

Research Report – Project HOWs

Participants’ and Organisations’ Erasmus+ Experience



Participating Countries

Latvia, Lithuania, Hungary, Bulgaria

2021

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Preface

This research was conducted as part of the Erasmus+ KA2 project named “Project HOWs”. Project Reference Number: 2020-2-LV02-KA205-003404. The project duration is 19 months, from 1.09.2020 till 31.03.2022. Organizations from 4 countries – Baltic Regional fund (Latvia), VSI “Inovatyvi karta” (Lithuania), Tudatos Ifjúságért Alapítvány (Hungary) and CVS-Bulgaria (Bulgaria) are involved in the implementation of this project.

This research has been divided into two parts. In the first part, the quantitative approach has been used to measure the experience of the population that participated in different Erasmus+ projects (non-formal education). In total, 190 surveys were analysed. In another part, a qualitative approach has been used to gather the information from the experienced project organizers. This information was focusing on getting helpful tips toward successful implementation tips from experienced project organizers. Both parts of the research were conducted in 4 partner countries: Latvia, Hungary, Bulgaria and Lithuania.

Every year, there are several projects funded under the Erasmus+ scheme funded by the European Commission that get implemented around the European Union and abroad. Therefore, every year the young generation, by gaining competencies from such projects, get motivated to write their applications for funded projects toward spreading the betterment and goodness around the society. However, it has been observed that in the beginning, designing a project and later implementing it can be a complex and confusing procedure. Therefore, this research focused on interviewing the participants who already participated in various projects and organisations around four EU countries (Lithuania, Latvia, Hungary and Bulgaria) who have extensive experience in writing applications, designing the projects and implementing them. To make the projects effective and draw some guidelines for newcomers in the project, it is important to gather some evidence based information.

To create such information, the most important thing is to hear the opinion of the attendees. These opinions shed light on the concepts which mostly go missing during feedback questionnaires. Erasmus+ is already changing lives, while such evaluations help to make those changes more effective. Involved organisations disseminated the questionnaire in their local communities to all those who participate in any kind of Erasmus+ funded projects. Similarly, involved organisations conducted qualitative interviews in their local communities with numerous project organisers. This research assured participants complete anonymity and freedom. We acknowledge that the more information we can gain the more it can help us to

understand the improvements that need to be made when designing and implementing the projects.

Data was analysed after collecting the answers. Thus, this report is giving a descriptive view of that analysis. We are firm that the synthesised information from this research will provide a good deal of wisdom to beginners toward designing and implementing the projects.

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QUANTITATIVE RESEARCH

Demographic information

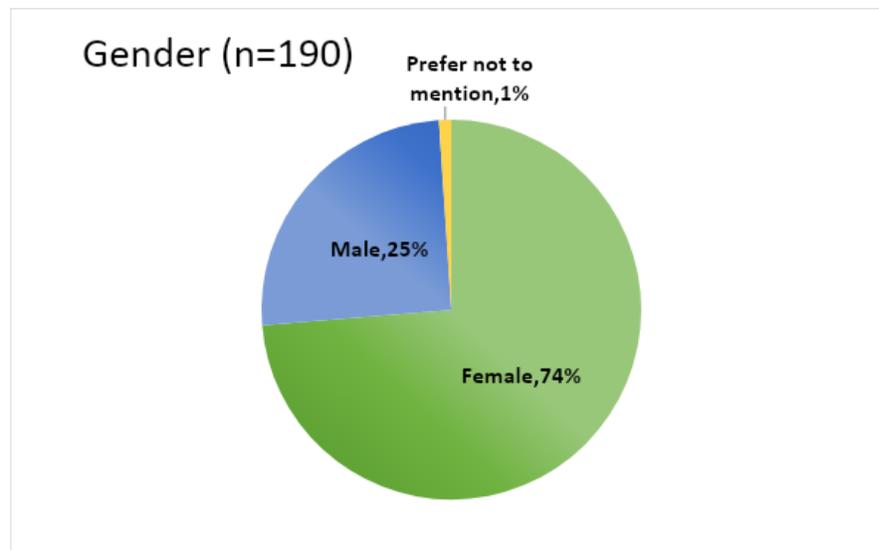
Quantitative survey (multiple-choice questions) for the youth that have participated in different youth projects as a participant. In the total, 190 surveys were analysed. 54 – from Latvia, 51 – from Bulgaria, 49 – from Lithuania and 36 – from Hungary.

In the quantitative survey, the questionnaire included socio-demographic factors (age, gender, country of origin, country of residence, etc.), number and nature of projects a participant has attended. Subsequently, there were questions about the confidentiality, accommodation, venue, food, activities, freedom of expression of an idea related to the projects participants have taken part in. Additionally, there were some open-ended questions in the form where participants were encouraged to share about the problems, positive and negative aspects on their own will and freedom.

1. Gender

Among the participants, 140 (74%) identified as female, 48 (25%) identified as males and 2 (1%) participants refused to respond (see Chart 1).

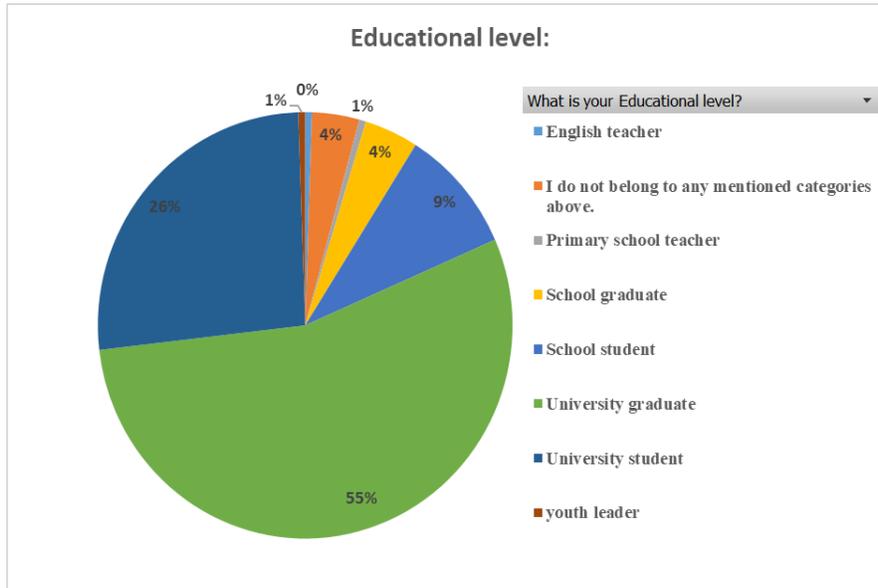
Chart 1



2. Educational level

Among the participants, 104 (55%) were university graduates, 50 (26%) were university students, 18 (9%) were school students, 8 (4%) were school graduates, 7 (4%) did not belong to any mentioned categories above (see Chart 2).

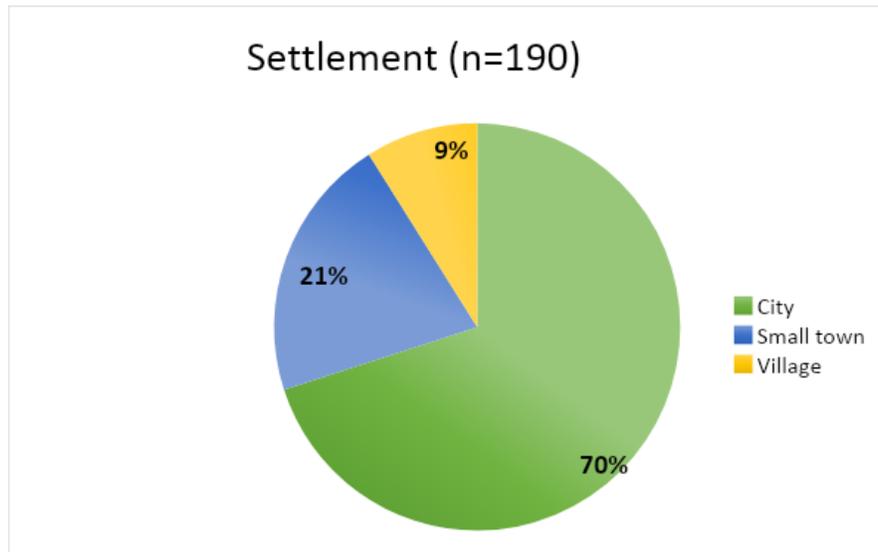
Chart 2



3. Settlement

Among the participants, 133 (70%) were from urban areas, 40 (21%) were living in a small town and 17 (9%) were from the rural areas (see Chart 3).

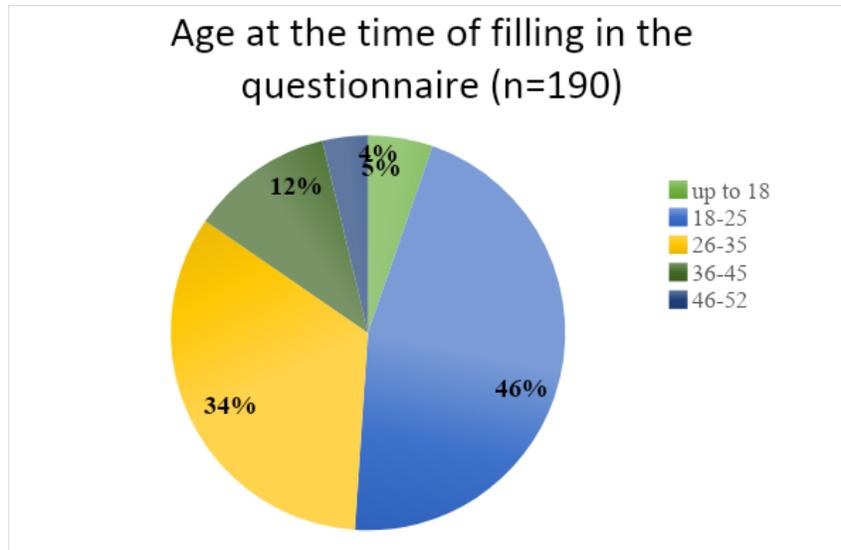
Chart 3



4. Age at the time of filling in the questionnaire

From the participants, 10 (5%) were under the age of 18 years, 86 (46%) fall under the 18-25 age category, 65 (33%) were 26 to 35 years old, 22 (12%) were 36-45 years old and 7 (4%) fall under the 46-52 age category (see Chart 4).

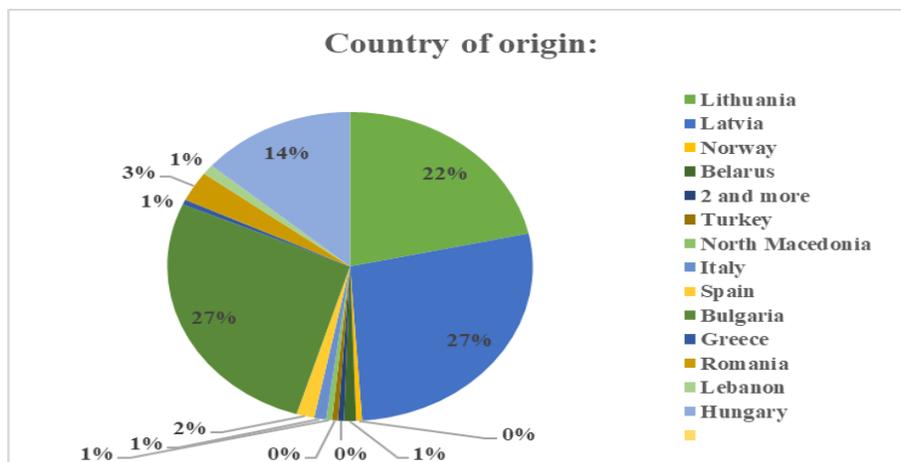
Chart 4



5. Country of origin

From the participants, 52 (27%) were from Latvia, 51 (27%) were from Bulgaria, 41 (22%) were from Lithuania, 26 (14%) were from Hungary, 6 (3%) were from Romania, 3 (2%) were from Spain, 2 (1%) were from Lebanon, 2 (1%) were from Italy, 2 (1%) were from Belarus, 1 (0%) was from Norway, 1 (0%) was from 2 and more countries, 1 (0%) was from Turkey, 1 (0%) was from North Macedonia, 1 (1%) was from Greece (see Chart 5).

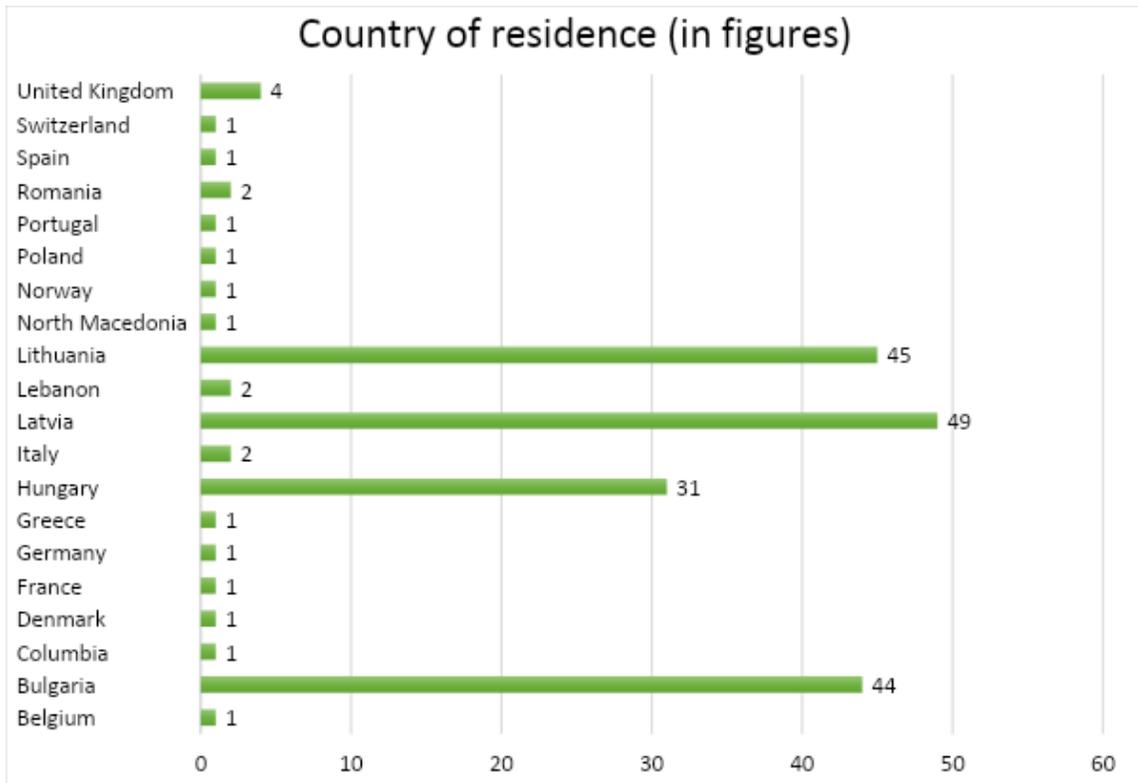
Chart 5



6. Country of Residence

Among the participants, (26%) participants were from Latvia, 45 (24%) participants were from Lithuania, 44 (23%) – Bulgaria, 31 (16%) – Hungary, 4 (2%) – United Kingdom, 2 (1%) – Romania, 2 (1%) – Lebanon, 2 (1%) - Italy. 1 (>1%) participant's country of origin is Switzerland, Spain, Portugal, Poland, Norway, North Macedonia, Greece, Germany, France, Denmark, Columbia and Belgium (see Chart 6).

