



Research project on competence development and capacity building in Erasmus+: Youth in Action – National Report

Module (C) on systemic effects and organisational development:
Interviews with key staff members of organisations/platforms/networks

National Research Report: Estonia

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1. Context

This section will contain a description of the overarching research project on competence development and capacity building in Erasmus+: Youth in Action and will be provided by the transnational research coordination.

2. Summary

Research showed that training and support activities within E+/YiA contribute to the development of organisations, platforms and networks involved in E+/YiA, also in combination with other E+/YiA activities these organisations are involved in and activities not connected with E+/YiA. However, it was seen that the impact of E+/YiA could be bigger if the aims of organisations and choosing training and support activities would be thought through profoundly and in a structured way.

Transferring the knowledge of those participating in training and support activities depends on the culture of the organisation and on the people taking part in the activities. Although most of the interviewees mentioned that employees receive support for decision-making, preparation and follow-up activities, the support is very case sensitive and rather superficial as there is a lack of reliance on different models, occupational documents, etc. While making the decision to attend some training or support activity, most of the interviewees said to have relied on the most pressing development needs even if they are aware of youth worker occupational standards.

Although there have been several changes in the youth work sector during the last five years and it is difficult to distinguish the impact of E+/YiA activities, the interviewees believed that the activities have had a positive effect on the beneficiaries on the organisational level. Gaining new knowledge, contacts and project ideas brings along an increase in competences and recognition. The impact of activities seemed to be higher if the organisation's culture and management encourages and supports decision-making, information about the activities is distributed within a broader network and covered on the homepage, media and social networks.

Based on interviews, it seems that E+/YiA activities have the highest effect on recognition, contacts, knowledge and new project or development ideas. All of this also has an impact on the culture and structure of the organisation, increases the quality of youth work and improves reaching the target audience. Thanks to higher recognition and external resources, it has been possible to hire new employees and to focus on certain topics. Therefore, in most cases, the size of the organisation has also increased and activities, reach and networks have broadened.

A positive effect on recognition and acknowledgement was noticed on several levels. Firstly, most of the interviewees mentioned self-recognition as Erasmus+ activities give a valuable opportunity to go and see what other youth workers do and

what their problems are, thus increasing work motivation. Secondly, an increase in social recognition was noticed as improved competences, a more accurate understanding of youth workers and wider networks have a positive effect on being seen and recognised by others. Although formal and political recognition were not mentioned by the interviewees that often, some impact on youth work strategy, developing youth workers' profession, incl. accreditation, licencing, etc., and involving political level discussions were noticed.

Research showed that there are four types of possibilities to support organisational development through training/ support activities in E+/YiA. Firstly, these activities should put more stress on strategic decision-making and strategic management. Interviews showed that these are probably rather superficial and therefore, the maximum potential of training and support activities is not used. Secondly, more emphasis should be put on explaining the advantages and needs of international youth work to encourage internationalisation. Thirdly, as the topics and trainers of training and support activities are kept important, more stress should be put on covering all the needed information in invitations and on providing specific and advanced level activities. Fourthly, changes in programme documents should be kept minimal and well explained, whereby the role of national agencies is remarkable in motivating and supporting participation in E+/YiA activities.

In conclusion, although the impact of E+/YiA activities is not well measurable, they have definitely supported the development of organisations and the youth work sector in general. Based on interviews, the impact of activities mainly depends on the people attending the activity, the specific activity and the culture of the organisation where (s)he is working. Depending on the person and organisation, different activity types are preferred and their impact is slightly different. The type of beneficiary, size of organisation and level of E+/YiA involvement do not seem to have a remarkable impact. However, to increase impact, a better understanding of the need for strategic management and internationalisation is needed.

3. Framework

3.1. Research Questions

In Estonia, there were no modified and/ or additional research questions. However, some sub-questions were added to interview questionnaires and some sub-questions were specified based on “*Noorsootöötajate koolitusvajaduse uuring*” (“Training needs of Estonian youth workers”)¹ and RAY CAP Module A-B interview summaries (see more in section 3.5).

Based on these documents, more stress was put on following aspects:

- In view of selection, preparation for/of and follow-up training and support activities, are there any differences between national and international trainings and support activities.
- Are there any strategic instructions for choosing trainings and support activities (MQ1-4)?
- Who else is involved in decision making about applying for a training and support activity (MQ4)? On what is the decision based (MQ4)?
- As some of the participants have been from outside of the organization, are there any differences in preparation, follow-up and support of training and support activities between these participants and those from the organization (MQ5-7)?
- To which extent are changes in organizations caused by the local governments reform (autumn 2017), changes in financing for non-formal learning (additional financing starting from 2018) and networks developed during the Erasmus+ activities (MQ11)?
- What kind of changes should be supported through Erasmus+ and governmental activities (MQ13)?

3.2. Interview Sampling

Archimedes Foundation sent to evaluators a list of 29 youth work organisations who have participated in different youth worker study mobility activities between the years 2014-2017:

- their worker or volunteer has participated in TCA activities (13 organisations);
- organisation has received financing for KA1 or KA2 project that has an element of organizing a study visit for youth workers (5 organisations);
- organisations that have received financing for KA1 or KA2 and whose workers have attended in TCA activities (11 organisations).

¹ Käger, Kivistik, Pertsjonok, Tatar (2017) Noorsootöötajate koolitusvajaduse uuring. Aruanne. Available at: <https://www.ibs.ee/en/publications/training-needs-of-youth-workers/> (mapping was carried out at the end of 2017)

While compiling the sample of 15 organisations, recommendations of the Archimedes Foundation and section 3 in document “Research project on competence development and capacity building in Erasmus+: Youth in Action – interview guidelines” (sampling criteria, sample size) were considered. However, based on research questions and the youth work situation in Estonia, stress was rather put on the diversity of organisations than on representativeness of all criteria. The more, that most of the youth work organisation types are not represented in a programme. Sampling was modified for and used in the following way (see also Table 1):

- different types of beneficiaries, covering the diversity of programme users – taken into account;
- organisations of different sizes at national, regional and local levels – was taken into account to an extent that was possible based on the e-Business Register (analysts were aware that organisations may record their size differently: covering part or full-time employees, volunteers, etc.; there was information about 24 organisations) and organisations’ home pages (descriptions of organisations and their activities);
- different level of E+/YiA involvement (training, support, mixed) – attending KA1, KA2 and TCA activities is taken into account (see above); although the quality of projects’ overviews was different and it was not always possible to understand the activities of the project; if possible, the content of the project was considered as well (organising large-scale training or cooperation projects, carrying out smaller mobility projects for some individuals, compiling different materials, attending TCA events alone or with a colleague, etc.; usually the extent of the project’s impact was not stated in projects’ overviews);
- different approaches to international youth work (activities, methods, structures) – as the quality of the projects’ descriptions was very different, this criterion was not reasonable in case of Estonia. However, the criterion is taken into account to an extent, based on the activities (see previous criterion), homepages and background of the organisations and descriptions of the projects;
- different activity types (KA1, KA2, KA3, TCA) – attending KA1, KA2 and TCA activities is considered, as there was no information about KA3, it was not taken into account;
- gender – not considered while choosing interviewees as the interviews targeted key staff members of organisations irrespective of their gender;
- urban/rural – considered in view of national/regional/ local levels as all the organisations are from bigger settlements and it is not possible to clearly distinguish between urban and rural organisations;
- whether organisation representatives were interviewed in modules (A) and (B) of the RAY-CAP research project (8 of 29 were interviewed) – considered.

Table 1. Sampling criteria

Criterion	Considered?	All organisations (total population, 29 organisations)	Final sample (13 organisations)	Comments
Different types of beneficiaries	Yes	NGO - 21, Local Public body - 7, union - 2 of organisations are part of international network, Agency of the Executive or other state institution - 1	NGO - 11, Local Public body - 1, unions - 2, other state institution -1	2 Local Public bodies were not able to participate in research, it was too late to find new organisations
Different sizes of organisations	Yes	15: < 10 workers, 8: < 50 workers, 1: < 250 workers ²	8: < 10 workers, 5: < 50 workers	
Different levels of organisations	Yes, to some extent as it was difficult to determine the level; additionally, following the research questions, other criteria were more important	6 rather international, 9 rather national, 3 rather regional and 11 rather local level organisations; some of these focused on some certain areas and some were internationally very active	1 rather international, 8 rather national, 1 rather regional and 3 rather local organisations	1 regional and 1 local organisation were not able to participate in research; it was more important to involve organisations that are not so active on the international level
Different level of E+/YiA involvement	Yes (TCA, KA1, KA2); involvement based on activities in some extent	TCA 13 organisations, KA1 or KA2 5 organisations, KA1 or KA2 and TCA 11 organisations	TCA 5 organisations, KA1 or KA2 2 organisations, KA1 or KA2 and TCA 6 organisations	if possible, the content of the project was considered while analysing involvement
Different approaches to international youth work	not reasonable			while compiling the sample, background of organisations and project overviews were considered
Different activity types	Yes, all activity types involved			No information about KA3
Gender	No		6 males and 13 females were interviewed	As stress was on organisations' key staff members, they were interviewed
Urban/rural	No			organisations were from bigger settlements
Interviewed in modules (A) and (B)	Yes	8 of 29 were interviewed	6 of 13 were interviewed earlier	

² Interviews showed that actual number of workers was sometimes slightly different and/or the number of people in organisation does not mean that all of these deal with youth work.

In case of one interview, the interviewee represented two organisations (the final reports and homepages hinted to a connection between the two organisations; during the interview, the direct connections were confirmed).

Interview invitation was sent to the head/manager of the organisation. It was requested that other key staff members who are responsible for implementing training/support activities abroad and key staff members who are responsible for implementing training/support activities in Estonia are also involved. In case of 5 organisations, more than one person attended in interview.

3.3. Interview Setting

7 interviews were face-to-face interviews whereby 4 of these were held in a cafe and 3 at the interviewee's office. 6 were carried out via Skype (with video) with interviewees who were either in their office, at home or abroad. There were no interruptions by external persons.

Interviews covered all main questions (MQ) addressed in the guidelines. If appropriate, sub-questions addressed in guidelines were mentioned as examples or to get more specific answers. However, considering the main research questions and the youth work situation in Estonia, analysts' experience in the field and permission to adjust, contextualise and/or deviate from questions during the interview (for a fluent, smooth interview), interviews were rather semi-structured than structured. This allowed to gather more qualitative information.

Depending on the interviewee, interviews lasted between 45 to 70 minutes.

3.4. Interview Documentation

All interviews were voice-recorded (participants gave their consent) whereby it was agreed that recordings and written summaries of interviews will not be shared with the procurer. However, interviewees gave their consent to use quotes if their names are omitted and it is not possible to determine the author of the quote.

After the interview, the recording was re-listened and summaries of interview questions and research questions were compiled. Once all interviews had been carried out and summaries were ready, analysis of all responses and compiling of the report began.

3.5. Interview Flow

Before carrying out interviews, interview questions were modified based on “Training needs of Estonian youth workers”³ and RAY CAP Module A-B interview summaries. Based on these documents, more stress was put on the following aspects:

- In view of selection, preparation for/of and follow-up training and support activities, are there any differences between national and international trainings and support activities.
- Are there any strategic instructions to choose trainings and support activities (MQ1-4)?
- Who else are involved in decision making about applying for a training and support activity (MQ4)? On what is the decision based (MQ4)?
- As some of the participants have been from outside of the organization, are there any differences in preparation, follow-up and support of training and support activities between these participants and those from within the organization (MQ5-7)?
- To which extent are changes in organizations caused by the local governments reform (autumn 2017), changes in the financing of non-formal learning (additional financing starting from 2018) and networks developed during the Erasmus+ activities (MQ11)?
- What kind of changes should be supported through Erasmus+ and governmental activities (MQ13)?

Interviews started with an introduction of the overall context and purpose of the interview and interview process. Thereafter, consent for voice-recording was asked. It was promised that responses are used anonymously, and voice-recordings and summaries of interviews are not shared with third parties.

