



Exploring Erasmus+: Youth in Action

Effects and outcomes of the ERASMUS+: Youth in Action Programme

from the perspective of project participants and project leaders

Transnational Analysis 2015/16

Main Findings

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'Erasmus+: Youth in Action' is part of the Erasmus+ Programme of the European Union and supporting European youth projects. The 'Research-based Analysis of Erasmus+: Youth in Action' (RAY) is conducted by the RAY Network, which includes the National Agencies of Erasmus+: Youth in Action and their research partners in 29 countries*.

This study presents a transnational analysis of the results from surveys between October 2015 and April 2016 with project participants and project leaders/team members involved in Erasmus+: Youth in Action projects. 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, under the research project direction of Helmut Fennes and in cooperation with the RAY Network. It was co-funded within the Transnational Cooperation Activities (TCA) of Erasmus+: Youth in Action.

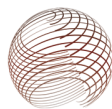
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Where available, national research reports can be requested from the respective National Agencies and their research partners (see <http://www.researchyouth.eu/network>). Further RAY publications can be retrieved from <http://www.researchyouth.eu/research-results-publications>.

* In 2015/16: Austria, Belgium, Bulgaria, the Czech Republic, Croatia, Denmark, Estonia, Finland, France, Germany, Hungary, Ireland, Italy, Latvia, Liechtenstein, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Malta, the Netherlands, Norway, Poland, Portugal, Romania, Slovakia, Slovenia, Spain, Sweden, Turkey, United Kingdom.



Erasmus+



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Abbreviations and definitions

Abbreviations

E+	European Union Programme Erasmus+ (2014-2020)
E+/YiA	Erasmus+: Youth in Action (2014-2020)
EU	European Union
NA	National Agency
PL	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.
PP	Project participants
RAY	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.
YiA	European Union Programme ‘Youth in Action’ (2007-2013)
YPFO	Young people with fewer opportunities
YPSN	Young People with special needs

Activity types

EVS	European Voluntary Service (Key Action 1)
SD	Structured Dialogue – meetings between young people and decision-makers in the field of youth (Key Action 3)
TCA	Transnational Cooperation Activities
YE	Youth Exchanges (Key Action 1)
YWM	Mobility of youth workers (Key Action 1)

Definitions

Activity start/end	The dates when, within a funded project, the core activity starts/ends, for example a youth exchange (when young people from different countries meet in one country), a seminar, a training course, etc.
Project start/end	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; for example, a youth exchange project might have an activity duration of one week while the project duration might be three months or more.
Residence country	Country of residence at the beginning of the project (the country of the partner organisation that the participant was part of)
Funding country	Country in which a project was funded through the respective National Agency of E+/YiA
Venue country	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’

Sending	This refers to PP or PL who came from a ‘sending’ partner, i.e., they went to another country for their project.
Hosting	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.

Countries

E+/YiA Programme countries	These are EU member states, EEA countries and EU candidate/accession countries (for country codes/abbreviations see Table 2 in the accompanying Data Report).
E+/YiA Partner countries	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 accompanying Data Report).
RAY countries	RAY Network members participating in these surveys as funding countries (Austria, Belgium, Bulgaria, the Czech Republic, Croatia, Denmark, Estonia, Finland, France, Germany, Hungary, Ireland, Italy, Latvia, Liechtenstein, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Malta, the Netherlands, Norway, Poland, Portugal, Romania, Slovakia, Slovenia, Spain, Sweden, Turkey, United Kingdom)

RAY Research Projects

RAY-CAP	A research project on competence development and capacity building of youth workers and youth leaders involved in training/support activities in Erasmus+: Youth in Action. 16 RAY Network members are currently involved in this project.
RAY-LTE	A research project on the long-term effects of Erasmus+: Youth in Action on participation and citizenship of the actors involved, in particular on the development of participation and citizenship competences and practices. 10 RAY Network members are currently involved in this project.
RAY-MON	Research-based analysis and monitoring of Erasmus+: Youth in Action aims to contribute to monitoring and developing Erasmus+: Youth in Action and the quality of projects supported by it. This activity is a joint activity of all RAY Network members.

Key competences for lifelong learning

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

List of figures

A *Data Report* exists to accompany this report, with additional figures as well as tables underpinning the figures listed below.

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1 Introduction

[Research-based analysis and monitoring of Erasmus+: Youth in Action](#) (RAY-MON) aims to explore a broad scope of aspects of the Erasmus+: Youth in Action Programme, seeking to contribute to the development of the current programme's implementation as well as of the next programme generation. What are the effects of the European Union's Erasmus+ Programme in the field of youth (Erasmus+: Youth in Action) on young people, youth workers and youth leaders involved in the projects funded by this programme? What are the effects on youth groups, organisations, institutions, structures and communities involved in the programme?

These are some of the questions the RAY Network – a network of E+/YiA National Agencies and their research partners in currently 29 European countries – explores, ultimately seeking to study to which extent the objectives and priorities of E+/YiA are achieved.

1.1 The RAY Network

The RAY Network was founded on the initiative of the Austrian National Agency of the YiA Programme in order to develop joint transnational research activities related to the EU-Programme Youth in Action (2007 to 2013) in line with the aims and objectives outlined above. A first network meeting took place in Austria in 2008. Since then, the RAY Network has expanded continuously. It now covers the Erasmus+: Youth in Action Programme with its research activities and currently involves the National Agencies and their research partners in 29 countries: Austria, Belgium, Bulgaria, the Czech Republic, Croatia, Denmark, Estonia, Finland, France, Germany, Hungary, Ireland, Italy, Latvia, Liechtenstein, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Malta, the Netherlands, Norway, Poland, Portugal, Romania, the Slovak Republic, Slovenia, Spain, Sweden, Turkey, United Kingdom. The RAY Network is open to additional partners.

1.2 Research approach and activities

In principle, the research on the programme and its activities envisages a combination of quantitative and qualitative social research methods and instruments, in particular surveys with project participants, project leaders and staff of beneficiary organisations as well as qualitative interviews and focus groups with different actors involved in E+/YiA. Surveys and interviews can also involve young people, youth leaders and youth workers not participating in the programme and thus acting as control groups.

The RAY research programme includes the following research projects:

- [Research-based analysis and monitoring](#) of E+/YiA (which this publication is about) aimed at contributing to monitoring and developing E+/YiA and the quality of projects supported by it (RAY-MON);
- a research project on the [long-term effects of E+/YiA on participation and citizenship](#) of the actors involved, in particular on the development of participation and citizenship competences and practices (RAY-LTE);
- a research project on [competence development and capacity building](#) of youth workers and youth leaders involved in training/support activities in E+/YiA; this project will also explore the effects of E+/YiA on the organisations involved (RAY-CAP).

1.3 Concept for this study

This research project aims to explore a broad scope of aspects of E+/YiA in order to contribute to practice development, to the improvement of the implementation of E+/YiA and to the development of the next programme generation. It is a further development of the Research-based Analysis and Monitoring of Youth in Action (YiA), the main activity of the RAY Network between 2009 and 2013 (see Fennes, Gadinger, & Hagleitner, 2012; Fennes, Hagleitner, & Helling, 2011), which indicated that youth mobility projects have an effect not only on participants – young people, youth leaders and youth workers – but also on project leaders/team members as well as on their organisations and on the local environments of the projects. Furthermore, the previous studies on YiA showed that a broad spectrum of effects was reported by participants and project leaders/team members, both intended as well as unintended. Based on the findings of the previous studies, the following design for this study was developed.

1.3.1 Aims and objectives

The aim of this study is to contribute to quality assurance and quality development in the implementation of E+/YiA, to evidence-based and research-informed youth policy development and to a better understanding of learning mobility in the youth field.

The objectives of this project are to explore

- the effects of projects funded through E+/YiA on the actors involved, in particular on project participants and project leaders/team members, but also on their organisations and on the local environments of these projects;
- the level of access to E+/YiA for young people (in particular of young people with fewer opportunities) as well as organisations, bodies and groups in the youth field;
- the profile of participants, project leaders/team members and organisations/groups/bodies involved in E+/YiA projects;
- the development and management of funded projects;
- the implementation of E+/YiA.

1.3.2 Research questions

General research questions:

- What are the effects of E+/YiA projects on participants, project leaders/team members and their organisations/groups as well as on the local environments of these projects?
- What is the environment of Youth in Action projects, in particular with respect to access to E+/YiA, the development of projects, the profile of actors and organisations, the management of projects and the support provided by funding structures?
- How could the findings from this study contribute to practice development, in particular in view of the implementation of E+/YiA and future Youth Programmes of the European Union?

Specific research questions:

- What are the effects of participating in E+/YiA projects on the development of knowledge, skills, attitudes, values and behaviours¹ of project participants as well as of project leaders/team members involved in E+/YiA projects?

¹ This study refers to key competences for lifelong learning as defined by the European Parliament and the Council of the European Union (2006), complemented by other competence frameworks and models, in particular related to (international) youth work competences.

- What are the effects of participating in E+/YiA projects on educational and professional perspectives of participants as well as of project leaders/team members involved in E+/YiA projects?
- What are the effects of E+/YiA projects on youth workers and youth leaders involved – either as participants or as project leaders/team members – with respect to the development of (international) youth work competences?²
- To which extent are E+/YiA projects in line with the objectives and priorities of the E+/YiA Programme? In particular, how do they contribute to participation of young people in democratic life, active citizenship, intercultural dialogue, social inclusion, solidarity and participation in the labour market as well as to the development of youth work, international cooperation in the youth field, recognition of non-formal and informal learning and youth policy development?
- How do these effects differ depending on the types of E+/YiA projects, the type of experience (going abroad for a project or being involved in a project at home with participants from abroad) and the countries of residence of participants and project leaders?
- What is the profile of participants, project leaders and projects involved in E+/YiA projects, in particular with respect to their educational or professional status, socio-economic and demographic background, educational attainment and previous experience with learning mobility? What does this say about the access to the YiA Programme?

1.3.3 Research design

In order to explore the research questions above, the research design is based on multilingual online surveys with project participants and project leaders for the following reasons:

- Actors involved in projects funded through E+/YiA are surveyed two months or longer after the end of their project in order to provide for a more reflected and distant view at their experiences and the perceived effects. By that time, however, the actors involved in a project have returned to their countries of residence and would be difficult to contact for face-to-face interviews or group discussions.
- Multilingual online surveys allow a large majority of actors to complete the questionnaires in their native language (or in a foreign language which they understand sufficiently).
- Surveying both project participants and project leaders/team members of E+/YiA projects through two different but coherent and interrelated questionnaires provides for a triangulation of responses, in particular with respect to the perceived effects on the participants by comparing the self-perception of participants and the external perception of project leaders/team members.

In order to provide for comparable views on experiences and perceived effects of E+/YiA projects, participants and project leaders/team members are invited to participate in these surveys between two and ten months after the end of their project.

The surveys for this study were conducted between October 2015 and April 2016, covering a representative sample of a full year of funded activities ending in 2015. The questionnaires were available in 25 languages. Based on the outcomes of this study, the questionnaires might be modified for future surveys planned for 2017/18 (for projects ending in 2017) and for 2019/20 (for projects ending in 2019). This research project is open to additional partners.

² Where applicable, this study will be linked to the RAY research project on competence development and capacity building of E+/YiA (RAY-CAP), in particular with respect to the development of (international) youth work competences of youth workers and youth leaders as well as concerning effects on the organisations involved in E+/YiA.

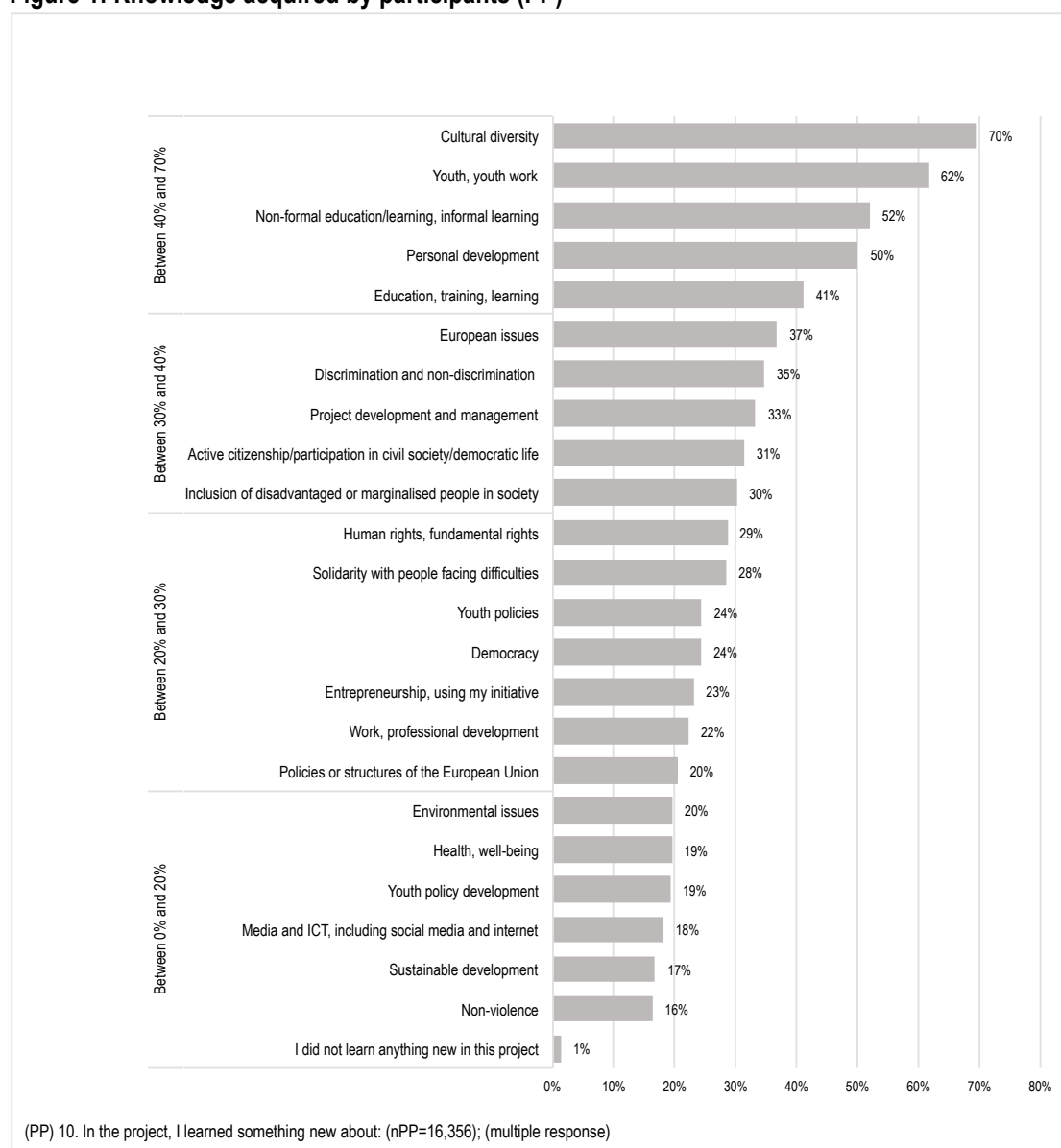
2 Competence development

This chapter explores the development of knowledge, skills, attitudes, values and behaviours through E+/YiA and relates to the programme’s objective to improve the level of key competences and skills of young people, in particular through learning mobility opportunities.