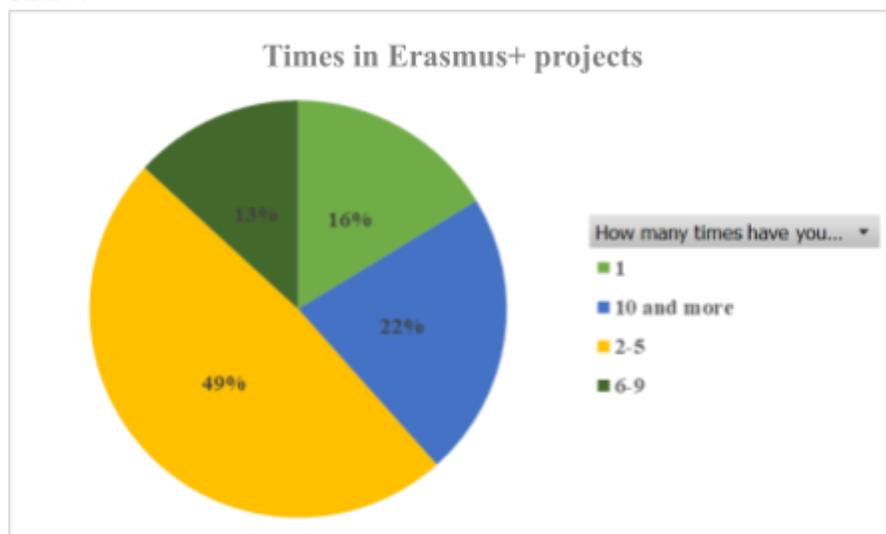
Chart 6



7. Times in Erasmus+ projects

Among the participants, 92 (49%) participated in around 2-5 Erasmus+ projects, 42 (22%) 10 and more times, 31 (16%) 1 time, 29 (13%) 6-9 times (see Chart 7).

Chart 7



8. Type of project

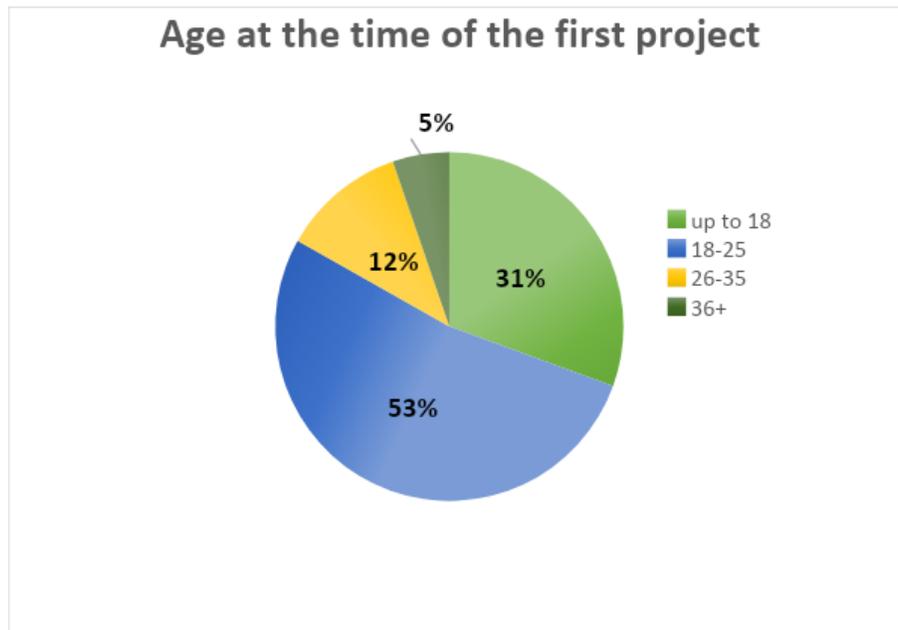
To the question regarding attendance in Erasmus+ projects, participants responded as follow:

- o Youth Exchange (158 answers)
- o Training Course (128 answers)
- o Study visit (47 answers)
- o Seminar (39 answers)
- o Conference (28 answers)
- o EVS (7 answers)
- o Volunteering (3 answers)
- o Partnership building (1 answer)
- o Comenius Erasmus K2 International camps (1 answer)
- o KA2 as a partner and developer of innovations (1 answer)
- o KA3 as a participant in a structured dialogue meeting with policy makers (1 answer)
- o Erasmus+ Volunteer Program (1 answer)
- o ESC (1 answer)
- o ESC Volunteering project (1 answer)
- o Erasmus+ internship (1 answer)

9. Age at the time of the first project

Out of all the participants, 100 (53%) participants were 18-25 years old at the time of their first project, 58 (30%) were up to 18 years old, 22 (12%) were from 26 to 35 years old and 10 (5%) were 36 and older (see Chart 8).

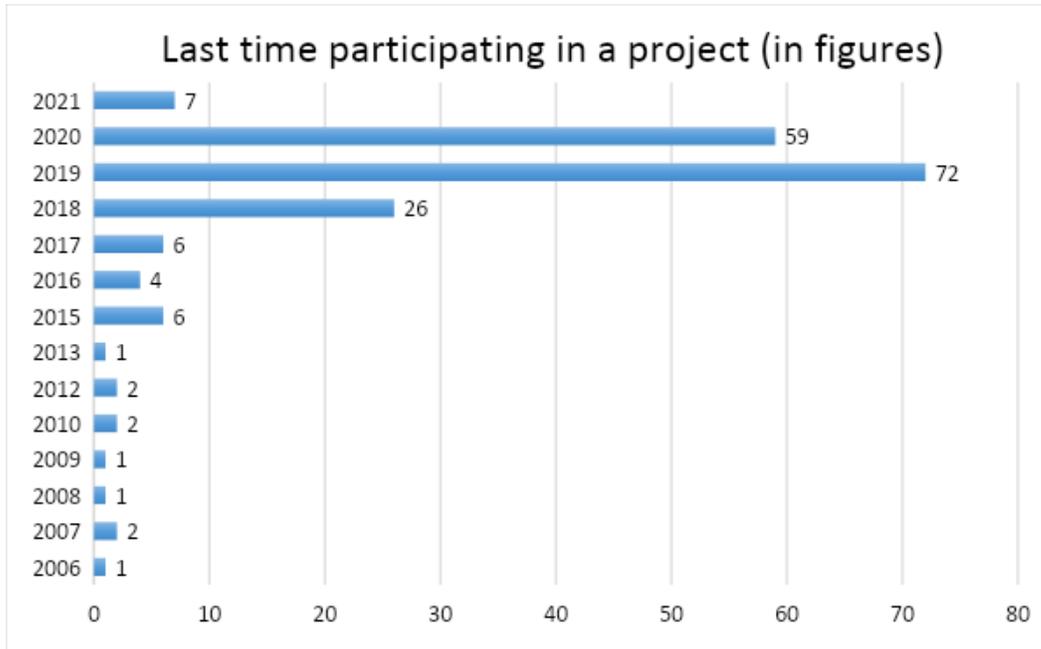
Chart 8



10. Last time participating in a project

Out of all the participants, 72 (38%) last participated in a project in 2019, 59 (31%) in 2020, 26 (14%) in 2018, 7 (4%) in 2021, 6 (3%) each last participated in 2017 and 2015, 4 (2%) last participated in a project in 2016, 2 (1%) each last participated in 2012, 2010 and 2007 and 1 (>1%) each last participated in a project in 2013, 2009, 2008 and 2006 (see Chart 9).

Chart 9



11. Motivation to take part in the project

As every participant could answer with multiple things that made them motivated to take part in a project, the most common answers to the question „What was your motivation to take part in the project?“ are as follows:

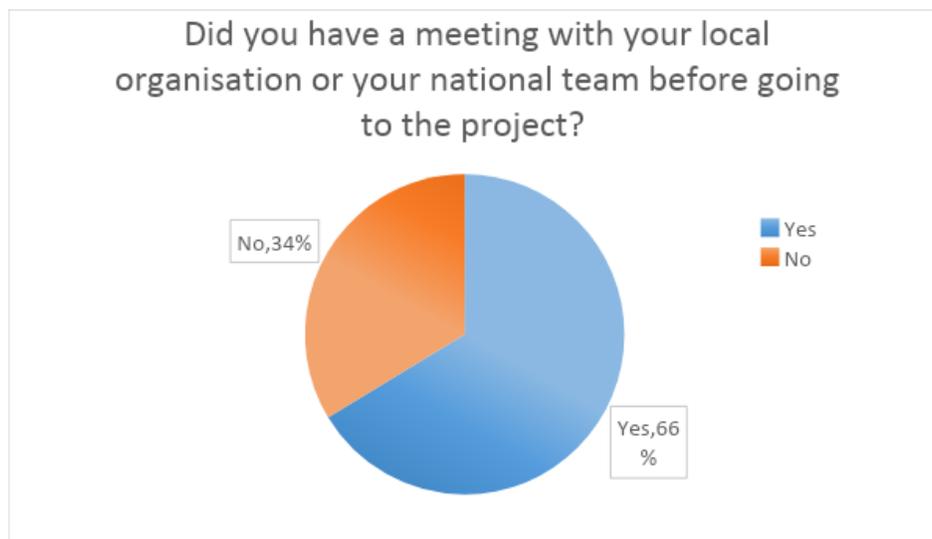
- o New experiences (171 answers)
- o Learning new things (164 answers)
- o Self – development (163 answers)
- o Travelling to another country (162 answers)
- o Meeting new friends (140 answers)
- o Gain new skills (132 answers)
- o Challenging myself (117 answers)
- o Learning foreign languages (75 answers)
- o Free food and accomodation (34 answers)
- o Recognition (Youthpass) (28 answers)
- o My friends encouraged me (18 answers)
- o Did not have anything better to do (11 answers)
- o So my family would be proud of me (7 answers)
- o I was forced (2 answers)
- o Work obligation/Part of my profession (2 answers)
- o To share my experience (1 answer)

- o Since I am a teacher I wanted to get new ideas to apply in my school hours (1 answers)
- o A possibility to travel during the pandemic (1 answer)
- o Gaining new perspectives (1 answer)
- o Understanding and learning different cultures (1 answer)
- o Cultures and learn via informal education (1 answer)

12. Meeting with your local organization

Among the participants, (66%) said that they have had a meeting with their local organization, and 64 (34%) said that they haven't met with their local organization (see Chart 10).

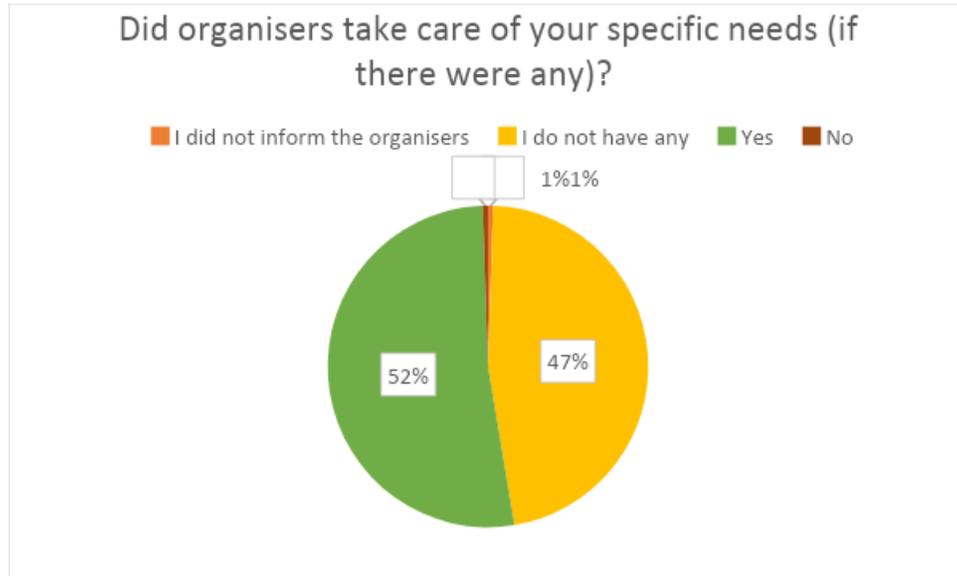
Chart 10



13. Taking care of specific needs

Out of all the participants from all four countries 99 (52%) said that organisers took care of their specific needs, 89 (47%) said that they do not have any specific needs, 1 (1%) said that organisers did not take care of their specific needs, and 1 (0%) said that they did not inform the organisers of their specific needs (see Chart 11).

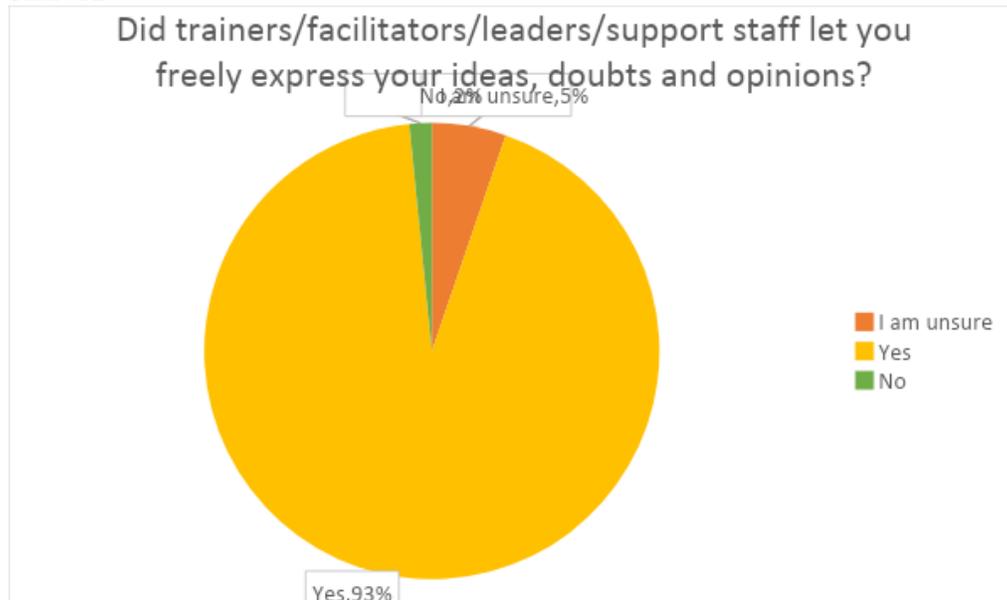
Chart 11



14. Expression of ideas

Out of all the participants from all four countries 177 (93%) responded that they could freely express their ideas, doubts and opinions, 10 (5%) are unsure if they could freely express themselves and 3 (2%) said that they couldn't freely express their ideas, doubts and opinions (see Chart 12).