When voice-recording was started, background information about the organisation (size, activities) and interviewees (roles of interviewees) were asked.

After this, main interview questions were asked. Depending on the interviewee, interviewers tried to structure the interview (sub-headings of questions like “selection training and support activities”, “preparation for/of training and support activities”, etc.) by saying that *now we are moving to the following topic* or *with the following questions, we hope to get input for this topic*. However, in some cases, interviews were more unstructured. Usually MQ1-4 were answered naturally, without the need to formulate the question (while asking who suggests a training and support activity, the answer was that based on this or that, in cooperation with these persons suggestions are done or decisions for training and support activities made, etc.).

³ Käger, Kivistik, Pertsjonok, Tatar (2017) Training needs of youth workers. Available at: <https://www.ibs.ee/en/publications/training-needs-of-youth-workers/> (mapping was carried out at the end of 2017)

Depending on the interviewee, MQ10 and MQ11 were asked together – how has your organisation changed and where did the change come from. The same with MQ12-13. Quite often people were rather speechless when asking if there are particular skills/knowledge/attitudes/resources that individuals/teams/etc. lack and where E+/YiA training and support activities can contribute.

The interview was wrapped up by asking whether interviewee wants to point out something that was not covered by the questions or he/she wants to stress. Finally, interviewee(s) were thanked for their time and flexibility to talk with analysts in the middle of the holiday season.

4. Results

In many cases, interviewees also belonged to the management and board of the organisations, which were rather small. This made it difficult to distinguish the role of management and the board and therefore these are covered together, if not mentioned otherwise.

4.1. Selection of training and support activities

Several interviewees said that in Estonia, there have been lot of possibilities for training and support activities for youthworkers in the last years. However, as seen also from the the research “Training needs of youth workers”⁴, there is no time to attend all training and support activities, i.e. a choice must be made. In this chapter, a thorough analysis of who is suggesting training and support activities, what is the choice of training and support activity typically based on, how are the training and support needs determined and how the decisions about applying for a training and support activity are typically taken.

4.1.1. Who typically suggests a training and support activity in your organisation?

As the interviewed organisations were rather small (an individual could also be member of the management and board) and included volunteers and contracted specialists, it was not always easy to determine who typically suggests a training and support activity in an organisation. However, in most of the organisations, all following levels of initiatives were mentioned:

- individual who would like to attend a training or support activity, based on the individual’s interests and needs and his/her knowledge about the needs of the organisation;
- individual’s team – team members may suggest some activity based on the development needs and interests of certain individuals. Depending on the organisation’s size and structure, the team may be the whole organisation, department or people with the same specialisation;
- management – based on their knowledge of the development needs and interests of certain individuals and the development needs of the organisation;
- board – depending on the size of the organisation and the responsibilities of the board members, suggestions are made based on the development needs of the organisation and/or development needs and interests of certain individuals; in case of three organisations, the board does not intervene in training and support activities, e.g. one interviewee said that members of

⁴ Käger, Kivistik, Pertsjonok, Tatar (2017) Noorsootöötajate koolitusvajaduse uuring. Aruanne. Available at: <https://www.ibs.ee/en/publications/training-needs-of-youth-workers/>

board who are not active in youth work, do not intervene in training and support activities;

- wider network (of partners) – all interviewees stated during interviews that they receive suggestions or hints also from their wider contact networks. Everyone said that very prominent “recommenders” are organisations organising trainings and organisations looking for partners in some project. These kinds of suggestions to attend in a training or project are coming mainly via mailing lists and e-mails. One interviewee said that no-one is giving concrete recommendations on how to develop the organisation but they have received direct invitations from partners to attend some trainings or projects. Aside from the training/project invitations, no other means of how a wider network (of partners) suggests development opportunities were determined.

“They come to us, we don’t go looking for them – how and from where can I get these trainings or projects.”

“There are usually no external recommendations regarding our development. It’s more like them making a suggestion – you are working on this, come to our training.”

Interviews showed that all these “recommenders” may have different levels of intensity. Analysts divided the interviewed Estonian organisations into 3 groups:

- all members of the organisation are active in finding and suggesting training and support activities – about 8 organisations;
- main initiative comes from employees – about 1 organisation;
- main initiative comes from the management and/or the board – about 4 organisations.

In all three groups there were organisations in which there seemed to be a well-considered approach to who should suggest training and support activities and for what reason. In some organisations, the management and/or the board is involved or stress is on the core group to ensure that the development needs of the organization are considered. In some organisations, the stress is on employees’ own initiative as employees should be responsible for their personal development.

Interviews showed that partner networks have a key role in suggesting training and support activities. Members of these networks receive information about trainings or projects are second level “recommenders” – depending on the organisation and employees’ responsibilities and his/her network, it may be a board member, manager, a team member or the individual themselves. None of the interviewees mentioned that they systematically search for training and support activities that would meet someone’s needs.

It is important to mention that in most of the interviewed organisations, personal development and attending training activities is very welcomed. In one organisation, it

is widely communicated that every employee may attend one freely chosen training in a year (does not have to be connected with work) to encourage self-development. One interviewee said that in their workplace, it is believed that personal development has a positive impact on fulfilling work responsibilities. With this type of trainings, the main initiative comes from the individual. Another type of training is work-related where colleagues have a higher possibility to suggest trainings. Additionally, there is in place a lengthened paid study leave and a bonus for graduating MA or PhD studies or becoming a youth worker by occupation. In another organisation, it was said that employees had the possibility to take a day off every month to go through some training materials or to go to the library. All interviews showed that the organisation's decision to support self development may come in the form of a suggestion to be active in looking for training and support activities.

“If an organisation communicates, both generally and personally, I mean face to face, that we support personal development and all that, then employees have that sense of security and they bring it up. They start looking for opportunities. That’s a very important aspect.”

For analysts it seemed that typically, the person who suggests training and support activities in an organisation does not depend on the type of beneficiary, level on E+/YiA involvement, approached to international youth work, participating in different activity types etc. However, in larger organisations the role of the board may be less prominent.

4.1.2. What is the choice for a training and support activity typically based on?

Several interviewees mentioned that there are a lot of possibilities for youth workers for self-development (free of charge), at least in general topics. Depending on the organisation, they may also receive several invitations to participate in large projects. Therefore, about half of the representatives of organisations said that there is a need to filter out the most important invitations to training and support activities.

“As a leader, I feel the overabundance of information regarding trainings and all that. One thing are the umbrella organisations. The second is the private sector. In a way, the third sector as well. Overall, it can get a little crazy. There’s too much information that reaches us regarding trainings.”

“We are very critical in assessing which responsibilities we will take on.”

“ANK sends us a lot of information about trainings. Sometimes, I can honestly say, we feel like there’s too much of it. Or that there’s too much stuffed into one month. We’ve wondered if the training organisers are in contact with each other or how do they make sure there’s no overlap. We’ve had cases when we’d like to attend several trainings but they overlap. Then you always have to choose, even though both are important to us.”

All interviewees said that choosing a training and support activity is typically based on the personal **development needs of the person and/or organisation**. De-

pending on the past experiences of the organisation and their members, only critically important trainings and support activities are attended. This means that if the organisation or team is new, most of the trainings that seem to be important and/ or interesting, are attended. **When the organisation is more mature and team members have more experience, activities are chosen more strategically: the aim of the organisation, its development plans and needs are considered and based on these priorities, trainings and projects are chosen.**

“Is it necessary for our youth centers, our members or our organisations and whether we are the right organisation to be a partner.”

“We don’t choose projects randomly... We don’t start a single project simply because we’re having fun. Every choice is based on the needs of the country. When Estonia made it clear that we need international youth work [we started strengthening that side of our organisation].”

Some managers bear in mind also the broader concept of youth work and choose trainings based on whether they will increase the youth workers understanding about youth work and what they do.

“As much as possible, I try to involve them [in trainings] so that they get an understanding that ... they are also a youth worker [in addition to being a hobby school teacher].”

When talking about strategic choices that take into account also development needs, then some interviewees said that the choice for training and support activity is based on **the needs of the team**. This means the team as a whole, with its members’ strengths and weaknesses, is considered so that all needs are covered.

“This is what I base my decision on, how can I support them, what are their strengths and weaknesses. /.../ All in all, yes, I look at certain people’s strengths and how to help them improve. The decision is informed.”

“Our most immediate goal was to get a functional team together /.../ to increase our visibility in /.../ [certain region] and to engage youths. And then we’ll take the next steps [from there].”

Depending on the organisation’s aims and target groups, the **needs of the partner network are also considered** when choosing trainings and support activities. Depending on the organisation, the wider network may be all Estonian youth work organisations and youth workers from a certain area in Estonia (also youth workers from organisations whose main task is not youth work, e.g. Unemployment Insurance Fund, Police and Border Guard Board), youth workers or youth organisations in other EU countries, etc. Sometimes the needs of the network are asked but generally the first choice for activities is done based on the individual’s knowledge about the (potential) needs of these groups. Only a few representatives said that they consider local governments needs, needs of the youth work sector in Estonia, the youth work development plan or studies carried out in a field.

“We don’t jump head first into every project. We take our time and read the entire thing to see if it speaks to our youth workers [in the wider region as well].”

In addition to the development needs of the person and/or organisation, **the topic, trainer, methods used, and target group of trainings or projects are also important factors** while choosing the training and support activity. The preferences of individuals and organisations are different. Some prefer broader and basic topics, others more specific and advanced trainings. Some prefer well-known trainers, others would like to hear new trainers, whereas instead of the importance of the trainer's qualification, professional experience and being active in the topic were pointed out. One of the most mentioned reasons for this choice is **lack of time**: in the interviewed organisations, the workload of youth workers is rather high and it is not possible to be away from everyday work responsibilities so often. Two interviewees said that for them, the **time of the training may be even more important than the topic**.

„When we first started, we didn't know much and looked at all trainings. /.../ Now we're more strategic and we look at the partners, the topic and who are organising the training.“

“If it was up to me [if time wasn't such a deciding factor], then that list would be different [referring to the activity maps information], in 5 or 6 years, there would be 60-70 names.”

Most of the interviewees said that nowadays, the country of the event is not so important. However, one representative admitted that people's activity to register to trainings is dependent on the country of the event. However, 2 of the representatives found that the **country may be one of the motivational factors when a youth worker is just beginning their career and when starting with international cooperation**. This confirms the abovementioned observation that more developed organisations and individuals are more selective concerning the content of the activity.

“Unfortunately, quite often, regardless of whether we find participants or not, the geography also decides, whether it's in Latvia or Spain.”

Several people said that trainings carried out through **Erasmus+ may be more valuable and preferable** as there are better possibilities to have **new trainers** and very **specific topics** (also advanced ones). **The possibility of internationalisation and having most of the costs covered** were also mentioned as some of the most important factors influencing their decision to attend Erasmus+ training and support activities. Two interviewees emphasized that to be a good youth worker, you need to know what is going on elsewhere as well. In addition to being able to **change experiences and find new contacts**, there is a higher possibility to see and get to know aspects that are not common in Estonia or are not covered in trainings that are carried out here. Due to these reasons, three representatives said that their organisation's focus is on internationalisation and therefore, international trainings and projects are more important. One representative mentioned that even in case of international activities, there are just few activities in their specific topic and

therefore, they try to attend all of these, if possible. Several representatives admitted that without Erasmus+ opportunities or if self-financing were higher, there will be less opportunities for their employees to attend international projects.

“We don’t attend all trainings just for the sake of it, but we do think highly of Erasmus+ things. If it is any way beneficial to us, we try to attend. And of course, if that useful training is free or cheap, that’s a big bonus.”

“At some point, in order to do high-quality work, you need to look across the border. But that needs to happen in cooperation with national needs.”

“We don’t support tourism done via Erasmus+. If a person attends through us, we expect them to come back and start applying or disseminating what they learned.”