2.1 Knowledge acquisition

Project participants were asked whether they learned something new through the project (‘choose all that apply’). Only 1% of all respondents asserted that *they did not learn anything new from this project*. Figure 1 provides an overview of the knowledge acquired by project participants through the project (see also Table 91; Table 92; Table 93; Table 94):

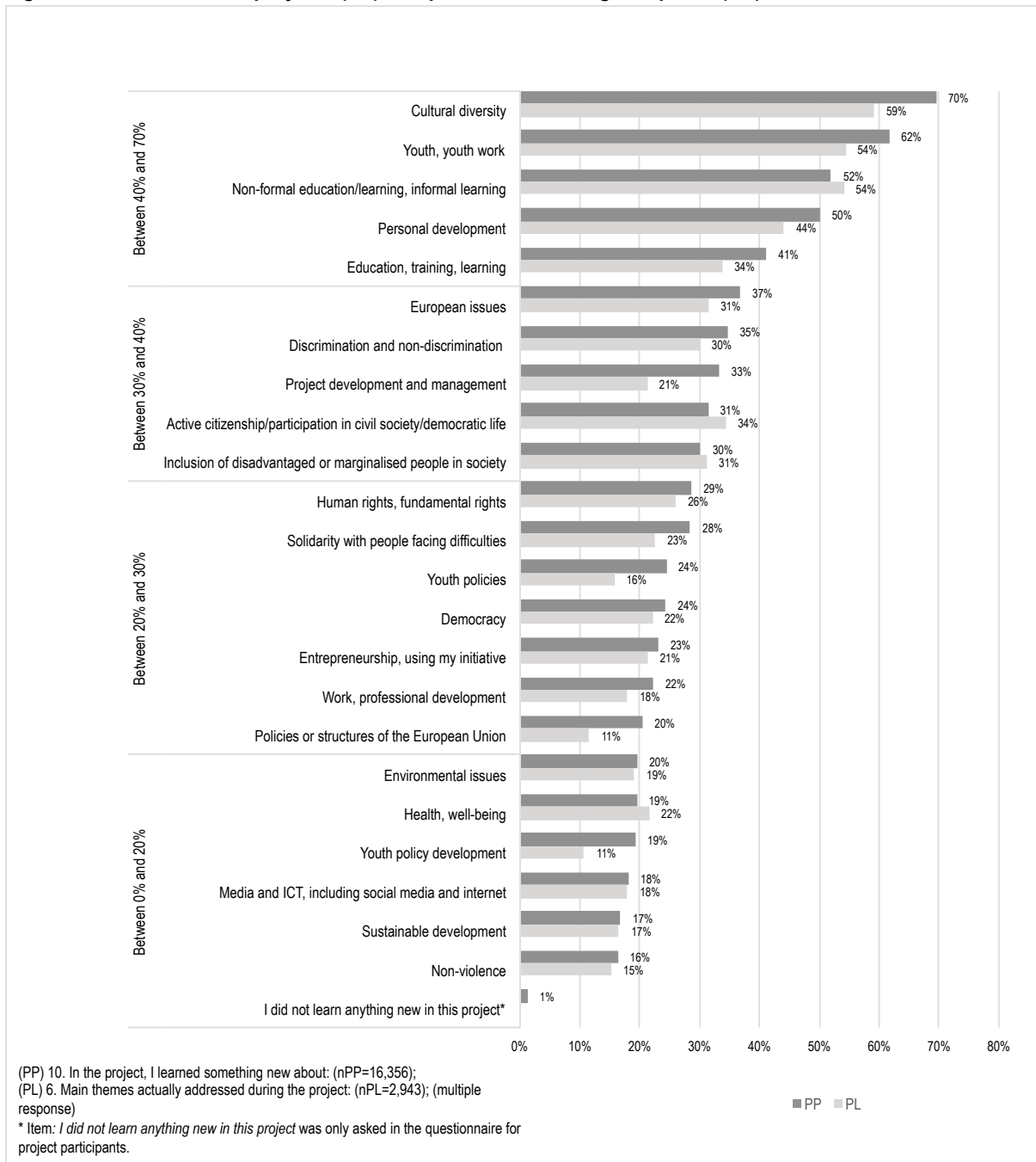
Figure 1: Knowledge acquired by participants (PP)



Interestingly, the responses by project leaders about the main themes of the project differ from the responses by project participants about their knowledge acquisition. The differences are presented in Figure 2 below (see also Table 95).

A number of themes are selected as being addressed during the project less frequently by responding project leaders than by responding project participants for their acquired knowledge. This indicates that learning effects go beyond the issues addressed in the projects.

Figure 2: Main themes of projects (PL) compared to knowledge acquired (PP)



Between age groups, the focus of participants' knowledge acquisition differs significantly. Consider, for example, the themes that each age group learned more about than any other age group in comparison (see Table 93):

- Age group of 15-17 years: *health, well-being* (25%)
- Age group of 18-20 years: *cultural diversity* (73%), *personal development* (53%), *European issues* (38%), *discrimination and non-discrimination* (36%), *solidarity with people facing difficulties* (31%), *democracy* (25%), *environmental issues* (24%), *non-violence* (18%)
- Age group of 21-25 years: *human rights, fundamental rights* (31%), *policies or structures of the European Union* (21%), *media and ICT* (20%)
- Age group of 26-30 years: *entrepreneurship, using my initiative* (26%), *policies or structures of the European Union* (21%)
- Age group of >30 years: *youth, youth work* (67%), *non-formal education/learning, informal learning* (63%), *education, training, learning* (49%), *project development and management* (41%), *inclusion of disadvantaged people* (40%), *active citizenship and participation in civil society and democratic life* (39%), *youth policies* (30%), *professional development* (29%), *youth policy development* (25%).

Across activity types, the focus of participants' knowledge acquisition differs substantially as well. Consider, for example, the themes that more than half of all project participants learned something about (see Table 92):

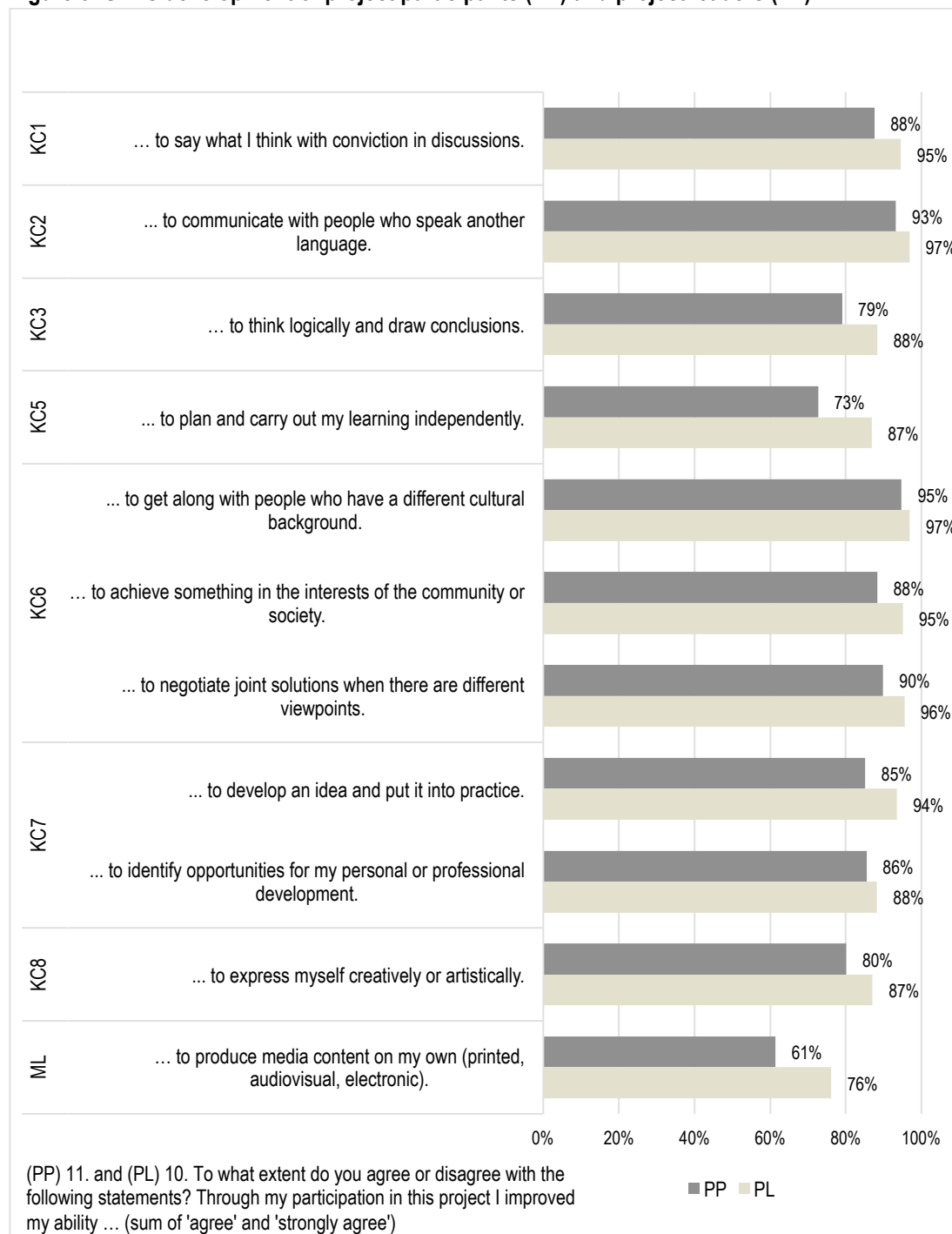
- YE activities cover *cultural diversity* (74%), and *youth and youth work* (56%);
- EVS activities cover *cultural diversity* (79%), *youth and youth work* (62%), and *non-formal education/learning and informal learning* (59%);
- SD activities cover *youth and youth work* (58%), *youth policies* (57%), and *active citizenship and participation in civil society and democratic life* (50%);
- YWM activities cover *cultural diversity* (68%), *youth and youth work* (67%), and *non-formal education/learning and informal learning* (65%);
- TCA activities cover *youth and youth work* (76%), *non-formal education/learning and informal learning* (70%), and *cultural diversity* (57%).

2.2 Skills development

The following section explores the skills development of project participants and project leaders, based on their self-assessment. In addition, project leaders were asked to assess the skills development of project participants, allowing for a comparison of self-assessed key competences by responding project participants and assessed key competences of participants by responding project leaders respectively.

Across the board, skills development of project participants is reported to be significant. High values across all activity types are selected by responding project participants with regard to improving their abilities through participation in their project, and scores range between 73% and 95% ('strongly agree' or 'agree') for all provided items, with two exceptions: *to produce media content on my own* (61% 'strongly agree' or 'agree') and *to discuss political topics seriously* (60% 'strongly agree' or 'agree'). See Figure 3 below and Table 98 for additional details.

Skills development of responding project leaders is consistently reported somewhat higher than for project participants. All skills are above 80%, with only one exception: *to produce media content on my own* (76% 'strongly agree' or 'agree'). See Figure 3 below and Table 104 for additional details:

Figure 3: Skills development of project participants (PP) and project leaders (PL)³

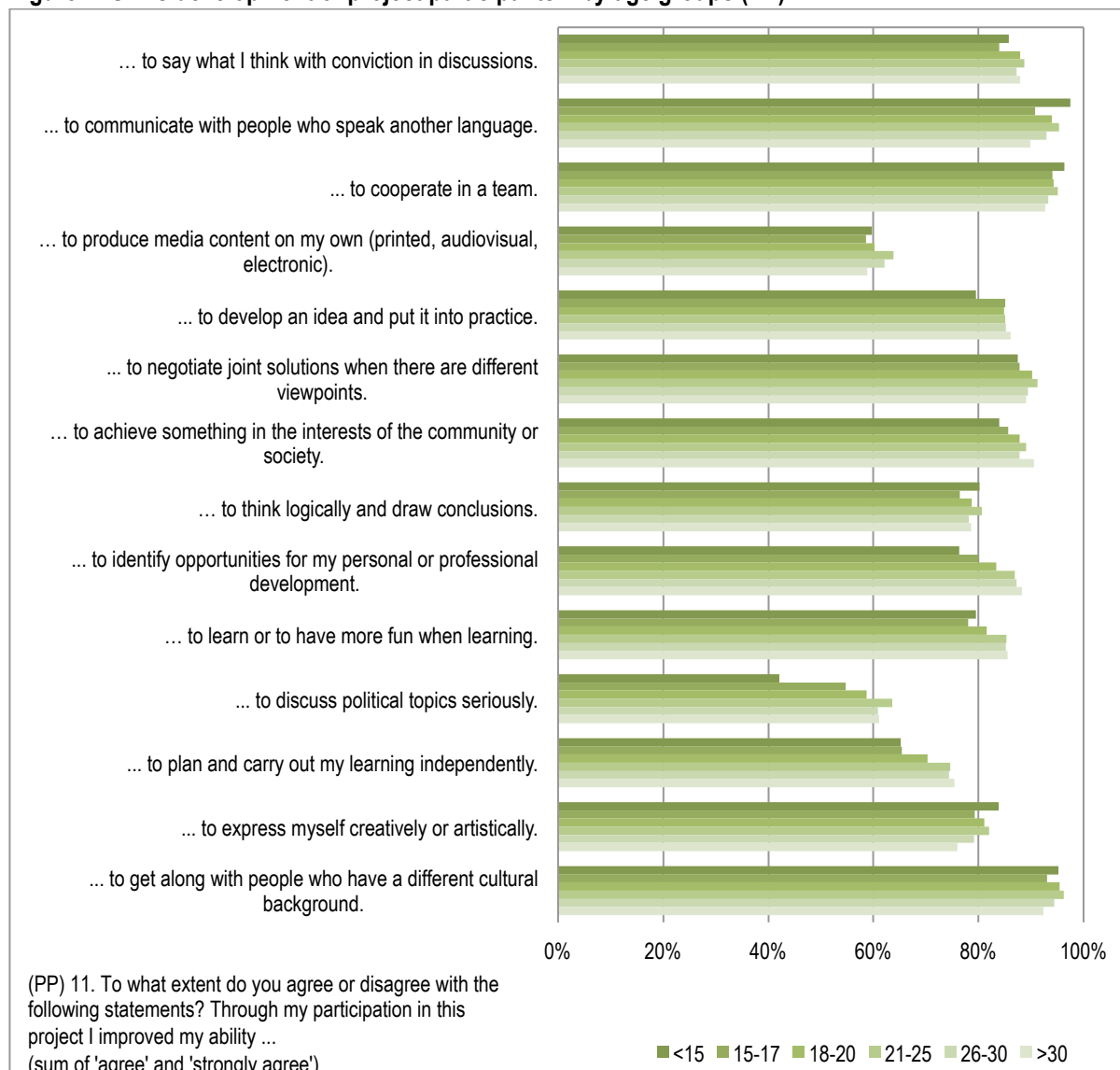
Differentiated by age groups, the younger responding project participants valued the item *to learn or to have more fun when learning* during the project more negatively than the older age groups: age groups 15-17 years 22% ('strongly disagree' or 'disagree'), 18-20 years 18% ('strongly disagree' or 'disagree') and >30 years 14% ('strongly disagree' or 'disagree').

The skill *to plan and carry out my learning independently* shows a similar picture: 15-17 years 35% ('strongly disagree' or 'disagree'), 18-20 years 30% ('strongly disagree' or 'disagree'), 21-25 years

³ See the section on abbreviations and definitions at the beginning of the report (page 5) for an overview of the key competences listed here (KC1 through KC8 and ML).

25% ('strongly disagree' or 'disagree'), 26-30 years 26% ('strongly disagree' or 'disagree') and over 30 years 25% ('strongly disagree' or 'disagree'). Thus, it can be stressed that age could have an impact on the learning setting as well as on opportunities to improve the *learning to learn competence*; the younger responding participants are, the less open, inspiring or self-determined the learning process for developing their learning to learn competence is (see Figure 4 and Table 102).