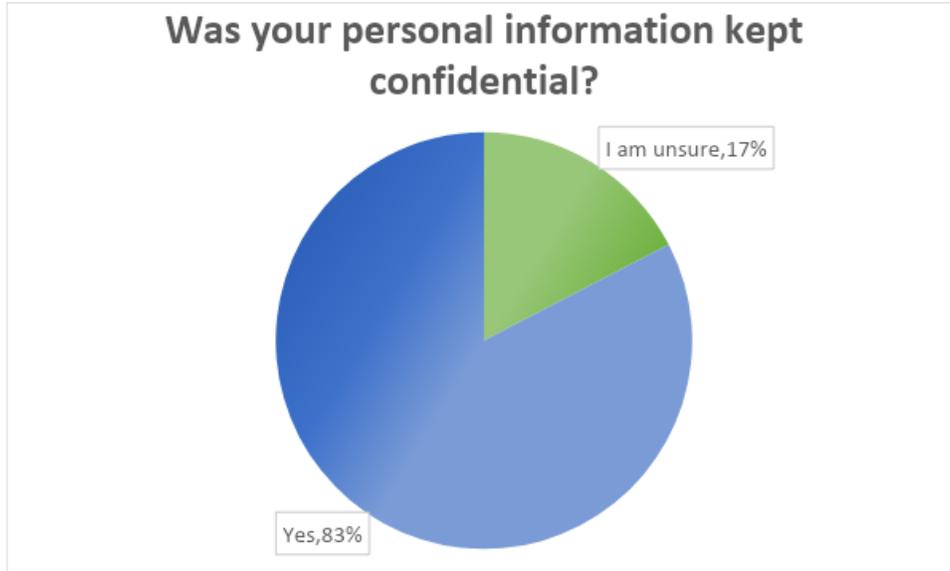
Chart 12



15. Confidentiality of personal information

Out of all participants from all four countries 157 (83%) said that their personal information was kept confidential and 33 (17%) are unsure (see Chart 13).

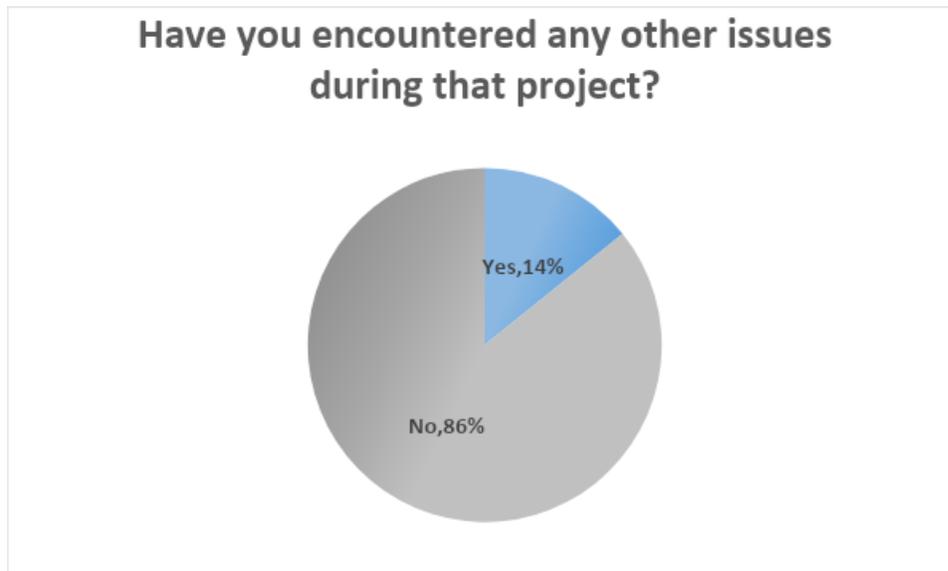
Chart 13



16. Any other issues during the project

Among the participants, 163 (86%) said that they didn't have any other issues during the project and 27 (14%) said that they had other issues during the project (see Chart 14).

Chart 14



17. If your answer is yes, please mention what kind of issues you faced and how the issues were solved? Were you satisfied with the solution? We would appreciate if you could be as comprehensive, as possible.

- Organizers of the project were lacking the experience;
- Organization of the project was formal rather than informal as per guidelines of Erasmus program projects;
- Feedback from experts and experienced participants was not taken into account and perceived negatively;
- Team was not communicative nor welcoming;
- Unexpected difficulties occurred;
- Flight delays occurred but were handled calmly;
- Psychological issues were handled, yet not in the best ways;
- Timetable wasn't thought out thoroughly, had a lot of free time;
- There wasn't anyone uniting us all as a group;
- Had a fear of public speaking but by the end of the project I was able to express my opinion. Many people with great leadership skills helped me gain my self esteem;
- In the hotel they were changing towels every day and didn't stop after asking not to. I was surprised and disturbed that they were not showing an example on how to be more environment friendly;
- Got sick but the organisers took me to the doctor and bought special food and medicine;
- Problems with the landlord, our coordinator tried to solve it;
- Room neighbours didn't understand my need for silence, peace, rest;
- Getting to the accommodation was a huge issue because no one greeted us after getting to the project country;
- Participants were left alone 70% of the time;
- A lot of outside people were coming into our hostel and drinking/smoking. It was very invasive and this issue was not solved;
- My luggage was lost and arrived almost halfway through the training, the organisers helped me with clothes, bathroom necessities, communicating with the airport;
- A lot of people were smoking in the rooms;
- Became very ill with a high grade fever. The organisers didn't believe me, didn't allow me to check my temperature nor could I skip a session;
- Not enough food provided.

18. How clear the general information about the project was? On a scale from 1 to 10

Out of all the participants from all four countries 60 said 10/10, 50 said 9/10, 46 said 8/10 and 34 said that the general information about the project was 7/10.

19. How clear the reimbursement procedure was for you? On a scale from 1 to 10

Out of all the participants from all four countries 71 said 10/10, 57 said 9/10, 33 said 8/10, 13 said 7/10, 4 said 6/10 and 12 said less than 6/10.

20. How satisfied were you with the accommodation? On a scale from 1 to 10

Out of all the participants from all four countries 73 said 10/10, 33 said 9/10, 34 said 8/10, 15 said 7/10 and 35 said less than 7/10.

21. How satisfied were you with the project venue (meeting rooms/outdoor spaces)? On a scale from 1 to 10

Out of all the participants from all four countries 94 said 10/10, 34 said 9/10, 38 said 8/10, 15 said 7/10 and 9 said less than 7/10.

22. How satisfied were you with the communication with the organizers? On a scale from 1 to 10

Out of all participants from all four countries 85 said 10/10, 54 said 9/10, 23 said 8/10, 13 said 7/10 and 42 said less than 7/10.

23. How satisfied were you with the communication from the sending organization? On a scale from 1 to 10

Out of all the participants from all four countries 87 said 10/10, 40 said 9/10, 26 said 8/10, 12 said 7/10 and 25 said less than 7/10.

24. Any good or bad experience you had with organizers, please do specify and please suggest what could be improved.

- This was the best project ever and everything was on very high level;
- Organisers were great! I don't have any suggestions;
- I sent my application just a few days before project, because of Covid there were less participants than expected, but the communication was fast, clear - before and during the project;
- Very bad Taxi experience;
- It was hard to be in between the changes what was going on in the hosting organisation. They were helping me to be there, but I am not sure if these things can be planned;
- Preparation on what Erasmus+ actually is would have been to know in advance before the first project;

- Organizers always double-check if all the necessary things are packed (I.e., passport, tickets, etc). Regular conversations are carried out between the group to make sure everybody is feeling well;
- Mostly good experiences, organizers were really understanding;
- Communication was really good;
- Host coordinator was not in place, so a lot of answers came later. Would be nice to have person on the place;
- Of course it depends on project and the leader who organize the project;
- I have had only good experiences, when they ask if everything is fine, take care of you;
- In one of my projects it was a very poor program, I can deal with all kind of food, accommodations, but I really don't like projects where is a poor program - nothing to do, feels like I'm wasting my time;
- I think it would be great to have mentors who will provide you personally with all necessary information;
- About visa reimbursement, organization didn't cover my visa fee, but they covered all money after arrival on project;
- Working heating inside during winter time;
- I would be more satisfied of more various vegetarian food. Sometimes it was not fully enough to sustain good diet. But organizers did as best as they could;
- Some organizers make completely useless projects. In one of them most useful thing was watching a shocking reality movie.
- I really love non formal education, but in this case there should be really well organised learning program full of activities, involving every single participant;
- On most projects a lot of time is spent sitting or sitting games and without movement - 80%. Outdoor activities, more movement games and fewer presentations, discussions, drawing games should be done. We must be sitting 50%;
- Stationery is not saved. Especially the cardboard that is put on the poster. At the end of the project, a lot of paper rubbish and colored paper is thrown away. They don't try to use everything a second time;
- When I was the project leader, on one of the projects after dinner some discussions only with the leaders started, which lasted until 10 pm. Participants had party, and youth leaders were discussing how the day went. But some of the leaders were the age of the participants and they were also willing to party - there must be a limit on the engagement of leaders. If there is an organized activity after dinner, let it be for everyone;
- Enough information; polite language; welcoming; giving space, well prepared program, guests from local community to teach us dances and instruments; local food and tour;
- So most of the participants hated the food that we were given and we were in the middle of nowhere with no shops around. On the 5th day or so the organizers created a shopping list to which we could sign up and write up what we would buy and they brought us later on that day in change of money of course. I liked that, it was kind;

- Good teamwork, but they could have been more prepared in some cases.

25. Here is the space for any additional comments/ suggestions related to logistics.

- Clarify activity plan in host country;
- In general, I never had any exceptional issues with the project being organized. Everyone seemed helpful and there was necessary information provided;
- It depends on project and the leader who organize the project;
- It was terribly cold in the hotel and electricity was bad;
- Meet at the airport or train station, especially if the person doesn't know the language of the country;
- Hotel should be only for participants and would be great in place with wonderful view or in city center;
- Many things asked in these questions depend on the organization that sends you to the project and the project itself as some have better infrastructure than others and experience varies with that;
- Often sending organization doesn't really care about other things just logistical parts;
- Logistic means a lot for youth adults. I am aware usually first impression which youth is doing about the project is the VENUE. I think it is important to take care that participants will feel safe and cozy in the venue where they have their projects. This also adds to their emotional wellbeing because usually during projects you need to get out from your comfort zone, so good location can just help adjust more easily to the environment;
- These projects are the best investment of European funds. Young people are developing before my eyes. They come to the project curled up, embarrassed to talk, and leave fresh with heightened self-confidence and faith that they can. And the development of their English in 7-10 days is indisputable; The journey to the place itself also makes them very good and develops them.
- I really like that the conditions for accommodation are not luxurious. It also changes the views of our oversatisfied young people;
- These projects are something unique. I do not replace them for the most luxurious all inclusive;
- More free time during the projects! In my opinion this is vital because during games we get to know each other up to a point. However, on the other hand, I've experienced projects where we had plenty of free time to discuss various topics with each other and to communicate freely and pleasantly;
- Accommodation is traditionally under criticism;
- Often, when traveling from a small town, it is necessary to spend the night in a big city. These costs, even small ones for people with limited opportunities, are an expense. None of the organizations has so far offered to cover such costs. Which, in my opinion, would give more people access to these programs;
- The whole organization was excellent, the only problems with the trip were beyond the control of the organization (traffic and waiting at the border).

26. What did you learn from the project?

Participants from all four countries said that they have learned:

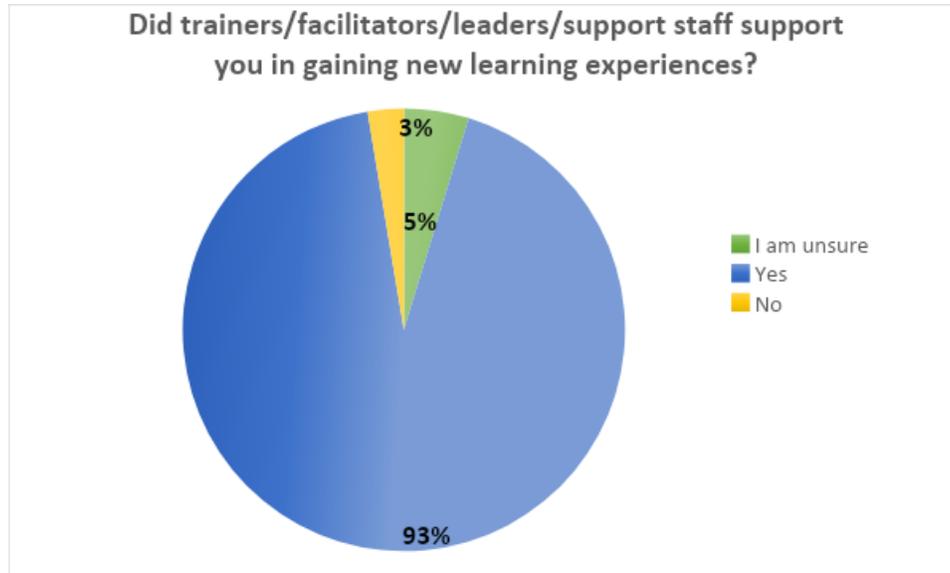
- Coaching techniques in youth work;
- Self-reflection methods;
- About gamification as a tool, how to use it in work with youngsters;
- A lot new games learnt from other participants;
- To be open to feedback, accept situation and find good in not the greatest situation;
- Project topic wise - about situation in other countries;
- Different practical things;
- Digital/technology skills;
- Gained knowledge about the culture;
- Enhanced my own personality traits;
- Learned more about storytelling;
- Learned some more ways to express myself and word and how to represent the current world in words and in theater play;
- Communication skills and developing language and other random skills connected with dancing etc;
- How diverse the people are!;
- Cooking skills;
- Organizational skills;
- Being more self aware;
- Creative thinking methods;
- Overall self-development;
- Debate as a educational method;
- New creative information expression methods;
- Things about business plans and career opportunities;
- I learned the things that school and parents can't teach you, things you can't read in books or watch youtube videos about, but only by stepping out of your comfort zone and participating in these projects;
- Facing fears;
- Kindness;
- Conflict solution;
- About Erasmus+;
- Leadership;
- Advocacy topics, how to defend my opinion and raise problems in society;
- How to overcome some personal biases;
- Respect others;
- Photographing;

- Video making;
- Editing;
- To be free;
- To be more patient with others and myself;
- Buying tickets for the plane (the first thing that I've learned, never flew before);
- Ecopreneurship;
- The importance of youth competences;
- Pros and cons of the EU;
- How to be an active citizen;
- To work in a multicultural environment;
- To make presentations about something I did not know much before;
- Learned more about migration;
- The method of self-improvement through Life Coaching;
- How to help people with special needs through sports;
- Learned about human rights and children;
- Many things about the EVS experience of other volunteers, sending and receiving organizations;
- How to organize a similar program;
- I learned to ignore stereotypes;
- I learned about the theatre of the oppressed and about some interesting projects for refugee integration through culture;
- How to involve our participants, young people in organizational processes;
- The background of board game development;
- Article writing, blog writing;
- I learned that one learns every day.

27. Support from trainers/facilitators/leaders/support staff in gaining new learning experiences

Out of all the participants from all four countries 176 (93%) said that trainers/facilitators/leaders/support staff supported them in gaining new learning experiences, 9 (5%) said that they were not sure and 5 (2%) said that the staff didn't support them (see Chart 15).