“Estonia becomes small very quickly, we need new ideas from elsewhere. Not that everything from abroad is always different or applicable, but learning about it gives you new ideas or thoughts. /.../ For growth to happen, you have to do something different.”

“They saw something completely different [during their activity abroad]. For me, honestly, I was already bored. /.../ But they’re like sponges, taking it all in. They met completely different people. /.../ Normally, they only interact [with people in their field]. But there, they saw different types of young people who are saying very smart things. /.../ They saw a completely different world. That’s extremely important.”

Although international activities are seen as very important, there are several reasons for not using the full potential of these. Two representatives said that they prefer local trainings as it is much more complicated to attend international trainings as these are more **time-consuming** and it is difficult to be away from work for such a long time. Several mentioned that if they have a **high workload**, there are not enough resources to develop their project ideas for Erasmus+ project applications. Two of the 12 representatives mentioned that writing applications to Erasmus+ activities is a bit difficult and may take more time than planned. Some said that they have attended in several activities as a partner and it gives them the **knowledge and courage** to try to be a lead partner themselves in the future. According to one interviewee participating in international activities that are carried out by someone else and/or are organised in Estonia, attending these is a good step forward to start carrying out their own activities. According to one organisation, **finding strong foreign partners** is the key to a good project. Everyone also mentioned the importance of consultations provided by the Archimedes Foundation: if you know that there is **someone available to offer explanations and give good advice**, you are more willing to try and write a proposal yourself. However, two representatives said that sometimes they have received information that later turned out to be incorrect. Several people also mentioned that **it is easier to re-apply if there have not been any substantial changes over the years and the instructions are clear**. However, two representatives said that sometimes there have been too many changes and ways to interpret instructions that complicates applying for funds for training and support activities. Three of the representatives also mentioned the lack of **language skills**. However, one representative said that for some youth workers, Eng-

lish may be the preferred language compared to Estonian and in these cases, Erasmus+ possibilities help to increase the organisation's participation in activities: the organisation may be more active in Erasmus+ training and support activities compared to activities carried out in Estonian.

“We have a bigger interest in Russian or English-speaking trainings but unfortunately, there aren't many of them. I can listen in at Estonian ones but not everyone can do that. Young people speak English. You need to be able to understand terminology, the content – young people are much better off with English than Estonian. When the training is in Estonian, it's much harder to find participants, it's easiest in Russian.”

Connected to development needs and the abovementioned factors, one interviewee mentioned the following three categories that are important when deciding whether to participate in training or support activity:

- can I **gain new knowledge**;
- is there a **need to change experiences** and/or give information to other participants;
- are there possibilities to **get new contacts/ broaden the network**.

“Actually, we use the training network to build up an international network.”

Although most of interviewees seemed to consider these aspects, they did not formulate them so concretely. In the opinion of analysts, a **systematic approach to choosing training and support activities may help to determine and explain the need for some trainings/projects**. However, based on module (A) and (B) interviews, it seems that not all employees of this certain organisation had understood this logic behind participation decisions and their feedback of the training was rather neutral, even though based on module (C) interview and the feedback of this person, we can say that the aim of the training was fulfilled and we can assume that the feedback would have been more positive if they had understood the above mentioned logic better. However, one interviewee from an organisation that has rather good experiences in training and support activities said that it may be good if there is no strategy to choose training and support activities.

“In that sense our stance is good, we are not limited. We can react really quickly and sometimes, if needed, decide within minutes if there is a need.”

According to some interviewees, the **attitude of the management to trainings and support activities** is a crucial factor when choosing them. If it is known that development is valued and that a request for certain activities is usually approved, it increases the motivation for self-development and planning the development of the organisation.

Another important factor is the **size of the cofinancing**. Several interviewees said that they usually choose free trainings. Although several of the interviewees said that they will attend international trainings and projects even if they have to pay, but they also admitted, that they can only participate in a limited number of such activities. One representative said that they did not get a positive financing decision for

one project idea, but they are trying to resubmit it and if needed, a new strategy will be developed thereafter. One representative said that implementing all promising ideas will take much more time without the financing from the Erasmus+ programme. Two organisations decided not to submit project proposals as lead partners as they knew that the cofinancing will be too high. All these examples show the importance of the Erasmus+ programme in supporting attending in training and support activities.

When it is decided to attend a training or carry out a training and support activity, the **question of quantity** may arise. One representative said that in case of trainings they prefer to send just one person as in this case, it is easier to settle in and make new contacts as you have no familiar person with whom to speak with. Another said that they try to send two people with different competences so that they can support each other. One said that they apply funding for one project that is most important to avoid competing with themselves.

Based on interviews, being part of an international organisation does not influence how training and support activities are chosen. However, in case of project ideas, there may be an increased potential for submitting proposals as it is easier to find the necessary foreign partners. This is confirmed by the fact that this type of organisations did not talk about problems in finding partners whereby quite often other organisations mentioned finding strong and reliable partners as one of the obstacles to applying for financing.

4.1.3. How are the training and support needs in your organisation typically determined, and who is typically involved in this process?

Interviews showed that training and support needs are typically determined through **discussions**. All interviewees said that the need for training has to be determined by individuals, e.g. there needs to be **self-reflection**. In case of 11 organisations, where the initiative is coming from the individual, the individual usually discusses it (the need for training and support activity) with **team members, managers and board members** (board is not involved if not all board members are active in field of youth work). Depending on the organisation, these discussions may be **informal, part of formal meetings** or in six cases, also **part of career talks**.

“Every employee has clear responsibilities. Their task is to think how to reach goals in the best possible way, where are the bottlenecks or if there is room for development. Together with the manager these will be identified.”

Based on recent research⁵, it is **questionable if this kind of discussion is very structured** as youth workers' capability to self-evaluate is rather low. However, it can be assumed that if you have to explain your interests or needs to your col-

⁵ Käger, Kivistik, Pertsjonok, Tatar (2017) Training needs of youth workers. Available at: <https://www.ibs.ee/en/publications/training-needs-of-youth-workers/>

leagues, you have thought about it. The more that several said to consider the youth work strategy in determining the needs.

At the same time, it is questionable whether it is possible to discuss needs during meetings in depth or strategically. However, as most of interviewees said that the employee should know the aims of organisation which have to be considered while determining the training and support needs, **it can be assumed that in these organisations, the needs are determined more realistically compared to the general situation in Estonia.** This is confirmed by the experiences of one organisation: after every project, the weaknesses and strengths of the project and lessons for next projects are discussed.

Discussions are also the basis for determining the need for projects. Usually, individuals, team, management, board and sometimes even the partner network are involved through formal and informal discussions. In the case of two organisations, needs are determined mainly by the management and board, employees have smaller role. Depending on the organisation, examples from the partner network may include the Youth Agency, local governments, organisations from connected field, (umbrella) organisations and target groups of the organisation (youth workers).

In addition to the discussions another widely used method to determine the needs is observation. All interviewees said that it is important to **observe both employees and also problems and developments in the youth sector.** One part of this is abovementioned information about training and support activities that can be used as hint for developing needs. Two of the representatives said that they determine needs mainly based on observations and that individuals and the rest of the team are not involved.

Some of the organisations highlighted the following methods to determine training and support needs:

- using the [Youth Work Act](#) as a strategic document;
- satisfaction surveys within employees;
- questionnaires/forms within employees;
- participating in projects that map the development needs of youth workers and youth work organisations;
- model evaluations (360 degree feedback, Belbin Team Roles);
- feedback of parents.

During interviews, it was seen that in some organisations, systematic discussions and determining needs is carried out rarely. As people and youth work change in time, the needs of an organisation and priorities in training and support activities should be evaluated regularly. One interviewee mentioned that this is needed to simplify the work of the manager.

“It’s so nice to work when you know what they need.”

4.1.4. How are decisions about applying for a training and support activity typically taken?

Interviews showed that making decisions about applying for a training and support activity depend on whether it is a question of deciding to attend a training or a big project. In case of **trainings, the decision is typically made by the individual**, who considers also discussions or opinions of team members, management and/or the board. As mentioned earlier (see chapter 4.1.2), depending on the organization, the individual's opinion about the need may have different weight.

“For us, the wellbeing of the employee and their personal development are very important. For example, if a training is not directly connected with the development of the organization but the employee is very interested in it, we support their participation.”

If there is a question of costs (participation costs, fare, daily allowance, etc.), the role of the management and/or the board is more prominent. In case of **projects, management and/or the board have a more prominent role or they make the final decision** whereby the discussions involve the team. One representative said that different options are discussed with the team. Another representative said that discussions are a crucial part of the decision-making process as discussions and questions make you to think in another way and you may realize that the idea is not good or some other aspects should be considered. Depending on the size of the organization and the topic area, a smaller team or the whole organization may be involved in decision-making.

“There is always the question of why do you think this [training or support activity] is helpful to you right now. /.../ If someone is asking questions, you do start thinking differently and sometimes you may realize that it isn't helpful after all.”

Decisions are usually made based on training and support activity needs (see chapter 4.1.2) that are determined mainly through informal discussions (see chapter 4.1.3) as employees work closely together and analyse their activities together, according to one interviewee. Interviews showed that depending on the organization, **discussions with the Archimedes Foundation, the balance of national and international financial resources, needs of local governments, experiences of organization, development plans of youth work and relevant studies are considered.**

Most of the interviewees said that **attending in trainings or participating in/ carrying out some project is not compulsory** for them as the impact and result of the activity will be insufficient if they participate unwillingly. Therefore, there should be a joint decision about applying for a training and support activity.

“There is no such thing as the management forcing you. /.../ You can't do that in youth work. You can't guide people.”

“Based on the information that reaches me, I try to choose what to forward to my employees.”

"A person's own motivation is their main trigger [for personal development and participation in activities]."

4.2. Preparation for/of training and support activities

In this chapter, preparation for/of training and support activities is analysed in depth. Emphasis is put on how organisations support the preparation of training and support activities and how team members are supported while attending training and support activities. As some of the interviewees said that Erasmus+ activities are more valuable, it can be assumed that in case of preparing for E+/YiA activities, more stress is put on supporting. One person said that in case someone is afraid of using English, the team supports her/him so that the individual would not give up. Another person mentioned that in these cases, they send two people to trainings, if possible, so that one can support the other.

4.2.1. How does your organisation typically support the preparation for a training and support activity?

- [SQ5.1] "Is the agenda of the activity discussed in any setting?"

Preparation for/of the training and support activities starts with discussing the agenda of the activity and this is the cornerstone for making the decision whether to apply for a training and support activity or not. As seen in chapters 4.1.2-4.1.4, all interviewed organisations discuss the agenda of the activity in any setting. The level of detail in which the agenda of the activity is discussed depends on the activity and its importance to the organisation. Depending on the size of the team, plans to participate in some training or support activity are discussed during regular meetings and/or with colleagues (formally or informally). **In case of trainings**, especially local ones, the agenda is usually discussed in less detail. However, in case of international trainings, incl. Erasmus+ events, most of the interviewed organisations admitted that depending on the individual's roles, competences and experience with international trainings, they prepare and discuss the agenda, expectations and purpose of the training before the training period. This discussion is mostly informal. In a few cases, it has been mainly seen as the psychological preparation of a person, especially when it is his/her first time or when s/he does not know English so well, or etc. In general, the purpose of the training - lobbying, contact finding, gaining some new information etc. is repeated.

In case of projects, the project's agenda is discussed in detail in the process of writing the application. The content of the project and activities are usually discussed together with all the team members of planned project. One representative said that in case of training projects, even trainers are involved in the preparation processes. It is usual to have many discussion sessions (physical as well as online), use a collaborative online platform for writing it and arrange a meeting even with foreign partners, if needed. One interviewee said that if financing for a training

project is received, the agenda of the project and trainings are developed in more detail.

- [SQ5.2] “Are expectations for the activity discussed in any setting?”