Figure 4: Skills development of project participants – by age groups (PP)



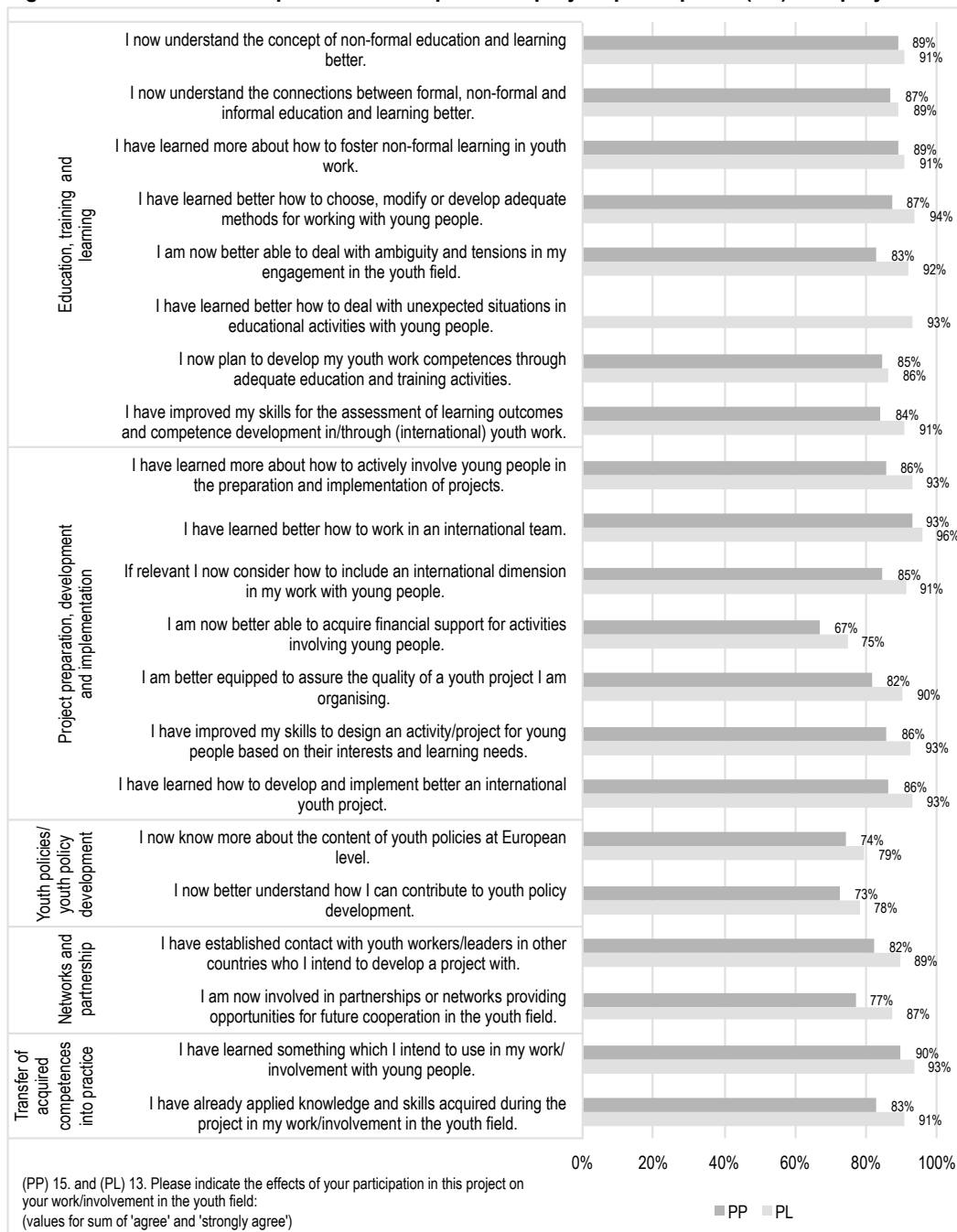
2.3 Youth work competences

A number of questions explored competences of respondents specifically in relation to youth work. Almost all questions were asked to project participants and project leaders alike, allowing for comparisons between both respondent groups. Among project participants, questions were asked to those respondents who had participated in YWM or TCA activities, i.e. those project participants seeking to develop their youth work competence.

Across all aspects of *non-formal and informal learning/education*, responding project participants selected predominantly high values when asked whether their competence had been strengthened: Between 88% and 90% 'strongly agree' or 'agree' across all activity types. Project

leaders assess these items even higher than project participants, ranging from around 90% up to 93% across all age groups and activity types (see Figure 5 below).

Figure 5: Youth work competence development of project participants (PP) and project leaders (PL)



87% of project participants ‘strongly agree’ or ‘agree’ that they *have learned better how to choose, modify or develop adequate methods for working with young people*. Differentiated by activity types, YWM (89% ‘strongly agree’ or ‘agree’) scores better than TCA (84% ‘strongly agree’ or ‘agree’).

Furthermore, 85% (‘strongly agree’ or ‘agree’) of responding project participants *have improved their skills for the assessment of learning outcomes and competence development in/through (international) youth work*, again with higher scores for YWM (85% ‘strongly agree’ or ‘agree’) than for TCA (82% ‘strongly agree’ or ‘agree’). Responding project leaders selected almost 91% (‘strongly agree’ or ‘agree’) for the improvement of this skill (see Figure 5, Table 106 and Table 108).

Finally, 84% ('strongly agree' or 'agree') of responding project participants *are now better able to deal with ambiguity and tensions in their engagement in the youth field*, although this item is scored differently in YWM and TCA, especially for the values *disagree and strongly agree*:

▪ TCA:	2.0% (--)	21.4% (-)	51.7% (+)	24.9% (++)⁴
▪ YWM:	1.4% (--)	13.7% (-)	50.4% (+)	34.6% (++)

In comparison, 92% ('strongly agree' or 'agree') of responding project leaders indicated to *be better able to deal with ambiguity and tensions in their engagement in the youth field*.

2.4 Effects on personal development

67% of responding project participants state that their *personal development* was among the reasons for participating in their project ('choose all that apply'), 63% say *to learn something new* was part of their motivation, and 38% indicate that their *professional development* was among their reasons (see Table 47).

Looking back at the project, 86% ('strongly agree' or 'agree') of responding project participants report that they improved their ability *to identify opportunities for their personal or professional development* through their participation in the project. With 78% ('strongly agree' or 'agree'), the percentage of project leaders who assessed that project participants had improved that ability (see Table 99 and Table 103) is slightly lower.⁵

In comparison, 88% ('strongly agree' or 'agree') of the responding project leaders indicate that they improved their ability *to identify opportunities for their personal or professional development* through their involvement in this project, highest scores being in YWM (91% 'strongly agree' or 'agree'), followed by YE (88% 'strongly agree' or 'agree'), EVS (87% 'strongly agree' or 'agree') and SD (67% 'strongly agree' or 'agree'). As a result, project leaders give themselves the highest scores for this item (see Figure 21 and Table 104).

Overall, over 95% ('strongly agree' or 'agree') of responding project participants report that their *participation in the project has contributed to their personal development* (see Table 90) and more than 85% ('strongly agree' or 'agree') of them report that the project had an impact on their *awareness which of their competences they want to develop further* (see Figure 6 below and Table 124). Almost 90% ('strongly agree' or 'agree') of responding project leaders indicate their awareness raising in terms of further competence development as a result of the project, again representing higher values than responding project participants (see Figure 6 below and Table 122).

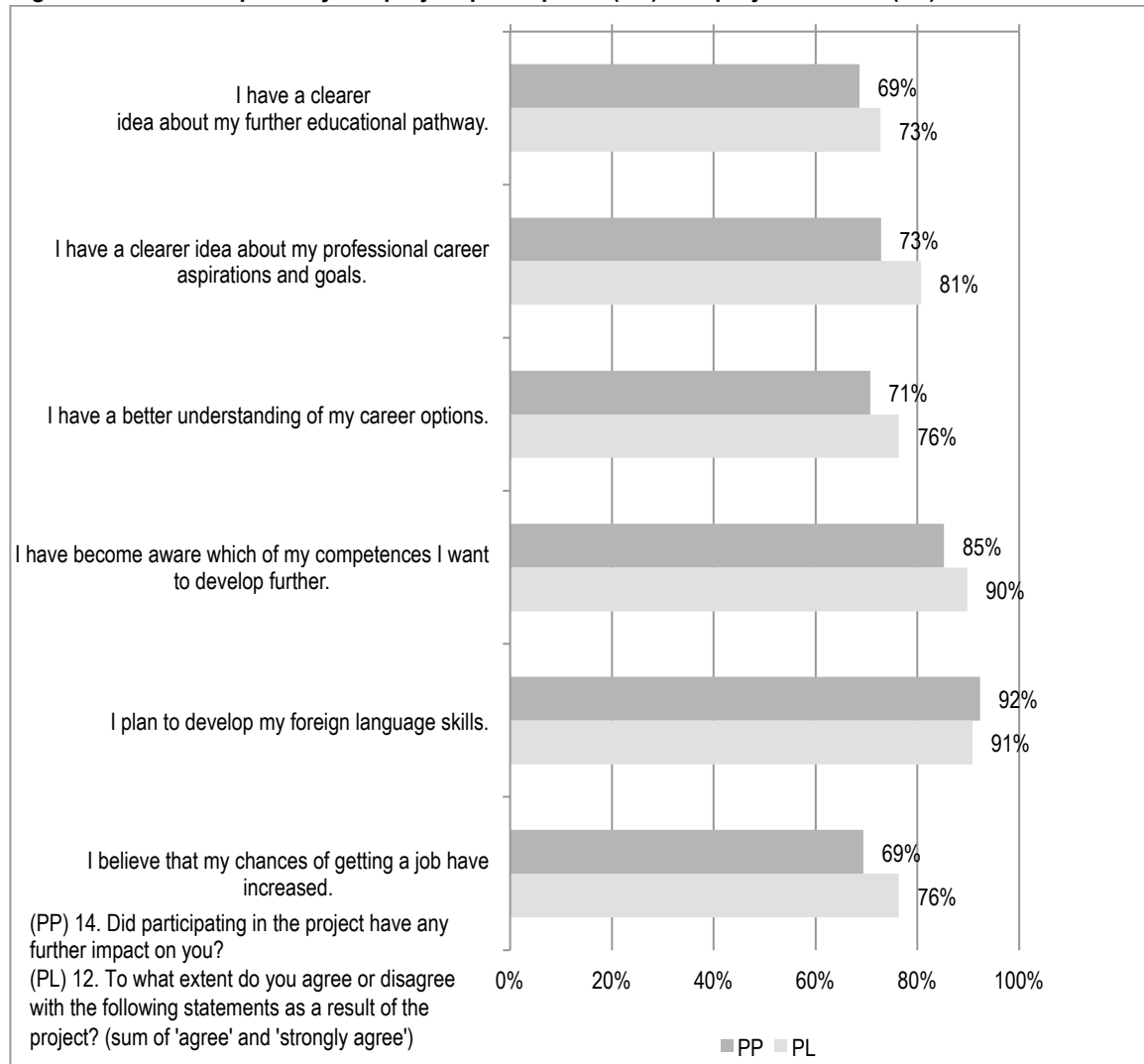
2.5 Further educational and professional pathways

We explore through a range of questions which impact a project has had on responding project participants and project leaders in relation to their further educational and professional pathway. Responding project participants and project leaders assess further impact based on their participation in the project in the context of their professional development as follows (see Figure 6; Table 122, Table 124, Table 125).

⁴ (--)= strongly disagree; (-)= disagree; (+)= agree; (++)= strongly agree.

⁵ It is worth noting that 12% of responding project leaders stated that they didn't know/couldn't say to what extent project participants had improved the ability *to identify their personal or professional development* (see Table 103).

Figure 6: Effects on pathways of project participants (PP) and project leaders (PL)



2.6 Conclusions

To improve the level of key competences and skills of young people, in particular through learning mobility opportunities is one of the key youth-specific aims of the Erasmus+ Programme, and our research findings show it is fulfilled with acclaim. The development of key competences and skills is very high for project participants and project leaders alike.

Project leaders are slightly more affirmative and self-confident about the improvement of their competences than project participants, which is to be expected, given their longer and more intense involvement in projects. Notably, project leaders consistently assess the learning outcomes/development of key competences of project participants through their participation in the project slightly higher than the responding project participants themselves.

Projects, with some variation across age and activity type, motivate project participants and project leaders to learn more and develop further, both personally and professionally.

3 Participation and active citizenship

The concept of participation and active citizenship refers to a broad scope of themes relevant to today's society, such as democracy, human rights, anti-racism and anti-discrimination, equal opportunities, intercultural issues, environmental issues, sustainable development, global issues, economy, peace and conflicts at all levels, community issues and social cohesion. In line with this, the questionnaires for participants and for project leaders/team members included a number of questions and items related to knowledge, skills, attitudes, values and practices relevant for participation and active citizenship, which could have been fostered through participating in E+/YiA. Additionally, project leaders as well as youth workers and youth leaders involved in YWM and TCA as participants were asked what they learned about youth participation – in particular, how to foster youth participation.

3.1 Knowledge acquisition on citizenship & participation

The question regarding knowledge acquisition through project participation includes 24 items, of which around three quarters related directly or indirectly to participation and citizenship. Multiple choices were possible. On average, respondents chose more than 7 items, indicating a broad scope of knowledge acquired (see Table 91). Items related to participation and citizenship were chosen by 16% to 70% of respondents, with *cultural diversity* ranking exceptionally high with 70%, followed by *European issues* (37%), *discrimination/non-discrimination* (35%) and *citizenship/participation in civil society and democratic life* (31%), all ranking fairly high; while *non-violence* (16%), *sustainable development* (17%) and *environmental issues* (20%) were ranked rather low (see Figure 1). In comparison to other subjects, citizenship topics rank between average and below average, except for *cultural diversity* with 70%.

When differentiating citizenship knowledge acquisition by activity types, SD ranks high for factual knowledge such as *European issues* (46%), *policies of the European Union* (46%) or *youth policies* (57%), while EVS and YWM rank high for social and cultural knowledge such as *discrimination/non-discrimination* (more than 38%) *inclusion* (37% each) or *solidarity* (38%/31%). YE and TCA generally rank lower for knowledge acquisition except for *cultural diversity* (see Table 92).

3.2 Skills development on citizenship & participation

The questions for project participants regarding the development of key competences for lifelong learning include 14 skills, which could be answered with 'strongly disagree', 'disagree', 'agree' or 'strongly agree'. The responses for the sum of 'agree' and 'strongly agree' range between 60% and 95% (see Table 98). Three of these skills are directly related to participation and citizenship:

- 95% of responding PP indicated that they agree (38%) or strongly agree (57%) that through their participation in the project they improved their *ability to get along with people who have a different cultural background*. For this item, the modal value is mostly 'strongly agree', with high values for YE participants (61%), female participants and participants aged 15 to 25 (see Table 99, Table 101, Table 102, Figure 18).
- 88% of the responding PP indicated that they agree (51%) or strongly agree (37%) that through their participation in the project they improved their *ability to achieve something in the interest of the community*. SD ranks highest for 'strongly agree' (44%); so do participants aged 30 or older (41%).
- 60% of responding PP indicated that they agree (38%) or strongly agree (22%) that through their participation in the project they improved their *ability to discuss political topics seriously*. Again, SD ranks highest (84% 'agree'/'strongly agree'); also ranking high are

'hosting' participants (66% 'agree'/'strongly agree'), participants aged 21 or older and male participants (66% 'agree'/'strongly agree').

PL were asked about their perceptions of the effects on participants in their project using corresponding items. Their perceptions about effects on participants are largely coherent with PP self-perceptions (see Figure 19).

86% of responding project participants involved in YWM or TCA indicate that they learned more about *how to involve young people in the preparation and implementation of projects* (46% 'agree', 41% 'strongly agree') – thus how to foster youth participation in youth work. The values for YWM are slightly higher than for TCA. 'Hosting' participants are ranking slightly higher than 'sending' participants. For project leaders, the numbers are even higher: 92% of responding project leaders indicate that they learned more about *how to involve young people in the preparation and implementation of projects* (42% 'agree', 50% 'strongly agree', see Table 107, Table 108).

3.3 Citizenship & participation attitudes and actions

The responses to the question on perceived effects of the project on participation/citizenship attitudes and practice (10 items) indicate an increase ('more than before') of between 23% and 65% for the different items (see Table 109). Between 3% and 5% of respondents indicate a decrease, all others indicate no change.

- The highest increases are reported for the *appreciation of cultural diversity* (65%), *feeling European* (47%), *commitment to work against discrimination/intolerance/xenophobia/racism* (45%) and *engaging in voluntary activities* (42%).
- Lower increases are reported for *participation in democratic/political life* (23%), *contributing to environmental protection* (31%), *engaging in civil society* (34%), *actively supporting the inclusion of people with fewer opportunities* (37%) and *keeping oneself informed on current European affairs* (38%).
- Perceived effects are diverse across activity types, hosting/sending, age groups and gender – largely for plausible interpretations (see Table 110, Table 111, Table 112).

Perceived increases for attitudes are generally higher than for practices, with higher increases for affective attitudes and practices versus lower increases for cognitive attitudes and practices.

Project leaders were asked if they noticed or heard about effects of their project on participants. PL perceptions are coherent with those of participants (see Table 96):

- 28%/64% of PL respondents agree/strongly agree that the participants *now appreciate cultural diversity more*;
- 40%/31% of PL respondents agree/strongly agree that the participants now are *more interested in contributing to youth policy development*;
- 39%/35% of PL respondents agree/strongly agree that the participants now *feel more European*.

3.4 Values regarding citizenship & participation

The question regarding values included a number of citizenship values; the responses indicate that each citizenship value did become more important for between 35% and 62% of the respondents. Around 1% of respondents indicate that these values had become less important; all others indicate no change.

