

**“***I would like to be in this work, in this platform even 10 years from now on and I want to proceed with sharing my experiences. I want to share my experiences with those who need my knowledge and experiences, and I want to continue with learning the things I could not learn yet”* (Ams\_TCA1rt3).

Most interviewed participants (2) want some kind of change either in the youth field where they work or to expand other working possibilities in the youth field. Thus, some of them are intending to change their organisation or position, but not the youth field in general. In interviews (3), this indicated ambition becomes more or less evident again. Sometimes interviewed people changed a certain aspect of their work, where for example they realised their preference for voluntary instead of paid work in the field of youth work or they focused on the specialisation in pedagogical functions and longer projects. Another interviewee (3) would like to continue working at the same institution and would like to have more international exposures. A further interviewee wishes to continue her work as an arts instructor for children but does not plan to implement any international activities in the future. Furthermore, some interviewees want to continue the path into youth work even after finishing their studies. One interviewee expresses her wish, for example, to continue working with young people on a voluntary basis, because this is a “occupation I like to carry out, which is very much rewarding for me, where I really can do something, on a voluntary basis, and there I really can move [change] something” (Jfs\_TCA5ta3). For others the focus changed from youth work to refugees or becoming interested in international projects outside Europe. For example, one interviewee (3) reports about his project idea to help improving the situation of people living in Africa or Asia by building a school or

a cooperative – “not now, eventually in 5 years” (Cmh\_YWM1ta3). If his business plans work out, he is considering initially investing private money to get that project started.

On the contrary to the ambitions to change something, a handful interviewees (3) stress that they are very satisfied with their jobs and do not want to change anything:

**“***Yes, this is a good question. I actually arranged everything for myself very well at work, in a way it is suiting me; I presently don't need any change, simply because everything is working out very well and I am very satisfied”* (Afh\_TCA1ta3).

In addition, a couple of interviewees (3) expressed critical remarks towards the occupational status in the youth field or indicated difficulties based on the present national circumstances. It does not seem astonishing that others raise the intention to improve working conditions for youth workers and to foster their well-being. More specifically, one interviewee does not want to return to youth work (is currently a teacher) because the salary is higher at school and work as a youth worker is hard and demanding:

**“***Young workers are often ignored, and no one talks about [their problems and work], nobody is thinking about it. I think this is such a big shortcoming of the whole field, and I do not think [it would be] bad even if the national agency would say loudly, that we also deserve youth workers, we deserved to be honestly paid, not that we were all half-volunteers”* (Afs\_TCA1ii3).

Another interviewee regrets that he has less and less time for working with excluded youth on the streets, despite his special street work (dog therapy). His future perspective refers to advising and mentoring street workers in Europe. His main task now is to train high quality dog therapists who will be able to answer the need for this kind of activity at the national level. In another case, dissatisfaction with the current workplace is stressed and the interviewee is looking for a job outside the youth field that is not necessarily linked to youth work. A further interviewee considers the EU's benefits to the projects and activities very positively, but the unstable situation of the country is mentioned as a factor that affects the international youth activities negatively. They wait for the country to normalised in order to be able to attend new youth activities.

Other interviewees (2) seem unsure if they will stay in the field of youth work, which is recon-

sidered in several interviews (3) together with a lack of concrete plans for the own professional future/career. Furthermore, not all future plans are linked with youth work as indicated in different statements of interviews (2): some want to intensify their work or are changing the focus, others have a stronger focus on their personal development and focusing to work outside the youth field.

Similar statements become evident in interviews (3). A few interviewees are interested in youth work but are confronted with other priorities as well as the intention to be engaged in a project beyond the youth field, such as being a school teacher who wishes to include informal education elements:

**“**Yes, I would like to go on with this [non-formal education], which would allow us to move on. This was a creativity-related training about how to find the creativity to everyone, how to support this as a teacher. How to pass the joy of creation and to motivate students. Our school is a talent point and it would be very important to deal with creativity” (Gfs\_KA2uh3).

Further interviews statements (3) in the context of outside the youth field refer to the involvement in social activities or ambitions and perspectives related to the future profession, for example of being an engineer. Furthermore, some changes in goals are also unrelated to youth work and contain humanitarian help, less stress, (extensive) travelling, counselling or gaining experience.