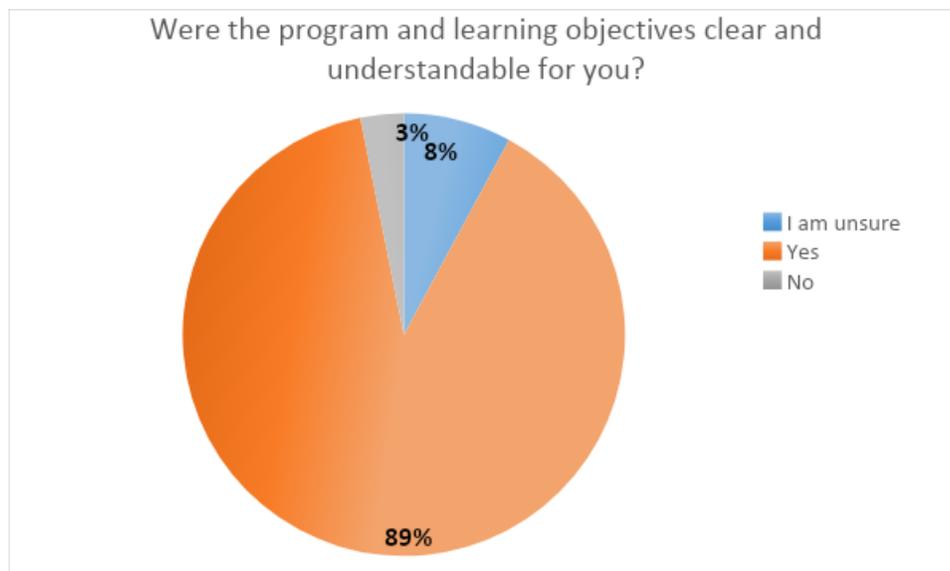
Chart 15



28. The program and learning objectives

Out of all the participants from all four countries 169 (89%) said that the program and learning objectives were clear and understandable for them, 15 (8%) are not sure and 6 (3%) said that the program and learning objectives were not clear nor understandable for them (see Chart 16).

Chart 16



29. 3 most useful and 3 less useful activities of the project

All the participants from all four countries were asked to mention and describe 3 most useful and 3 less useful activities of their project.

Useful activities:

- ✓ Team building;
- ✓ Reflection activities
- ✓ Theoretical input about coaching techniques;
- ✓ Learning about gamification and how to use it as a tool in work with youngsters;
- ✓ Learning new information about Erasmus+, ESC;
- ✓ Development and presentation of the assigned task;
- ✓ Visiting the project town, other city;
- ✓ Treasure hunt - involving exploration of the area, language, things;
- ✓ Meeting/getting to know people;
- ✓ Lectures and meetings with professionals of specific field;
- ✓ Culture evening - dances, traditions, quiz;
- ✓ Group storytelling;
- ✓ 5 word story;
- ✓ Making theater of country's fairytale;
- ✓ Open sharing (chance for those who wish, to share openly and tackle a question they have);
- ✓ Time for ourselves;
- ✓ Meeting different schools;
- ✓ Creativity and sightseeing activities;
- ✓ Thinking about stereotypes;
- ✓ Outdoor activities;
- ✓ Debates;
- ✓ Land art project;
- ✓ International/World cafe;
- ✓ French lessons;
- ✓ Work with handicap youngsters;
- ✓ Summer camp organisation;
- ✓ Experience sharing;
- ✓ 16 personalities test;
- ✓ Organising life tasks such as cooking and cleaning;
- ✓ Name games and ice breakers;
- ✓ Workshop linked to the project;

- ✓ Having an obligation to participate in cleaning and keeping our environment clean;
- ✓ Discussions about different topics with others;
- ✓ Opportunity to assist in organizing international trainings;
- ✓ Leading the group of street animation;
- ✓ Group brainstorming;
- ✓ Secret friend;
- ✓ Trying informal education methods;
- ✓ Excursions;
- ✓ Meeting with locals;
- ✓ Forum theatre;
- ✓ Day hike;
- ✓ Night hikes with roles;
- ✓ Setting goals, setting steps to achieve that goals;
- ✓ Speed friending;
- ✓ Quizzes;
- ✓ Visiting the recycling center;
- ✓ Final work about all what we learned;
- ✓ Experiential learning;
- ✓ Role plays;
- ✓ Arts integration;
- ✓ Talking to investor practice;
- ✓ Eating together;
- ✓ Mini force talks with random person;
- ✓ Meditation session;
- ✓ Slack lining;
- ✓ Public speaking;
- ✓ Blind-trust walking;
- ✓ Organizing and establishing a village (with own herb, ministries and etc);
- ✓ The game about smuggling immigrants (forgot how it's called);
- ✓ Drawing;
- ✓ Researching;
- ✓ Ferdinand simulation;
- ✓ The simulation of people coming from different layers of society and each question they can walk 1 step ahead;
- ✓ Rock climbing;
- ✓ Meeting with other artists;
- ✓ Working on self-discipline and endurance;
- ✓ Living outdoor;
- ✓ Introduction to Erasmus + programs;
- ✓ Practical activities related to rural tourism;
- ✓ Organizing charity events;
- ✓ Meeting partners;

- ✓ A session where we had to tell a story from our folklore;
- ✓ Opportunities for participants to lead activities;
- ✓ Mindfulness speaker;
- ✓ A touching, beautiful personal walk - the organizers decorated the path with small candles, meaningful questions and quotes, passing a threshold, sharing circle in the end;
- ✓ Painting our own cup on the first day in the very first hours of the morning;
- ✓ Conducting Europe-wide research regarding youth work;
- ✓ Organizing English conversation groups for young people;
- ✓ Developing a card game;
- ✓ Online trainings;
- ✓ Article writing/blog writing;
- ✓ Creating test forms and documents;
- ✓ Making PPT;
- ✓ Making language lessons with youth and prepare for them;
- ✓ Time management;
- ✓ Market of methods;
- ✓ Human statues;
- ✓ Open event for the public;
- ✓ Energizers;
- ✓ City rallies;
- ✓ Getting a lot more acceptance towards disabled people.

Useless activities:

Lectures that were not in English yet attendance was obligatory;
 Lectures;
 Activities by organisers and local volunteers;
 Too much free time;
 Too many energizer games/Morning energizers;
 Listening to someone explain youthpass in detail;
 Long feedback questions;
 Drawing;
 Repetitive activities;
 EVS presentations organized by us;
 Blog of the project;
 Short presentations by participants of their organisations;
 Culture/Intercultural evenings;
 Extra ice breakers;
 Evening discussion groups;
 Poorly planned sessions;
 Secret friend;
 Working only in local teams;
 Painting white t-shirts;

Making a circle everyday;
"How you feel";
Oira Oira;
Too many workshops;
Too much sitting in one room;
Only one session where countries lead activities separately;
5th history lesson of Romas;
Talking about youthpass 1-2 hours of same stuff/Youthpass competences;
Sleep, because there was too little time for all great activities;
Closing party;
Snacking breaks;
Presentation on nutrition, maybe it could be done better in practical level;
Agreement board;
Making a presentation for some local rank politician;
Creating songs;
Activities which had more theory than experience;
Writing exercises;
Activities that weren't connected to project's theme in any way;
The lack of more ice-breaking activities;
Leaving us to do hitchhiking without our phones;
Reflection that was mandatory to be conducted alone;
Meeting with local bodies;
Spending too much time on one topic and disregarding others that are also as important;
Too many dating games;
Trust games on the first training days to get to know each other;
Video making workshops;
Activities with presentations;
Long team building;
Evaluation;
Debate sessions;
Opening speeches;
Long, non active presentations without breaks in between;
Easy games for the age group.

30. If you would be able to change/improve 3 things in that project you took part, what would they be?

- Include activity about future cooperation;
- A more detailed description of the available courses (foreign uni) - info about them;
- Choice of activities;
- Place for participants to express themselves and cooperate (again activities);

- Attitude from organizers;
- Time management - right on time for activities, bed time;
- Appropriate bathroom;
- More precise daily schedule;
- More precise end task;
- Activities could be targeted more towards uniting all participants, not in smaller groups;
- The venue;
- Length of the project/ Longer projects;
- Better preparations before projects;
- Meeting with other participants from the same country before departing;
- Food variety and quality/Times when you get the food and amount of food;
- Changing team members for different teams;
- Use of young people, creativity and activity side;
- Within preparations more decisions made by participants, i.e. menu, activities etc;
- No alcohol;
- To take out some childish games in youth exchanges;
- More cooperation between participants (preparing some social program for evenings etc);
- I would have opened up more and had more fun; I was just shy. Maybe it would be possible to do an activity on the first day where introverts are paired with outgoing extroverts that have the responsibility to encourage and push the introverts to be more active, participate everywhere;
- More workshops;
- More responsibilities given to youngsters;
- More in depth problem solution;
- More active activities, like sport type;
- Learning from direct experience, such as playing games that reveal certain things about the group or the topic, or having someone facilitate a session that involves more action than talking;
- Facilitation by participants, when the group is given some part of the programme every day to design their own activities based on their skills & experience;
- A flexible programme with enough time for the participants to get to know each other. Oversaturated and strict programmes often make the participants feel like there is no time to enjoy each other;
- More speakers for different topics;
- More non-formal activities;
- Sleeping in tents;
- Show more country, sightseeing;
- Less information more practices;
- More time exploring host country;

- Would make that all facilitators are prepared well and willing to share the knowledge (in my experience not in all projects it was like that);
- Would try to make +-5 years difference between participants because it is kind of hard to do the task with 16 and 30 years old people in one group;
- I don't know if it is possible but it is always better when the sending organization buys tickets first not the participants and then the refunding;
- Would invite more specialists to talk about recycling and wasting and maybe have them to conduct activities;
- Do a bit less useless work in teams inside of one building;
- Spend more time on important things;
- Recruit more passionate participants/inspire the participants more;
- Too many participants;
- More experiential learning;
- More arts included;
- More reflections about the process and actual plan for steps to work in the near future (on the topic, ex. how can I use my new knowledge/skills back in my country/my community?);
- Make it clearer how to get to the exact location of the project for the first time;
- More cultural activities like visiting museums;
- One decent group sports activity in the place of energizers;
- Communication with the sending NA;
- Would carry out the project in the summer;
- No smoking;
- More incentive to build partnerships between participants after the project;
- Rooms max for 4 people, 6-8 are problematic;
- More joint events organized for the volunteers (in person or online);
- Bicycles or some other form of individual transportation for volunteers;
- Better, more personalized language support;
- More financial support;
- Sustainability after the project finishes.

31. Please comment if there was something special during that project: some special moments, workshops, experiences. Let us know!

- „Singing activity for all group with singing teacher who showed that each person can sing. It was magical moment!“;
- „Can't remember, but project was great! A lot great workshops, new information, ice breakers! Special moment was Latvian Folklore group had show about traditions“;
- „Small town was great, as local volunteers could show us around and town itself was lovely!“;
- ..Special was the bond between the organizers“;

- „Really special was evening free time and conversations/dances. Also whole project was special with people I met there and with whom I'm still keeping contact“;
- „There was a 3 day festival at the end of the project with concerts and different activities“;
- „All project was special. New communication, outdoor activities together“;
- „We went out in the woods and made landart about exchange projects and had to talk about them. Love it. Creative and an interesting way to give information“;
- „Very nice country presentations, expedition to hill, game in the city, games in the forest.“;
- „Between international friends we were playing Almost perfect dinner, sharing our cuisine. Also I love cooking classes with handicap youngsters and amazing summer camp. Chance to pass the DELF/ French language exam.“;
- „Always the most emotional is the last evening, also international cultural evenings“;
- „Every project I have done has had special moments that I have taken something from it. My favorite part is however always the teambuilding through daily chores“;
- „Possibilities to step out of the comfort zone - climbing the mast of the ship; learning to have fun with the team while doing mundane things like cooking, doing dishes, and cleaning. It was an out-of-comfort experience, and it made me appreciate everything in life more.“;
- „I think the most special thing was our solidarity as a group, and I met two guys that were the funniest people I've ever met, and became my best friends of the group“;
- „I think that the most interesting and useful was a part of the project (1.5 days) when we were working in teams developing project ideas. After we were presenting our projects proposals, and received feedback both from the organisers, other participants and a representative of the NA. It was very useful, because the NA representative explained in details what are the important details which evaluators pay special attention on, and gave many good advices.“;
- „Special moment was the friendship that we made between each other.“;
- „Travelling to childhood - we did a kind of meditation where we remembered some happy moment from our past and then we were drawing that memory and that feeling with our fingers. It was such a powerful experience and it let me and others grow so much as personality. It had great impact on how we see ourselves and how we all shared that emotional moment.“;
- „I enjoyed that it was not a theoretical project, but we actually spent a lot of time in orphanage and had the possibility to see the social situation from inside.“;
- „Crying session, hike, food and so much more.“;
- „It was nice to feel the care and attention from the organizers, topics (trainings) are arranged purposefully, well-planned time.“;
- „Feeling that you belong is the best“;

- „Eurovision night“;
- „Workshops where you put yourself in other shoes through the Take a step forward game“;
- „Students got a better confident in themselves. Everybody liked IT. The final analysis of the project was 100%.“;
- „On the last day we sat in the circle and just looked at each other, people that we got to know in the project, and then after we went to hug each other one by one and said beautiful things for each other“;
- „Maybe talking with people from other countries and finding out about interesting things they do, for example I found out about Slow Food from one of the participants and it inspired me.“;
- „*There are infinite special moments.* I'm thinking of when people from Georgia to Sweden started playing with snow and building a snowman altogether.“;
- „Falling in love :)“;
- „Forum theater workshop - topics touched some of the participants deeper than me, but they helped me understand that I should appreciate my life more and be grateful for what I have; hiking in the nature in the group and activities outside made me understand other participants better; routines every day made me understand that I should be implementing even the hard at first routines, as if being consistant it is possible to hernia rebel it fast and start enjoying hard things“;
- „Cultural nights! the most amazing experience“;
- „PEOPLE! It's always about amazing, wonderful, kind-hearted people that I meet in Erasmus ♥“;
- „What I remember now was the night (day) hikes and their culminations, a lot of impressions. I like to see how people are change when they are getting tired, "losing their masks" and show their real face, emotions.“;
- „We had to create a short movie. Each group got a different genre. It turned out to be really fun!“;
- „Last night we gathered, lit candles and in the form of a game, describing a person, handing out our certificates. It was hellishly exciting because everyone was describing someone in words we were all glad to hear about ourselves. This was a really TRUE moment in our daily lives, because we are all used to the hypocritical world. And that moment, it was really KIND for all of us.“;
- „There was a wonderful meeting with young people at the Youth Center in Smolyan. Also, during another project, an unforgettable workshop with games was organized in the center of Gabrovo. A special moment is always the last night. The party is on a level, nostalgia is already knocking on the door and the organizers are preparing a cake. One of my favorite parts of the projects is sightseeing and walking.“;
- „For the first time, the project was inspected by external observers and Erasmus + evaluators. The visit was known in advance and certain people (some of the leaders of the participating teams) were selected to answer their questions.“;