- Increases above 50% were reported for *human rights, individual freedom, peace, equality, solidarity with people facing difficulties* and *tolerance* (see Table 117).

- Perceived increases are diverse across activity types, hosting/sending, age groups and gender.

3.5 Citizenship & participation in organisations

The question to participants in YWM projects and TCA regarding perceived effects on their organisations included a number of items related to participation and citizenship (see Table 127):

- 65% of the respondents indicate that their participation in the project resulted in an *increased participation of young people in their organisation/group* (35% ‘agree’, 30% ‘strongly agree’).
- 75% of the respondents indicate that their participation in the project resulted in an *increased appreciation of cultural diversity* in their organisation/group (35% ‘agree’, 40% ‘strongly agree’).
- 67% of the respondents indicate that their participation in the project resulted in an *increased commitment to include young people with fewer opportunities* (34% ‘agree’, 32% ‘strongly agree’).
- 66% of the respondents indicate that their participation in the project resulted in a *more intensive involvement in European issues* (37% ‘agree’, 29% ‘strongly agree’).

This suggests a considerable indirect effect of the participation of youth workers and youth leaders on participation and citizenship in their organisations and groups.

Project leaders (for all activity types) were also asked this question. Their responses show higher values for competence development than those of the participants in YWM and TCA, which can be explained by the direct involvement also of project participants from their organisations (see Table 128, Figure 7):

- 83% of the PL respondents indicate that their participation in the project resulted in an *increased participation of young people in their organisation/group* (36% ‘agree’, 48% ‘strongly agree’).
- 90% of the PL respondents indicate that their participation in the project resulted in an *increased appreciation of cultural diversity* in their organisation/group (33% ‘agree’, 57% ‘strongly agree’).
- 80% of the PL respondents indicate that their participation in the project resulted in an *increased commitment to include young people with fewer opportunities* (35% ‘agree’, 46% ‘strongly agree’).
- 77% of the PL respondents indicate that their participation in the project resulted in a *more intensive involvement in European issues* (40% ‘agree’, 36% ‘strongly agree’).

3.6 Citizenship & participation in local communities

Project leaders were asked about effects of the project on the local community in which it was carried out. Some items of this question are related to participation and citizenship (see Table 129):

- 69% of PL respondents indicate that the local community *has become aware of the concerns of young people* (39% ‘agree’, 30% ‘strongly agree’) – thus suggesting (or hoping), that the local community might strengthen youth participation.
- 82% of PL respondents indicate that *the intercultural dimension was appreciated* by the local community (40% ‘agree’, 42% ‘strongly agree’).
- 58% of PL respondents indicate that the local community has become *more committed to the inclusion of young people with fewer opportunities* (31% ‘agree’, 26% ‘strongly agree’).

- 77% of PL respondents indicate that *the European dimension was received with interest* by the local community (41% ‘agree’, 36% ‘strongly agree’; see Table 129).
- Generally, the agreement of ‘hosting’ project leaders to these items was stronger than the agreement of ‘sending’ project leaders, suggesting that the effects on the hosting communities are stronger than on the sending communities – which could be expected.

It needs to be noted that the agreement was relatively small with respect to the inclusion of young people with fewer opportunities.

3.7 Conclusions

To promote active citizenship and participation in democratic life in Europe is another key youth-specific aim of the Erasmus+ Programme. Our research shows that 95% of respondents believe that they developed one skill relevant and helpful for participation and active citizenship; 88% believe they developed two skills, and 60% believe they developed three skills strengthening citizenship and participation. These skills are translated into action swiftly: 45% of respondents report that they actually became more active as citizens as a result of their participation in the programme.

Equally remarkable are the responses of youth workers and youth leaders involved as PP or PL in E+/YiA projects: They report that they learned better how to foster participation of young people in the preparation and implementation of (youth) projects (86% of PP, 92% of PL).

These developments are underpinned by the involvement of participants in the preparation and implementation of the project, reported by more than 80% of participants, through which participants could actually practice participation. A related outcome is that organisations also became more open with regard to the participation of young people, the inclusion of young people with fewer opportunities and the involvement in European issues.

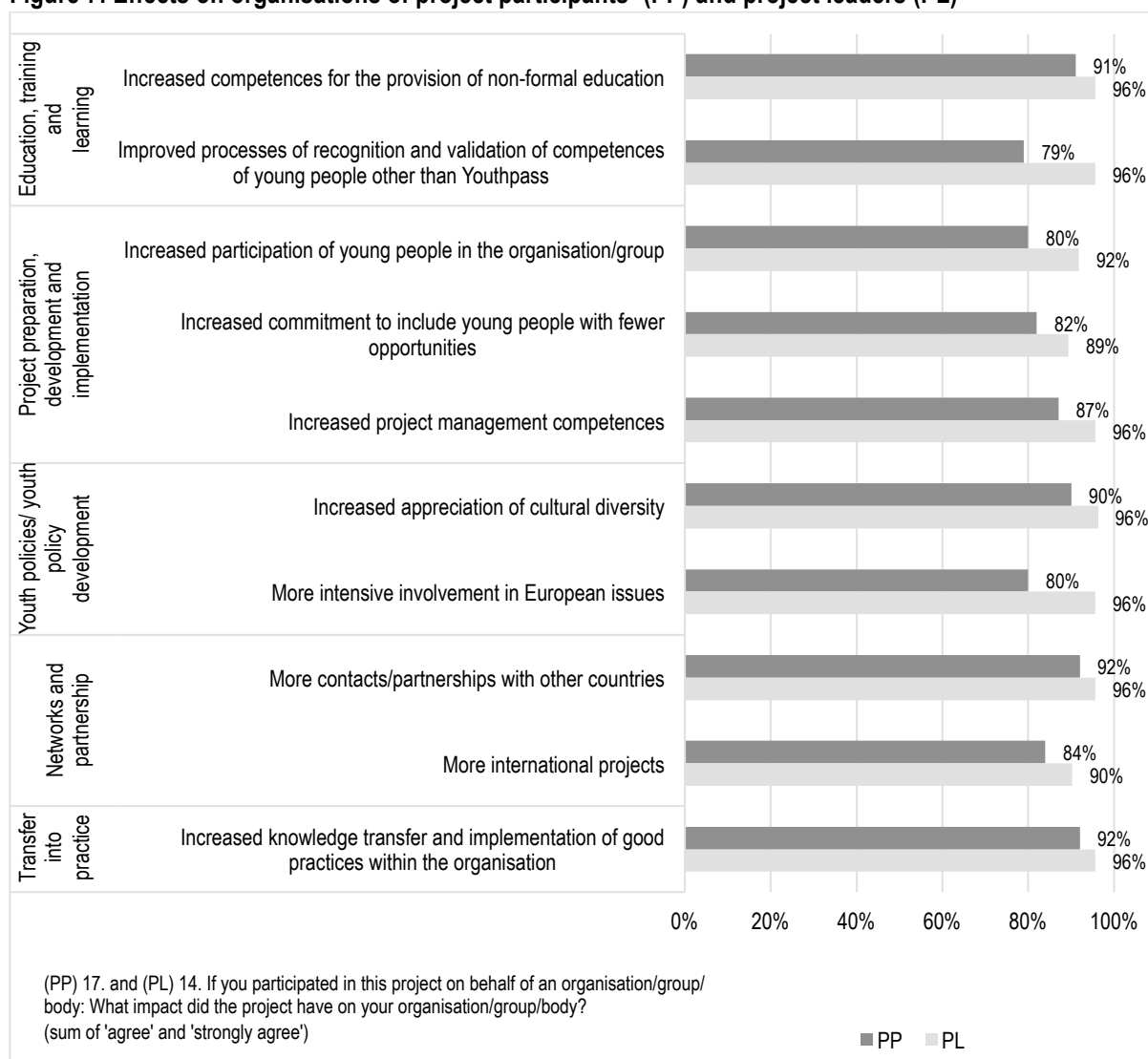
4 Learning organisations and communities

This chapter explores the effects of the programme on organisations and communities.

4.1 Effects on organisations

Concerning the effects of the participation/involvement in the project on the organisation/group/body, 91% ('strongly agree' or 'agree') of responding YWM/TCA participants and 94% ('strongly agree' or 'agree') of responding project leaders assess that they *increased competences for the provision of non-formal education*. 86% ('strongly agree' or 'agree') of the responding project leaders think that they could *increase the application of open educational resources*⁶. In addition, 79% ('strongly agree' or 'agree') of responding project participants and 85% ('strongly agree' or 'agree') of responding project leaders indicate that they *improved processes of recognition and validation of competences of young people other than Youthpass* (see Figure 7, Table 127, Table 128).

Figure 7: Effects on organisations of project participants⁷ (PP) and project leaders (PL)



⁶ This item is not available in the questionnaire for project participants (youth workers).

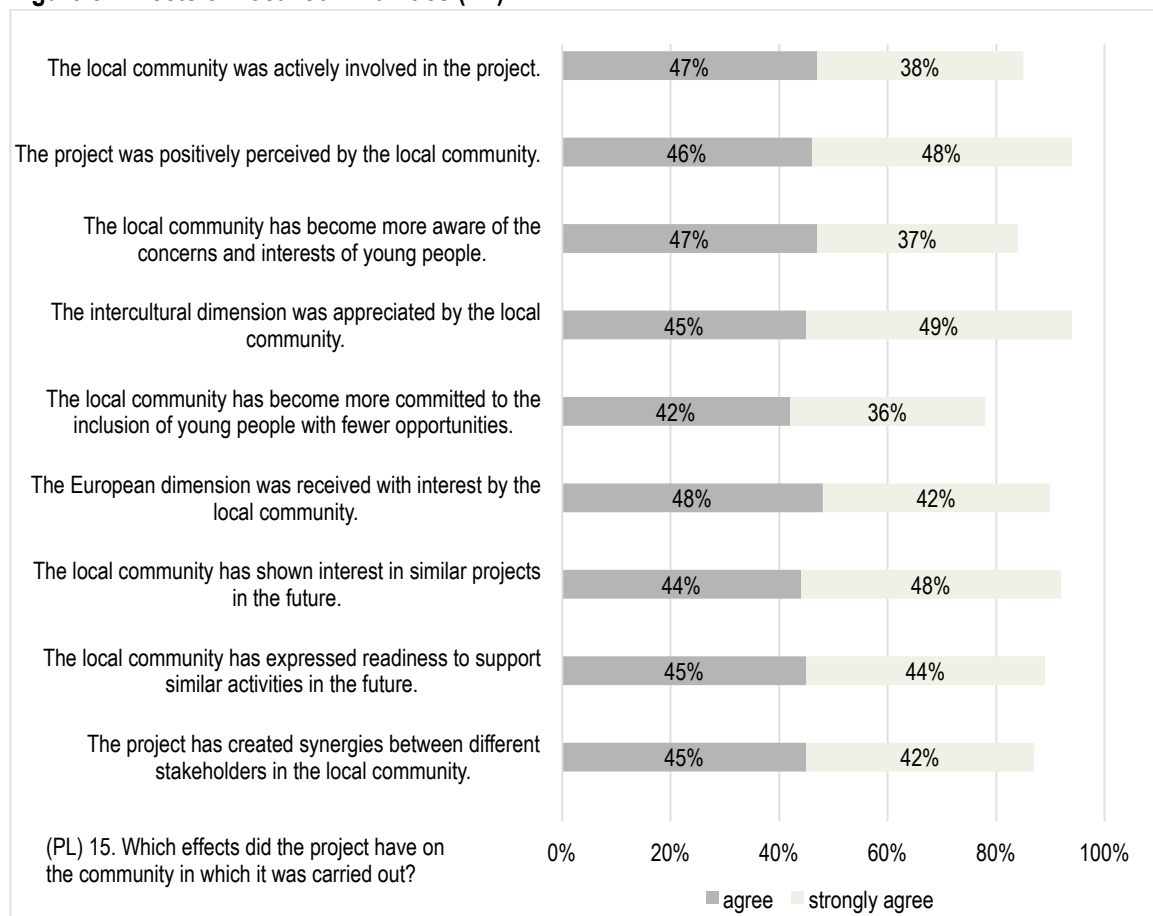
⁷ Responding project participants who report having been involved in YWM or TCA.

Responding YWM and TCA participants as well as responding project leaders report some effects of their project participation on their work and involvement in the youth field through the transfer of competence development into practice. 84% ('strongly agree' or 'agree') of responding project participants and 91% ('strongly agree' or 'agree') of responding project leaders *have already applied knowledge and skills acquired during the project in his/her work/involvement in the youth field* (see Table 106, Table 107). Moreover, 91% ('strongly agree' or 'agree') of responding YWM and TCA participants and 94% ('strongly agree' or 'agree') of responding project leaders indicate an *increased knowledge transfer and implementation of good practices within the organisation*.

4.2 Effects on communities

In addition to the impact on organisations, complementary questions explore effects of the project on local communities. 87% ('strongly agree' or 'agree') of the responding project leaders stated that *the project has created synergies between different stakeholders in the local community*. 84% ('strongly agree' or 'agree') indicated that *the local community became more aware of the concerns and interests of young people*. Moreover, it is reported by 78% ('strongly agree' or 'agree') of respondents that *the local community became more committed to the inclusion of young people with fewer opportunities* (see Table 129). Furthermore, 85% ('strongly agree' or 'agree') of respondents assess that *the local community was actively involved in the project* and 95% ('strongly agree' or 'agree') express that *the project was positively perceived by the local community*. Finally, 92% ('strongly agree' or 'agree') of the responding project leaders positively indicate that *the local community has shown interest in similar projects in the future* and 89% ('strongly agree' or 'agree') of these respondents judge that *the local community has expressed readiness to support similar activities in the future* (see Table 129).

Figure 8: Effects on local communities (PL)



4.3 Conclusions

To strengthen the role of youth organisations as support structures for young people, in particular through enhanced cooperation, is another key youth-specific aim of the Erasmus+: Youth in Action Programme. Our research shows that effects of projects on organisations – and communities – are assessed to be positive by project participants and project leaders alike. The effects are less strong than the ones on the individual level – in part because they are less immediate and can only be seen at the time of surveying. Understandably, systemic effects need more time to take hold than individual effects.

The most highly rated effects on organisations are *more contacts/partnerships with other countries*, *more international projects* and *increased appreciation of cultural diversity*, showcasing an improved, extended, enriched and enriching international dimension of youth work.

The most frequently stated effects of projects on their local communities were that *the project was positively perceived* as well as *the intercultural dimension was appreciated by the local community*, both with response rates of over 80%.

In both instances, additional research could be undertaken to explore the effect on organisations and communities from the perspective of those stakeholders who did not directly participate in a E+/YiA project.

5 Respondent profiles

This chapter explores the profiles of respondents to contextualise the findings of this research project. At the same time, the chapter also provides relevant information with respect to the programme's aim to involve young people with fewer opportunities. While the subsequent chapter summarises the self-assessment and -perception of project participants and project leaders regarding e.g. obstacles they face, this chapter studies their personal profiles.

5.1 Profiles of project participants

5.1.1 Gender and age

Close to two-thirds of respondents are female (64%), one third is male (36%), and 0.5% selected 'other' (see Table 16). The highest number of respondents can be seen in the age group 21-25 years (34%), followed by 26-30 years (20%) and 18-20 years (19%). The total percentage of respondents over 30 years is 15% (see Table 17).

- YE: highest percentage in the age group 21-25 years (36%)
- EVS: highest percentage in the age group 21-25 years (49%)
- SD: highest percentage in the age group 21-25 years (26%)
- YWM: highest percentage in the age group 21-25 years (33%)
- TCA: highest percentage in the age group over 30 years (49%)

5.1.2 Educational attainment

Generally speaking, the educational attainment of respondents is high: 60% of respondents have a tertiary degree (*university, polytechnic or post-secondary/tertiary level education*). The highest educational attainment can be seen in TCA projects (86% with a tertiary degree), YWM projects (80%), followed by EVS projects (67%)⁸, SD projects (47%) and YE projects (43%). Overall, 73% of the responding 21-25-year-old participants completed some form of tertiary education, compared to 87% for participants aged 26-30 years and 88% aged over 30 years (see Table 18).