Another interesting point refers to a group of interviewees (2) who are not even involved in youth work but uses the trainings to find out if the person really wants to engage in youth work. Some know it beforehand and are using the training as continuing education to gain knowledge about youth work. One interviewee wishes to become a trainer for and not only for European, but international youth work. Another interviewee addresses the plan to include an international perspective in youth work. Besides, the founding of an association for leading training activities is considered. For others, training helps with life decision, for example, when it comes to study choices.

Generally speaking, trainings are assessed to be helpful especially in increasing career perspectives and improving professional and personal competences, although this is not always assessed to be useful for only youth work (see chapter: training and support activities). Moreover, trainings are sometimes seen as part of Life Long Learning offering the possibility to speak

for oneself and not for the sending organisation. However, this is a conflicting situation; on the one side, youth workers are embedded in the structure and on the other side, they represent individuals and aspire for personal development at the same time (see chapter: transfer of learning/training outcomes into practice/effects on practice). Finally, a group of people can be indicated in the third round of interviews who is interested in attending further YiA trainings, as well as further workshops in the field of youth work. The attended training/activity encourage different interviewees and raise awareness for the need of more training activities. One interviewee perceives the impact of the training as “like one stone, like one part in the chain” (Dms\_TCA1is3) (see chapter: expectations/motivation to attend the training/activity; training and support activities).

In some cases of the third round of interviews, the training had a strong impact on future steps. It became the starting point to acquire more expertise about a certain topic. On closer inspection, the attended training/activity has expanded personal views, strengthened the European/international dimension of youth work in the activities of organisations to become a role model of best-practice, increased interests in the international framework as well as involvement of projects initiated by European Commission, focus on making the organisation bigger (in location as well as functioning) or on refugee crisis (i.e. interested in volunteering and training initiatives for refugees), created interests in cross-cultural communication, in implementing strategic partnership focused on young people with less opportunities as well as in EVS as a long-term goal (currently no time for participation) and finally involved more and more people in citizenship initiatives and mobility projects.

Further initiatives in the field of youth work in interviews (3) refer to the field of digitalisation and the intention to achieve something great with a new gaming project and its potential for expanding developed solution nationally. A further activity is stressed for the development of more EVS projects to become a sending organisation. Other ambitions in youth work concern the converting of sports club in youth association, the support of different associations with interviewees’ expertise (i.e. as civil society volunteer) or the wish to be in the management of youth workers.

Finally, the challenges of the NEET youth are raised in terms of the labour market and the welfare system, but also on the wellbeing of the youth themselves. One interviewee stresses sev-

eral times the urgency to take action and seek solutions.

## 8.2 Professional development and career perspectives

**“***I would like to have more time on educ pop, non-formal education , on the pédago composition of a program, think finally ... here, know more activities to propose more ways (...) how we approach these topics in group thing. Finally here, yes, more animation techniques and activities to know and lead. And the Pedagogical building a program too” (Afs\_KA1rf1).*

**“***I could learn a lot from working together with younger people than me, it was a very positive experience, I gained a lot of energy from them” (Gfs\_KA2uh2).*

**“***Often it's important just to get to share your own experiences and to get something new” (Bms\_TCA2if3).*

**“***However, I see myself bound to the youth work field in the long run – this is my place, here is my heart. (laughs) I know, why I do it” (Gfs\_TCA7xe3).*

### After the training/activity

When focusing on the professional and career development/perspectives after the third round of interviews it may become obvious that for some interviewed participants career aspirations stayed unchanged, others are interested in pursuing a youth work related career or some are interested in new topics outside youth work and/or even started studying. Among those who indicated some new career aspirations within youth work, a stronger focus on international perspective in youth work become evident when it comes to planning a new project. Generally speaking, the interest in creating new projects, some within the youth field and some outside, grew. What seems interesting are the differences in the choice of timeframes to implement the projects: Many of the interviewees want to implement projects within the coming months/year but some also have long-term plans for the project start (e.g. 5 years).

Referring to professional development, one interviewee (2) confirms its importance and it can be best achieved through learning from others that equally includes youth workers and youth policy makers. Another interviewee of the third round of interviews feels that sharing experiences and

discussing larger themes is a good way for professional development, but it is also valuable to put focus on networking with international colleagues (see chapter: (international) youth work competences and development/changes). Other interviewees of the second round of interviews think in terms of professional development that confronts with experts of other social and cultural realities allowing them to directly explore and evaluate different perspectives and views of participants.