Besides the agenda of the activity, **expectations for the activity** are discussed. Firstly, expectations are talked about **during decision making and preparation processes** (see chapters 4.1.2, 4.1.4 and 4.2.1), but depending on the activity, **re-viewed right before activities and sometimes even during the activities**. However, interviews showed that in case of short term and less important activities, these discussions are not so common and these are less structured (see chapter 4.1.2). In case of larger projects, the expectations are mostly discussed in the application preparation process. One interviewee said they discuss whether the activity aims at individual, team or area development, and whether the aim is to get knowledge, provide knowledge or get contacts. However, comparing these findings with the information received from module (A) and (B) interviews, it can be said that in order to support employees, there is a higher need for explaining the expectations (see chapter 4.1.2).

Although most of the organisations do not send participants outside of their organisation to training and support activities, in those few cases when activities have included people from the outside, their preparation is more thorough, including discussions about expectations for the activity.

One representative highlighted that if the positive financing decision is received and participants for training activities are looked for, they ask and consider also the expectations of the training target groups.

- [SQ5.3] “Are materials for the activity prepared individually or collectively?”

If the decision to attend a training and support an activity is made (see chapter 4.1.4), it is time to prepare materials for the activity. In case of trainings, this could mean discussing the topic with colleagues or making some background research. In case of larger projects, the **most frequent practice is to prepare materials collectively as a team** (about 11 organisations; no information about 2 organisations), which could, but does not necessarily have a responsible person or coordinator. About half of the interviewed organisations said they are preparing projects and training materials as a small team, 2-5 people, where everybody is contributing according to their skills, interests and competences. Some of the representatives said that even trainers are involved in preparing applications and one representative said that if possible, volunteers are involved in preparing materials. In fewer organisations, there is one person responsible who does most of the preparations, but if needed, they can discuss the preparations in a group as well.

“They have working groups who address this. They come together and develop these ideas. This does not happen in a week. It takes longer than that. /.../ It is not just one person saying how it is going to be.”

One more aspect that the interviewees mentioned in relation to preparations for/of training and support activities is **support of the wider network**. Organisations that are part of the international network and/or belong to some umbrella network said that if needed, they feel free to ask support and ideas from other members of the network. Several other representatives also said that they get support from outside persons, mainly from target groups, but also from personal contacts, to prepare larger projects. It was seen as obvious that while preparing larger activities, **potential project partners** also contribute to preparing the documents. One representative said they are thinking of handing in a project proposal under the network as it may increase the value of the project and potential to get funding. In case of networking, it is also easier and faster to find suitable project partners.

Most of the representatives (**heads of organisations** and youth work departments) said that in case of questions, they provide **support for preparing the materials** and it is always possible to get **relevant information from the Archimedes Foundation**. One representative said to offer support to youth workers considering the content of the activity, but avoids giving technical support while preparing the documents and encourages youth workers to find out how something should be covered in the applications themselves.

One of the interviewees said that **when a positive financing decision for a large project is received, materials for the activity are specified collectively**. In case of training projects, the trainer has to prepare training materials in cooperation with the applicant. Informing the partners, looking for participants, etc. are done collectively.

4.2.2. How does your organisation support a team member while they attend a training and support activity?

- [SQ6.1] “Do you discuss the workload of the team member in advance?”

Although reviewing the workload while taking part in training and support activities may support and motivate participating in these activities, most of the interviewees have not done it. Most said that the **employees have the possibility to manage their workload**: they can fulfil the most important tasks before attending a training and support activity and continue once they return. Also, most said that **some of the tasks or questions that emerge can be solved from distance**. However, **in case of smaller organisations and organisations where the workers are in close contact with the youth, the question of workload is more acute**. A few organisations said that they have to share the workload between colleagues as it is not good to dismiss the planned activities. One said that as they have more employees, it is possible to find a replacement and there is no risk of closing the organisation. However, in one organisation (not a youth work centre), there was an opinion that sharing the tasks while being away could cause more problems than completing these before, during or after the training and support activity and therefore, delegating is not used if possible.

One interviewee said **it is not possible to attend training and support activities during busy periods** as it is not possible to share the workload. This was pointed out by several interviewees, relating to their experience with smaller youth centres or organisations. Organisations try to take into account that a person's training would not take place during a very busy period at work. Usually, the workload of the team member does not decrease because of the training, which means that in general, work- and training-related workload increases as everybody is responsible for filling their tasks before, after or during the training or finding someone to replace them. The changes in tasks are discussed with the leader and, if needed, with the bigger team and potential substitute.

Another aspect related to the workload of a team member who is attending a training and support activity is reacting to work-related questions from distance. As mentioned earlier, these could be solved from distance, but about 11 representatives said they **try to avoid contacting in every question so to support taking part in the activity**. One interviewee said that it also depends on the individual whether (s)he reacts to e-mails while being away.

“Modern technology is always within your reach, so it's impossible to tell someone to not look at their phone, they'll do it anyway”.

Analysts agree that in case of small organisations/teams, it may not be possible and/or reasonable to delegate the tasks. However, from some interviews, it seemed that the attitude of managers/board members towards employees' responsibility and not helping them find solutions to be able to participate in activities may be too unmotivating and there may be a need for better supporting a team member.

- [SQ6.2] “How do you redistribute the work of the team member while away?”

The practice of most of the organisations is that **work has to get done** even if a person participates in training and support activities. This means that the workload stays the same or increases for a short time for those who are participating in trainings. Carrying out projects is usually a part of employees' everyday responsibilities, whereby as shown in chapter 4.1.2, workload is considered while planning these activities. In any case, work has to get done and therefore, it is important to keep in mind that a) the **activity would not overlap with a busy period**, b) that important tasks are done before, after or during the activity c) for specific tasks which need physical presence, there is somebody replacing the person. As a training is usually a short-time activity, work is most often done before or after the activity. In one organisation, it was mentioned that if there is an important training where the main responsible person of the activity cannot attend, they have used the practice where someone else attends the event and shares the information later.

Usually, **everybody is responsible for managing their work responsibilities**, including finding a replacement if needed. In bigger organisations, finding a replacement is a more common practice than in smaller ones, but just one organisation has a formal system of substitutes. However, even in their organisation, the em-

ployee should try to complete her/his tasks before, after or during the activity as delegating responsibilities may take more time and cause more problems. In one small organisation, volunteers are asked for help, and in a couple of others, the management is more helpful in finding the replacement.

„We have a policy that at least 2 people need to be involved in a topic so they could discuss with each other. If choosing is not possible, then the departments cooperate, meaning that every person can represent others, e.g. during vacations. /.../ It's not like when one person falls ill or goes to an international seminar or training, that others don't know what's happening.“

„Everything should get done even if I go to a training. We can't say that we'll be unavailable for the next 3 days as we are participating in a training.“

„The person gets to decide how to manage their tasks. If they can't do these things in the evening, they'll either ask their colleague or complete the task later.“

- [SQ6.3] “How do you communicate with the team member while away?”

Most organisations adhere to the practice that the team member who is away is **contacted with work-related topics only if it is highly important or necessary**. In general, it is expected that the person focuses on the training. A minority of organisations takes it for granted that e-mails are followed all the time. One of them added that this is easy as people usually have smartphones or computers with them. In contrast, a widespread practice in many organisations is that the person shares some new and interesting information from the training already during the training period. It did not seem to be compulsory, but has turned out to be a common practice as all employees work and communicate together very closely and want to share their emotions and experience as quickly as possible. The channels used for these communications vary from e-mails and Facebook to Google Docs and Dropbox.

4.3. Follow-up of training and support activities

- [SQ7.1] “Do you discuss the training and support activity within the team?”

The people who have participated in trainings share their experience and knowledge in several ways. In most of the organisations, the knowledge is shared in formal/informal **meetings or discussions**. In addition, oral presentations and short in-house trainings or workshops are carried out. Three representatives said that the outcomes are shared on a wider scale only if the topic is important to all people – usually, only those are informed who may need the information. One person said that in-house trainings are mainly practiced for providing general information about the topic that was covered during the activity, introduce some methods and increase interest in the topic to attend similar activities in the future – these are not meant for compensating the training and support activity.

“The colleague might not be a clinical psychologist to organize a training on the topic, but it's still possible to present the methods, create interest and make the first introduction.”

In almost half of the organisations, people **share their experience also in written form** – essays, summaries, memos etc. on the home page, in social media or in blogs. A couple of organisations use a practice where employees have to **share e.g. the five most important facts or learnings with their colleagues**. Two interviewees stated that sometimes, they send out people who are not members of the organisation and in these cases, sharing the outcome is compulsory. Only a few interviewed organisations did not seem to have a practice for sharing the experience – those who are interested will get the information from the team member. One organisation has a tradition to create a **closed Facebook group for every activity** where different information, materials, instructions etc. are shared. In addition, the amount of information that is shared depends on the person – some want to share more, others less -, on the importance of the gained knowledge to other organisation members and on the quality of training or support activity. Some discuss the outcome even with youth workers, umbrella organisations and organisations responsible for developing the field of youth work. In one bigger organisation, there is a requirement to write a report outlining the experience gained and potential follow up activities.

- [SQ7.3] “Do you discuss the training and support activity within the organisation?”

The discussions and meetings are open to everyone who is interested and informed, so all members of an organisation can take part in the discussion. In a few cases, the meetings can be first organised for a team or smaller unit, but even then, **everyone who so wishes can get information** about the activity. If not orally, then in writing - this information is usually shared with everyone in the organisation. In some organisations, trainings and support activities are added to the organisation’s calendar (Google, Outlook) and thus everybody is up to date with the others’ trainings and activities.

- [SQ7.2] “Do you discuss the training and support activity within the board?”

Depending on the organisation, the **outcomes of a training and support activity are also shared with the board**. In many cases, the organisations are small and informal enough and the board is seen as a part of the team which gets an overview of the training. In fewer cases (in bigger organisations), the participant or team leader takes the information to the board if it seems important or if the board is interested in getting an overview of the activities. One representative who was not a member of the board said that in their organisation, the manager keeps the board informed about the activities.

- [SQ7.4] “Do you discuss the training and support activity within the wider network?”

Most organisations **share the outcome also with the wider network**. Only a few organisations believe that they do not have any information to share with the wider

network. In general, the circle where information is shared and discussed depends on the topic and on the role of the organisation.

“Information is shared with the team, members or as public blog posts depending on the nature of the information.”

The most frequently mentioned channels for delivering information to the wider audience are blogs, home pages and Facebook. Several interviewees mentioned that they share information with other organisations in the same field. One interviewee highlighted that in addition, they share information with umbrella organisations and use it for preparing sectoral development plans.

- [SQ7.5] “Does this change with or depend on the role/function of the team member?”

In conclusion, the information flow in the organisations is distributed quite equally to all team members and it depends more on the tasks of the organisation, the topic and the personality than the position of the person. Some topics are worth longer discussions and sharing and some people do longer overviews than others. Concerning access to training materials, in one organisation, volunteers have no access. People in leading positions can have a bigger role in deciding which information is transmitted outside of the organisation.

4.3.2. How do you try and preserve the training/learning outcomes of an activity?”

- [SQ8.1] “Do you have a collective (digital or analog) storage place for training material?”

To support the follow-up of training and support activities, most organisations have collective storage space for training material and projects. Using **cloud services** (Google Drive is the most popular) **and keeping the material in the organisation’s own server or computer are** both equally popular and often those two practices are used in parallel. Only one interviewed organisation stores the material physically, but plan to use cloud services in the future. In addition, one organisation does not store training material at all, but believe this practice is worth considering. One organisation has their own digital library. Two interviewees mentioned specific storing practices/tools which are worth considering.

“Study materials that are suitable for sharing – project results like guidelines, handbooks and other material – are gathered in a virtual library that’s available on the website of the Association of Estonian Open Youth Centres.”

Two of the organisations found that it would be very valuable to store all the materials in one place so that other organisations could use these as well. One representative thought this may even promote a science-based approach in choosing and working out activities.

“I think it’s a good idea to add materials to the SALTO toolbox as well.”

“In working out instructions for a specific activity, the partners used very science-based materials. /.../ Various theories were combined and this could serve as a good example for other organisations too.”