Parental educational attainment is somewhat lower, as would be expected, given the development of educational attainment in Europe over the past decades and the policy objectives of the European Union⁹: 41% of fathers/male legal guardians and 44% of mothers/female legal guardians have a tertiary degree themselves, according to respondents. 12% of fathers/male legal guardians and 14% of mothers/female legal guardians have a primary or lower secondary level of attainment, compared to less than 2% of those project participants who are 21 and older.¹⁰

5.1.3 Minority affiliation

Overall, 13% of responding participants indicated that they belong to a cultural, ethnic, religious or linguistic minority (RAY partner countries 13%; other countries 15%). The differentiation

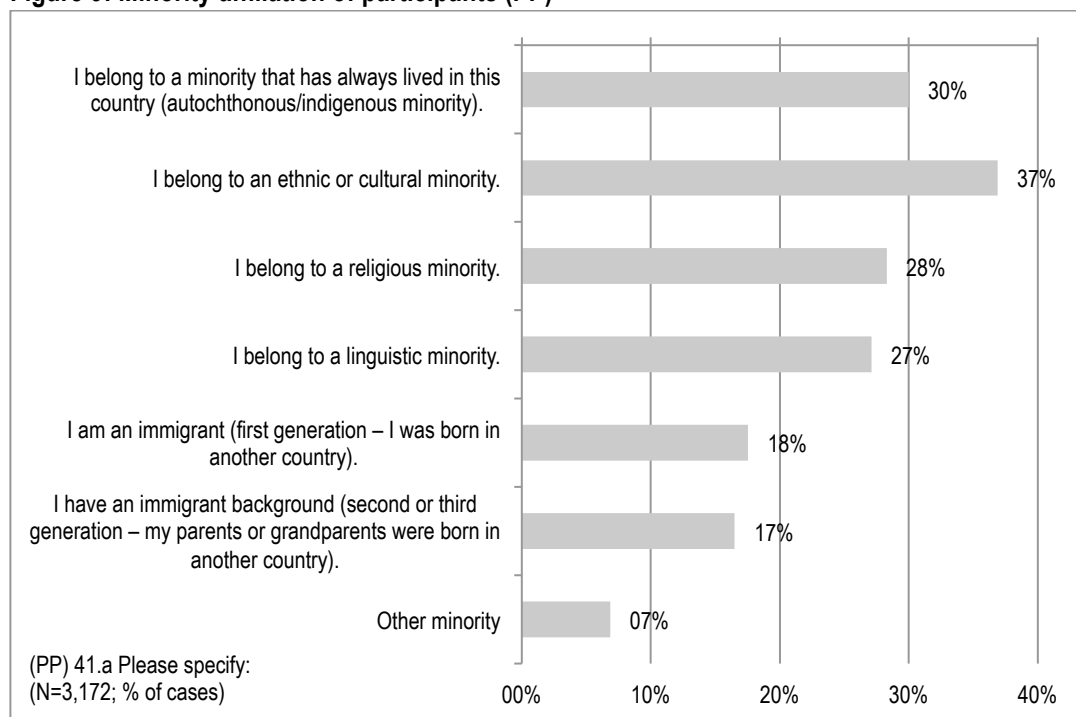
⁸ It should be taken into account that in YWM and TCA there is no age limit for participating in these projects, and that participants are usually older in YWM and TCA than in other activity types. In addition, youth workers are included within the sample of the Standard Surveys 2015/16, who often underwent vocational training for doing youth work (as is required in some countries).

⁹ See http://ec.europa.eu/education/policy/higher-education/attainment_en for an outline of the targets for educational attainment as outlined in the EU-2020 strategy.

¹⁰ Younger respondents may still attend secondary school and may therefore not have completed their higher secondary education.

between defined obstacles in the questionnaire for project participants highlights that the largest number of responding project participants¹¹ belong to an *ethnic or cultural minority* (37%) or an *autochthonous/indigenous minority* (has always lived in this country) (30%), followed by a *religious minority* (28%) and *linguistic minority* (27%). The values for a *migration background (second or third generation)* and an *immigration background (first generation)* concern 35% in total. The item *other minority* was selected by 7% of responding project participants (see Figure 9; Table 22).

Figure 9: Minority affiliation of participants (PP)



5.1.4 Occupation of project participants

With regard to the occupational status of responding participants (choose all that apply), 51% report to have been *in education or training* for at least three months during the 12 months before the project started. The percentage of responding participants *in education or training* by activity types is quite diverse: YWM 40%, TCA 28%, YE 62%, EVS 52% and SD 53%. Respondents *in education and training* were *secondary school students* (23%), *students at a university etc.* (41%), *an apprentice (vocational education or training)* (3%), *doing another type of education and training* (13%; see Table 19, Table 21).

24% of responding participants report (‘choose all that apply’) that they were *not in education or training*, and the largest group can be found between 26-30 years (46%) and over 30 years (62%; see Table 21). Respondents *not in education or training* report (choose all that apply) being *employed full-time* (54%), *employed part-time* (23%), *self-employed* (40%), *unemployed* (38%), *a volunteer* (24%), *an intern/doing a work placement* (11%), *not in paid work* (23%), and *other* (22%).

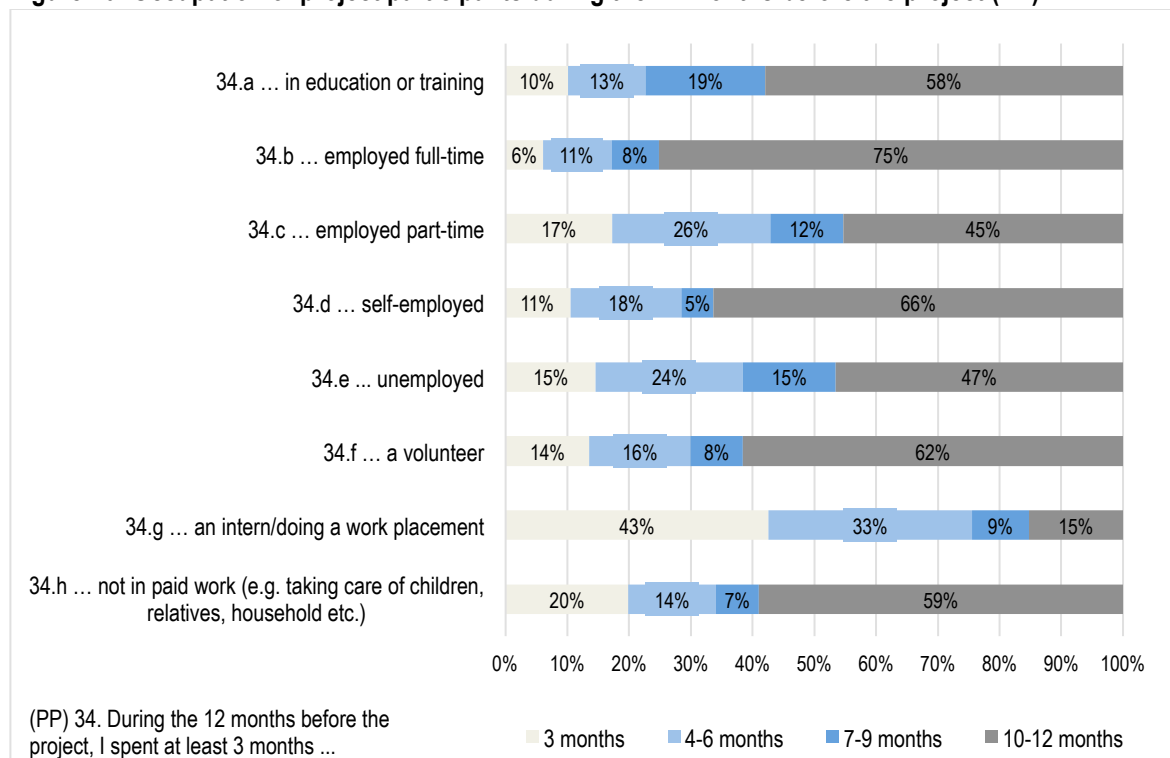
8% of responding project participants state that they were *unemployed* for at least three months in the year prior to the project, with percentages ranging from 3% in the age group 15-17 years to 13% in the age group 26-30 years (see Table 20).

¹¹ Dependency question: 13% of the responding project participants received this question.

26% of responding project participants reported to have spent at least 3 months (choose all that apply) *employed full-time*, 14% *employed part-time*, 8% *unemployed*, 7% *self-employed*; 6% as *an intern/doing a work placement* and 5% *not in paid work* during the last 12 months before the project started (see Table 19). Across activity types, 42% of responding project participants from YWM and TCA (combined) and 15% from YE, EVS and SD (combined) were employed full-time (for at least 3 months) during the 12 months prior to the project.

21% of responding project participants report to have been *a volunteer* for at least 3 months during the year leading up to the project. 27% of the responding participants from YWM and TCA (combined) and 17% from YE, EVS and SD (combined) indicate having been *a volunteer*. The status of being *a volunteer* is distributed among the responding participants as follows: *secondary school students* (14%), *student at a university etc.* (48%), *an apprentice* (4%), *doing another type of education or training* (20%), *not in education and training* (24%).

Figure 10: Occupation of project participants during the 12 months before the project (PP)



5.1.5 Motivation

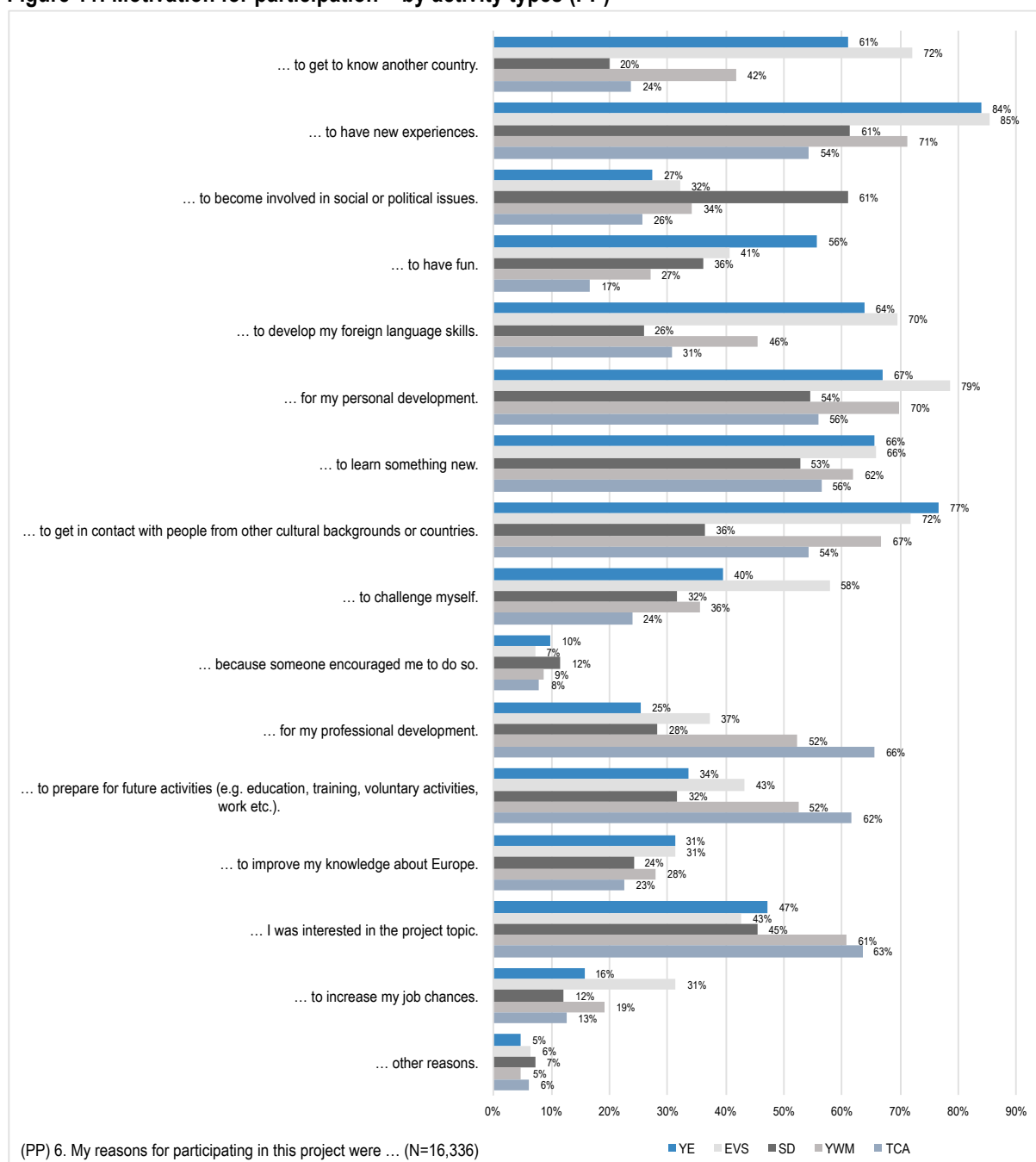
With regard to the motivation for participating in this project (‘choose all that apply’), responding project participants refer the highest scores to *new experiences* (76%), *to get in contact with people from other cultural backgrounds or countries* (69%), *for my personal development* (67%) and *to learn something new* (63%). The responding project participants indicate over 50% for *to develop my foreign language skills* (53%), *I was interested in the project topic* (53%) and *to get to know another country* (50%). The lowest value relates to *because someone encouraged me to do so* (9%) (see Table 46).

Differentiated by activity types (see Figure 11, Table 47), it becomes obvious that respondents of YE and EVS indicate the highest values (up to 85%) in the context of *mobility* (new international contacts and countries) (YE 61%/EVS 72%), *new experiences* (YE 84%/EVS 85%) and *to learn something new* (YE 66%/EVS 66%), *foreign language skills* (YE 64%/EVS 70%), *fun factor* (YE 56%/EVS 41%) and for *personal development* (YE 67%/EVS 79%). In addition, the items *to increase*

the job chances (31%) and to challenge myself (58%) are most frequently indicated by responding EVS participants.

SD responding participants are predominantly motivated by *new experiences* (61%), *to become involved in social and political issues* (61%) followed by *personal development* (55%), *to learn something new* (53%) and *interested in the project topic* (45%). TCA respondents indicate *to learn something new* (56%), *personal development* (56%), *new experiences* (54%), *to get in contact with people from other cultural backgrounds* (54%); the highest scores refer to *professional development* (66%), interest in the project topic (64%) and *to prepare for future activities* (62%). In YWM the most important motivational factors range from *new experiences* (71%), to *personal development* (70%), *to get in contact with people from other cultural backgrounds* (67%), *to learn something new* (62%) to interest in the project topic (61%) and *to prepare for future activities* (52%).

Figure 11: Motivation for participation – by activity types (PP)



5.2 Profiles of project leaders

5.2.1 Gender and age

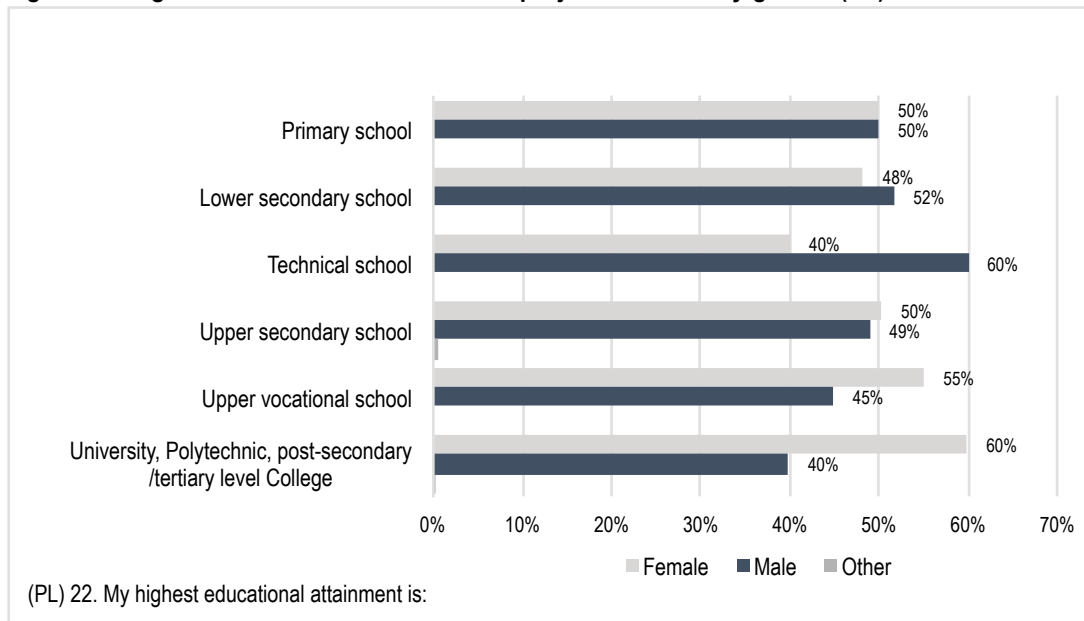
Similar to the responding project participants, the majority of responding project leaders are female (58%) and 42% are male; 0.3% of the responding project leaders indicated 'other' (see Table 48). The highest percentage of project leader respondents can be identified in the over 30 years age group (51%), followed by 26-30 years (24%), 21-25 years (20%) and finally by 16-20 years (5%; see Table 49).