In line with the main aspects of the 2nd European Youth Work Convention, more measures are needed to cover the cultural diversity across Europe, as indicated in interviews (2). Thus, youth work seems very professional but in the work field the situation looks different (see chapter: (international) youth work competences; present (international) youth work). In particular, differences between Western and East/East-south European countries need to be taken more strongly into account, as there are differences in the acceptance and conceptualisation of youth work in the respective countries. It ranges from countries where youth worker is an excepted profession (for e.g. Austria) to countries where it is not recognised (for e.g. Poland). In the latter case, trainings play a greater and a different role when it comes to development of professional competences. Those participants relay more strongly on the exchange with participants from others countries. They are using the trainings and activities as further training and networking possibility:

**“***As a proposal for TCA trainings: to involve more eastern and eastern-European countries in order to have possibilities to go beyond the closed European value debate and to focus on issues such as human rights and equal rights and gender equality” (DE\_Jfs\_TCA8de).*

Furthermore, informal learning is proven to be a suitable source to gain more experience and knowledge in the field of youth work as well as beyond. Thus, it serves as a useful source for developing professionalism. This does not only include youth workers but also people considering starting to work in the youth field, students and those interested in finding employment/new employment. It turned out that participating in a variety of projects on different topics can be helpful in finding a new job.

For some interviewees (3), not only professional development but also career aspirations changed through the training/the exchange with others and other factors in the meantime. This results in



changing the organisation within the youth field, starting to work in a new working field or the decision to start studying. Some of the interviewees (3) will try to get socially (voluntary) but not professionally involved into youth work activities. Others would like to set up a business, not necessarily related to youth work or will not return to the youth sector with respect to the workload during the weekend:

**“***In the youth sector, I will probably not return, at least not on non-formal terms. Maybe formally, in the future.” She was not happy that the majority of youth work was done during the weekend “because during the week [Monday-Friday] you deal with documentation” (Afs\_TCA1ii3).*

One of the factors for changes refers to the health conditions which determines the future tasks and place in organisations, as one interviewee reported. Currently she is the president, but she is planning to move to the background. Age seems to be another factor that is mentioned by some participants concerning their future engagement in youth work. Mostly seen as a limiting factor because younger youth workers are assumed to have better knowledge about the life realities of young people and are therefore able to better connect/reach them (see chapter: involvement in the youth field).

Overall, we notice a general increase of career perspectives among interviewees and trainings/activities may inspire people for future activities and/or to work in the youth field. In some cases, interviewed participants (2) had very clear project ideas when participating in the training, others changed the envisaged plans because of the input of the training and got inspired to do something else, as well as used the training to get a better idea of certain tools they would like to use e.g. exchange opportunities or EVS (see chapter: present (international) youth work). EVS, for example, is assessed as a good activity in interviews (2) because it is open to every young person, although the application process is interpreted as unfair and selective. Thus, EVS volunteers do not represent all European Youth and more information would be needed. Another interviewee (3) is currently involved in another association's work as well, she helps them to start the accreditation for hosting EVS volunteers. This organisation does not operate especially in the youth field but would like to find a way towards the younger generation with support from another organisation and a professional progress become apparent in the context of communication and mentoring:

**“***Yes, our communication has improved a lot, finally we have a working, fresh website (...), but still, it would be good if we could find the channel for the young (...). It's a big challenge to find the young people who are now 17-18 years old because they are communicating in quite different ways than we do” (Afs\_TCA1uh3).*

With respect to Youth Exchange, optimistic and passionate statements in interviews (3) become apparent. One interview explores that after finishing youth exchanges “with honour”, they have started planning them and have received funding for two of them. Through experiences from these first two, they want to develop these exchanges in the future as well as the idea of expanding to EVS. Other interviewees want to be able to encourage young people to get into international youth activities and inform them about more possibilities for youth mobility (woofing, summer jobs...). This intention does not only relate to the Erasmus+ Youth in Action Programme because the time scale is considered to be too long for some young project. Thus, the development of new partnership without Erasmus+ is considered.