To sum up, it can be said that most of the interviewed organisations store at least some of the training materials, but this is not done systematically. In almost all of the interviewed organisations, materials from trainings are accessible to everybody in the organisation and sometimes even outside of the organisation.

- [SQ8.2] “Do other team members use material from training and support activities?”

However, some of the interviewees were rather sceptical that these materials are or will be used by other team members. None said that they keep track of how much other team members are using these materials, but several hoped that they have at least some ideas to take with them from these overviews. One representative believed that it is not reasonable to make it compulsory to use these materials as the value from doing so is low. However, the same person found that the systematic preserving of materials may be valuable in cases where you have to prepare for some other activity and you know that you may get some valuable input from the materials that have been shared earlier.

- [SQ8.3] “Does this change with or depend on the role/function of the team member?”

The interviews did not reveal any differences in trying and preserving the training/learning outcomes of an activity. However, it was seen that sharing the materials is rather looked at case by case. Based on 3 interviews, it may be assumed that project managers or people preparing a project may be more active in using already stored materials as it was found that the materials should be collected systematically to increase their use.

4.3.3. How do you reflect about training and support activities in your organisation?”

- [SQ9.1] “How do you deal with new project ideas arising from activities?”

Several interviewees said that a lot of ideas could come from training and support activities, but **it is only realistic to go further with the ones that are important for the organisation and its target groups** (see more in chapter 4.1.3). Two representatives said that in their organisations, all new ideas are added to the **idea bank** (notebook or some other solution) as these might be needed after some years. In one organisation, **ideas are collected through dispatch reports**. However, only a few organisations gather or collect ideas systematically. Several representatives admitted that dealing with new ideas depends on the person who attended in an activity.

As explained in chapters 4.1.2-4.1.4, in most of the organisations, **people share and discuss the ideas with their colleagues** (and sometimes even with the board) immediately after the training. In general, gathering and developing ideas is not a formal process, it is rather the case that if somebody has an idea and s/he is motivated enough to put effort into it and make others interested as well, or the idea seems important to the leaders, then the idea will end up as a new activity. Depending on the situation, the idea might be taken over by the person who is re-

sponsible for this topic and it will be discussed further in teams (see chapter 4.2). Three organisations mentioned that they have several **new projects that proceed from earlier trainings or projects**.

To support implementing new ideas and increase the effect of the activities, two of the representatives **recommend to include developing new project ideas into the agenda of the training and support activity**.

“When carrying out trainings, we always recap the ideas on the last but one day, where everyone expresses their thoughts and ideas on how to go on. A lot of new things have come about this way.”

Surprisingly, neither the lack of money, time nor human resources were the main reasons why ideas are not realized in practice. Only two people mentioned the lack of financial resources and one person the lack of time when asked directly. However, during the interviews, more representatives said that in case of more financial resources, there will be more possibilities to hire more people who could implement the ideas.

About half of the interviewees were optimistic that many of the good ideas will be implemented at some point. In their opinion, the lack of money and time means the ideas will just be implemented later on. One interviewee estimated that 25% of all the ideas will be realized, two others estimated that respectively 50% and 75% of the best ideas will be implemented.

- [SQ9.2] “How do you deal with new partner contacts arising from activities?”

As getting new contacts is emphasised as one of the main aims of E+/YiA activities (see chapter 4.1.2), it is also important to explore how organisations are dealing with new partner contacts. About **half of the organisations keep and collect contacts collectively**. A few of them even have databases for that.

“We have a database of the contacts and topics we have been involved with. We have a project database where everything is stored. Those we no longer work with are marked in red etc. If a person goes to a training and brings in a new contact, this will also go to the database. We are a private company and this is in our interest. We have to take initiative.”

The other half of organisations consider contacts as valuable, but **leave managing the contacts up to their workers who share their contacts with other colleagues based on need**. Most frequently, individual contacts are maintained by using Facebook.

- [SQ9.3] “How do you deal with (potentially challenging) questions arising from activities?” + [SQ9.4] “How do you deal with the potential need for change arising from activities?”

Attending E+/YiA activities could or should also create (potentially challenging) questions and ideas for changing something in an organisation or even in the youth sector as a whole. However, the interviewees could not think of such a situation and half of the organisations did not comment on that topic. Some of the repre-

representatives said that most often, the questions and ideas for changes, similar to new project ideas, are discussed at the meetings that take place after the activity. Usually, it is discussed altogether (see chapter 4.1) whether it is worth to continue with these questions and ideas for changes. Depending on the organisation, if there is something worth changing in a short or longer period, it might be included in future activities or even in yearly or development plans as mentioned by one bigger organisation. Some of the interviewees said that as Estonian youth workers are often one step ahead of other countries, no ideas for changing their organisation or Estonian youth work have been received.

- [SQ9.5] “Does this change with or depend on the role/function of the team member?”

Based on the interviews, reflecting on training and support activities does not significantly depend on the role/function of the team member. However, it seems that people in higher positions may have more influence over and more say in new ideas, contacts and changes. At the same, one interviewee added that it rather depends on the idea, contact and question and their connection to the aim of the organisation, and on how much the person that attended the training and support activity shares the information.

4.4. Previous organisational change and development

While asking about changes in the organisation in the past five years, interviewees focused on aspects that were most important for them. With the help of interviewers, a few additional aspects were covered. This chapter highlights changes in organisations in the past five years and the reasons for these changes according to the interviewees.

4.4.1. How has your organisation changed in the past five years?

[SQ10.1] “... in relation to size, structure, setup?” + [SQ10.2] “... in relation to activities, projects, programmes?” + [SQ10.3] “... in relation to target group, reach, impact?”

The majority of interviewed organisations have **increased in size, both in terms of members and team size**. In many cases, the team has increased several times and the **number of activities and projects have also increased**. Several representatives stated that their **activities and target groups have broadened** while some said that they are **more focused**.

“Previously, when someone thought that something was interesting, there was the drive, let’s do it. But what is the bigger picture... /.../ Is that thing a priority. /.../ It may be youth work etc. /.../ We have advanced in a sense that since the youth work field is so broad, then you could do anything. /.../ But we have prioritized and set goals where we see that /.../ we need to apply and realize this, this is our function. To avoid being all over the place.”

Two representatives admitted that due to the abundance of youth work organisations and good coverage of topics, they have narrowed down on their activities or

are thinking of stepping out of the field. One of these organisations is today smaller than five years ago. Several representatives also mentioned **changes in using volunteers** – if some smaller organisations were proud that in addition to volunteers they also have paid employees; then in some other small organisations, involving volunteers was emphasized as a step further. In addition, connected to changes in the size of the team and activities carried out, almost half of the organisations find that their **structure has improved and developed** as well. In most of the cases, these changes are caused by the general development of the organisation, higher visibility of youth work and by the fact that there are more financial resources available in the field. Several representatives mentioned that the team has been increased because more resources are coming from **more and/or bigger projects** that enables having a bigger team, and broader and/or more focused activities. Although many organisations are better off because of (international) projects and programmes, that is not the only development path organisations have chosen. There are also those who have emphasised that their development stems from a better and more strategic focus, acting as a social enterprise, or that the increased number of activities are a direct result of local government reform.

Several organisations pointed out that their target groups are rather similar (in fewer cases target groups have changed or widened) but they reach them more effectively, find them more easily (because of better communication, more knowledge and a better reputation) which means **they also reach more people within the target group**. One representative said that reaching the target group was very difficult before as youth centres were thought of as places where only loitering youths go to. After broadening their activities and increasing cooperation with schools, new youth target groups have been attracted. This **increases also the impact of the activities of the organisation**.

“We started participating in breaks at schools. This has brought us new people, we’re happy.”

[SQ10.4] “... in relation to partners, networks, collaborations?”

Majority of the organisations confirm that **their network and number of partners as well as the level of cooperation has increased, broadened and improved**. The increased number of international partners, especially through Erasmus+ programme, are most often mentioned. This is followed by local governments which are a much better cooperation partner for many organisations now. In addition, other national youth work actors, Unemployment Insurance Fund, Rajaleidja, Police and Border Guard Board, social workers, schools, etc. are mentioned. In some cases, the number of partners has not increased, but the level of cooperation has improved.

[SQ10.5] “... in relation to objectives, mission, vision?” + [SQ10.6] “... in relation to culture, spirit, approaches?”

The missions of most organisations have not changed but several interviewed people emphasise that the **objectives and priorities are much clearer** now compared

to earlier years. However, there are still **some organisations that have also changed their focus in some ways**. For instance, one organisation used to concentrate on the non-Estonian target group but now unites both the non-Estonian and Estonian youth groups. Several interviewed people found that **people are more aware of youth work**. Almost everyone found that **trainings and experience have increased the competence and confidence of youth workers and increased the motivation to cooperate with different type of partners**. Therefore, it is **easier for youth workers to do their work**, for example to motivating special needs youths to work with others. Still, some of the representatives said that the attitude toward youth work and workers could be better in the society and among youth workers as well.

[SQ10.7] "... in relation to funding, resources, income?"

Most of the interviewees found that they have **more financial resources** now compared to the situation five years ago. Some resources have increased because of international projects, some get more national funding (incl. resources for non-formal education). However, in general, people are not satisfied with funding and resources of youth work organisations although it varies greatly. Most of the representatives thought that their **organisation relies too heavily on (short-term) projects** that makes financing and development activities unstable. One organisation had to increase member fees to not be so dependent on projects. The situation is somewhat different in case of local government organisations where there is at least some kind of stable financing (depends on local government). One such organisation said that now they have more resources for youth work as they restructured their organisation.

"Administration costs have been used for attracting youths and offering them activities."

Some organisations have better possibilities for collecting participation fees (private companies) compared to others. One organisation has decided to start a social enterprise to have some reserves in order to decrease their dependence on projects.

"To get funding for ideas, we thought that we need to have a buffer of sorts, to increase our financial capabilities. With social entrepreneurship, we want to create those financial reserves that could be used for one-time things or events."

[SQ10.8] "... in relation to training, support, mentoring?"

Several organisations mentioned that when considering training and support activities, they are more selective (see chapter 4.1.2). None of the organisations said directly that they have used mentors or that there have been any changes in using mentors but a few said that as their experiences in the field, e.g. in writing applications and coordinating projects, has increased over time, they are mentoring other youth work organisations. This can be interpreted as a development from beneficiary to grantor. Another rather big organisation found that they are now much more conscious as participants in training and other support activities.

[SQ10.9] "... in relation to recognition, acknowledgement?"

One remarkable change is that **two thirds of the organisations confirmed that they feel much more recognised and acknowledged now than they did before** (other organisations did not discuss this in detail). The ways how this is expressed vary: national and local level institutions are treating them as equal partners – inviting them to committees, asking advice etc., their area of competence is known; more (international) people are visiting and have an interest in their activities; positive feedback (e.g. from parents, through different awards, etc). Most of the representatives of organisations that have carried out KA1 or KA2 projects found that in addition to other aspects, these may have triggered this change. Based on interviews, it can be said that follow-up activities are also important: if an organisation communicates information and outputs of the projects widely, the possibility to increase their visibility is higher.

4.4.2. Where did these changes come from?

- [SQ11.1] "... caused by singular internal events, such as resignations, elections?" [SQ11.2] "... caused by singular external events, such as trainings, seminars?" » if so, which kind of events, and what marked their influence? + ... põhjustatud KOV reformist? ¹ + Erasmus+ tegevuste käigus loodud võrgustike tegevusest?

To sum up the interviews, **changes in team members** is one of the main reasons behind changes in organisations. This has enabled to specialise, broaden target groups and activities, participate in more projects, etc. The role of team members is higher as in the field of youth work, background knowledge about youth work and working as a team are very important. In case of changes in team, organisations may gain but also lose some competences, contacts, etc.