- YE: highest percentage in the age group over 30 years (50%)
- EVS: highest percentage in the age group 21-25 years (34%)
- SD: highest percentage in the age group over 30 years (66%)
- YWM: highest percentage in the age group over 30 years (55%)

5.2.2 Educational attainment

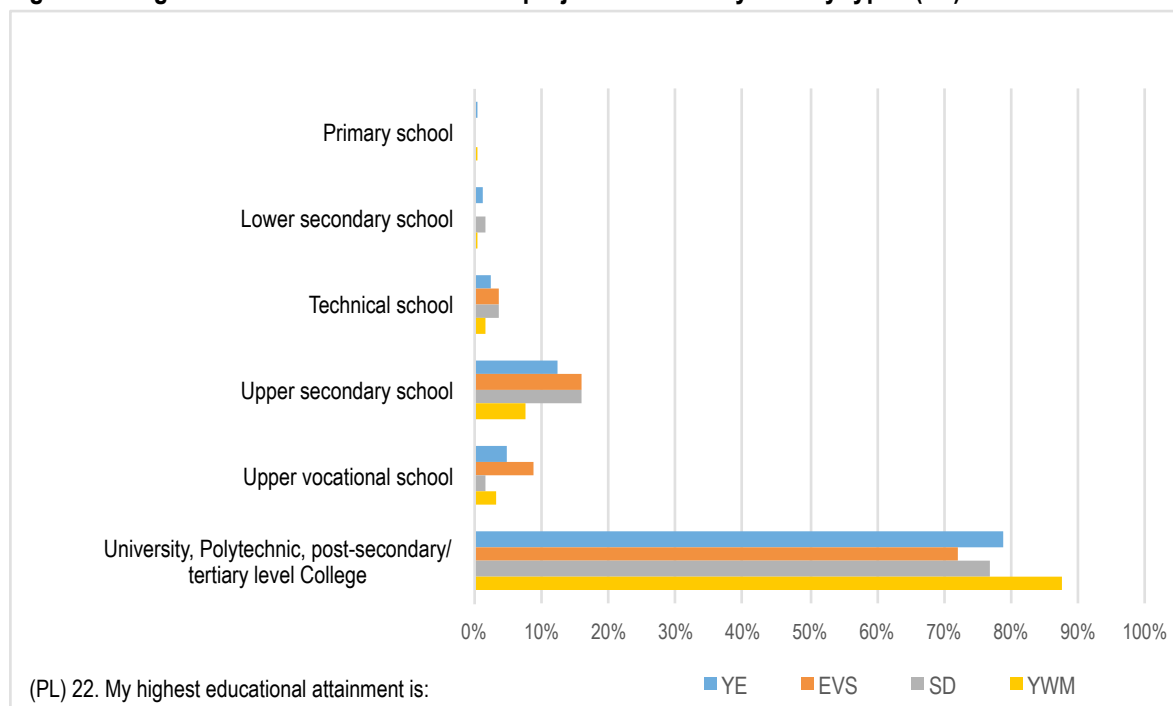
81% of responding project leaders indicated having a university/college degree (60% female; 40% male), 11% completed an *upper secondary school* (almost gender-related balance), 4% an *upper vocational school* (55% female; 45% male), and 2% a *technical school* (40% female; 60% male). Only 0.1% indicated *primary school* (without gender-related differences) and 1% *lower secondary school* (48% female; 52% male) to be their highest educational attainment (see Figure 12, Table 51).

Figure 12: Highest educational attainment of project leaders – by gender (PL)



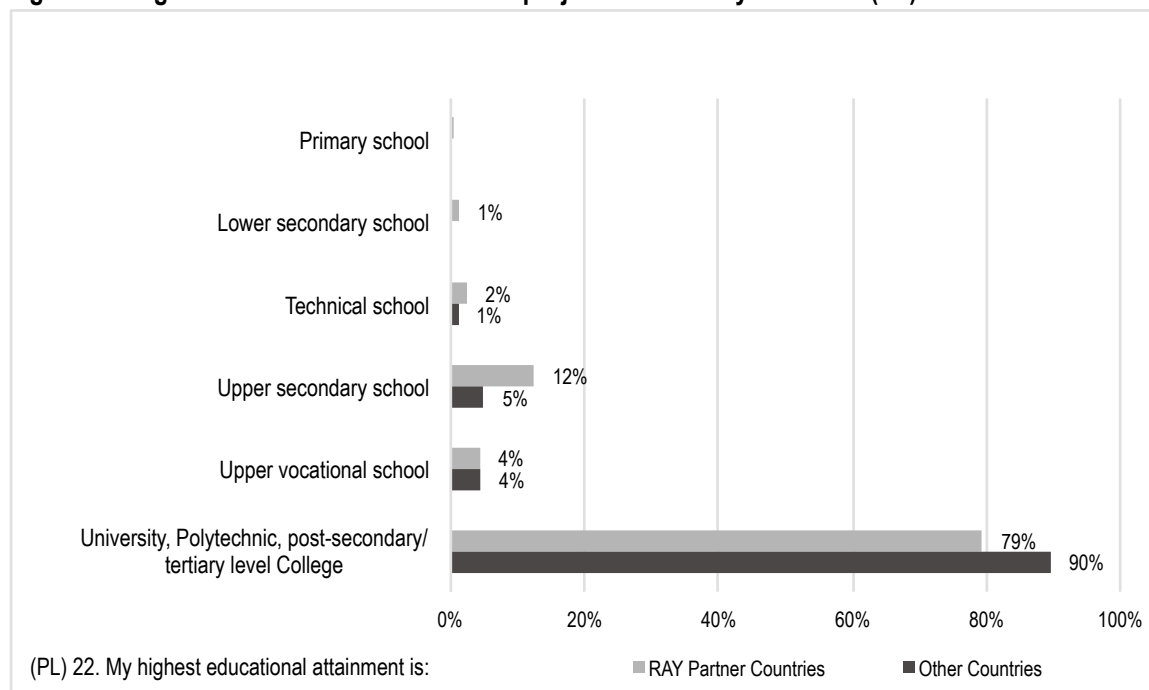
Differentiated according to activity types, it becomes apparent that in YWM (87%) and in YE (79%) the highest proportions of responding project leaders have a tertiary level of educational attainment, followed by SD (77%) and EVS (72%). In comparison, the next highest proportion of responding project leaders' highest educational attainment is evident for upper secondary school in SD (16%), EVS (16%), YE (13%) and YWM (8%; see Figure 13, Table 51).

Figure 13: Highest educational attainment of project leaders – by activity types (PL)



Differentiated by RAY partner countries/other countries, the proportions of responding project leaders with secondary/tertiary level can be indicated for RAY partner countries at 79% and for other countries at 90% (see Figure 14).

Figure 14: Highest educational attainment of project leaders – by countries (PL)



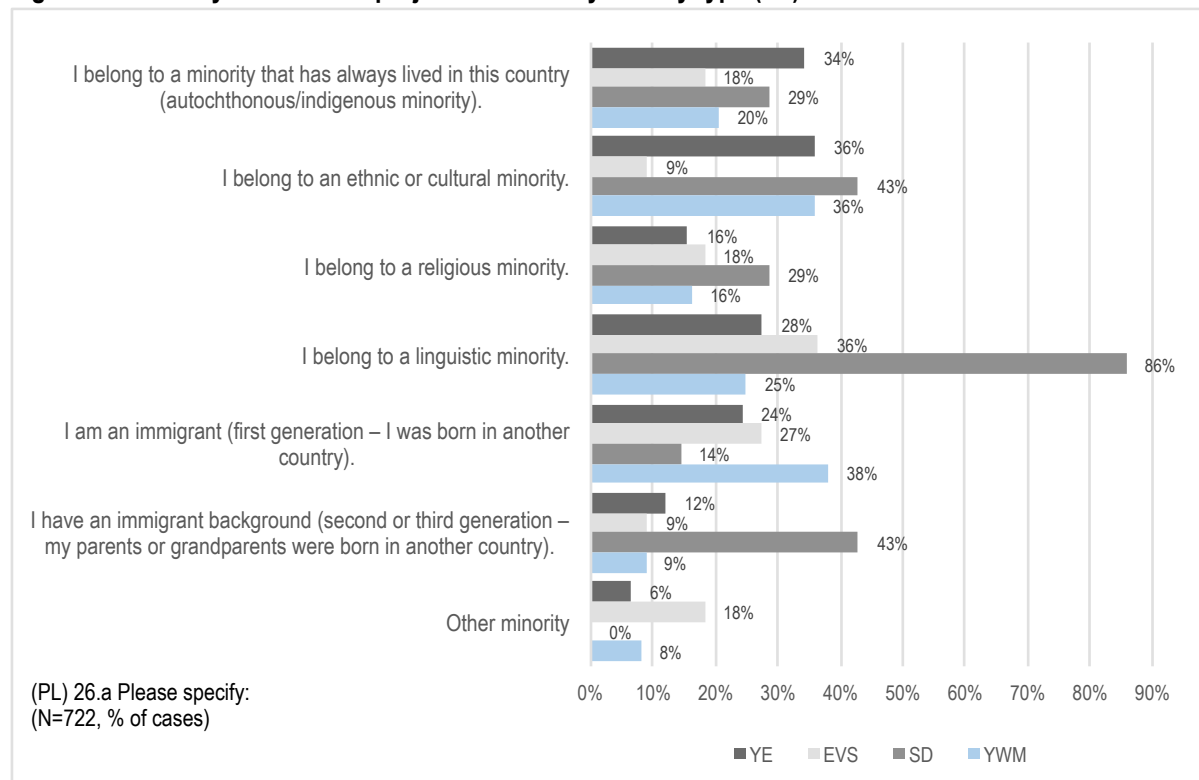
With respect to the completed number of years of formal education, responding project leaders indicate the highest scores for 14-20 years of formal education (79%, see Table 50).

5.2.3 Minority affiliation

17% of the responding project leaders define themselves as belonging to a minority. More specifically, 35% of those respondents¹² belong to an ethnic or cultural minority, 30% to an autochthonous/indigenous minority and 28% to a linguistic minority (choose all that apply). 28% of project leaders with a minority affiliation identify as being an immigrant of the first generation but only 11% of the second or third generation. Furthermore, 7% of the respondents select the item other minority, and 18% of them in EVS, for which for further clarification could be interesting.

Differentiated by activity types, SD represents the highest scores in comparison to other activity types for belonging to a linguistic minority (86%), to an ethnic or cultural minority (43%), being an immigrant of the second or third generation (43%) and belonging to a religious minority (29%). Only to be an immigrant of the first generation is scored higher in YWM (38%), belonging to an autochthonous/indigenous minority in YE (34%) and other minority in EVS (18%) (see Figure 15; Table 63).

Figure 15: Minority affiliation of project leaders – by activity type (PL)



5.3 Conclusions

The level of educational attainment for both project participants and project leaders is comparatively high: Over 60% of project participants and over 80% of project leaders have a tertiary degree,¹³ compared to an EU-wide average of around 40%.¹⁴

13% of responding project participants indicated that they belong to a cultural, ethnic, religious or linguistic minority, whereas 17% of responding project leaders define themselves as belonging to a minority.

¹² Dependency question: 16.6% of the responding project leaders received this question.

¹³ With over 50% of project participants still being in education or training, the PP percentage is likely to rise.

¹⁴ http://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/statistics-explained/index.php/Educational_attainment_statistics

6 Inclusion of young people with fewer opportunities or with special needs

61% of project leaders reporting to be involved in YE, EVS or SD stated that *young people with fewer opportunities or with special needs participated* in their project (YE 61%, SD 55%, EVS 45%; see Table 33). Geographically, the percentage of project leaders who confirmed the involvement of young people with fewer opportunities or with special needs ranged from 41% in Bulgaria and 44% in Italy to 83% in the United Kingdom and 91% in Ireland (see Table 32).

62% of responding participants reporting to be involved in YWM and TCA confirmed that *they themselves are working with young people with fewer opportunities or with special needs* (YWM 63%, TCA 73%; see Table 35). In geographic terms, the percentages range from 47% in Latvia and 45% in Italy to 88% in the United Kingdom and 94% in Ireland (see Table 36). Project leaders, in contrast, stated that 83% of the youth workers, youth leaders and other professionals participating in their projects worked with young people with fewer opportunities or special needs.

6.1 Aspects of (potential) exclusion

Obstacles of project participants – as assessed by themselves

45% of responding participants across RAY partner countries, and 55% of respondents of other countries, report that they are faced with obstacles when asked to indicate all obstacles that apply (see Table 41, Table 42, Table 43). The main obstacle project participants see concerns *accessing work and employment* (39%), followed by *active participation in society and politics* (24%), *mobility* (22%) and *accessing education* (20%; see Table 39, Table 40).

All four obstacles show large geographic variations. Obstacles in accessing work and employment ranges from 8% in Denmark to 64% in Spain (the largest variance among the four obstacles); active participation in society and politics ranges from 5% in Denmark to 38% in Spain; mobility ranges from 6% in Denmark, Luxembourg and Norway to 32% in Spain; and access to education ranges from 0% in Denmark to 34% in Latvia (see Table 43).

When asked to indicate the kind of obstacle faced ('choose all that apply'), one item dominates the responses, namely *not having enough money* (50%), which is represented across all activity types, with slightly higher values for EVS (54%) and YWM (53%). All other kinds of obstacles are mentioned less frequently, with five other obstacles indicated by more than 10% of respondents: *living in a remote area* (16%), *social background* (15%), *low educational attainment* (13%), *family responsibilities* and *health problems* (both 11%). Despite a relatively comprehensive list of 17 different kinds of obstacle, 33% of respondents opted to indicate another obstacle: this should be explored in the next surveys (see Table 44).

Some obstacles play a stronger role in certain activity types: *living in a remote area* is a stronger obstacle for SD (25%) than any of the other activity types; *social background* (20%) and *family responsibilities* (17%) are stronger obstacles for TCA than any other activity type; whereas *gender* plays a larger role in TCA (14%) and YWM (10%).

When asked to compare their opportunities to those of their peers (described as *people of your age living in your country*), 45% respondents state that they are *getting their fair share of opportunities*,

whereas 18% assessed that they are getting *more than their fair share of opportunities*, with 16% stating that they are getting *somenhat less*, and 7% stating that they are getting *much less than their fair share of opportunities* (see Table 37.) The number of respondents who say they are getting *much less than their fair share of opportunities* is highest in Turkey (18%), Italy (16%) and Portugal (13%). The number of respondents who say they are getting *more than their fair share of opportunities* is highest in Norway (54%), Denmark (45%) and the Czech Republic (42%). More than half of all responding project participants from 9 countries (AT, FI, HU, LI, LU, LV, MT, NL and SK) say they are getting *their fair share of opportunities*, with an overall range of 64% (LI) to 37% (IT and TR). There is no country where more than half of all responding project participants say they are getting *somenhat less* or *much less* than their fair share of opportunities, though five countries stand out: Turkey with 44%, Italy with 38%, Portugal with 34%, and Romania and Spain with 31% (see Table 38).

Obstacles for project participants – as assessed by responding project leaders

83% of project leaders of YWM projects state that youth workers, youth leaders and other professionals participating in their projects worked with young people with fewer opportunities or special needs, compared to 63% of participants reporting that they had been involved in YWM projects who confirmed that they do so (see Table 35). More closely aligned are the number of project leaders who reported that inclusion was addressed in their projects and the number of project participants who learned something about inclusion: 31% of project leaders state that inclusion was a main theme addressed during their project, and 30% of project participants state they learned something about inclusion as part of their project (see Table 91, Table 95).