- „*The whole experience was special to me.*“;
- „There was an optional evening workshop, which was connected to music, art, expression and culture in our lives. It was a very touching event, which engaged all participants and connected us more to the location we were in, as well as to art in our own lives. It was a very special moment.“;
- „The three-day wandering in the depths of the Czech Republic with a mini team, without money and a connection to the comfort zone was top. Absolutely memorable and enabling reflection“;
- „The on-arrival training, although it was online, has been one of my best experiences since October. Some hikes in the nearby national parks have also been memorable times.“;
- „Each class I took part of, each esn event, or international dinners were new and eye-opening experiences, Erasmus+ helped me to learn and gain skills by taking part in activities and seeing places that made me a different person.“;
- „So many like the fact of crossing borders without any plan the cultural exchange night and the family feeling“;
- „We had to sell ourselves based on our traits and experiences like we would do on the job market. It was very engaging.“;
- „The whole project gave me a new perspective. I remember that at night we would make a fire and surround it and just talk and talk and get to know each other even more. The training would just not stop after the official ending time, we would continue to share our experiences and learn from each other. I am really grateful to be a participant because I truly think it gave me help to look at the construction of my life from a different angle.“;
- „The free-nights we had as a whole squad of youngsters from mixed nationalities were amazing. Those were the moments when we truly made unbreakable bonds with each other.“;
- „*Special moments are created by special people.*“

32. What learning experiences from that project have you been using in your life?

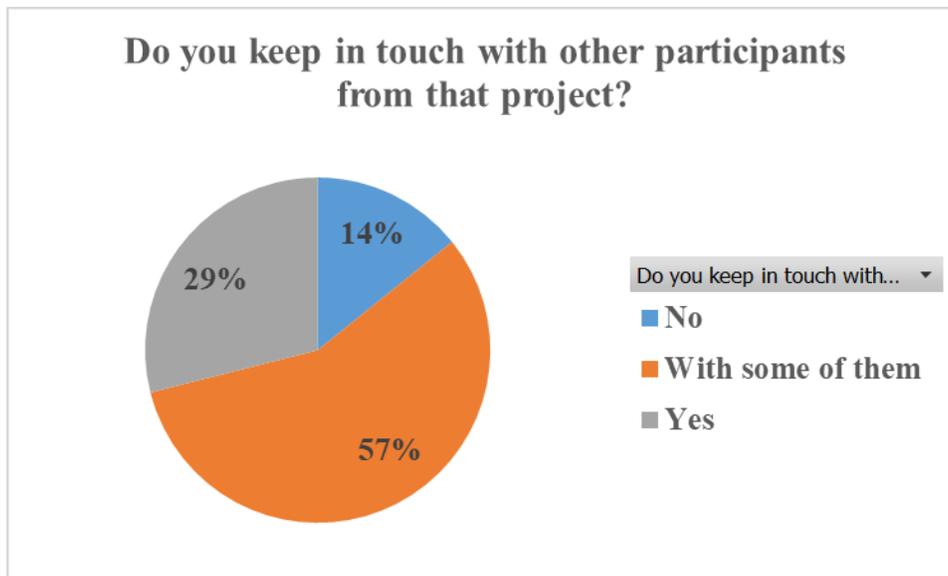
- work with young people;
- reflection strategies;
- more research before making decision;
- asking more questions not to deal with negative consequences;
- remind myself that what seems to be bad at first thought doesn't mean it is as bad;
- games and activities;
- organise project in general;
- constructing an opinion and defending it with facts;
- communication skills;
- skills from debating;
- organizing time and work;

- personalities test;
- communication with youth;
- appreciating the little things;
- having fun and being positive;
- the love of traveling;
- the importance of stepping out of your comfort zone;
- team building activities;
- manage projects and conflict situations;
- problem solution;
- listen and understand different people way of life, culture, religion;
- working as a trainer in Erasmus+ programme;
- openness to other people;
- video making and editing;
- leadership;
- love improves everything;
- stress reduction methods;
- listening to others;
- meditation;
- physical exercise;
- interpreting different things from different perspectives;
- getting out of comfort zone;
- how to lead groups of sessions;
- speaking in English;
- braveness;
- jewelry making;
- never give up;
- kayaking;
- the winner-victim attitude;
- many techniques for self-observation;
- empathy;
- listen actively;
- how to be aware, how to be in the here and now;
- how hard is to trust somebody else;
- how to make friends easily.

33. Keeping in touch

Out of all the participants from all four countries 108 (57%) keep in touch with some of participants from that project, 55 (29%) answered Yes to this question and 27 (14%) answered No (see Chart 17).

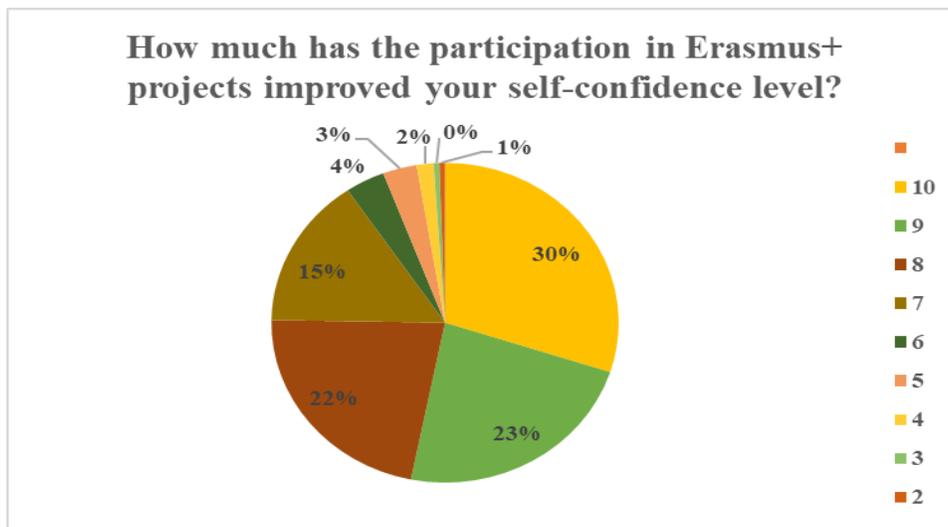
Chart 17



34. How much has the participation in Erasmus+ projects improved your self-confidence level?

Out of all the participants from all four countries 57 (30%) said 10, 44 (23%) said 9, 42 (22%) said 8, 29 (15%) said 7, 7 (4%) said 6, 6 (3%) said 5, 3 (2%) said 4, 1 (0%) said 3 and 1 (1%) said 2 (see Chart 18).

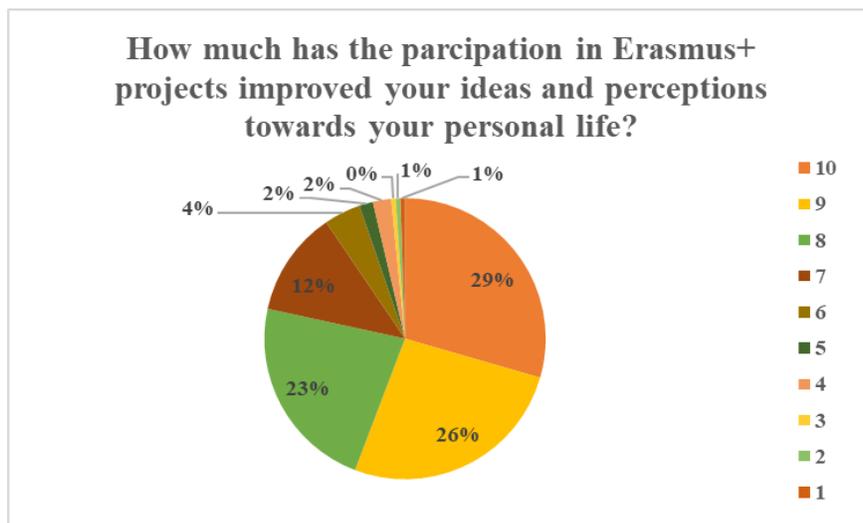
Chart 18



35. How much has the participation in Erasmus+ projects improved your ideas and perceptions towards your personal life?

Out of all the participants from all four countries 56 (29%) said 10, 50 (26%) said 9, 43 (23%) said 8, 23 (12%) said 7, 8 (4%) said 6, 4 (2%) said 4, 3 (2%) said 5, 1 (0%) said 3, 1 (1%) said 2, 1 (1%) said 1 (see Chart 19).

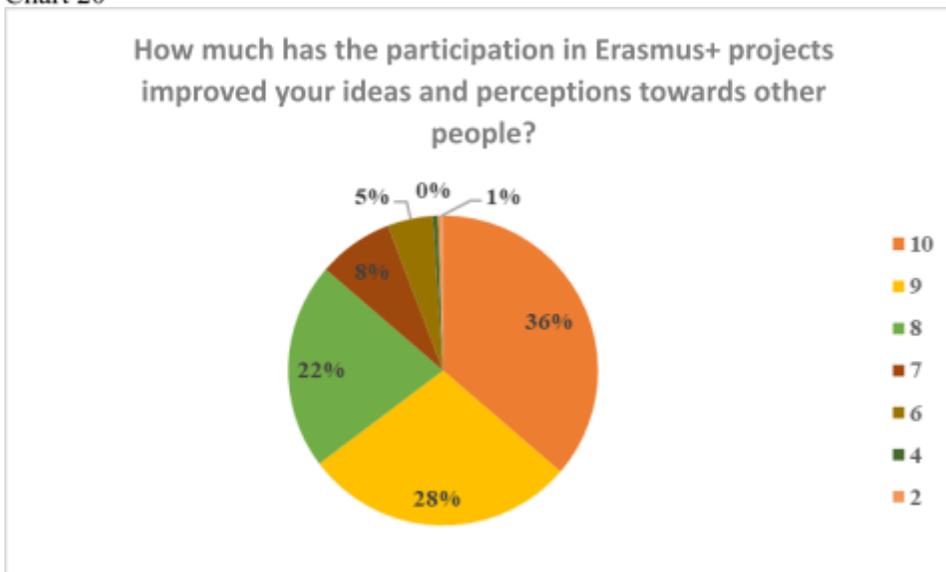
Chart 19



36. How much has the participation in Erasmus+ projects improved your ideas and perceptions towards other people?

Out of all the participants from all four countries 69 (36%) said 10, 54 (28%) said 9, 41 (22%) said 8, 15 (8%) said 7, 9 (5%) said 6, 1 (0%) said 4 and 1 (1%) said 2 (see Chart 20).

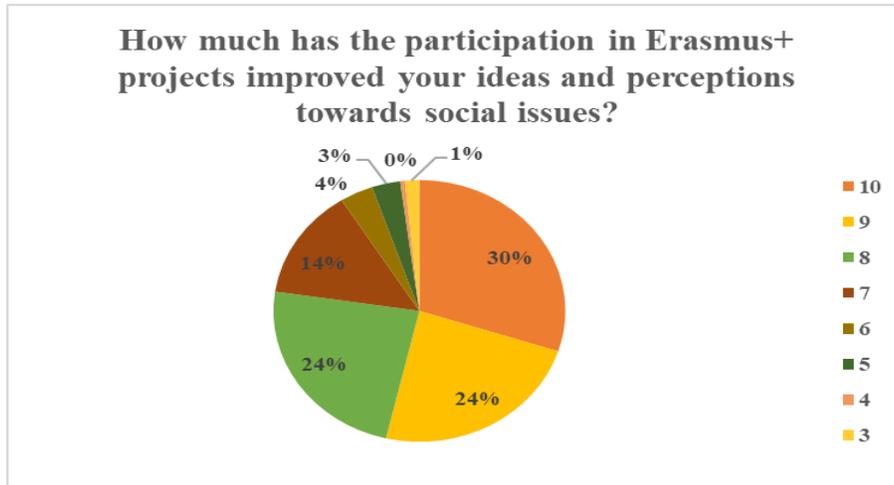
Chart 20



37. How much has the participation in Erasmus+ projects improved your ideas and perceptions towards social issues?

Out of all the participants from all four countries 57 (30%) said 10, 45 (24%) said 9, 45 (24%) said 8, 26 (14%) said 7, 7 (4%) said 6, 6 (3%) said 5, 3 (1%) said 3 and 1 (0%) said 4 (see Chart 21).

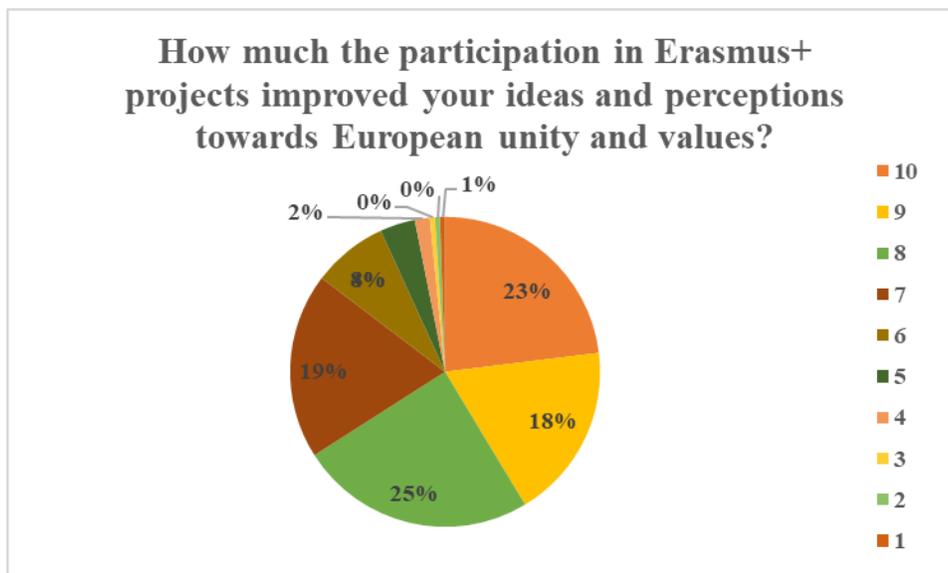
Chart 21



38. How much has the participation in Erasmus+ projects improved your ideas and perceptions towards European unity and values?

Out of all the participants from all four countries 47 (25%) said 8, 44 (23%) said 10, 37 (19%) said 7, 35 (18%) said 9, 15 (8%) said 6, 7 (4%) said 5, 3 (2%) said 4, 1 (0%) said 3, 1 (0%) said 2 and 1 (1%) said 1 (see Chart 22).

