

RAY LEARN – OUTCOMES OF THE ACCREDITATION IN ERASMUS+

The accreditation is both organisationally clarifying and administratively overwhelming. It creates stability, continuity, repetition and prompts for reflection, but it can also become unstrategic, overwhelming, abstract or individualised when organisations have limited capacity, little experience in the European youth field, or no habit of strategic planning, all of which are common conditions among programme beneficiaries. To reach its full potential, accreditation support should therefore make it easier for organisations to connect the tool to their own identity, mission, capacities and development concerns from the bottom up. National agencies play a central role in providing this support.

WHAT WORKS WELL

1. It supports planning through financial continuity

The accreditation gives organisations more predictable access to KA1 funding and allows them to plan over several years. This supports organisational learning through stimulating long-term thinking

2. It supports learning through repetition

The accreditation stimulates the creation of repeated KA1 projects. This supports organisational learning through repetition, which enables learning by doing. Application, project management, and quality assurance gradually improved through repeated projects.

3. It reduces financial uncertainty

Several organisations experience accreditation as a way to “breathe” because they can foresee where at least part of their activity funding may come from. This reduces pressure linked to repeated applications, frees staff time for activity design and quality, and can make it easier to maintain coordination roles linked to mobility activities.

4. It supports reflection and structured project management

The accreditation requires organisations to identify needs, set goals, plan activities, monitor progress and reflect on results. For some organisations, this led to needs analyses, monitoring tools, clearer goals, annual reflection and stronger quality routines. These effects often became clearer after some time working with the accreditation.

5. It provides credibility and legitimacy

Accreditation can strengthen how organisations are perceived by partners, local stakeholders, public authorities, funders and young people. It signals that the organisation is reliable, experienced and able to run quality mobility activities.

6. It supports strategic decision making

In some cases, especially when the accreditation process aligned with an internal moment of strategic reflection, it really helped organisations make strategic decisions and strategically connect European youth work to their wider organisational strategy.



WHICH CHALLENGES STILL REMAIN

1. Many beneficiaries do not work through formal strategic planning

Many organisations do not naturally think about their development through long-term goals, indicators, impact frameworks or formal strategies. They often hold direction through organisational identity, target groups, themes, established practices or local role. The accreditation can therefore be difficult to translate into their own way of working.

2. Knowledge of the European youth field cannot be taken for granted

Some beneficiaries, especially newer organisations or organisations rooted outside youth work, do not automatically understand the culture of non-formal European youth work and its strategies, goals and priorities. This makes the accreditation difficult conceptually and administratively.



3. The process can become a one-person task

Important organisational processes often depend on one person. We found evidence that this can happen to the accreditation process and implementation, reducing its effect on shared reflection and organisational learning.

4. The process can become too abstract

Beneficiary organisations seem to understand impact through practice-based outcomes rather than abstract links between immediate practice and big picture contribu-

tions. However, the accreditation requires abstractly explaining expected impact, strategic objectives and their connection European priorities. For some beneficiaries, this language is difficult to connect to everyday work and may feel like something written for the programme rather than a tool the organisation can use internally.

REASONS FOR NOT APPLYING

The points above reflect the difficulties reported by organisations that already hold the accreditation, but most of these also coincide with the reasons given by non-accredited organisations for not applying: it requires too much administrative capacity and logistical investment, it feels too complex, or they don't feel familiar enough with the programmes. Non-accredited organisations also mentioned having other avenues for funding and not wanting to make KA1 a central activity in their operations.

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ABOUT RAY-LEARN

RAY-LEARN focuses on strategic organisational learning and development in the context of the European Youth Programmes. The project looked specifically at the Erasmus+ accreditation, since it is the main programme instrument designed to support longer-term planning, continuity and strategic use of KA1 mobility activities.

Refer to the main [RAY LEARN research report](#) for methods and further information. Click [here](#) to receive other specific key findings of RAY LEARN.