The number of project leaders indicating that their projects included young people with fewer opportunities (YPFO) or young people with special needs (YPSN) increases remarkably with the age of respondents: the percentage of project leaders reporting to be involved in YE, EVS or SD with YPFO/YPSN grows from 51% in the age group of 16-20-year-old respondents to 65% in the age group of respondents who are older than 30 years (see Table 34). This begs the question whether older project leaders are more confident in working with YPFO/YPSN target groups, or whether the perception of what constitutes a disadvantage has changed over time and younger project leaders are closer to the target group. This needs to be explored in further analyses and studies.

Project leaders were also asked to specify which obstacles prevented young people with fewer opportunities or with special needs who participated in their project from having access to education, mobility, work or participation in society and politics at large. They specified *not having enough money* as the most frequent obstacle (56%), followed by *social background* (41%), *belonging to a disadvantaged group* (36%), *living in a remote area* (35%), *low educational attainment* (31%) and *living in a deprived (sub-)urban area* (29%). With the exception of not having enough money, project leaders estimate the obstacles to be more common than project participants themselves (see Table 45).

There are strong differences between the self-assessment of project participants concerning obstacles they are faced with and the project leaders' perception of the obstacles of participants (see Table 44, Table 45). For example, the *social background* is seen as an obstacle by 41% of all responding project leaders, whereas only 15% of all responding project participants assessed this to be an obstacle they are faced with. The *low educational attainment* (PL perception 31%, PP self-assessment 13%) and their *belonging to a disadvantaged group* (PL 36%, PP 9%) are two other aspects considered to be obstacles by a much larger percentage of project leaders.

6.2 Working on inclusion

Project leaders were asked to state how strongly they agreed or disagreed with the statement that their project *contributed to supporting the inclusion of young people with fewer opportunities or special needs* in the Erasmus+: Youth in Action Programme. 42% of responding project leaders strongly agreed with the statement, another 41% agreed, with 14% disagreeing and 3% strongly disagreeing (see Table 130).

Project participants were asked how the project affected them in the end, using a series of statements, one of them being 'I actively support the inclusion of people with fewer opportunities'. 37% of responding project participants said they do so *more than before the project*, 61% said they do so *to the same extent as before the project*, and 2% said they do so *less than before the project* (see Table 109).

Project leaders were asked the same question. 48% of responding project leaders said they do so *more than before the project*, 51% said they do so *to the same extent as before the project*, and 1% said they do so *less than before the project* (see Table 113).

Project participants involved in YWM or TCA projects were also asked, in case they had been participating in this project on behalf of a group or organisation, what impact the project had made on their group or organisation. 32% of responding project participants said they strongly agree that the project resulted in *an increased commitment to include young people with fewer opportunities*, another 34% said they agree, with 12% disagreeing and 2% strongly disagreeing (see Table 127). Even more project leaders of all activity types believe that the project resulted in *an increased commitment to include young people with fewer opportunities*: 46% strongly agree and 35% agree with this statement, while 10% disagree or strongly disagree (see Table 128).

6.3 Conclusions

To strengthen social inclusion and solidarity in Europe is a key youth-specific aim of the Erasmus+ Programme. To this end, 61% of responding project leaders stated that young people with fewer opportunities or with special needs participated in their projects. On the other hand, 47% of responding project participants report that they are faced with obstacles in society.

The main obstacle, from the perspective of project participants themselves, is gaining *access to work and employment* (39%), followed by *active participation in society and politics* (24%), *mobility* (22%) and *access to education* (20%). Participants mentioned as specific types of obstacles *not having enough money* (50%), *living in a remote area* (16%), *their social background* (15%) and *low educational attainment* (13%). Project leaders, on the other hand, believe that next to *not having enough money* (56%), other major obstacles for project participants are *social background* (41%), *belonging to a disadvantaged group* (36%), *living in a remote area* (35%), *low educational attainment* (31%), *a history of unemployment in their family* (30%) and *living in a deprived (sub-) urban area* (29%).

Notwithstanding these differences in judgment, which should be researched further, the programme's inclusion approach works. 83% of project leaders agree that their *project contributed to supporting the inclusion of young people with fewer opportunities or special needs* in the Erasmus+: Youth in Action Programme (42% strongly agree, 41% agree). 37% of project participants and 48% of project leaders said they actively support the inclusion of people with fewer opportunities *more than before the project*. Furthermore, 66% of participants in YWM projects and TCA as well as 81% of project leaders of all activity types said that the project resulted in an increased commitment of their organisations to include young people with fewer opportunities

7 Youth in Action trajectories

This chapter explores the previous experience of project participants and project leaders and sheds lights on the professional status and occupation of project leaders.

7.1 Previous experiences of project participants

7.1.1 Previous mobility experiences of project participants

93% of all respondents had been abroad before participating in their Erasmus+: Youth in Action project. 15 options were given to respondents to indicate why they had been to another country before, in addition to *I have never been abroad before this project* (7%). By far the most frequently indicated reason was *because I went abroad for holidays* (75%), followed by *because I participated in a youth exchange* (44%) and *because I went abroad with my class at school* (41%, see Table 23).

Differentiating the responses by age shows a number of variances:

- Age group 15-17 years: 49% *went abroad with my class at school*; 11% *have never been abroad before this project*
- Age group 18-20 years: 49% *went abroad with my class at school*; 10% *have never been abroad before this project*
- Age group 21-25 years: 47% *participated in a youth exchange*; 7% *have never been abroad before this project*
- Age group 26-30 years: 52% *participated in a youth exchange*; 5% *have never been abroad before this project*

As is to be expected, working and studying in another country becomes more prominent in older age groups. Interestingly, the same is the case for youth exchanges (see Table 24).

Considering the responses geographically, a number of differences become apparent (see Table 26):

- Turkey has by far the largest proportion of project participants who had never been abroad before their project (32%). All other countries range between 8% (RO) and 0% (LI, LU and NO).
- On average, 44% of respondents went abroad with their class at school, ranging from 5% (TR) and 16% (RO) to 72% (SI) and 75% (LU). Relatively low percentages are noticeable in the Nordic states (SE 27%, FI 30%, NO 40%) – with Denmark being a regional exception (62%). Most other regions show similarly aligned response patterns, although, curiously enough, there is often exactly one regional exception (LT 31% and LV 37% – but EE 51%; PT 35% and ES 41% – but IT 58%; HU 46% and BG 45% – but RO 16%).

The level of educational attainment (both individual and parental) has a noticeable impact on prior international mobility experiences (see Table 25):

- 14% of respondents at primary school attainment level had never been abroad before their project, compared to 6% of respondents with upper secondary and tertiary levels of attainment. This could also be linked to the age.
- The percentage of respondents whose parents achieved primary school attainment level and who had never been abroad before their project is even higher (primary school attainment level of father/mother: 16%/19%).

- Respondents who had spent time abroad to gain work-related experience (job, internship, au-pair) are more frequently those with higher technical/vocational or tertiary educational attainments.
- Respondents who had spent time abroad to gain education-related experience (school, university, language course) are more frequently those with upper secondary and tertiary educational attainments.

7.1.2 Previous project experiences of project participants

Responses of project participants to the question ‘Thinking about the project we have been asking you about, have you participated in a similar project before?’ show the following:

- 51% of respondents had never participated in a similar project before, compared to 49% who had done so (see Table 27). Gender-based variance is marginal (48% of female and 50% of male respondents had previously participated in a similar project).
- As can be expected, the level of prior experience with similar projects increases with age: 34% of 15-17-year-olds had prior experience, compared to 58% of 26-30-year-olds.
- More than half of respondents from 12 RAY partner countries had previously participated in similar projects, covering all regions of Europe (AT, BE, BG, EE, LI, LT, LV, NO, PT, RO, SI) and ranging from 50% (BE and LI) to 66% (SI).
- Less than half of respondents from 17 RAY partner countries had previously participated in similar projects, again covering all regions of Europe (CZ, DE, DK, ES, FI, FR, HR, HU, IE, IT, LU, NL, PL, SE, SK, TR, UK), and ranging from 37% (DK) to 49% (SK).
- 22% of those who had participated in a similar project before indicated that they had participated once before in a similar project, whereas 24% said they had done so twice. 35% of responding participants had participated 3-5 times in a similar project, 13% between 6 and 10 times, and another 6% more than 10 times (see Table 28).
- The proportion of respondents with 10 or more prior similar projects is highest in MT (21%), LU (19%) and AT (18%). It is lowest in LI (0%), SK (2%), and DK (3%).
- Of those respondents who previously participated in similar projects, 74% participated in a project supported within E+/YiA or an earlier EU youth programme, 33% participated in another EU programme and 32% participated in another similar project (see Table 29).
- Previous experiences with projects financed by E+/YiA or an earlier EU youth programme are strongest in SI (50%¹⁵), BG and LV (both 44%) and EE (43%). Previous experiences with other EU programmes are strongest in LV (24%), LU and SI (both 23%) and LT (21%). Prior experience with non-EU funded projects is strongest in DE (24%), UK (22%), and BE, NL and SI (all 19%).

¹⁵ All percentages under this point of *all* participants – not only of those who previously participated in similar projects.

7.2 Trajectories of project leaders¹⁶

7.2.1 Professional status and occupation of project leaders in the youth sector

Project leaders were asked to indicate what they had done during the year prior to their project outside of the organisation for which they were involved in the project. When asked to select all options that had applied for at least 3 months out of 12, respondents specified the following:

- 39% of the responding project leaders were *full-time employed*, 22% were in education or training, 19% were *self-employed*, 15% were *volunteers*, 14% were *part-time employed*, 8% stated to be *unemployed*, 6% to be *not in work*, and 3% were *doing an internship* (see Table 52).
- Project leaders of all but one activity type were most frequently employed full-time, ranging from 41% (YE) to 34% (SD) – project leaders involved in EVS projects, however, are most frequently in education or training (35% versus 28% in full-time employment; see Table 53).
- Unemployed project leaders are involved twice as often in EVS (15%) than any other activity type (see Table 53).
- Self-employed project leaders play practically no role in EVS (4%), a very strong role in YWM projects (31%), with SD (21%) and YE projects (15%) ranging in the middle (see Table 53).
- As would be expected, older project leaders are less often involved in education and training (age group 16-20: 55%, age group 26-30: 20%). Similarly, employment increases with age (full-time employment in the age group 16-20: 10%, in the age group 26-30: 40%; see Table 54).
- Female respondents are more likely to be in education and training (24% versus 20% of male respondents). Male respondents are more likely to be self-employed (23% versus 16% of female respondents; see Table 55).
- Geographic variance is distinct: the percentage of project leaders who were employed full-time for at least 3 months out of 12 ranges from 13% (IE) to 75% (MT). In 6 RAY partner countries, more than half of all responding project leaders were employed full-time: DK, EE, LV, MT, SE, SK. In 5 RAY partner countries, less than a quarter of all responding project leaders were employed full-time: AT, ES, IE, IT, NL. When considering full- and part-time employment together, more than half of all responding project leaders in 18 of the RAY partner countries were employed (see Table 56).
- In 6 countries, the percentage of unemployed project leaders is higher than 10%: BE (19%), IT (17%), HR (16%), ES and PT (both 15%), and FR (14%; see Table 56).

7.2.2 Professional status and involvement of project leaders in their projects

The majority of responding project leaders were involved in their project as volunteers (63%), while 36% were involved through one of various forms of employment. 16% were involved on a permanent full-time employment basis; all other options (temporary full- or part-time

¹⁶ It needs to be noted that the sample of project leaders is relatively small with respect to EVS and SD as well as for small countries. Therefore, the respective percentages need to be seen with caution, in particular when comparing the responses by activity types or countries. This is even more the case for dependency questions, which were not addressed to all project leaders but only those answering a previous question in a specific way. Therefore, the text avoids referring to percentages of EVS, SD or small countries when they represent extremes.

employment, self-employment, internship) each were relevant for less than 10% of respondents and cumulatively amount to 20% (see Table 57).

Voluntary involvement is lowest in YWM activities (43%) and highest in YE activities (70%). Permanent full-time positions are most prevalent in EVS activities (21%) and least prevalent in YE activities (15%); permanent part-time positions range from 20% (SD) to 4% (YE). Temporary part- or full-time employment (project leaders were employed specifically for their project) is most frequent in YWM activities (16%) and least frequent in YE activities (5%). Self-employment is strongest in YWM activities (18%), where it is the second most frequent type of involvement after volunteering, while it remains below 4% for all other activity types (see Table 57).

Voluntary involvement decreases with age (age group 16-20: 82%, age group 26-30: 64%, age 31 and above: 54%), and permanent full-time employment increases with age (age group 16-20: 5%, age group 26-30: 14%, age 31 and above: 22%). Most employment types show the same pattern, with the exception of temporary part-time employment (4% for 16-20-year-olds, and 3% for 26-30-year-olds) and internships (2% for 21-25-year-olds and 26-30-year-olds, and 1% for 16-20-year-olds and those above the age of 30; see Table 58).

Female respondents are less often involved as volunteers (60%) than their male counterparts (66%), but are more frequently employed in all but one form of employment: permanent full- and part-time positions, temporary part-time positions, self-employment and internships are all more frequent for female respondents, whereas temporary full-time employment for their project is more frequent for male respondents (see Table 59).

Project leaders who are interns outside their organisations (involved in the E+/YiA project) or unemployed are most frequently involved as volunteers (both 77%), while project leaders who are self-employed outside their organisations are least often involved on a voluntary basis (45%) – and most frequently involved as self-employed project leaders (29%; see Table 62).

Types of involvement differ considerably between countries (see Table 60). Voluntary involvement in projects is highest in Romania (85%), Malta, Norway (both 83%) and Bulgaria (81%), and lowest in Denmark (27%), Finland (33%) and Sweden (35%). It is below 50% in 9 RAY partner countries, predominantly in Northern and Western Europe (AT, BE, DE, DK, FI, FR, IE, SE, UK), and above 50% in 17 RAY partner countries, covering all regions of Europe. Permanent full-time positions are most frequent in Finland (51%) – the only country with more than 50% of a full-time permanent employment basis – Sweden (40%) and France (34%). Permanent full-time positions are least frequent in Romania and Italy (both 5%), and Malta (8%). In 8 countries, more than 10% of project leaders were involved in their project on a self-employed basis: NL (19%); AT, DE and IE (all 16%); PL and UK (both 15%); CZ (14%); and LV (12%). In most countries, permanent employment arrangements (full- and part-time) outnumber temporary employment arrangements (full- and part-time), with the exception of Austria (14% permanent vs. 20% temporary) and Italy (7% permanent vs. 16% temporary). In all countries, full-time positions (permanent and temporary) are more common than part-time positions (permanent and temporary).

7.2.3 Previous project experiences of project leaders

Responses of project leaders to the question ‘Have you previously participated in projects supported within Erasmus+: Youth in Action or an earlier EU youth programme (e.g. Youth in Action 2007-2013)?’ show the following:

- 74% of respondents had participated in a project supported by the programme before, 51% of them as project leaders or team members, and 41% of them as participants. 26% of responding project leaders said they had never participated in a project supported by the programme before (see Table 64).
- Differences between activity types are distinct: more than half of all responding project leaders of EVS (53%) and SD (56%) projects stated they had never participated in a project supported by the programme before, compared to 12% (YWM) and YE (30%; (see Table 64).
- With age, the percentage of those who had previously participated *as a project leader or team member* in a project supported by the programme grows (age group 16-20: 32%, age group 26-30: 53%; see Table 65).
- Male respondents have more frequently participated as project leaders or team members before (54% versus 49% for female respondents), whereas female respondents have more frequently participated as participants before (42% versus 39% for male respondents; see Table 66).
- Geographic variance is noticeable (see Table 67): prior participation in a leading role is most common in Austria (74%), Ireland (69%) and Denmark and Malta (both 67%), and least common in France (41%), Bulgaria and Croatia (both 42%). Prior participation in a participating role is most common in Bulgaria (55%), Slovenia (53%) and Croatia (52%), and least common in Ireland (22%), Germany and the UK (both 28%). No prior participation is most common in France (41%), Belgium (38%), and Lithuania (36%), and least common in Austria (16%).

Those respondents who had stated that they had been involved as a project leader or team member in a project supported by the current or former EU youth programme were asked to estimate in how many projects they were involved. 9% had been involved in 1 prior project, 15% in 2 prior projects, 31% in 3-5 prior projects, 23% in 6-10 projects, 13% in 11-20 projects, and 9% in more than 20 projects (see Table 69).