Another main reason behind the changes mentioned in chapter 4.4.1 is the **development of team members and organisation**. Organisations and people working there are more professional, better trained, have more national and international experience and therefore, the organisations also work better and in a more structured way. Participating in Erasmus+ activities were seen as one of the factors increasing the competences. Interviews showed that long term projects and activities where it is possible to broaden the network have bigger impact on organisations compared to the short ones or those where the main aim is to give new knowledge. However, many organisations are thankful for the Erasmus+ programme as their organisation as well as their members individually have benefited a lot from that. The aspects which are highly appreciated are the wider (international) network, new knowledge and ideas for new projects and activities on the local, national and international level, more professional labour force and improved recognition of youth work.

„An organisation is only as strong as its employees.“

„We can only develop together and if youth workers feel more appreciated and developed, they will put their heart into their work and give it all they have. If the workers

feel they are valued and appreciated, the results are much better. All trainings, including the Erasmus+ trainings, have definitely benefitted us.“

In some cases, the change in the community – that **youth work is more accepted** – was offered as one of the main reasons behind their organisation’s development. It was explained through a bigger interest in youth work activities, the need to cooperate with organisations contacting the youth, more financial resources to youth work, etc.

Some organisations found that the **local government reform** has had a clear impact on them, but not necessarily in a negative way. However, one organisation had to change their membership fee system not to rely too much on projects. Connected to **policies**, developing the field (incl. development plans), restructuring the role of county governments in youth work, elections and depending on the state’s or local government’s budget were also highlighted as factors influencing the development of youth organisations. Before and after the elections and before approving the budget for the next financial period, there is higher uncertainty regarding whether and how much resources will be allocated to the field. Therefore, organisations are not willing to plan long-term projects or prepare long-term development plans.

Another reason for changes is related to changes in funding informal/recreational activities starting from January 2018. About 25% of organisations confirmed that they have applied for funding to offer their services and have received it. However, as there is/was a confusion concerning who should be able to apply for this funding, these changes have had a different impact on the organisations interviewed. However, the interviewed organisations have understood that this new funding encourages youth centres to put more effort into communicating that they are part of informal/recreational activity. It can be assumed that this also has a positive effect on recognition and acknowledgement.

“Youth centres have to make an effort to explain that they are also one of the target groups offering recreational activities for the youth, so they wouldn’t be left out.”

In a few cases, the **fluidity of labour force was mentioned as a problem that has an effect on** the outlined or potential **changes as it hinders faster development**. The interviews showed that quite often, the people who participated in Erasmus+ activities between 2014-2017 had left the organisation by the time of the interviews of the module (C). It was also seen that as quite often, information and contacts received from the activities are not communicated strategically, an activity might have no impact on the organisation if the person moves on to other organisations or other fields.

- [SQ11.3] “... caused by deliberate processes to develop and/or change?”
- [SQ11.4] “... caused quite consciously or rather randomly?”

Some organisations also mentioned several deliberate processes that have had an impact on their development. Choosing the focus for activities seems to have re-

markable effect. Also, the positive effect of restructuring the organisation was highlighted.

It was also seen from the interviews that quite often, the changes mentioned in chapter 4.4.1 are caused rather randomly, especially in cases where the organisation has no concrete strategies and acts just according to opportunities, incl. invitations to some activities.

While changes in smaller organisations can be the result of changes in the personnel, team or changes in funding, bigger organisations tend to be more confident that changes are caused by deliberate processes rather than random chance – the topics and priorities are set consciously based on national policies, trends in the field, and keeping in mind the development of the organisation. Still, there is some room for flexibility as sometimes, new opportunities (for funding, for projects etc.) emerge unexpectedly. Also, the organisation which changed the membership fee system as a result of the local government reform finds that it was not formerly planned, but rather implemented as a reaction to the external event.

4.5. Future organisational change and development

Although most of the interviewees said that the organisation's development plans are discussed and some kind of focus is set over the time, the interviewees were rather modest when talking about future organisational change and development. The first reaction of several interviewees was that the field changes fast and developments depend on policies of the field, e.g. results of local government reforms, financing the youth work, etc. However, most of the interviewees see that the field is increasingly important. Connected to this, potential changes in organisations and the contribution of E+/YiA training and support activities in these change processes are covered in the current chapter.

“You can never be 100% sure that everything that was previously seen as good and effective will also be seen that way after the next elections or the ones after that.”

4.5.1. How would you imagine, even hope, your organisation to change in the next five years?

- [SQ12.1] “... in relation to size, structure, setup?”

In general, organisations, both smaller and bigger ones, **hope to grow**. The smallest organisations hope to have 2-3 paid workers instead of the current one paid worker or relying on volunteers. Smaller organisations especially feel that they need a more structured organisation or activities. One organisation expressed clear hope for a new and bigger place/building in order to train more teachers and youth workers. Several organisations mentioned that growing may bring about the need to make some **changes in the structure**. Also, changes in the field, incl. the needs of the youth, may bring about changes in the structure of the organisation.

- [SQ12.2] “... in relation to activities, projects, programmes?”

As the youth work sector changes quickly, most of the organisations highlighted the need to observe e.g. changes in methods and the needs of target groups to support

the development of youth. Based on the needs of the target groups, some organisations mentioned their wish to focus on a specific topic. These might also cause changes in the activities of the organisation. Although international programs are highly valued as development opportunities, three smaller organisations stressed that **local projects** are needed besides international ones in order to have some balance. Two people from small organisations especially valued the **KA2 projects** – this framework suits them well and better than other Erasmus + programmes.

- [SQ12.3] “... in relation to target group, reach, impact?”

In view of the target group, **organisations see that they reach their target group better and their influence on the target groups is more evident** in the future. Two organisations mentioned the need for **better communication** with the target groups and community **and for better visibility**. One of them hoped that digital tools could make communication easier, but was somewhat disappointed in these possibilities at the moment. Influencing and reaching the target groups is often related to prioritising youth work. One person emphasised the need for including more youth with special needs into collective activities.

- [SQ12.4] “... in relation to partners, networks, collaborations?” + [SQ12.5] “... in relation to objectives, mission, vision?”

Although partners, networks, collaborations, objectives, mission and vision were highlighted during the interviews as very important, there were not many hopes concerning these aspects for the future. A few organisations were precise in describing their objectives in addition to general growth, more cooperation, better training and more appreciation. Several organisations mentioned the need for stable cooperation and partners. Most of them were more **interested in local or national partners** (schools, local governments, other organisations), but a few also in international partners. Just two people mentioned more specific objectives – one would want to focus on teaching more **practical skills** and filling the youths’ leisure time, and the other wanted to **increase the youths’ tolerance** towards each other and the minorities (race, ethnic origin, etc.).

- [SQ12.7] “... in relation to funding, resources, income?”

As expected, funding is one of the most critical topics for organisations. Many of the interviewees mentioned that stable funding is needed. Bigger organisations linked funding with the word “**stability**”, smaller ones mentioned the word “**sustainability**” **more**. Funding is very much related to planning activities and several interviewees expressed their wish (often linking it with funding and resources) to make more longer-term plans than currently possible. Several organisations pointed out the value of Erasmus+ training and support activities. However, some of them were a bit worried that they are directly dependent on Erasmus+ activities.

- [SQ12.8] “... in relation to training, support, mentoring?”

In view of training, support and mentoring, several organisations emphasised the need for having **more professional workforce** – more educated, more trained etc. Due to the fluidity of labour force, some organisations expressed the need for **con-**

stant basic training. However, several interviewees felt the need for specific advanced trainings. Some people wished to have more new trainers in the field of youth work in Estonia. One interviewee expressed the idea that instead of international trainings international experts could come to Estonia as in this case, more people could participate and it would be easier to reorganise work responsibilities. One person thought that in order to increase the visibility and understanding of youth work, youth work related topics should be taught more widely in education studies and for local government officials.

- [SQ12.6] “... in relation to culture, spirit, approaches?” + [SQ12.9] “... in relation to recognition, acknowledgement?”

Several interviewees hoped that **youth work will be seen as more important and youth workers are more acknowledged** in the future. As mentioned earlier, according to some people, one of the possibilities of improving the image of youth work is to add the topic to educational studies curricula and to trainings of local government officials. In their opinion, more professional staff can be both the cause and the effect of a better image of youth work.

4.5.2. How could E+/YiA training and support activities help these change processes?

- [SQ13.1] ... individuals in your organisation typically lack?” + [SQ13.2] ... teams in your organisation typically lack?” + [SQ13.3] ... board members in your organisation typically lack?” + [SQ13.4] ... managers in your organisation typically lack?” + [SQ13.5] ... are typically missing in your wider network?”

The organisations agreed that **Erasmus+ funding has been important in their development and also has the potential to support developments in the future** (see chapter 4.5.1). However, most of the interviewees were rather modest when commenting on the particular skills, knowledge, attitudes and resources that individuals, teams, board members, managers and the wider network are typically missing.

Based on the interviews, several aspects concerning **skills and knowledge** can be highlighted:

- International activities enable to address very specific topics that would otherwise not get a sufficiently large group just from Estonia.
- E+/YiA activities provide an additional opportunity to exchange experience and learn about important topics from new trainers.
- E+/YiA activities should enable various training and support activities as the needs of youth workers are different. For instance, if there is a small general youth centre, its workers have to know something about everything – more general trainings in some topics with the possibility to exchange experience are suitable. In case of bigger organisations, there are better possibilities for specialising and therefore, they may need very specific trainings to be satis-

fied. Even among small organisations, however, the training preferences were conflicting – one organisation wanted more specific trainings on human rights, while the other found those trainings too specific and wanted trainings about intercultural learning, communication, teamwork skills, etc. It can be assumed that on the international level, there are better possibilities to respond to different needs for training and support activities.

- As there is a big labour turnover (common in Estonia) and a lot of youth workers have no educational background in youth work (in Estonia, only about 40% of youth workers have educational or professional qualifications in youth work), there is a high need for trainings that strengthen the team and give basic knowledge about youth work (about five of the interviewed organisations felt this need). If the team is stable, there are better opportunities to specialize and develop team members and therefore more specific trainings are welcomed.
- Some of the representatives believed that youth workers' skills in writing applications should be increased. However, one person said that participation in project writing trainings is rather low.
- The interviewees pinpointed the **following skills that youth workers should develop**: self reflection, communication, communicating youth work, increasing the critical thinking of youth, self-initiative of youth, competences of youth, cooperation between various parties (e.g. youth centres and schools), volunteering, practical skills about using ICT in youth work, methods of youth work, intercultural communication, work with disabled persons, NEET youth, integrating youth with different backgrounds, street youth work, contact youth work, motivating youth, public performance, teamwork. Some people felt that more trainings should be in Russian.
- **For managers and/or board members, the need for the following free trainings** were highlighted: accounting, safety and health at work, management, increasing the sustainability of activities, developing the organisation, etc. At the moment, those trainings are very expensive and access to those is therefore restricted for smaller organisations.

“Erasmus+ and the whole international dimension should be a part of everyday work, the ability to integrate these activities and develop your organisation through these trainings should be a natural process.”

Based on the interviews, E+/YiA activities should emphasise the following:

- As there are several critical topics where youth workers feel the need for developing and there is a lack of time to attend trainings, topics like human-rights, violence, etc. are not their priority although these may be some of the cornerstones for youth work. Therefore, there is a need to change the attitude of youth workers so that they understand the importance of different topics in their work.

- Participating in international training and support activities is important to have a broader understanding of youth work, to hear others' experience and for networking.

When asking about the **training needs of the wider network**, just one representative proposed some topics. In his/her opinion, more stress should be put on organisations dealing with disabled people and parents. However, during the interviews, the need to increase knowledge about youth work and to improve the attitude towards youth work in the whole population (incl. representatives of local governments and people from the education sector) was mentioned.

During the interviews, it was also said by several people that there is a lack of financial and human resources to implement potential changes mentioned in chapter 4.5.1. However, through Erasmus+, there is a possibility to train and recruit youth workers and get funding for projects. This enables to deal with the development ideas that have not been addressed owing insufficient time.