Length and regularity of trainings/activities seem to play a role for interviewed participants (2) because some state where there would be a need for more regular meetings and offering those more time for reflection, networking and learning. This would also be welcomed at a national level. Therefore, some participants decide to repeat trainings with similar topics in order to have more time. In rare cases, the national agency stops interested participants in further participation despite the stated relevance and importance by the potential participant.

It is worth mentioning that it cannot be said definitely if there is a direct link between the training/activity and interviewee's next steps/ideas as reported in interviews (2). But improving the pedagogical skills and widening the collaboration network as well as setting up an EVS project might be inspired by the activity (see chapter: general assumptions and conclusions for interviews (2) and (3); training and support activities; transfer of the training/learning outcomes into practice/effects on practice). In addition, a handful interviewees (3) stress in self-perceived outcomes a progress with respect to their career aspirations. One interviewee explores that her personal and professional development are indicated to be a steady process starting with her own exchange experiences, doing an EVS, being responsible for



exchange and other youth projects until today with the decision to establish her own organisation. Nevertheless, during the first two interviews, the next professional steps were still unclear for her. In interviews (3), a turn-around of concrete steps occur: to establish her own organisation together with some friends. Another interviewee (3) acknowledges her change in mind (very critical on several courses) and realises now what she gained in total – the qualification and conviction for youth work – local and international. When finished with her Master she will start a full-time job as a youth worker in one of the two organisations and will continue to work with both.

### 8.3 Future organisational change and development

The following section summarises the findings of module (C) in relation to future organisational changes and developments. First, potential hopes and changes of these organisations are presented followed by how E+/YiA can support these goals. Finally, a list of recommendations for the future are presented.

#### 8.3.1 Hopes for the future

“At the European level, I still dream to realise a big network of like-minded organisations (...) I think of a long-term partnership in that case, because if you look at those strategic partnerships KA2, that is only 3 years. I really think that it takes longer, I think it is more interesting if it could last longer than three years because then you can realise more. (...) Because sometimes it takes three years to take a first step and that is only the beginning. You have not worked into the deep yet” (B564E\_rieg).

“I hope we still exist in the future and that as a channel we still can send people to those kinds of training activities. People who otherwise would never have that opportunity” (38dios\_BE).

Two hopes become apparent for interviewees: continuity and innovation. Organisations are hopeful they continue to exist in five years and are able to consolidate innovation at the organisational level. In particular, state-run organisations were hopeful in their expression of a future but without much certainty their hopes will come true. However, NGOs have more influence in the shaping of their future and would like to include more intergenerational activities and perspectives from staff members in management procedures.

In order to achieve such hopes, interviewees emphasize structure, staffing and financial needs. Many were hoping to have more paid staff, a permanent venue, new staff to join and new financial resources in order to continue their interventions and have a bigger impact at local level. Greater financial resources are potentially of greatest importance, as securing funding allows for an expansion of activities and enhances stability of the organisation. There is also further hope of entering a new phase of growth by focusing on the quality and not quantity of projects with more trustworthy and stable partners, diversification of financial resources, and the ability to maintain or increase the number of hosting/sending volunteers using EVS projects. Furthermore, hopes for change often include a European dimension:

“I would hope in five years’ time we’ll have a suite of European programmes that will be offered to all our youth and community centres. We’re one of the only groups that has somebody qualified to design and deliver human rights education programmes” (IE\_45rdgd).

“I’d like to see a European dimension being a central part of everybody’s workplan....The [name of Ministry] should make it an integrated requirement of their funding, it should be part of every youth worker’s job” (I3E\_0ser12).

This interest in the European dimension is coupled with conceptual concerns for the future of E+/YiA. There is potentially a need for political education to address growing concerns about the uncertain future of the E+ programme and expected negative effects on organisations such as the rising doubts and fears that invested time and finances in E+/YiA will not continue. There is growing concern with regards to changes in the European Voluntary Service (EVS) and the introduction of the European Solidarity Corps adding a dimension of complexity. New recommendations for the future include:

- special emphasis on the needs and demands of young people;
- more cooperation at local level;
- reduction of the application workload;
- reduction of bureaucratic requirements and restrictions are welcomed despite an understanding that guidelines and some minimum standards and procedures will remain/are essential;
- wish for one programme for youth, sport and education.