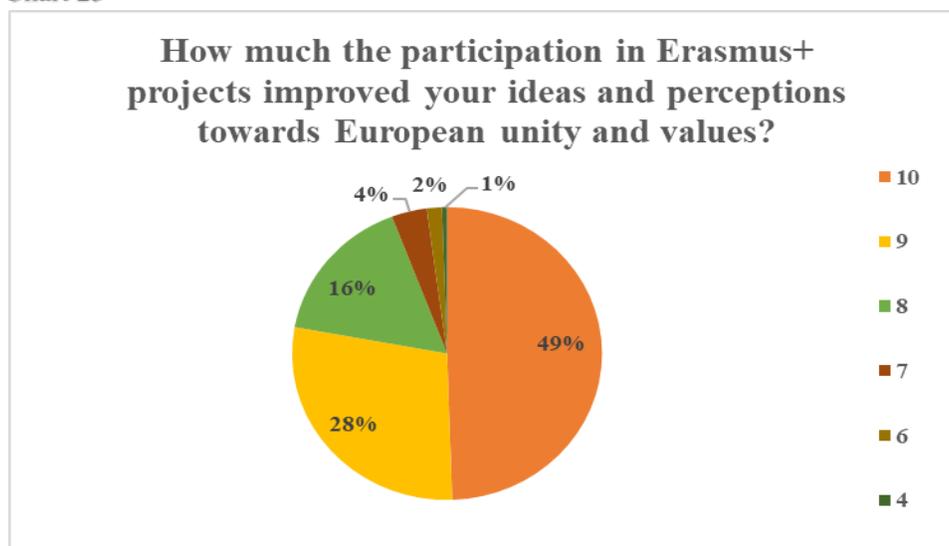
Chart 22



39. What is your level of satisfaction towards the non-formal education (learning by doing) in Erasmus+ mobility projects?

Out of all the participants from all four countries 94 (49%) said 10, 54 (28%) said 9, 31 (16%) said 8, 7 (4%) said 7, 3 (2%) said 6 and 1 (1%) said 4 (see Chart 23).

Chart 23



40. Where do you get information about participating in projects?

- Facebook, Instagram, E-mail, Snapchat, Tik-tok;
- Youth organisation or youth group;
- Local municipality;
- Friends, colleague, other people;
- School/University;
- Radio;
- Television;
- Salto YOUTH;
- ‘I was searching for "freiwilligenerarbeit" in Germany, and I found ESC project’;
- Websites about these programs.

41. Anything missing in the questions and you want to share please feel free to mention.

- “Update terms of choosing people, not so strict, more like if they have good habits, they are good persons.”

- “The projects ARE making a difference. Keep up the great work!”; “Wishing you good work for the future!”
- “Questions are to abstract.”; “This questionnaire is confusing.”
- “Everything is Possible if You really WANT TO!!!”
- “We should find a way to encourage more people to go on Erasmus.”
- “I say thank you for everything that Erasmus+ has given me and others. It is fantastic and please keep up with the work that you do.”; “The Erasmus plus projects changed my life.”; “That this is one of the best projects I have been to.”; “This project allows you to live abroad one year, with different people, language, culture, and developing yourself. It could only be AMAZING”;
- “It's not very fair for people to go to projects so many times.”
- “Sometimes the non formal way of teaching in these projects can be improved and made more interactive.”

QUALITATIVE RESEARCH

Qualitative survey (interview with open questions) for the different youth organisations representatives who have been involved in the implementation of different youth projects. In total, 40 organisations were interviewed. The research was conducted in four partner countries and organisations that had been interviewed are based in Latvia, Hungary, Bulgaria and Lithuania.

In the qualitative survey there were open questions that covered different aspects to gain insights from project implementers' side. There were questions on what help is provided by national agencies (including communication, capacity building of organisations, and recommendations for national agencies). Successively, other questions covered the crucial aspects such as preparation and implementation of the project and concerns to cover after the project activities. Furthermore there were also open questions and the interview attendees were encouraged to share any view, ideas and suggestions that were not covered in the other questions.

Project approved and What's next?

Q. What kind of support do you get from your National Agency?

All respondents answered that, depending on the need, they receive support from the Agency for International Youth Programs.

- The most common support measures were meetings of approved projects - one-to-one consultations, support materials such as guidelines on publicity, webinars, reminder e-mails such as the deadline for submitting the final report.
- Communication is informal (by e-mail and telephone), understandable even for young people.
- Seminars for organizations with approved projects on how to do administration and financial documentation of the project, meeting of accredited organizations. Webinars are uploaded on the website and available for all organizations to watch.

One-sided opinions:

- Support was provided in the form of discussions regarding technical issues and financial matters.
- Support was provided in form of a problem-solving approach regarding issues related to the participants.

Another sided opinions:

- There is too much bureaucracy.
- There was a lack of support in implementing the projects.

Q. What feedback would you give to a National Agency that would help in implementing a project?

- Support materials directly related to project administration, for example: project accounting and harmonization of documents with local accounting laws and project guidelines, would be useful.
- A more detailed explanation of financial use and general information on financial issues, incl. for the state treasury.
- Organizations with less experience mentioned that materials that would give young people an in-depth understanding of why certain things should be done would be useful.

Communication - to answer all inquiries, quicker answers.

Support in legal matters, such as reviewing agreements with partners / participants.

- to reshape the form of support;
- to provide advice and support, tools to organizations, contact of different experts;
- to inform and support newcomers, non-formal groups;
- to organize more meetings, to give consultations, to stay closer to the organizations and their activities. Provide consultation during the reporting time;
- to do a monitoring of projects;
- to use appropriate for youth methods;
- to promote the Pool of Trainers.

Capacity building of organizations

- to organize trainings to build the capacity of the organizations - how to write and implement projects, trainings for newcomers, develop administrative capacity of the organizations;
- trainings for newcomers - more in detail what is expected from the organizations, how to organize the processes; more interactive trainings, to use visuals and non-formal education methods, to give more information and understanding on the rules;
- to organize more promotional events and spread more information through youth information centres, to reach more young people and organizations.

Team

- There is an intense need for improvement in the evaluation process and it needs to be more professional and transparent.
- National Agency should provide training and professional support to the new organisations.
- National Agency should be more communicative and explanatory toward project writing and implementation requirements. For example; providing video tutorials.
- National Agencies should help organisations in times of confusion by using an empathic approach.
- There should be a strict no-alcohol policy implemented by National Agencies.

Recommendations:

- Create a “Checklist” that you can check and keep track of your work, which can be printed and placed in the project folder. It could be a simple document with listed works and a time frame;
- Create a material “Step Plan”, which the project implementers would fill in themselves. It would be like a detailed planning document - what to do in planning and what to do if something does not work as it should;
- To provide project implementers with written recommendations for project implementation based on project applications and expert evaluations;
- Improve the website;
- To develop easy-to-understand support material on project administration - record keeping, accounting, financing, etc. requirements;
- Organize more trainings for new project implementers. This would be particularly useful for youth exchanges implementing their first project;
- A project mentor from one of the experienced project organizations would be useful for the first implemented project;
- The questionnaire for participants in the mobility tool must be in the national languages and should be youth-friendly and inclusive.

A. Preparation

Q. What kind of suggestion could you give regarding preparatory meetings with partners?

It's an advantage to know the partners beforehand or even have experience with them, because it will contribute to having clear expectations towards the program and the activities. However, including new partners in the partnerships is a way to expand them and move on from unsuccessful ones (yet looking for new partners last minute and on the internet should be avoided). Furthermore, while finding partner organisations it's vital to match the organisations' goals, focus on their strengths and weaknesses.

When it comes to **roles**, you should:

- Be transparent and clear about the roles of the partners - in promotion, selection, preparation, support, follow-ups.
- Maintain regular communication. After all, communication is the key!
- Provide trust, optimism and encouragement – it will assure a successful outcome.
- Prepare and sign a preliminary agreement with the partners even before the project application - it's a way to clarify the roles, information about the preparation of participants and the work plan.

After approving the project:

- Send a short summary to the partners - project goal, tasks, partners' responsibilities, deadlines (it will provide clarity and transparency).
- If the project is in English, share the project application itself.
- Conclude written agreements with partners, including obligations, terms, responsibilities, conditions of cooperation.
- In case of any changes, inform the partners.

Of course, **meetings** are mandatory:

- Plan them early to have enough time for preparation (2-3 months before the activity).
- If there's a possibility, meet with responsible people of the partner organisations in person. If no, organise online meetings! Either way, they will help both to get to know each other better and to discuss current issues, and to make sure that the partners are actively involved in the implementation of the project.
- During the preparatory meeting with partners discuss concrete questions:
 - the program in detail;
 - rhythm of the day;
 - activities;
 - if it is a youth exchange (YE) – everything regarding the exchange;
 - profile of the participants and what their expectations, interests, motivation are;

- discuss and know the profile and the needs of participants (especially when involving participants with fewer opportunities or special needs);
- prepare a risk plan;
- agree on communication channels;
- discuss, share and use the strengths of each partner organisations;
- discuss the logistics;
- do a clear tasks division;
- make an agreement on special requirements - logistics, activities, participants.
- Organise Advanced Planning Visit (APV) - if possible - to meet, to visit the place, to discuss the exchange on the spot.

For easier and constant communication, you can:

- Have 1 contact person per partner organisation who is coordinating and is responsible for the project implementation, follow the project communication (thus ensuring on time communication).
- Use Online options for document circulation/storage, working simultaneously and collaboratively - Google Drive, Dropbox, Trello (very useful for following the process during the implementation phase), helps to appoint, manage and follow the tasks to be done on time and not left for the last minute!
- Use regular communication channels for regular communication - more formal communication - e-mail, faster communication - WhatsApp/FB group.
- When communicating with partners in emails, use the option - reply email to the previous email, as it can be easily tracked for previous communication.
- Have all the information beforehand for the activities and even some extreme activities.

And lastly, when it comes to participants themselves:

- Have a plan for preparation of participants - unify the preparation done by the different partners.
- Prepare very detailed information for the participants (Info Pack) - clear and true information, detailed but also concise. Be sure to send it to the partners.
- If needed, the host organisation can organise video meetings with the partners and the participants for the preparation.
- Discuss if there will be a little fee for the trainings (could be sliding scale) - contribution and higher commitment by the participants.
- Be sure that all participants have e-mail addresses (needed for the Mobility tool after).
- When working with participants with few opportunities or special needs - keep in mind possible changes, cancelations, other challenges that can hinder their participation, to choose them earlier but still to keep in mind a possible change/cancellation.
- Inclusion of participants with special needs - be aware what the specific needs are, how to be answered, how to be involved.

- Create a waiting list of participants in case of last minute cancelations.

Even after all of these steps, most importantly don't forget to build real and human relationships. Be open, talk about mistakes, challenges, and any issues that could affect the project, and do so when a problem arises. Consider partners as colleagues, not as an appendage to the project.

Q. What kind of suggestion could you give regarding logistics: travel, accommodation, insurance, visa?

The answers regarding logistics could be divided into a few categories.

General:

- First of all, plan and do everything on time.
- In case of involvement of Non-EU partners, start paperwork more in advance.
- Always keep the focus on documentation as every country has different laws and regulations.
- Clearly describe logistics issues in the InfoPack, which is sent to both participants and partner organisations.
- Prepare a very detailed InfoPack with pictures, contact details, and how to reach the place.
- Appoint 1 person coordinating the logistics.
- If an APV is planned in the project, dedicate a separate session to logistics.
- Have and use a checklist.
- Involve someone new and with no experience in the team to learn about project implementation.
- Take into consideration special needs, cultural backgrounds of participants, disabilities.
- Know every single detail - the place, what is around, what participants need to bring with them, etc.
- Prepare a list of participants.
- Organise online info sessions Q&A for participants about mobility.

Transport & travel:

- Emphasize to partners that they have a responsibility to support participants in purchasing tickets.
- Watch tickets through an incognito window on your computer.
- Keep constant communication with participants about the travel.
- Set up a deadline for the ticket's purchase.
- Introduce ticket limits.
- Look for a way to support youngsters if tickets can not fit in the budget.
- Before buying, ask to send for confirmation.
- After purchase, ask to be sure to send the ticket reservation.
- Encourage an environmentally friendly way of travel, land transport, and support travel by car.

- Call for CO2 emissions to be covered as much as possible if travelling by plane.
- Buy travel tickets for project promoters only in special cases. If such a situation arises, conclude separate agreements with participants/partners.
- Encourage the whole group to travel together.
- If possible, allow participants to stay/arrive/depart for a later day to get to know the country (if allowed by the NA).
- For organised local transport contact a few local transport companies and ask for offers, collect 3 offers and organise a pick-up and transport for the whole group.
- Provide information to the participants how to reach the place.
- Take into consideration if participants are travelling for the first time or are experienced.
- Host organisation should check if travel plans are realistic knowing the local situation.
- Participants and groups have to agree with the host organisation on the travel plan before buying the tickets.
- Provide accurate information about the reimbursement procedure.

Accommodation:

- Be in smaller places/villages, in private homes, outside of the cities, closer to nature.
- Pre-book a guest house already at the time of writing the project application.
- Have not only plan A but also plan B.
- Contribute to the local community.
- If necessary, civilization should be easily reachable.
- Location should be picked according to the needs of the themes of the projects.
- Location should create an environment to connect the participants.
- Take into account several aspects – the place should be adequate, easy to reach, have enough space to work, relax.
- Use seasonal places not during the season, so that the prices are cheaper and there are also good conditions.
- Before setting an agreement with the catering company, clarify special needs of the participants.
- Visit the place in advance.
- Don't book through Booking.com or by checking through the internet.
- Check the conditions of accommodation.
- Meet the people from the accommodation place.
- Have an agreement with the hotel with all information.
- Assure that the place is easily accessible and suitable for all the groups/participants.
- Check what the participants need to bring (e.g. sleeping bag, towels, slippers, etc.).
- Send information about the accommodation to the participants beforehand.
- Mix participants from different countries.
- Divide participants (females & males).
- Ask participants for room preferences.
- Basic needs like heat and food need to be covered.

When it comes to insurance:

Participants – health and travel insurance, *organisers* – project insurance.

- Ask participants to bring EHIC (European Health Insurance Card).
- Ask participants to purchase travel insurance with plane tickets or by buying for the whole group together.
- Make an insurance for the venue (third party liability insurance).
- Ask participants to do their own additional insurance.
- Provide insurance for the whole group and send information of what is covered beforehand to participants.
- Ask the partner organisation to arrange and provide the insurance of the group (YE).
- Organise COVID-19 insurance of the travel tickets in case of cancellation of flights, change of flights, etc.

Visa:

- Note that this process will take more time than planned, start early communication.
- Provide very clear information to participants requiring visas and involve partners if necessary.
- Clarify the role of the sending organisation in supporting the visa issuing and support the sending organisation with the needed information.
- Plan expenses for documents, travelling to the embassy.
- Have a direct contact with the Embassy in the sending country – email, call.
- Prepare invitations for the borders with information about the group of participants, the project, the funding program.

Food:

- Plan and arrange enough food - quality and quantity, diversity, nutrition values, lighter dinners.
- Take into consideration the portions.
- Have enough food for the participants.
- Hire cooks for the event.
- Prepare a menu.
- Arrange and provide needed products.
- If participants cook themselves - inform them beforehand, plan it, explain so they can prepare.
- Ask participants for food preferences, allergies, medicines and take it into consideration.