Prior involvement in previous projects is most pronounced in EVS projects (45% of respondents had been involved in more than 10 previous projects), and least pronounced in YE and SD projects (both 15%; see Table 69).¹⁷

Geographic variances exist without a particular regional pattern and range from 32% of prior involvement as a project leader/team member in more than 5 prior projects (AT) to 64% (HU). In 8 countries more than 50% of respondents estimated having been involved in more than 5 prior projects (DE, DK, FR, HU, IE, LT, RO, UK; see Table 68).

7.3 Conclusions

51% of responding project participants had never participated in a similar project before. 22% of those who had participated in a similar project before indicated that they had participated once before in a similar project, whereas 78% said they had done so at least twice (35% of responding participants had participated 3-5 times in a similar project, and another 19% between 6 and 10 times). While this demonstrates that initial participation sparks further interest and engagement, it may also be an indicator for limited access and/or for a lack of (advanced) project and training offers outside the realm of the Erasmus+: Youth in Action Programme.

¹⁷ Due to the small samples for EVS and SD this comparison needs to be considered with caution.

74% of responding project leaders had participated in a project supported by the programme before, 51% of them as project leaders or team members and 41% of them as participants. There is a slight gender bias to the prior experience of project leaders: Male respondents had more frequently participated as project leaders or team members before, whereas female respondents had more frequently participated as participants before.

The occupational status of project leaders outside of their E+/YiA project indicates that 75% of all responding project leaders were in some form of employment: 39% were *full-time employed*, 19% were *self-employed*, 14% were *part-time employed*, and 3% were *doing an internship*.

Within the projects, the majority of project leaders is involved on an unpaid basis (63% as volunteers), while 36% are involved in some form of employment (21% *full-time employed*, 8% *part-time employed*, 7% *self-employed*), and 2% on the basis of an internship/a work placement.

8 Implementation of Erasmus+ Youth in Action¹⁸

This chapter explores various aspects related to the application for and administration of projects in the context of Erasmus+: Youth in Action.

8.1 Becoming involved in Erasmus+: Youth in Action

53% of project participants got to know about their project through a *youth organisation/association* (41%), an *informal youth group* (11%) or a *youth centre* (7%).¹⁹ Other sources and contexts through which participants learned of their project were *friends/acquaintances* (28%), *school/college/university* (13%), *other types of organisations* (10%), *National Agencies or their regional offices*, *newspapers/magazines/radio/TV/Internet* (both 9%), *at work* (7%), *information/the website of the European Commission* or *Eurodesk* (both less than 2%; see Table 72).

Differences between activity types are distinct: youth organisations/associations/groups/centres range between 20% (TCA) and 60% (YWM); friends/acquaintances between 8% (TCA) and 35% (YE, EVS), schools/colleges/universities between 1% (TCA) and 29% (SD), National Agencies between 3% (YE) and 49% (TCA), information/the website of the European Commission and Eurodesk both between 1% (YE) and 7% (TCA) (see Table 72).

59% of project leaders and team members learned of Erasmus+: Youth in Action through a *youth organisation/association* (47%), an *informal youth group* (18%) or a *youth centre* (10%) – even more than project participants learned about their project through these contexts. A similar role was played by *friends and acquaintances* (28%) and *school/college/university* (11%), but *National Agencies or their regional offices* played a much more prominent role (28%), as did the *work* environment (19%), the *information/website of the European Commission* (10%) and the *Eurodesk Network* (5%). Project leaders more frequently mentioned multiple contexts/sources for their involvement in E+/YiA (almost two on average) and also more frequently indicated the implementation structures of E+/YiA (see Table 73).

Again, differences between activity types are distinct, in particular with respect to EVS and SD, while YE and YWM show more similarities. It needs to be noted, though, that the samples for EVS and SD are relatively small, so the percentages need to be considered with caution (see Table 73).

8.2 Application procedure and administrative project management

All project leaders who responded with *yes* to the question ‘Was your organisation an applicant organisation, receiving financial support for this project from the National Agency of your country?’ (38% of all respondents), were asked to which extent they agree or disagree with 11 statements regarding the application procedure and administrative project management of their project. Their responses show the following (see Table 74):

- Overall satisfaction with the 11 covered aspects of the application procedure and administrative project management is very high. Combined ‘agree’ and ‘strongly agree’

¹⁸ See earlier footnote: It needs to be noted that the sample of project leaders is relatively small with respect to EVS and SD. Therefore, the respective percentages need to be considered with caution, in particular when comparing the responses by activity types.

¹⁹ Multiple answers were possible.

response rates range from 59% to 79%, with six aspects scoring above 70% (and four of those above 75%).

- Respondents most strongly agreed that *it was easy to obtain the essential information required for applying for this project* (79%), and least strongly agreed that *compared with other funding programmes, the administrative management of this grant request was easy* (59%).
- Four of the 11 covered aspects of the application procedure and administrative project management were viewed comparatively critically, all with a combined ‘disagree’ and ‘strongly disagree’ response rate above 20%.
 - 27% disagree that *the online tools for application and reporting are easy to use*.
 - 23% disagree that *reporting was easy*.
 - 22% disagree that *the application procedure for this project was simple*.
 - 22% disagree that *the administrative management of this grant request was simple*.
- Four of the 11 covered aspects of the application procedure and administrative project management were viewed comparatively positively, all with a combined ‘agree’ and ‘strongly agree’ response rate above 75%.
 - 79% agree that *it was easy to obtain the essential information required for applying for this project*.
 - 78% agree that *the overall grant system was suitable and satisfactory for this project*.
 - 77% agree that *in the case of this project, it was easy to meet the funding criteria*.
 - 76% agree that *the online tool for Youthpass was easy to use*.

Agreement with the 11 covered aspects of the application procedure and administrative project management differs somewhat between activity types. Disagreement across all aspects is much more pronounced for SD projects, with combined ‘disagree’ and ‘strongly disagree’ response rates fluctuating between 14% and 57%, and with 50% or more respondents in disagreement with five of the 11 statements, namely:

- 57% disagree that *the application procedure was simple* for SD projects.
- 57% disagree that *reporting was easy* for SD projects.
- 50% disagree that *it was easy to meet the funding criteria* for SD projects.
- 50% disagree that *online tools for application and reporting are easy to use* for SD projects.
- 50% disagree that *compared with other funding programmes, the administrative management was easy* for SD projects.

SD projects are the only activity type for which the combined ‘agree’ and ‘strongly agree’ response rate is below 50% for any of the 11 aspects. EVS and YWM projects, on the other hand, show a noticeably higher agreement rate across most aspects. EVS projects show a combined ‘agree’ and ‘strongly agree’ response rate above 80% for three aspects (*it was easy to obtain the essential information required for applying for this project*; *the information required for applying for this project was easy to understand*; and *the online tool for Youthpass was easy to use*), YWM projects even for four aspects (the same three as EVS projects plus *the overall grant system was suitable and satisfactory for this project*).

The duration of projects has a remarkable impact on the agreement with the 11 covered aspects of the application procedure and administrative project management. Four aspects show a linear growth of the combined ‘agree’ and ‘strongly agree’ response rates from shortest (1-3 days) to longest duration (15 or more days), namely *it was easy to obtain the essential information required for applying for this project*; *the information required for applying for this project was easy to understand*; and *compared with other funding programmes, the administrative management of this grant request was easy*. Moreover, responding project leaders who had been involved in the shortest projects, lasting 1-3

days, were considerably more critical in their assessment. The largest difference is apparent regarding the statement *the information required for applying for this project was easy to understand* (1-3 days: 56% combined *agree* and *strongly agree* response rate versus 77% for 4-6 days, a difference of 21%), and *the online tools for application and reporting are easy to use* (1-3 days: 44%, 15 days and more: 63%, a difference of 19%).

Finally, when comparing responses of those project leaders with and without prior project experience, an interesting pattern emerges. Project leaders without prior experience are more critical in their assessment of aspects relating to the application procedure and project administration leading up to the start of a project, whereas project leaders with prior experience are more critical in their assessment of aspects relating to reporting and project administration in the later phases of a project.

8.3 Development, preparation and implementation of projects

8.3.1 Development and preparation of projects

Project leaders were asked to respond to a number of statements about the development and preparation of their projects and to indicate whether each statement was true or false. Based on their responses, the following observations can be made (see Table 75):

- 92% of all respondents state that their *project was well prepared*. Fluctuation between activity types is nominal (EVS 88%, YE 91%, SD 92%, YWM 95%).
- 75% had *cooperated with one or more of the partner organisations* before their project. Fluctuation between activity types is distinct (EVS 64%, YE 71%, SD 83%, YWM 86%).
- 72% of all respondents used Skype or similar tools during the preparation of the project, ranging from 60% for EVS projects to 83% for YWM projects.
- 67% of all projects were *prepared in one or more preparatory meetings involving other project partners*. 92% of all respondents involved in a project with at least one such preparatory meeting said that *the preparatory meetings were essential for the preparation of the project*. SD projects most frequently involved a preparatory meeting with one or more project partners (75%), followed by YE projects (68%), YWM projects (64%) and EVS projects (60%).
- 30% of respondents stated they found one or more project partners through online support services such as OTLAS. Fluctuation between activity types is pronounced (SD 11%, YWM 39%).

In addition, project leaders were asked to which extent they ‘agree’ and ‘strongly agree’ with two statements regarding the development and preparation of their projects. Their responses show the following (see Table 76):

- 84% of respondents state that *the project was developed through mutual cooperation between all partners* (combined ‘agree’ and ‘strongly agree’ response rate). With the exception of EVS (74%), all activity types show similar rates of agreement (SD 83%, YE 83%, YWM 87%).
- 85% of respondents state that *during the preparation, the cooperation between the partners worked well*. Fluctuation between activity types is noticeable (EVS 73%, SD 81%, YE 84%, YWM 89%).

There are no major differences between projects of different duration and between respondents with and without prior project experience.

8.3.2 Implementation of projects

Project leaders were asked to which extent they ‘agree’ and ‘strongly agree’ with 7 statements regarding the implementation of their projects. Their responses show the following (see Table 77, Table 78):

- 94% of respondents state that *the relationship between the project leaders/members of the project team was characterised by mutual respect and good cooperation* (combined ‘agree’ and ‘strongly agree’ response rate). Fluctuation between activity types is nominal (EVS 88%, YE 93%, SD and YWM both 96%).
- 93% of respondents state that *the overall project management was appropriate and satisfactory*. Fluctuation between activity types is nominal (SD 88%, EVS 91%, YE 93%, YWM 96%).
- 91% of respondents state that *during the implementation of the project, the cooperation between the partners worked well*. Fluctuation between activity types is noticeable (EVS 83%, SD 87%, YE 90%, YWM 94%).
- 91% of respondents state that *the results/outcomes of the project are sustainable*. Fluctuation between activity types is noticeable (SD 83%, EVS 86%, YE 91%, YWM 94%).
- 91% of respondents state that *the pedagogical implementation of the project was of high quality*. Fluctuation between activity types is pronounced (EVS 75%, SD and YE both 90%, YWM 96%).
- 89% of respondents state that *the workload for the implementation of the project was reasonable*. Fluctuation between activity types is noticeable (SD 77%, EVS 83%, YE 88%, YWM 92%).
- 88% of respondents state that *the results/outcomes were disseminated appropriately*. Fluctuation between activity types is pronounced (EVS 72%, SD 83%, YE 86%, YWM 93%).

There are no major differences between projects of different duration and between respondents with and without prior project experience.

8.4 Youthpass

79% of responding project leaders report that Youthpass was used in their project, with YWM (87%) and EVS (84%) being above average and YE (79%) around average. SD (32%) is considerably below average, which can be explained by the fact that Youthpass was launched for SD only in 2016 – after the end of projects being invited to the surveys analysed for this report (see Table 81).

94% of the project leaders reporting that Youthpass was used in their project indicate that the project participants wished to receive a Youthpass, and 98% say that the participants received a Youthpass certificate. Around 94% to 95% of project leaders agree or strongly agree that

- they *received all necessary information concerning Youthpass*;
- the *information about Youthpass was clear and understandable*;
- *project participants were informed in detail about Youthpass* (see Table 82).

Furthermore, 92% of project leaders strongly agree (54%) or agree (38%) that *Youthpass was integrated throughout the project and its methods*.

68% of responding participants reported to have a Youthpass certificate, with EVS (77%), YWM (75%) and TCA (73%) being above average and YE (65%) slightly below average. SD (33%) is again considerably below average, which can be explained by the reason mentioned above (see Table 83). The reason for the lower percentages compared to the answers of the project leaders

(see above) needs to be explored further. Possibly, this could be explained by Youthpass certificates being issued only after the surveys.

Of those participants having a Youthpass, 94% report having received a Youthpass certificate as part of the project they were asked about (EVS 98%; YE 95%; YWM 94%; TCA 86%; SD 84%; see Table 85).

Of those who received a Youthpass certificate as part of this project, 67% reported having been involved in a reflection or self-assessment related to issuing the Youthpass certificate (EVS 78%; YWM and TCA 75% each; SD 61%; YE 59%; see Table 86), and of these 83% said that this reflection or self-assessment helped raise their awareness of their development through the project (see Table 87). The lower percentage of participants who were *involved in a reflection or self-assessment* (67%) compared to the percentage of project leaders stating that *Youthpass was integrated throughout the project and its methods* (92%) should be explored further.

30% of the participants having a Youthpass certificate reported that they had used it, e.g. for an application for a job, internship, studies etc. As could be expected, the use of a Youthpass is more distinct for older age groups (age group 21-25: 34%; age group 15-17: 19%; see Table 88). 64% of the participants who had used the Youthpass certificate think that it was appreciated in the context where they presented it, and 69% think that it was helpful, e.g. in getting a job or being accepted for an internship or studies (see Table 89). The reason for the higher percentage for the helpfulness of the Youthpass certificate could be explored further.

8.5 Conclusions

The majority of project participants and project leaders learned of their project, respectively of E+/YiA or a preceding EU youth programme, through *youth organisations, youth groups or youth centres*, followed by *friends/acquaintances*. *Schools/colleges/universities* played a more prominent role for project participants, while *National Agencies or their regional offices* and the *work* environment played a more prominent role for project leaders.

Overall, project leaders are largely satisfied with the application procedure and administrative project management of projects under E+/YiA. Four aspects are seen more critically: more than 20% of respondents disagree that *the online tools for application and reporting are easy to use*, that *reporting was easy*, that *the application procedure for this project was simple*, and that *the administrative management of this grant request was simple*.

Agreement with the 11 covered aspects of the application procedure and administrative project management differs somewhat between activity types. Disagreement across all aspects is much more pronounced for SD projects, with 50% or more respondents in disagreement with five of the 11 statements, namely that *the application procedure was simple* for SD projects, that *reporting was easy* for SD projects, that *it was easy to meet the funding criteria* for SD projects, that *online tools for application and reporting are easy to use* for SD projects, and that *compared with other funding programmes, the administrative management was easy* for SD projects.

The duration of projects has a remarkable effect: several aspects show a linear growth of the combined 'agree' and 'strongly agree' response rate from shortest (1-3 days) to longest duration (15 or more days). The application procedure and administrative project management are clearly catering better to longer projects than shorter ones, and projects lasting between 1 and 3 days are seen as less efficient than longer projects when looked at through the lens of applying for and managing a project.

According to project leaders and team members, Youthpass is widely used in E+/YiA projects – 79% of project leaders report this, and 92% of them state that *Youthpass was integrated throughout the project and its methods*.

On the other hand, 63% of responding participants stated that they have a Youthpass certificate, 94% of them having received one as part of the project they were asked about in the survey. Only two thirds of them reported *having been involved in a reflection or self-assessment* related to issuing a Youthpass certificate, while 83% of these stated that this *helped raise their awareness of their development through the project*. Given the value of reflection or self-assessment for the learning process of participants, it should be explored how Youthpass could be integrated more into the projects. Furthermore, the differences of percentages of participants' and project leaders' responses on the use of Youthpass in the projects should be explored further.

While only 30% of participants having a Youthpass certificate reported that they used it, e.g. for an application, 69% of them think that it was helpful in getting a job or being accepted for an internship or studies. This suggests a relatively high recognition of the Youthpass certificate – and that E+/YiA participants should be encouraged to use it more frequently.

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