#### 8.3.2 How E+/YiA training/activities help

**“***I think that there could be a possibility of ‘refreshing’ your own work. And this sort of increasing your own professional capacity, and always when you use and see tips from somewhere else, then you look at your own thing differently as well” (6FI\_8wfd).*

“For us, training is very important because we started as an association of volunteers. We were a group of people who started doing things. Thanks to the training we have become a very organized structure and doing a lot of activities that were inspired by what we saw others doing. We have discovered new methodologies that have allowed us to go on” (IT\_56fdr).

According to interviewees, a successful training/activity must have:

- clear and achievable goals that are concrete and applicable; should be practical and informal, include examples from everyday life and from personal experience and include hands-on activities;
- must use a mix of experiential learning and informal learning methods, such as sharing experiences, participative approaches and reflection;
- the involvement of trustworthy partners.

E+/YiA is seen as an added value that greatly supports the recognition of organisations through contributions that develop individuals. Interviewees are overall satisfied with the offered activities of the E+/YiA programme. Many organisations use the format of YWM as an additional working field because of content-related interest and economic considerations. These trainings allow an increase of total activities offered by an organisation and its operational budget. In addition, they have the potential to contribute to the development of a new competence profile on national and European level. Thus, YWM may influence organisational development.

Additional trainings are useful because they reinforce the competences of youth workers and members of the organisations. There is a strong need for more specific trainings that strengthen the team and give basic knowledge about youth work. If the team is stable, there are better opportunities to specialize and develop team members. For youth workers, skills in writing applications should be increased. While for managers and/or board members, the need for the following free trainings were highlighted: accounting, safety and health at work, management, increasing the

sustainability of activities, developing the organisation, etc. At the moment, those trainings are very expensive and access to those is therefore restricted for smaller organisations. Furthermore, existing and future needs are diverse and individual, thus the practical benefits of these trainings/activities are highly recommended. There is a perceived need for the introduction of more innovative subjects that touch upon current affairs in Europe or social trends that affect the whole of Europe. Connections with the local realities to ensure long-term repercussions.

The role of the National Agency is stressed by several organisations in the success of how E+/YiA training/activities helped. Interviewees state that current active support through activities and consultation should be continued and even expanded. Suggestions for further support of organisations from the NA include:

- financial support because some projects are systematically underfunded, creating financial problems for organisations;
- consolidation of project results;
- translation of the application into English to be provided as a service by the NA;
- time-limited information about the E+/YiA programme and its changes on a regular basis;
- impact assessment: support in measuring the impact of the project;
- improvement of the creation of partnerships in a more efficient and effective way through NAs contacts.

### 8.3.3 Particular types of training/activities

**“***I find the training in project writing particularly useful. Project writing, project development, teamwork... We find these particularly useful. We are trying to ensure access to these by our all new volunteers” (dfda\_534TR).*

**“***On a personal level study visits have been something where you actually get to see (how things are done). That yes, trainings and seminars give that, but often much later. Usually with a study visit you straight away have something, when the training and seminar outcomes come later” (f56dsrft\_FI).*

Particular types of training/activities were considered well working for organisational development. These instrumental forms of training/activities include:

- study visits or a job/work shadowing;
- short trainings for project managers;
- online trainings;

- SALTO trainers' meetings;
- appetisers training activities and the BiTriM-ulti training activities;
- youth exchanges and mobility programmes;
- seminars.

Strategic and long-term projects were perceived to be most effective, especially among bigger organisations or among those who have specialised in certain topics. Short trainings (in some cases mentioned as a supplement for long projects) which focus on developing practical skills in topics that are rather narrow and specific were similarly highly appreciated. These were appreciated because 1-2 days of training is something organisations can afford without making too many sacrifices in their work or private life. Short workshops of a half-day maximum concerning subjects directly linked to the Erasmus+: Youth in Action programme and its changes is preferred by experienced staff members who wish to stay updated. Furthermore, multiple training activities forming a training trajectory with preparatory meetings, the actual training activity and a substantial post-training activity phase (practising the learning outcomes and reflecting on them) is the best option to help realising fundamental changes in organisations. Particular emphasis was placed upon more specific topics being preferred to broader and perhaps even philosophical ones.