- *Milliste eelnevas küsimuses toodud muutuste puhul oleks riiklikest tegevustest-projektidest rohkem kasu? Miks?*

The kind of changes that should be supported from the government's budget and by Erasmus+ was also asked about from the interviewees. Most people did not respond to the question, but several did not support a clear separation of national and international level activities. Some of them pointed out that those levels should be interconnected and all the important national objectives should be reflected in Erasmus+ activities. Two specific actions were proposed concerning what should be done on the national level. First, one person found that the **key skills of youth need stronger development on the national level** and teaching those skills should be the result of cooperation between schools and youth work organisations.

„I think it's important to increase support for the development of the youth's key competences. This is currently not supported in schools the way it should be. It's crucial in youth work to support this more than now. Also, cooperation between youth work centres and schools is important as both the centres and schools address the same people. Cooperation and supporting these organisations is crucial. It's an important topic.“

Secondly, one of the interviewees emphasised another critical topic – **national level decisions about the pay system** are needed because the salary of youth workers is very small compared to other workers in similar fields, e.g. teachers.

4.5.3. Are there particular types of training/support activities that typically work well for you?

- [SQ14.1] “Why? What makes them resonate so much with you and/or your organisation?”

When organisations were asked which particular types of training/support activities work well for them, three different types of activities were mentioned as good examples. Firstly, **strategic and long-term projects** were preferred as most effective, especially among bigger organisations or among those that have specialised in some certain topics. Secondly, **study visits and (work) shadowing** in Estonia and abroad were highly rated, enabling to see and experience first-hand how others work and to put that into practice later. And last of all, (in some cases mentioned as a supplement for long projects) **short trainings** which focus on developing practical skills in topics that are rather narrow and specific were similarly highly appreciated. For some people, the short trainings/activities are the only option as they are time sensitive, and 1-2 days of training is something they can afford without making too many sacrifices in their work or private life. Many respondents emphasised the nature of training or activity – it should be **practical and informal**, include examples from everyday life and from personal experience and include hands-on activities.

„Something that a phone or computer cannot offer, for instance. /.../ It's always interesting to see these project videos or photos. /.../ What else do these people /.../ come up with /.../ that I would want as well.“

4.6. Any aspects covered in addition to the ones above

There were no other aspects covered that did not fit under the above mentioned headings.

5. Main findings and conclusions

How do training and support activities within E+/YiA contribute to the development of organisations, platforms and networks involved in E+/YiA, also in combination with other E+/YiA activities these organisations are involved in?

Research showed that training and support activities within E+/YiA contribute to the development of organisations, platforms and networks involved in E+/YiA activities. Some of the reasons for this are having extra financial resources for development activities, increasing the knowledge, changing the experience, broadening the network and the fact that E+/YiA activities to some extent direct organisations towards dealing with topics that are important in youth work. Several interviewees said that without these possibilities, youth workers could not attend in so many training and support activities. Also, the development of youth work may be slower. This is supported by the fact that some interviewees even had experience that once a valuable project ends, it is difficult to find resources (even from local governments that are responsible for youth work on the local level) to continue previous activities.

“Our policy in this field has always been that you cannot do your job well enough if you don’t know how it’s done elsewhere. Something will be missing. You might be exceptional at what you do, but maybe something is missing, you wouldn’t know. Maybe the neighbour does it better. Or...”

“We wouldn’t have our own resources. We just wouldn’t have the resources for this. This couldn’t be done.”

However, as seen in earlier chapters, the impact of E+/YiA activities also depend on how beneficiaries support the participants of E+/YiA activities and how the knowledge is transferred. Also, the big role of the Archimedes Youth Agency was mentioned in encouraging and managing cooperation and in providing support for applying and implementing projects.

“The level at which the Youth Agency currently operates is very good as they always provide information about trainings and materials as well as invite you to talk about projects and ideas with other organisations. /.../ Sometimes it’s hard to create this dialogue when you’re just a youth organisation.”

In the following sub-chapters, the impact of E+/YiA activities and their potential for future development are explored in more detail.

5.1. How do beneficiaries of E+/YiA support transfer (strategies) of participants of training/support activities strategically?

The beneficiaries of E+/YiA can support the participants of training and support activities through a positive learning culture, incl. participation/application decision making process, preparation process and follow-up activities. The interviews showed that the **level of support of the participants of training and support activities depends on the organisation, potential participant and concrete ac-**

tion, whereby there seems to be no remarkable differences in the types of beneficiaries or size of the organisations.

The interviews showed that decision-making and preparation processes are more connected to each other as in order to make a decision, the content, structure, aim, etc. of the activity are discussed. In case of trainings, depending on the development of the organisation and the potential participant, **there might be no preparation process** as the management/board is sure that the worker is experienced enough and his/her time is too highly valued to attend irrelevant trainings. **In case of projects, more stress is put on supporting the preparation process.** In the decision-making process, it is usually discussed in a team whether the project is relevant for the organisation, who should be the partners and target groups, which aims should be achieved, etc. Once the decision to participate is made, the content of the project is further developed. Usually, this is **done in a team**, whereas the broader network may be involved and a **leader for the preparation process may be assigned** to support carrying out the project successfully.

In case the training or support activity application is accepted, a similar behaviour pattern was described. Some interviewees said that there was no need to support the participants as the topic was discussed during the decision-making process. Some mentioned the **need to go through the aim of the activity and expectations for participants.** In case of projects, the **content of the project also had to be specified.** If people outside the organisation had a remarkable role in implementing the project, even they were involved in supporting the beneficiary and their employees.

Even if the preparation process was not deemed very important, **all of the interviewees stated that the follow-up activities supported knowledge transfer in some way.** In some organisations, this is more formal, like giving an overview of the activity in a meeting or carrying out an in-house training, and in others, more informal. In one organisation, tea-time is organised after the activity to share information. Some representatives said that the level of detail of the overview or if an overview is given at all depends on the personality of the participant (how much he/she would like to talk about it), the topic and how many people could be interested in it. **Just two representatives stressed that they are looking for possibilities to encourage implementing new knowledge.** One of them said that their organised trainings include a **practical part at the end of the event** to practice the knowledge. Three of the organisations that carry out projects said that they try **to leave some time for generating new ideas at the end of the event.** In most of the organisations, materials related to the activity are shared with a smaller team or the whole organisation and in some organisations, sharing the information with the broader network is considered.

To sum up, there are some kind of support activities for participants and knowledge transfer in all the organisations, but based on the information received, **there is room for development.** This is proved by the fact that just in case of half of the or-

organisations, it can be said that they support employees strategically (there seem to be agreed and well-known procedures for participating E+/YiA training and support activities and sharing the knowledge). In other organisations, this is addressed more case-by-case. However, **in all the organisations, there seemed to be a possibility to ask advice before the activity and questions after the activity.** It was also seen that even if preparation activities were not deemed important (depending on the experience of people that participated in the activity and the importance of the activity for the organisation), **all organisations valued sharing the information after the activity.** In most of the organisations, information is shared during discussions or meetings, but in some cases, also in written form. Therefore, it is rather the question of how to improve the quality of supporting the participants, incl. knowledge transfer.

5.2. How do transfer (strategies) of participants of training/support activities in E+/YiA effect programme beneficiaries at organisational level?

Research showed that participating in E+/YiA training and support activities has a positive impact on organisations. Most of the interviewees claimed that **participation brings in new knowledge, contacts and project ideas** that are needed to develop the organisation. **New cooperation projects** were seen as one of the most valuable effects of E+/YiA activities as these support developing the organisation or youth work in longer-term and in a more systematic way than without any project.

Some interviewees said that the most important is the **impact on the employee and on his/her competences.** Several representatives mentioned that due to E+/YiA activities, organisations could **become competent in new fields or develop their proficiency in fields where they were active before.** One representative who is organising E+/YiA activities said that the biggest effect they have is **higher competence in writing applications and carrying out training and support activities.** According to the interviewees' experience, these higher competences **increase the quality of their youth work, improve the reputation of the organisation or youth work in general and bring new youth to participate in the services.** An example of increased reputation is that several representatives said their organisation is so well recognised by now that they are **invited to discussions** in the field.

As one of the aims of E+/YiA activities is to provide the opportunity to learn and act in an international environment, these **activities should have an impact on all the competences of youth workers and youth, especially on intercultural communication.** However, it seems that not all the interviewees have thought through why internationalisation and E+/YiA activities are needed and what the aim of international youth work is for them. It seems that the main reason for participating in E+/YiA activities is to get new knowledge and contacts, whereas only a few said that these activities give a possibility to develop competences in intercultural com-

munication⁶. Even on the homepages of organisations, there is a lack of information why youth workers and youth should take part in international activities and what their aim is in international youth work. Therefore, E+/YiA activities may not have the expected impact on organisations in view of supporting youth and intercultural communication.

While considering the effect of the activities on organisations, supporting the participants of E+/YiA activities should not be underestimated. It can be assumed that the **effect of the activities on organisations is greater if the aims, expectations and results of the activities are talked thorough and the knowledge is transferred more broadly**. One representative said that the impact on organisations depends on preparation activities – whether the aims and expectations are explained and the participant is supported in a way that (s)he feels good during the activity. Also, if there is a system for sharing experience, ideas and contacts that result from E+/YiA activities, the effect on organisations may be higher as important information does not just stay in the hands of one person.

Based on the interviews, the type of the beneficiary, size of the organisation, level of E+/YiA involvement and approaches to international youth work did not seem to have remarkable differences in how the E+/YiA activities affect programme beneficiaries on the organisational level. Some differences were seen in types of activity as projects enable longer and more systematic cooperation compared to e.g. TCA activities. However, the effect also depends on the person, his/her position and whether the person continues working in this organisation as impact on the person is key to changes on the organisation level.

5.3. To which extent do training/support activities in E+/YiA contribute to (which aspects of) organisational development?

Although it is difficult to determine what kind of changes in organisations are caused by E+/YiA or some other activities and which is the extent of changes, the interviewees believed that **E+/YiA activities have had a remarkable impact on the development of their organisation**. Changes in size, structure, target groups, partners, objectives, culture, financing, training, recognition, etc. (see chapter 4.4.1) can also be seen concerning the organisational climate, culture and strategies.

Firstly, E+/YiA activities have increased the **knowledge or network of the participants and/or provided resources for implementing certain projects**. Several interviewees said that E+/YiA have helped to develop employees in fields that are also deemed important for the organisation. More competent workers have increased the quality of services, capability to initiate projects and therefore also higher recognition. For some organisations, this has caused the need for more employees

⁶ The reason for attending international activities was not asked directly and its usefulness might have been deemed unnecessary to mention during interviews.

to manage the responsibilities. Having more employees has in turn resulted in the specialisation and restructuring of the employees' tasks.

Secondly, the knowledge and experience have had an **impact on organisational climate and culture or "personality"**. Several interviewees said that the role of the organisation and their employees are better understood, seeing themselves also as an advisory organisation. Better self-recognition has given the understanding that it is important to spread the knowledge to colleagues and the broader network. One interviewee claimed that E+/YiA activities support the management's message to the employees: they are youth workers, not just trainers. Two representatives said that as they have been in a process of rebuilding the team, E+/YiA activities have been very valuable in supporting the development of employees' attitudes and beliefs that influence collective behaviour. Internationalisation is also seen as a possibility to exchange experience and increase the motivation of workers as they are more aware of what is done or what the situation is in other organisations or countries.