Q. What kind of suggestion could you give regarding safety and protection of participants?

When it comes to safety and protection of participants:

- Firstly, every participant should be clear and aware about what will happen, when will happen, how it will happen, what to expect, who to take with it, what goals, tasks. Also, about Erasmus + principles and NFE.
- Before projects send the participants individual agreements/declarations with the terms and conditions to be signed, including the inclusion of a clause that the participants themselves take close responsibility for their decisions. The host organisation is not responsible for lost personal belongings or the damage of accommodation properties.
- Use a declaration for private data and the usage of picture and video materials with the participants for the purpose of the project.
- Organise insurance for the whole group.
- On the first day of the project/at the beginning of the event, introduce all the safety information when it comes to venue, emergency, etc. This information should be clearly explained. If some participants do not understand English, it is definitely recommended to discuss security rules in the national groups.
- Have at least one responsible person who has passed a first aid course and have a first aid kit at the place.
- There should be the availability of a car and one person who can drive.
- Ask participants beforehand for allergies, medicines needed, or any other specific needs to be taken into consideration.
- Inform others (municipality, police, emergency) that there will be a project.
- It is desirable that the project implementation area is closed and participants do not have the opportunity to go somewhere, as well as restrict meetings with locals (especially in youth exchanges).
- Introduce the participants to each other even before activity to have an emotionally safe environment.
- Form everyday reflection groups that the participants can easily speak and share feelings.
- Create a box where people can leave anonymous messages.
- Take cultural differences of the participants into account.
- Ensure that accommodation is spacious for everyone and participants get the opportunities to rest.
- Concentrate on both the physical and mental wellbeing of the participants.

Q. What kind of suggestion could you give regarding preparation for participants?

- Have a preparation by the sending organisation.
- Discuss with partners the preparation of participants - for the project, learning process, Youthpass and NFE, as well as on logistics.
- Participants must be updated with the aim of the project and they must be willing to participate completely and actively.
- Provide information to participants about the organisation and its activities.
- Partners are responsible to lead preparation activities of young people in their country (eg homework), but there must be clear instructions/guidance from the coordinator.
- Give homework prior the project, it will help participants understand the meaning of the project.
- Provide sample agreement and short InfoPack with the most needed information, contacts, location, rules, medicines to bring.
- Inform participants about local conditions and what kind of necessities they need to bring.
- *Selection process* - clear and detailed call for participants.
- *Pre-selection* by partners, *final selection* by host organisation.
- *Registration form* for participants - personal information, emergency contact, ID number.
- Try to form groups where the participants have different experiences and take their experience into consideration, some might have participated, some might be newcomers.
- There should be two meetings before organising any project. One meeting should be to share the ideas and team building activities and another to prepare the project.
- If possible, at least 1 face-to-face meeting should be arranged with the group.
- During the preparatory meeting, present Erasmus+, information about the program, aims, what is the mobility about
- Don't promise too much and don't let them have wrong expectations - give real insight.
- If the participant is a minor, invite a parent representative to the meeting and explain all the information about the project. If needed, be in contact with the parents, have their emergency contacts.
- The choice of a group leader is important in a youth exchange, there should be an arranged meeting with the leader and the group.
- Organise a preparation training for the participant YE (1 day), prepare them what they will experience to lessen the stress.
- Understand participants' English level and support system.
- Discuss the laws of the country where the project takes place (special aspect - alcohol).
- Prepare participants and make them aware of the cultural differences.
- Focus on the conflicts which may arise because of cultural differences, nature of the participants and how to solve them.
- Ask if the participants have any special needs and try your best to take care of them, include, support them, check what assistance might be needed.
- Create a FB group + and share inspiration and motivation by the trainers.
- Provide theory before the training itself and during the training focus on practice and developing skills, focus on the topic rather than the country.

- Provide invitation letters for people who will apply for a visa.
- Inform participants that there is follow up after the event, give information, support.
- Include an assistant in the project - per group, for the person who needs it.

Q. Budget management: important tips and crucial aspects. What would you suggest?

- Plan the budget at the very beginning while writing and preparing for the project.
- Have a clear understanding of the different budget lines.
- Start budget planning with the big items (catering, accommodation).
- Look for a price-friendly place, bargain for prices, use local resources and services (caterers, products).
- Or look for long term cooperation with accommodation places, have direct contact with it, negotiate lower prices.
- Collect at least 3 offers - for accommodation, local transport.
- Create a list of minimum and maximum requirements.
- Sign the contracts with all the service providers (accommodation, catering, transportation).
- Make a copy of all the documents, gather them in a folder.
- Entrust budget planning to someone who understands and knows how to do it.
- Update the costs in the budget/excel table regularly and follow it.
- Make steps about project implementation.
- Have a very clear understanding of the final price and what it includes.
- Plan visa costs during the submitting phase and plan costs for visa in the budget.
- Keep an extra budget for unseen and unexpected scenarios, including a 10% reserve.
- If the logistics are done by young people, then make sure that everything is taken into account.
- Plan fees for the external experts, facilitators.
- Allocate a small budget for the partner organisations.
- Organise local travel for the whole group - simplify the financial reporting.
- Clearly inform participants and partners what is the maximum budget for travelling, what it includes, what documents are needed for the reimbursement, deadlines for sending, copies needed etc.
- Ask participants to keep travel as economical as possible.

B. Implementation of the Projects

Q. Leading the group through their learning process: working methods and activities.

- There should be diversity in the activities.
- Activities should be more engaging and team building.
- Use Compass booklet for the methods.
- There should be a good mix up of light and intense activities.
- Activities should have a non-formal approach as much as possible.
- Adaptation is an important key while implementing the activities, therefore, adapting activities according to the needs of participants and the surrounding atmosphere is crucial.
- Field trips can be an enormous help.
- Participants to set their own learning objectives
- Have daily questions about reflecting on learning
- Provide participants with a diary or a notebook for writing down thoughts, ideas, aha moments, reflections; learning diary
- To do something new, interesting, unforgettable, different - to provide experience and learning culturally, spiritually, socially
- Evening activities to help the team building, socializing, getting to know each other, additional experience
- To have a balance of theory and practice, importance of debriefing
- To have a team of 2-3 facilitators
- Program activities to include all senses - to see, to speak, to sense, to do
- Support a process of self-discovery
- YE - division of days, which groups is responsible for each day, to think of a topic, activities, to facilitate - in this way it is engaging, share responsibility, very diverse experience and motivating for participants
- To provide space for participants to share, to learn from each other, Open Space, Human Library
- In the beginning of the activity recall the overall goal of the project. Activities, sessions, and even energizers should help to achieve overall goal.
- At the beginning, invite participants to think about exactly what they would like to learn during this project. Recall the basic principles of NFE.
- Allow the participants themselves to do and make mistakes and to learn from them.

Q. Taking into account the group dynamics and the individual needs of the participants.

- Never skip the disputes, and work to solve them as soon as possible.
- Pay attention to the validity of the methods applied for the activities (In the case of participants with disabilities, language barriers, cultural differences).
- Encourage participants to share their feelings, and respect individuality.
- For enhancing group dynamics - run the activity in a smaller place; to put in contact the participants from the very beginning, using different communication channels; teambuilding activities that are also practical and contribute to the project (e.g. build something for the place); create together with the participants a common place; often mix of the participants; activities to get to know each other, sharing motivation and expectations; reflection and evaluation (different kinds, daily, midterm, at the end)
- Create together with the participants a group agreement (codex) for working together at the beginning of the event, all of the participants to agree on.
- For YE - keep in mind the language level, have more people to help with translation (e.g. when having refugee teenagers). Use google translate when needed
- To ask for individual needs and take into consideration (before and during the event)
- Pay attention to gender pronouns - be sensitive and ask the group what they prefer
- To give space for people to relax, to know the surrounding, to meet the others informally
- Give opportunities for discussing questions off the topic - example “The Sitting Tree” poster. “Parking Lot” Poster
- Mix of participants - 50% with special needs
- Individual learning Badge wallet - give and anticipate time for individual assessment.
- For individual needs, emphasize that the participants themselves have a great responsibility for what they have gained. Set boundaries for the group.

Q. Team of organisers: any tips?

- Understand the partner organisations well before making any commitment.
- Meet with the people from the partner organisations in person and spend time in communication to gain insight before making any commitments.
- Organising team building activities for your organisation members is a plus.
- Organisers should be an example; practice what you preach.
- Organisers needs humility; to feel also as they are the participants.
- During projects, share responsibilities with responsible young minds.
- Use the strengths and competences of the people in the team, to know the people in the team
- Clear roles division - fine-tuning roles, responsibilities, engagement of the team members
- Facilitators team - 2-3 people, understanding and teamwork in the trainers team
- Invite external guest experts

- Write meeting notes and then send them to the whole project team.
- Less experienced people have some support person / mentor.
- It is important that the team has a desire to learn and learn new things.
- Regular meetings and internal feedback.
- It is important to celebrate success and support each other.
- Be sure to create team rituals.

Q. Logistics: venue, meeting rooms, heating, food.

- Keep the nutritional needs in mind and stay flexible. In case to change the menu, do change it.
- Keep in mind that working rooms should be spacious and facilitated with light.
- Keep things clear between the owners of the accommodation that which areas would be allowed for participants to utilize in the living space.
- Take care of the weather, especially in the winters, the place should be enough warm.
- Use a special venue, for example outdoor education center
- If participants sleep in tents and use summer kitchen - inform the participants beforehand (in the call for participants)
- The venue to have a place for activities outside
- When including participants with special physical needs - the venue to be accessible, have an advance visit to check the access, if possible together with a person with such needs
- Give a possibility to the participants to choose from different menu options
- Use local products, organic products
- Meet and pick up participants from the airport
- When travelling locally - always count the number of participants
- Use the local opportunities and organize local special activities/rituals for the group - e.g. loom weaving
- Provide a chance to participants to learn about the local communities and specificities - e.g. Local dialect, traditions, arts and crafts
- The place and all aspects of the project (eating, living, moving) must correspond to the theme of the project. Any action should complement the theme.
- Give everyone their own cup from the beginning of the project (mark them and give as a gift).
- It is important that water is available at all times, ideally if also tea / coffee.
- Food should be enough, if there is not enough food, it is not a good project, because 80% of our decisions are made by our intestinal tract.
- Before the project, ask what you usually eat at the breakfast, dinner, lunch.
- Better to have a buffet table.
- Limit the number of dishes (if 30 people, there are 30 plates).
- Put notes for dishes with a description - vegetarian, vegan. Accommodation for participants in mixed groups - age, nationality, experience. But keep in mind the situation, because not everyone is ready to live with strangers.

- For youth workers - to accommodate in one room not more than 2-3 people.
- Make sure that each person has its own bed and not a space in a double bed.
- To inform participants about accommodation already before.
- If the participant is disabled, speak with that person to find the best option to accommodate.

Q. Do you have any tips on how to make the project special? Any small or big details that could help newcomers to make the process magical?

- Organisers must be interested in the topic of the project they are working on.
- Organisers must have the passion and work on the project from their heart.
- Give an opportunity to the participants to create/build something together, to have a sense of achieving something together
- Have a ritual of the group; Each day starting with the same activity (e.g. ritual)
- Create a purposeful confrontation - so that the participants feel strong, have a voice, are involved in the decision making
- To be consistent - what is said, to be done
- Use methods and practices for self development - personal and spiritual work
- Use theatres' methods (if appropriate to the group and the topic)
- Use non-standard process and simulations (bring people out of the comfort zone)
- Use one and the same song to gather the people
- Use on-going games - secret friends, envelopes for messages
- Freedom to create and be active
- Give participants opportunity to organize a big party themselves in the end
- Some little gifts, attention gestures (e.g. welcome message), surprises for the participants
- Dinner out in a local place
- Activities that create strong emotional experience.
- Give to participants more than they expected, to include surprises.
- The project is made special by the participants themselves, if there is a great group, then you don't need anything more.
- Create positive emotions, like sunset, silent hours etc. :)

D. After the Project

Q. What kind of suggestion do you have regarding appropriate evaluation matters of the project and main activities?

- questionnaire is crucial on the last day of the project to gain insights on the overall evaluation of the project.
- keep reports from the daily reflection in the written form as it helps to complete the evaluation process.
- self-reflection evaluation is also crucial to make improvements in the future.
- daily evaluation, mid-term evaluation, evaluation at the end of the activity (in the group, anonymous questionnaire), follow-up evaluation (1-3-6 months later).
- ongoing evaluation - to be introduced from the very beginning and to encourage participants to provide feedback; what to improve while implementing the mobility.
- ask for expectations and hopes in the beginning and then check at the end of the mobility how much they are achieved.
- to use questions with I - I learned this and that... I did this and that... (change the focus, participants can reflect to what extend the training was useful for them).
- provide space for self-assessment to participants - to see how they developed on the topics; to have a personal plan, to assess by themselves but also in small groups (to help each other in the evaluation process), to support the satisfaction self-assessment.
- to follow the constant learning process.
- to introduce youthpass and use the key competences for self-assessment.
- organize an online evaluation meeting later on.
- the group leaders - to have a meeting with the youngsters, to evaluate and support the follow-ups.
- to receive feedback from the sending organizations.
- to build up a community - in order not to lose the inspiration and boost - whatsapp chats, to stay connected in FB - to invite participants (and/or their friends) to next projects.
- have 6-12 months impact evaluation survey (on personal and professional level) with participants, to support reflection and what they have learned and developed.

Q. Dissemination and follow up: what, how, when? How to plan it?

- be clear that partner organisations will also help in the process of dissemination, and play a responsible role.
- social media platforms can be actively used as a tool for dissemination.
- dissemination plans must be made before the beginning of the project and should be implemented as soon as possible after the project.
- keep regular personal communication with the participants as a reminder for the implementation of the dissemination plan.

- planning dissemination by involving participants can be useful and effective.
- to plan time and capacity for the dissemination activities, to understand it gives completeness and meaning of the project.
- Plan beforehand the dissemination, together with partners, have a DEOR (dissemination and exploitation of results) plan with clear steps, process, deadlines.
- Discuss and plan during the prep meeting with partners, also responsibility of the partners, how the results will be communicated further.
- allocate a coordinator to follow the DEOR plan.
- involvement of partners and participants - to feel ownership.
- to have a specific product in the end of the project, something to show, something to be as a summary and closure of the project.
- Dissemination of bigger products - on websites, bulletins, other trainings and meetings, NGO platforms, FB sites, send organizations (other partners) websites.
- to share interviews, pictures, videos from the mobility.
- use social media, newspapers - press releases, media.
- Organize local events.
- Press conference (depending on the topic of the project).
- Results to be included and used in new projects and activities.
- The partner agreement is a clause on the responsibilities of the partners, for example, that each partner will make at least 1 entry, implement 1 event, etc.
- Learn from others who do things well, incl. ask partners for suggestions.
- Collect links in a timely manner and create a publicity file where everything is saved so that there is a common document that helps with reporting.
- Prepare a media list and collaborate with local media.
- Involve the participants themselves in creating publicity (with a hashtag), give each one a task, at least one publication (Instagram / FB). Can also give a prize to a more active participant - create a competition.
- Creative ways for publicity.
- It must be remembered that if the project promises, it must be implemented.

Q. Final Report (How to make it easier to finalize the report: tips).

- Track the activities and their results from the very beginning till the end of the project. Making everyday notes can be highly beneficial.
- Start recording videos or pictures from the first day of the project, so there should be enough data for visibility and creating the final report.
- Monitor what was planned in the project because it must be implemented and, if there are changes in the project, record everything, as well as inform the agency. Also contact the agency in case of problems.
- It is important to record everything during the activity, especially changes in the program.
- To make notes for the content part of the report also from partner meetings, leaders' meetings.