#### 8.3.4 Suggestions for organisational changes

In order to maximize the benefits of these trainings/activities for organisations for the future, there is a stressed need for being social and more innovative. Organisation should change:

- their ready-made responses and standardised procedures;
- channels of communication with participants to better deal better with new circumstances of non-formal education;
- top-down definition for job responsibilities to encourage the adaption of mindless and unquestioning attitudes;
- adaptations of new non-formal actions and measures.

Furthermore, there is a expressed need from interviewees to face modern challenges by leaning how to communicate effectively by being able to create a more effective common space of existence for young people, generate a sense of shared visions and develop a target oriented approach that participants feel more comfortable about acting on the basis of their own insights.

## 8.4 Summary future perspectives and outlook

### 8.4.1 Youth work ambitions and perspectives

#### After the training/activity

The analysis of the second round of interviews shows that participants demonstrated a high variety concerning anticipated future perspectives and/or projects. The future perspectives were often linked to the personal situation of the participants. The educational/professional background as well as the passion/motivation for youth work were major factors that influenced further plans. Equally the possible impact of training and support activities within E+/YiA on competence development and professionalism of youth workers and youth leaders differed.

Additionally, the training and support activities within E+/YiA on competence development and professionalism of youth workers and youth leaders seem to have different strong impacts depending on those factors stated above. It seemed the training impacted particularly those in their future planning who specifically decided to use it as decision-making aid. Different types of participants can be distinguished: (1) Those who intended to take further steps in youth work/initiating new projects or (2) to join or leave youth work or (3) those who used the training as decision-making aid for personal life goals not related to youth work. The foresight of their envisaged future plans differed from short term goals (2-3 years) to several years especially for those focussing on a higher position.

The analysis of the third round of interviews indicates that more or less the same patterns are visible among the participants concerning their youth work ambitions and perspectives. Based on the outcomes of all three rounds of interviews we can distinguish now between interviewees who:

- (1) showed little to no impact for people who are very satisfied with their jobs and do not want to change anything or want to continue the path into youth work even after finishing their studies;
- (1) changed a certain aspect of their work, for example they realised they prefer voluntary instead of paid work in the field of youth work. For others, the focus changed from youth work to refugees or to international projects outside Europe. Some changes in goals are also unrelated to youth work and contain travelling or counselling. Some are also interested in youth work and other top-

ics but still intend to engage in a project that goes beyond this;

- (1) had a strong impact on further steps. It became the starting point to acquire more expertise about a certain topic, expanded views or strengthened the interests in the European dimension of youth work.
- (1) are interested in attending further YiA trainings, as well as further workshops in the field of youth work.

#### 8.4.2 Professional development and career perspectives

##### After the training/activity

Concerning professional development and career perspectives, participants of the second round of interviews mentioned age as a limiting factor for future steps in youth work as younger youth workers may connect better with youth realities. At the same time, interviewed participants underlined the importance for regular exchange and networking possibilities among youth workers. Maybe more exchange possibilities among youth workers could help the older ones to better keep up with their younger colleagues and understand today's fast changing life realities of young people. From another perspective, the younger ones would benefit from the experience of the other ones.

Exchange and networking possibilities seem equally important for youth workers coming from Eastern countries where youth worker is not a recognised profession. Therefore, the TCA/YWA trainings are used as further training and exchange possibilities with other youth workers. This is important for their professional development. Building on this point, youth workers coming from other countries as well as students in seek of employment highly benefit from the informal learning strategies of the training and the professional development linked to it. While it is impossible to make a direct link between the activity and the participant's next steps/ideas, further steps seem inspired by the exchange of youth workers during the activity and the learning of new methods and approaches in the training itself.

When focusing on the professional and career development/perspectives after the third round of interviews it becomes obvious that not every participant is interested in pursuing a youth work related career or are interested in new topics outside youth work. For some interviewees (3), career aspirations changed through the attended training/activity or the exchange with others

and other factors in the meantime. This results in changing the organisation within youth field, starting to work in a new working field or the decision to start studying. For others the training/activity is an inspiration for future activities/work in the youth field and for other interviewees the ambitions/career aspirations stayed unchanged. The interest in creating new projects, some within the youth field and some outside, increased. Interestingly, the differences in the choice of timeframes to implement the projects varies among different interviewees: Some of them want to implement projects within the coming months/year and others stress long-term plans for the project start (e.g. 5 years). Simultaneously, it can be noticed that there seems to be a stronger focus on international perspective for planning new projects in youth work. In general, it can be noticed that there is an increase in career perspectives among interviewees.

