



**Research-based
analysis of European
youth programmes**

EVIDENCE-BUILDING RESEARCH PROJECT ON WHO IS MISSING IN THE EU YOUTH PROGRAMMES (RAY-MISS)

DRAFT CONCEPT NOTE FOR 2026 & 2027

15 SEPTEMBER 2025

Please note that, to ease contract and project administration, we have used 2025 to switch from an annual cycle to a two-year year cycle. The previous concept note and its accompanying budget covered one calendar year, January 2025 until December 2025 – this was the first part of the switch. This concept note and budget, now cover 2026 and 2027 for a two-year cycle – the second & final part of the switch.

This concept note is a preview and is subject to change.



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1. CONTEXT AND RATIONALE

European youth programmes are intended to reach ALL young people, and in particular young people with fewer opportunities. The findings of RAY-MON show that most likely European youth programmes only reach a limited segment of this target group. Furthermore, it can be assumed that also a limited share of potential applicants actually seeks for funding in the context of European youth programmes.

Therefore, we will explore which types of potential applicant organisations/groups/networks/youth do not apply for funding, and why by dissecting the application and selection process in order to identify possible structural mechanisms hindering potential applicant organisations/groups/networks/youth. Additionally, we aim at further exploring which young people with fewer opportunities and special needs are underrepresented in projects funded by European youth programmes, and why. While recognizing there are many individual reasons which may influence a young person's participation in the European youth programmes, we recognize the pivotal role organisations play in reaching young people with fewer opportunities. Consequently, in order to begin exploring why young people with fewer opportunities and special needs are missing or underrepresented, this project will have a primarily organisational focus.

2. AIMS AND OBJECTIVES

2.1. OVERALL AIM OF THE RESEARCH PROJECT

This research project aims to explore who is missing from the European youth programmes, by attempting to understand which potential applicants do NOT submit applications for funding programmes, why some applicants are not selected and which young people do not participate in projects funded through European youth projects – and why.

2.2. KEY OBJECTIVES OF THE RESEARCH PROJECT

The key objectives of this research project are to explore:

- The application and selection process for organisations/groups/networks to determine structural impediments to participation in the European youth projects.
- The application and selection process for youth to determine structural impediments to participation in the European youth projects.
- To create a profile of which young people with fewer opportunities and special needs are underrepresented in projects funded by European youth programmes.
- To develop supports and changes in the application and selection process to eliminate barriers to participation for eligible organisations/groups/networks/youth.

3. RESEARCH QUESTIONS

3.1. CORE RESEARCH QUESTIONS OF THE PROJECT

The core research questions of the project are:

- Which types of organisations/groups/networks are significantly underrepresented in projects applied for within and funded through European youth programmes, and why?
- Which young people are significantly underrepresented in projects applied for within and funded through European youth programmes, and why?
- What are the obstacles of young people and organisations/groups/networks to become involved in European youth programmes?

- How can young people and organisations/groups/networks that are underrepresented in the European youth programmes be better supported in order to become involved in these programmes?

3.2. UNDERPINNING RESEARCH QUESTIONS OF THE PROJECT

- Is there a selection bias for eligible organizations/networks/groups where they may not receive funding because they are unprepared to apply?
- How does the application process influence an organisations/group/networks willingness and capacity to apply for funding?
- How does the application process influence a young person's willingness and capacity to apply for participation in the European youth programmes?
- Is there adequate support material/information to assist interested parties in completing the application process?
- How much additional/supplementary support is necessary to submit an application and how is an application selected?
- Are there organisations who would likely not be able to participate in a similar project under the current conditions?
- What systematic changes need to be implemented for participation of deterred, eligible applicants more likely?

4. RESEARCH DESIGN AND INSTRUMENTS

4.1. MODULE 1: DATA ANALYSIS

In this module, a comparative analysis of RAY MON data will be carried out in order to identify youth who are missing and underrepresented, particularly focusing on youth with fewer opportunities. Bearing in mind, the RAY MON data is not representative for all participants in the European Youth Programmes so we are limited by the data that is available. This analysis will be repeated when new monitoring data becomes available.

4.2. MODULE 2: CASE STUDIES

In this module, we will conduct thematically clustered case studies (which could encompass interviews, focus groups, and/or participatory observation) with organisations/groups/networks/with multiplier roles in the youth field. The selection of cases would be informed from the information discovered in Module 1¹. This case module serves to dive deeper into the reasons for the voluntary or involuntary absence of certain types of organisations as well as certain parts of the youth population from the European youth programmes.

4.3. MODULE 3: YOUTH SURVEY

In this module, a multilingual survey built on the data collected from the previous modules will be developed, run, and analysed. It will be addressed to young people across Europe, if possible drawing on representative samples.

4.4. MODULE 4: SENSE-MAKING

In this cross-cutting module, we will experiment with different modalities for common sense-making processes, involving not only an agency and their research partner (at national level) or the network and research teams (at transnational level), but also research participants.

¹ For example, if the data analysis demonstrates youth from a certain minority is missing, we would recommend the national researchers seek organisations working with youth from this minority to be included in the case study.

5. RESEARCH SCHEDULE

The following table provides an overview of main activities at transnational and national level for the next project phase (January 2026–December 2027):

Time period	Activities at transnational level	Activities at national level
01.2026 – 12.2026	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Module 1: Data analysis of fresh transnational monitoring survey data Module 2: Implementation of thematic transnational case studies Module 3: Data collection and analysis for multilingual youth survey 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Module 1: Data analysis of fresh national monitoring survey data Module 2: Implementation of thematic national case studies
01.2027 – 12.2027	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Module 4: Process of common sense-making at transnational level with project and sector stakeholders Development of research reports, policy briefs, fact sheets, infographics 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Module 4: Process of common sense-making at national level with project and sector stakeholders Development of research reports, policy briefs, fact sheets, infographics

6. RESEARCH OUTLOOK

While the next programme generation remains under development, no research outlook beyond 2027 can be usefully provided. partner contributions

7. PARTNER CONTRIBUTIONS

The following table provides an overview of basic and optional contributions to the research project by project partners:

Basic contribution of partners	Optional contributions of partners
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Financial contribution to the transnational costs of the research project 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Participation in the working group of the research project
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Translation of survey questions for the multilingual survey into national languages 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Translation of research reports and/or fact-sheets into national languages
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Case Studies at national level with organisations/groups/networks/ 	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Support in distributing the findings of the research project at national level 	

8. RESEARCH PARTNERS

Research partners of this project are the RAY Network partners in Austria, Bulgaria, Czechia, Estonia, Finland, France, Germany, Hungary, Ireland, Luxembourg, Romania, Slovakia, Spain and Sweden. Further partners are always welcome to join.