- In the report be open and also write what failed. As long as the reports are written only for the good, the bureaucracy will not change. Must be open.
- Can be used approach to prepare the report - copy the planned things from project and then make changes. Can be used - Impacttool - <https://www.erasmusplus.nl/en/impacttool-mobility>.
- From the very beginning of the project, set up an online storage for documents, materials (Google drive, Dropbox, etc.).
- Timely input of information into the mobility tool.
- Create a Checklist of what issues are included in the report that the project must have (promises) and follow it throughout the project.
- To have a dossier of the project - with all the documents + scan of the documents and back-up, keep paper copies of the documents
- to create a google drive - to have all the documents at one and the same place
- To keep a daily report (with bullet points what happened, issues, etc.)
- To have a report from the trainers for each day of the program
- To write the final report when everything is done - including dissemination and follow-ups
- To be true (not invented information) in the report - if there were problems, to be mentioned
- To include proofs - pictures, videos, materials, social media posts
- If there are any changes - inform the NA immediately, keep them updated
- to create a new-email for the project - to follow the communication
- for International payments to use Transferwise, Revolut
- in invoices and contracts - amounts to be written in both local currency and in euro
- to have GDPR declarations signed by participants
- Declaration signed by participants that photo and video can be used
- to check and know before the beginning of the activity what information about the participants is needed for the Mobility tool (e.g. ID card, e-mail address, etc.)

E. Open Questions

Q. What practical tips could you give for the newcomers: tips for the next generation of Erasmus+?

Projects are a great opportunity, definitely need to use them and don't be afraid - neither participate nor implement them. There is no other similar activity where something similar can be gained and broadened, so it is very important to give this opportunity to as many young people as possible. From the beginning, the project seems to be something very big and complicated, but it is definitely exciting.

Practical tips can be divided into few different categories:

General

- To plan the time. Pay special attention on the preparation, earlier; the better prepared, less stress after;
- To create a plan of action and to follow it, check list;
- You could have one person responsible to follow the deadlines;
- Implement projects only on topics on what have passion, interests, and topicality;
- Invest in a project and not formally do things! Defend your point, because there will be people who will try to stop you.

Participants/ Process

- To take into consideration gender issues (which pronoun to use - to ask participants); not to reinforce stereotypes; to use humour but also be sensitive;
- Youth exchanges must be written / implemented by young people. The role of youth workers is to support, not to do for young people;
- Collaborate and make friends with those who have already implemented the project. Make friends with young people and involve young people in the project writing process.

Documentation

- Proper documentation skills are essential especially when it comes to travel tickets and reimbursement;
- Know what you will need for reporting and collect it in advance.

Team

- Include in the team people who are passionate and have various strengths, different profiles;
- To focus on things/project ideas that are easy and comprehensive for everyone in the team;
- To ask colleagues for information, help and support;
- The person who writes is also involved in the implementation of the project.
Create a team from more people already in the beginning.

Partners

- Work with reliable partners and verified organisations only;
- To avoid misunderstandings, make signed agreements between the organisations;
- Keep creating new connections and expanding the network;
- to have a balance of organizations with experience and with no experience.

Evaluation

- Evaluate partner organisations' performance from time to time;
- Have a strong team and try to go out of the comfort zone;
- Evaluate the experience after the project: MUST!

Knowledge

- Do things gradually – in the beginning to be a participant, then the group leader and then write your own project;
- Organisers should also keep participating in others' projects to gain good practices;
- Do not be afraid of making mistakes but it essential is to learn from the mistakes and not repeating those mistakes again;
- To find a mentor someone with experience, to share, discuss, to assess what they can manage with; real objectives;
- Ask support in National Agency.

Q. Failures. Did you have any and what did you learn from them?

Failures, as well as practical tips, could be divided in different categories:

Participants and safety

- Choosing the city centre as a location for the project made it difficult to gain the proper involvement of the participants;
- Be careful about organising such activities which can incite rigorous emotions;
- Attention on the safety of participants - forgotten participant during a local trip;
- Attention of young people - to use more the new digital information and communication technologies;
- Be sure about safety while organising any activity that is outdoors and has the possibility of being risky;
- To take into consideration cultural differences and backgrounds (food not enough and not appropriate);
- To have a stronger and longer preparation of participants (participants feeling stressed during the exchange);
- Prevent last minute selection of participants - participants were not aware of the program and not with the right motivation (e.g. tourists). Thus, lack of preparation of participants leading to challenging situation during the event;
- Language barriers hindering the communication process;
- Avoid missing the APV in any sense. In case you did not think about it before- you can still plan it online and reduce or avoid the costs!;
- Recommendation is to follow a non-alcoholic policy;
- The main thing is not to panic and approach situations with a cool head. Be open to participants, tell situations if that's not right. "Don't blow an elephant out of a fly", for example, someone is unhappy, nothing, the session didn't really go away, nothing - these things are not the end of the world.

Technical parts

- Technical failures are common. Thus, planning and understanding the needs for the report and how to fill in everything is a must. National Agency or more experienced colleagues can help here;
- Check the meeting room beforehand (too small room to gather all the participants in a circle; columns in the middle);
- Even in places that are safe and have good previous experience in the past, an unexpected situation can happen.

Team and preparation

- Clear information about the role of a person in the team - you are willing and imagining something to happen, but there is no capacity and competences of the person to perform the task;
- Lesson learned - not to be afraid of failures and to be ok with not having all the answers, to learn from each situation;
- Check all technical issues before if all equipment is working;
- Prepare an action / speech plan and do not rely on your memory;
- You can never be ready for anything and plan everything. We need to be flexible and accept change;
- Don't take on too many responsibilities for one. You have to trust others and share responsibilities;
- Understand that there are things you can and there are things you can't. You don't have to be a psychologist and solve all the problems of young people;
- Explain everything precisely and make sure that the participants have understood everything.

Budget and Insurance

- Don't waste your budget until you are absolutely sure that the project will happen. Contract experienced financial person;
- Insure all risks to the maximum;
- Be careful with documents (ticket purchase dates, invoices, etc.);
- Pay attention to the payment procedure with suppliers and do not agree to 100% prepayment.

Q. What's a must in a project for you? What's the recipe (main ingredients) of a good project for you?

The answers were divided into different categories.

Process

- Outdoor activities;
- Daily group reflections;
- Provide an atmosphere that supports learning, so the participants can concentrate and focus. Create an atmosphere that everyone can be and show their best;
- Project isn't formal, everyone has the opportunity to share their experience and the air can be filled with enthusiasm;
- Combine and use different methods;
- Balance in the program – activities and free time. Opportunity to get to know the local culture, cooperation with locals. Clear and honest communication;
- An important topic that is interesting and professionally presented. A well designed program;
- Create a positive feeling of the group - good group dynamics;
- Accept emotional moments - not to ignore these moments as they are important;
- The theme and various methods, all for a common goal, the big picture is revealed in pieces and at the end all the pieces of the puzzle are folded into a common picture;
- Thoughtful activities, exciting topic, idea that you are interested in;
- To be done with love and passion; to be an engaging, meaningful project with clear idea;
- Youth and Team participate (active and engaged);
- Willingness; people to like what they do, to do it from the heart;
- Meaningful project; to be valuable for the participants and the local community;
- Space for creativity and involvement of the group, they can also reach their objectives;
- Attention to details: i.e. surprises;
- Participants being heard, feedback taken into account;
- Informal time for digesting; to keep the red thread throughout the whole event;
- Thematic play/topic during the whole event.

Participants

- Have a good selection of participants; the project to be something practical, to create something; to give feedback, to give suggestions for improvements;
- Give freedom to participants - if someone is not ok to participate in something, to accept and respect it;
- Provide space to people with special needs (after agreeing with them) to explain directly to the group;
- Great involvement of participants, motivation and energy of the participants.

Partners

- Transparency to all partners of the budget spending;
- Clear and timely communication, attention is paid to the details of logistics;
- Good partners, a topic that interests everyone, well-divided responsibilities.

Team

- Have a personal approach to the participants;
- Regular meetings of the project team (before the project and during the project);
- International team of facilitators;
- Trainers who are professionals and know what they do – both, in the topic, in the methods and in general;
- A lot of work, solid preparation, dedication and devotion, a team you can trust on;
- Good team, because it will solve everything;
- The organizers to have passion to organize the event and in such a way to ignite the passion in the participants;
- Team that cares;
- The team to have a clear idea why implement this project - how it contributes for the development of people and communities;
- Team; clear objectives and to know what you would like to achieve.

Logistics

- Enough and good enough food (for the stomach and brain);
- Preparation- make a plan and follow it;
- Communication and organizational plan.

Communication and follow up

- To generate a follow up change on a personal, professional, social levels;
- To create better follow up good deeds and activities;
- Preparation (x 5); consistency; transparency; quick and proper communication; attention;
- To be open and transparent with all the information, including financial info;
- To have ongoing evaluation of all stages.

Keep in mind:

- Open attitude.
- Flexibility.
- Open communication.
- Empathy.
- Passion.
- Diversity.
- Devotion.
- Heart and faith and doing. Everything together and in balance!
- Vision, purpose, passion, communication, good food, informal atmosphere.

Scaling questions: 1-2 minutes questionnaire for organisations after the interview

1-10 scale

1. How satisfied are your participants after participating in your implemented Erasmus+ Youth in Action projects?

Average answer was 8-10

2. How satisfied are you about your implemented Erasmus+ Youth in Action projects?

Average answer was 8-10

3. How good your team is at designing and implementing Erasmus+ Youth in Action projects?

Average answer was 9-10

4. All in all, how satisfied are you with partner organisations while implementing the projects?

Average answer was 7-10

5. How would you evaluate your overall performance while implementing Erasmus+ Youth in Action projects?

Average answer was 8-10

Conclusion

The research was focused to gather the first-hand experience of the participants and the project organisers. On one hand, this research explains how the project's quality can be improved in the future. On another hand, this research also shows the importance of learning from mistakes that have been made in the past while implementing and participating in youth projects. Overall, this research findings will not only be valuable for newcomers in project design and implementation but also can be an aid for experienced organisers and the national agencies.

The project “Project HOWs” is financed with the support of European Commission’s “Erasmus+: Youth in Action” administered in Latvia by the Agency for International Programs for Youth. This publication reflects only the author’s views, and the Commission cannot be held responsible for any use which may be made of the information contained there in.

Summary

This research was conducted as a part of the Erasmus+ KA2 project named “Project HOWs” (Project Reference Number: 2020-2-LV02-KA205-003404). The project duration is 19 months, from 1.09.2020 till 31.03.2022. Organizations from 4 countries – Baltic Regional fund from Latvia (www.brfonds.lv), VSI “Inovatyvi karta” from Lithuania (www.innovativegeneration.eu), Tudatos Ifjúságért Alapítvány from Hungary (www.tudatosifjusag.hu) and CVS-Bulgaria from Bulgaria (www.cvs-bg.org) are involved in the project implementation. The purpose of this research was entirely aligned with the aims of the project that is focused to provide evidence-based tools to newcomers in the field of Erasmus+ youth projects.

Hence, before the creation of the guidelines or tools for newcomers in the field of Erasmus+ youth projects, it was important to evaluate the experience of the young population that have attended some youth projects. Additionally, information was also collected from the organisations that have already implemented youth projects to understand the concept of “do and don’ts” before, during and after the projects implementation. The research took place in all four countries separately.

The research was divided into two parts:

1. Quantitative survey (multiple-choice questions) for the youth that have participated in different youth projects as a participant. In total, 190 surveys were analysed.
2. Qualitative survey (interview with open questions) for the different youth organisations representatives who have been involved in the implementation of different youth projects. In total, 40 organisations were interviewed.

In the quantitative survey, the questionnaire included socio-demographic factors (age, gender, country of origin, country of residence, etc.), number and nature of projects a participant has attended. Subsequently, there were questions about the confidentiality, accommodation, venue, food, activities, freedom of expression of an idea related to the projects participants have taken part in. Additionally, there were some open-ended questions in the form where participants were encouraged to share about the problems, positive and negative aspects on their own will and freedom.

In the qualitative survey there were open questions that covered different aspects to gain insights from project implementers' side. There were questions on what help is provided by national agencies (including communication, capacity building of organisations, and recommendations for national agencies). Successively, other questions covered the crucial aspects such as preparation and implementation of the project and concerns to cover after the project activities. Furthermore there were also open questions and the interview attendees were encouraged to share any view, ideas and suggestions that were not covered in the other questions.

After the completion of the research from all involved organisations, research results were compiled at one place in the form of a research report that is attached to this summary.

Main findings from participants' answers are as follow:

1. Majority of participants were female, university graduates followed by current university students, belonging to urban areas, age group 18-15 years old followed by the age group 26-35 years old. Around 49% participated in at least 2-5 projects followed by 22% who participated in 10 or more youth projects. Majority of the respondents attended youth exchanges and training programmes.
2. The main motivation of responders behind the participation in youth projects were – to gain new experience/self-development/traveling to another country, free food and accommodation/learning a foreign language/recognition (youth pass).
3. Looking at a wider scenario, 665 responders mentioned that sending organisations had a pre-project meeting before the mobility and 52% responded that organisers took care of participant's specific needs. However, 99% of participants mentioned that they could express their opinions freely while 83% mentioned that organisers did take care of the confidentiality.
4. While responding to open questions in the survey, participants mentioned that in case of a problem or an issue occurred for them personally or for the whole group of participants, some organisers were able to solve the issue while some other organisers failed to do so.
5. Although participants shared their positive and negative experiences, participants also mentioned plenty of suggestions and recommendations that can be highly useful for the national agencies, current project organisers and importantly the newcomers in project organisation and implementation. All views are mentioned in the detailed research report attached to this summary.

Main findings from organisers' answers are as follow:

1. Interviewees mentioned what kind of support they obtained from their national agency while designing and implementing their projects. On the same token, the shortcomings from the side of the national agency were also mentioned such as the presence of too much bureaucracy, also some aspects which indicated that there was still lack of support from the national agencies while implementing such activities. There was an emphasis that national agencies must look at

these reviews and make the process of designing and implementation of the project simpler and help the organisations in their capacity building.

2. Interviewees highlighted the points for newcomers in the project life to keep in mind when it comes to the roles of the partners – promotion, selection, preparation and follow ups. There was emphasis on avoiding making common mistakes after the approval of the project such as setting goals, tasks, deadlines, and partner’s responsibilities.

3. Consecutively, interviewees shared how to take care of other organisational aspects such as travel, insurance, visa, regarding safety and protection of participants, preparation for participants, working methods and activities, individual needs of the participants, logistics (accommodation, venue, meeting rooms, heating, food).

4. In follow up questions, there was also a discussion about the responsibilities after the project implementation related to dissemination and follow up (what, how, when) and final report.

Whereas the research finding is explanatory and intensive in the attached research report, this summary report has highlighted the focus of the research - including mention of the strategy related to research and findings. The research was focused to gather the first-hand experience of the participants and the project organisers. On one hand, this research explains how the projects quality can be improved in the future, and on the other hand, this research also shows the importance of learning from mistakes that have been made in the past while implementing and participating in youth projects. Overall, this research findings will not only be valuable for newcomers in project design and implementation but also can be an aid for experienced organisers and the national agencies.

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