#### 8.4.3 Organisational growth perspectives

The largest concern from an organisational development perspective is financial resources. Organisations do not suffer from a lack of ideas but rather a lack of resources. Larger organisations seek stability, while smaller organisations mention more frequently sustainability financially. Organisations are also hopeful greater financial resources will increase their ability to perform youth work by increasing their volumes in international youth work (FI) and to distribute the results to other organisations after the project is over. Overall, greater financial stability allows organisations to better pursue their goals of continuity and innovation by allowing the organization to become financially independent and further established in terms of employed staff rather than depending on voluntary work. With proper support from the National Agencies and providing means of financial stability organisations perceive greater possibility in achieving goals of continuity and innovation.

In order to maximize benefits from these trainings/activities, organisations should look toward being more social, strengthening innovation, and developing practices that communicate more effectively with young people.

**“** We moved from being a two-hours-a-week drama group to being an organisation, a company limited by guarantee...We were a drama group for young people, now we're a community resource to enrich the local community and empower local people” (gd73ft\_IE).



**“***The structure, the membership of the board, strategic planning have changed. Ideological change has not happened, there are small ideas coming and going, but no special changes have taken place. We have started to work more with private companies, it helps us to gain additional financial resources. The organisation’s recognition and influence have increased. There are talks about us outside Latvia too.”* [nC75io\_LV]

Review on organisational change varies depending on interviewees’ experience within the respective organisation. Little has changed in the short span of 5 years but in a longer time period some changes could be indicated in organisations, which were established in the beginning of the 1990s or around 2000. Different is the situation for new established organisations. In these cases, a lot of changes can be indicated. One organisation, for example, started in 2014 with a training (participation), registered in 2015 and implemented their first international training 2016: “We haven’t even existed that long yet! It’s been pretty wild, so in 2014, four young people went to (country) to a training, where this whole idea came from, our organisation, and then 2015 we registered and the first year went pretty much into paperwork... and then in 2016 we had our first international training...” (c0765ztu\_FI).

Many organisations perceive that they are more recognised and acknowledged now than they were before. For all organisations, the past 5 years were characterised by development and maturity based on unchanged mission and vision and well-designed long-term development plans/strategies. Whilst the mission and vision have not changed considerably, in other organisations a change in the outlook can cause a change in the vision and mission of the organisation:

**“***The mission has broadened. It is just not only supporting groups (...), but more building bridges between different groups of people. (...) Intercultural work is still strongly present, but we are not only present in one country. (...) But I know that in the last two years we have reached new, highly motivated girls who have entered our organisation by that playground project (...). Afterwards they stayed and now they help to develop new projects in our organisation”* (yT290Rz\_BE).

Some organisations are bigger today due to a change and wider range of target groups and far-reaching impact of the organisations:

**“***There is increase in the number of users. Of course it didn’t happen just like that; there were various factors bringing about this increase: Responding directly to requests and needs with our activities; designing training programmes according to needs expressed by youth; and activities with headings that youth would be interested in rather than standardized ones – i.e. delivering a course in graffiti instead of marbling”* (BVCok\_TR347).

Organisation growth was indicated as:

- Development in visions, approaches, activities, target groups, networks
- Qualitative diversification and multiplication of activities (i.e. new target groups)
- More qualitative selection of projects and partners
- More and bigger projects and partners
- Changes in using volunteers, now paid employees or now involving volunteers (EE)
- Closer links with the young people in their localities (i.e. new youth association in the city)
- Further focused on a set of goals and priorities for the larger organisation

Enlargement of the number of staff member/employees working in the organisation as well as membership is an outcome of organisational growth. In some organisations staff members were doubled or tripled because of the number of implemented projects; only one organisation reduced the staff members due to their long-term strategy of a new established board of directors. In addition, it is stressed that funding has been tightened, whilst the volume of international mobility has increased there was seen to be less opportunities to develop new projects and to support young people.

Some organisations indicated no significant changes and number of activities, projects and employees are constant. Public body organisations seem less likely to change and duties remain within their original structure. This is especially emphasised by state-run organisations, for instance fixed finances from the state budget (yearly plan).