Thirdly, E+/YiA activities have an impact on **organisational strategies**. Although several interviewees mentioned that they have underused E+/YiA activities to support the development of the organisation as the emphasis has rather been on youth workers, the mobility and topics covered have given them ideas to modify their strategies (also in spreading the information, responsibilities of employees, etc.). Several interviewees said that today, the organisations are more structured and there is an international network for sharing information. At the moment, one organisation is planning a project that focuses on the development of the organisation. Several interviewees said trainings are used to grow the network of contacts, whereby a bigger network is seen as a possibility to consult and create new development projects. Thanks to E+/YiA activities, some organisations are more active on the international level and one interviewee mentioned that they are now focused on providing projects and trainings for youth workers. However, according to one interviewee, the support of E+/YiA activities for the development of the organisation may be higher if there are training and support activities related to management. However, although E+/YiA activities have a positive effect on organisational development and offer some kind of stability in finances or activities, there are or may be also some negative aspects. The analysts concluded and some interviewees admitted that sometimes, the dependence on Erasmus+ is too high. Several interviewees said that they make their decisions on training and support activities based on the information they receive. This means that information about training and support activities dictates the topics and activities that are attended. Also, one interviewee said that about 30-40% of their activities are financed from Erasmus+. This means that if one day, it is no longer possible to receive funding from the programme, there is a high risk for degeneration. Therefore, more stress should be put on the development of management (incl. setting long-term aims, systematical decision-making and supporting employees) and the sustainability of activities.

5.4. To which extent can training/support activities in E+/YiA contribute to the visibility and recognition of the youth sector?

One of the biggest problems in youth work, in EU and in Estonia, has been the recognition of the youth sector, youth workers and youth work. Although it was not possible to discuss the visibility and recognition of the youth sector in depth, the interviews show that E+/YiA activities have remarkable possibilities to contribute to this aspect of youth work.

In Estonia, according to “Training needs of youth workers”⁷, one of the problems is lack of **self-recognition**. The interviews showed that **Erasmus+ activities give a valuable opportunity to go and see what other youth workers do and what their problems are**. This was said to increase work motivation and an understanding of why, what and how should be done by youth workers. Also, **Youth Pass** was mentioned several times as a tool to analyse new knowledge. However, some said that it is more suitable for youth and young youth workers. Increased self-recognition is also supported by organisations through **decision, preparation and follow-up procedures related to E+/YiA activities**. As the interviews showed, processes, systems and the level of support may be different, but **in general, there are some kind of processes in place that encourage self-evaluation and learning**.

In view of **social recognition**, the **impact of attending E+/YiA activities and sharing information about the activities that are carried out and attended** was acknowledged. The interviewees believed they have developed remarkably during the last five years (also as a result of E+/YiA activities). They stated that even if the organisation did not get anything new from E+/YiA activities, **participating increased some of the competences or understandings of youth workers or widened the network for further projects and therefore, the potential to be seen and recognised by others is higher**. The impact may be even higher as in case of projects, the broader network is involved in training activities. Several interviewees pointed out that they have been invited to cooperate with other organisations and professionals that deal with children (e.g. schools, Unemployment Insurance Fund, Police and Border Guard Board, other youth organisations, local governments, etc) and their advice is asked for in fields where they are active.

Self- and social recognition is also supported by sharing **information about the activities that are carried out and attended**. On the organisational level, this increases the colleagues’ knowledge or motivates to improve themselves in a specific topic. Sharing information or materials that are developed for the broader network and society **increases the knowledge of other parties about certain organisation, its workers and their impact on youth**. This supports a **positive attitude**

⁷ Käger, Kivistik, Pertsjonok, Tatar (2017) Noorsootöötajate koolitusvajaduse uuring. Aruanne. Available at: <https://www.ibs.ee/en/publications/training-needs-of-youth-workers/>

towards youth organisations in the long run. Some of the interviewees stated that sharing information about activities as broadly as possible is one of their strategic decisions in order to increase knowledge about and support a positive attitude towards youth work and Erasmus+ possibilities. Some of the organisations share their experience through Facebook, Instagram, YouTube, blogs, live broadcasts about workshops, etc., but this is not widespread, although there is a continued need to talk about the importance of youth work.

“I’ve also noticed that many people don’t even know what youth work is about or why it’s important. Usually, the donors don’t really know what youth work is. In that case, it’s up to us to tell them.”

„If youth workers feel more appreciated and developed, they will put their heart into their work and give it all they have. If the workers feel they are valued and appreciated, the results are much better. All trainings, including the Erasmus+ trainings, have definitely benefitted us.“

Formal and political recognition were not mentioned by the interviewees that often, but some positive impact can be still seen. For instance, some of the E+/YiA activities covered topics relevant to the youth workers’ profession, incl. accreditation, licencing, etc., and a representative of one of the organisations said that the information received from the activities is also used while giving input to the development plan of the youth work sector. Although one of the aims of Youth Pass is to support the recognition of learning outcomes, some of the interviewees did not see the value of Youth Pass for experienced youth workers.

To sum up, the impact of E+/YiA activities on the visibility and recognition of the youth sector cannot be clearly identified. However, as these activities increase the competences of youth workers and the quality of youth work as well as cover topics about recognition and encourage sharing the information in a broader network, they have a positive impact on visibility and recognition.

5.5. How can training/support strategies at national and European level support organisational development through training/support activities in E+/YiA?

As youth work is a quickly developing and comprehensive field and Estonian youth workers’ skills are uneven, it is very important to use opportunities on the national and European level strategically to develop youth work. As one of the interviewees said, an advantage that Estonia has is the fact that the youth work strategy of the European Union and Estonian Youth Work Act are in harmony. In case of limited resources, a combination of national and European level resources and opportunities enables to develop the field more effectively.

Research showed that there is a need for different types and levels of training and support activities. At the moment, the **activities that are most used are trainings** (in view of E+/YiA TCA activities) **as these enable to gain new knowledge and contacts and share experience in a less time-consuming way.** As these do not

usually require remarkable experience in the field, having project writing experience or foreign partners, these were also mentioned as a **good starting point for internationalisation**, especially if the event is held in Estonia and it is easier to ask for explanations in the first language. As the decision to attend a training or support activity is made based on information received and found on the internet, it is very important to think through how to describe the background of trainers, methods used, etc. at the training in the project invitations.

KA1 and KA2 activities are seen as making a step further from short-time TCA activities. KA1 activities are seen as a possibility to **bring together youth workers in one certain field for a short time**, whereas KA2 **enables long-term and more strategical cooperation**. The interviews showed that the more developed people or their organisations were and the more they saw their own activities from a broad perspective, the higher was the potential to prepare a KA2 application and implement it. There were even some interviewees who pointed out that they are not interested in training activities, but they would like to carry out a wider project with a greater impact on youth work.

A closer look on gaining new knowledge shows the potential of a bigger market and target group. Based on the interviews, a bigger market **increases the possibility to hear about a topic from a new perspective** as there are youth workers and trainers who they have not been in contact with before. Therefore, more new knowledge about the sector is gained. Related to this, one interviewee mentioned the smallness of Estonia as a real weakness of trainings carried out in Estonia – there are not enough trainers to cover different perspectives and aspects. The interviews also showed that a bigger market gives **better possibilities to specialize**. For instance, if in Estonia, there were said to be mainly basic trainings, then on the EU level, there were said to be more trainings for advanced youth workers and trainings in very specific topics.

According to the interviewees, it has been very valuable for them that E+/YiA enables carrying out various types of activities. To sum up the interviews, it can be said that there is a **continuous need for trainings, study visits, work shadowing, strategic cooperation projects, etc.** If possible, the opportunity to support volunteering by adults would be welcomed.

According to the interviewees, there are not enough **of the following trainings** that should help develop their organisation: self-reflection, communication, communicating youth work, increasing the youth's critical thinking, self-initiative of youth, competences of youth, cooperation between various parties (e.g. youth centres and schools), volunteering, practical skills on using ICT in youth work, methods of youth work, intercultural communication, work with disabled persons, NEET youth, integrating youth with different backgrounds, street youth work, contact youth work, motivating the youth, public performance, teamwork. The need for those trainings is also highlighted in the report of the study "Training needs of youth workers" that

was carried out at the end of 2017⁸. **For managers and/or board members, the need for the following free trainings** were pinpointed: accounting, safety and health at work, management, increasing the sustainability of activities, developing the organisation. Besides the already mentioned study, the need for developing the last aspects is also revealed in the current study to increase strategic decision-making, supporting employees, follow-up activities and the development of organisations in general. All this is needed to increase the impact of E+/YiA activities. As mentioned in the study and also by the interviewees, it is important to continue to offer **basic** and in a broader extent also **advanced trainings**, whereby in the Estonian content, cooperation between Estonian and Russian speaking people should be encouraged.

According to the analysts, concerning the topics of **trainings, more stress should be put on those that are not so popular among youth workers at the moment**. As participating in E+/YiA activities is also seen as a motivator and there are more possibilities for experience exchange and gaining contacts, the potential to have enough participants in trainings on “softer” topics like human rights or violence is higher. Therefore, it may be reasonable to **use E+/YiA activities as a possibility to shape the youth workers’ understanding of their work and their attitudes**, e.g. the importance of cooperation, volunteering, human rights, violence, involving youth etc. However, in these topics, national activities are also needed as in this case, the time it takes to attend is smaller and more youth workers can afford it.

It was also seen from the interviews that there is a **need for more state-level activities**. Some interviewees said that topics like mobile youth work and NEET youth have state-level importance and coordinating these kinds of projects by small youth organisations may not be as effective as it should be.

Although the interviews showed that international activities have several positive sides, it has to be understood that only the organisations that are more experienced are participating in these activities and inadequate language skills is one of the reasons for that. It was also pointed out by some interviewees that **at least some basic courses should be provided in the mother tongue** (in case of Estonia, in **Estonian as well as Russian**) as in this case, the potential to shape the understandings of youth workers is higher.

In conclusion, in combination of national and European level training and support activities, it is possible to increase the quantity of youth work services and the quality of youth work as there are more resources and more options to develop organisations to offer more and higher-quality services. The possibility to see and hear about youth work in other regions and to ask support from the broader (international) network gives a boost to development. Therefore, as youth work organisations

⁸ Käger, Kivistik, Pertsjonok, Tatar (2017) Noorsootöötajate koolitusvajaduse uuring. Aruanne. Available at: <https://www.ibs.ee/en/publications/training-needs-of-youth-workers/> (mapping was carried out at the end of 2017)

lack financial resources, there should be at least some possibilities to attend free training and support activities in all important fields.

6. Overview of organisations

In Estonia, 13 interviews were carried out, whereby information about 14 youth organisations was received. However, to avoid confusion or counting some input twice, 13 organisations are shown as the total sample size. More precise information about sampling and the types of organisations that were addressed with the interviews is covered in chapter 3.3. To sum up, it can be said that the final sample covers the diversity of organisations that have attended E+/YiA training and support activities. However, while comparing the total population and final sample with information known about the Estonian youth sector⁹ (in Estonia, there is no systematic government statistics on youth work), it can be said that most of the organisation types are missing. Between 2014-2017, mainly youth centres, local public bodies, youth unions and other youth organisations are represented. General education schools and hobby schools are underrepresented, considering that these are the second and third most important employers of youth workers.

The interviewees came from a range of organisations and institutions: youth centres, city government, state institutions, unions, hobby schools and other youth organisations, whereby most of these came from the third sector and from bigger settlements. 60% of these had less than 10 workers and 5 less than 50 workers. However, the interviews showed that the number of people active in youth work was rather small.

8 of these organisations are directly involved with young people and 5 mainly address youth workers. 4 of these organisations put more emphasis on international projects (looking for international opportunities for Estonian youth workers and youth or dealing with problems that are shared with some other countries), whereby the costs are mainly covered through E+/YiA activities. Based on background research and interviews, most of the interviewed organisations also have experience with youth exchange and the European Voluntary Service (EVS).

⁹ Look e.g. Villenthal, Kaunismaa, Veemaa, Talur, Žuravljova, Varblane (2016) Huvihariduse ja huvitegevuse pakkujad ning noorsootöötajad kohalikes omavalitsustest. Available at <http://dspace.ut.ee/bitstream/handle/10062/55423/Lopparuanne.pdf?sequence=1&isAllowed=y> and Käger, Kivistik, Pertsjonok, Tatar (2017) Training needs of youth workers. Available at: <https://www.ibs.ee/en/publications/training-needs-of-youth-workers/>

7. Appendices

No annexes.