### Professionalisation

**“***I mean, we have become more professional, because of these projects, let’s say you implement one training with 25 partners / ... / you have to be organized and professional. I think that we*



*have grown with this Erasmus + project, substantively and, in particular, organisational growth” (f3tuk\_S3I).*

Some interviewees report that their organisations have increased/undergone a process of professionalisation (i.e. better structured; organisation becomes a learning organisation). This is indicated to be largely the result of previous implemented projects. Implemented activities enabled organisations to raise their recognition, gain opportunities to participate in new project, attract funding and obtain support from local governments.

Team building is described as the main achievement of the past few years. The development of expertise through the attended training caused a turn over to training providers to share this expertise. Physical infrastructures and technical capacities have also been improved and developed and have increased capacity. Effects of the involvement organisations in E+/YiA on the structure and work of organisations were improved language skills for staff members, development of group work methodology, improved staff skills or improved work through international cooperation.

### Internationalisation

*“Where we would like to be in three or five years? That is again a difficult question. I think you need to set clear goals. We did develop from a small association to a training support structure for Europa. Now I see that we should more invest in development, in projects with Europe or Africa or South America in order to introduce our gained expertise” (CiF4H\_D24E).*

An increased internationalisation has led to:

- more openness in the local area
- increased interests from youth
- influences on city, education and youth workshops
- increased presence of the European dimension through networks
- diversification of topics
- increased internationality at the local level

### Partnerships and networks

*“We grew larger, the number of projects increased and the network widened. Now there are more partners in every European country that we can work with” (Jf45kz\_TRe).*

International cooperation could be established in E+/YiA and positive changes such as expansion

and diversification in terms of partners, networks and collaborations are indicated for many interviewees. Added value to the projects have been realised in the community through partnership network. However, quality of partnership is more important than quantity, as indicated by one interviewee “excessive number of useless partnerships are a burden.”

### Recommendations for organisational development

*“The financial aspect is also important. The budgets have declined. We have to look for ways to finance all projects that we had in mind. It is sometimes searching for means to make ends meet. That is also a factor. Some dreams, projects we cannot realise because we do not have the financial capacity” (Cz2TV\_B235E).*

Whilst new funding opportunities at European/international level have increased, other funding at national level have often declined. An implemented structured and staffed working context for European/international youth work must exist in order to have potential effects on organisational development. Where strategic planning of organisational development does not exist, an extensive range of financial operations would be needed. In several contexts, organisations rely heavily on (short-term) projects, which makes financing and developing long-term activities unstable. There is a lack of long-term systemic financing in the youth field, thus E+/YiA funds are important for the development of organisations. At the same time, projects may not have long-term effects in their local or regional contexts, for example because the international dimension is not closely enough related to local youth policy.



**All annexes of PART C are available for download as a separate document at [researchyouth.net/cap](https://researchyouth.net/cap).**

**For environmental reasons, they were not printed as part of this report.**

# RESEARCH PROJECT PARTNERS

This study was designed and implemented by the Institute of Educational Science at the University of Innsbruck and the Generation and Educational Science Institute in Austria in cooperation with the RAY-CAP research partners: National Agencies of Erasmus+ Youth in Action and their research partners in Austria, Belgium (FL), Czechia, Esto-

nia, Finland, France, Germany, Hungary, Ireland, Italy, Latvia, Lithuania, Poland, Portugal, Romania, Slovenia and Turkey, with technical support by Youth Policy Labs. National research reports can be requested from the respective National Agencies and their research partners listed below.

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- **IZ – Verein zur Förderung von Vielfalt, Dialog und Bildung | Österreichische Nationalagentur Erasmus+ Jugend in Aktion & Europäisches Solidaritätskorps**

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- **IKAB e.V.**  
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## **LITHUANIA**

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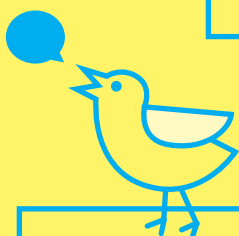




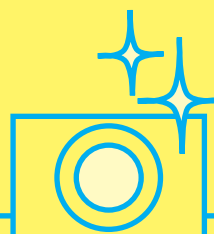




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