

The European Union's ENPI Programme

EVALUATION OF THE EASTERN PARTNERSHIP YOUTH IN ACTION WINDOW

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FINAL REPORT

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ABBREVIATIONS AND ACRONYMS

AA	Association Agreement
CoE	Council of Europe
DG	Directorate-General
DG DEVCO	DG Development Co-operation
DG EAC	DG Education and Culture
EACEA	Education, Audiovisual and Culture Executive Agency
EaP	Eastern Partnership
EC	European Commission
ENPI	European Neighbourhood and Partnership Instrument
EPYW	Eastern Partnership Youth in Action Window
ET	Evaluation Team
EU	European Union
EVS	European Voluntary Services
F3	DG DEVCO Unit - Regional Programmes Neighbourhood East
NA	National Agency
SALTO	Support for Advanced Learning and Training Opportunities
SALTO EECA RC	SALTO Eastern Europe and Caucasus Resource Centre
TL	Team Leader
TN	Training and Networking
TORs	Terms of Reference
YE	Youth Exchanges
YiA	Youth in Action
YPfO	Young people with fewer opportunities

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Eastern Partnership Youth in Action Window (EPYW) under the Youth in Action Programme was set up for the period 2012-2013 to address identified needs of young people in Eastern Partnership countries (employability, skills development, lifelong learning, social inclusion and active citizenship) through the promotion of regional cooperation between policy institutions, youth organisations, youth workers and youth populations. EPYW aims to achieve this goal by offering more non-formal learning opportunities to young people, with a special focus on young people with fewer opportunities, to enhance their skills, competences and active participation in society.

The main objective of this assignment is to evaluate the on-going EPYW regional programme and to provide recommendations for the design of a future 2015-2020 regional programme for disadvantaged youth with a focus on their social and economic needs. Geographically the scope of the evaluation covers the six Eastern Partnership (EaP) countries: Armenia, Azerbaijan, Belarus, Georgia, Moldova, and Ukraine.

The Final Report focuses on presenting the main conclusions of the evaluation process, including an evaluation of the EPYW implementation and recommendations on the design of a future regional programme for disadvantaged youth, taking into account existing support for youth by the international donor community (including the EU) in the beneficiary countries.

The Final Report was drafted jointly by the Evaluation Team (ET) involving the Team Leader and the Junior Expert. The home-based Senior Expert supported the team in the refinement of the methodology, elaboration of the answers to the Evaluation Questions, as well as formulation of recommendations.

The FR builds on the previous milestones of the evaluation process: the project's Terms of Reference (TORs), methodology and work plan submitted to DG DEVCO within the bidding process in June 2014, Inception Report, Desk Report and Field Phase report (Country notes).

This Final Report includes the following elements:

- Information on EPYW background and context
- Information on EPYW implementation
- Presentation of the evaluation methodology
- Findings (answers to Evaluation Questions)
- Conclusions
- Recommendations
- Annexes.

Key conclusions

Relevance to objectives and priorities

- The EPYW has successfully addressed most of its planned objectives and has significantly contributed to addressing socio-economic needs of young people in the EaP region.
- The EPYW was most useful in supporting young people's needs in the area of participation and active citizenship. Intercultural learning and mobility were considered as major benefits followed by employability and empowerment.

Addressing the needs of young people with fewer opportunities

- The number of young people with fewer opportunities directly reached by the Window was low, notably with reference to youth from rural and deprived urban areas.
- The EPYW mostly supported young people with fewer opportunities indirectly, in the form of capacity-building activities. (Trainings and seminars for youth workers dealing with this target group as well as through relevant complementary actions and events)

- European Voluntary Service (EVS) was identified as one of the most impactful activities under EPYW with high potential in reaching young people with fewer opportunities at all levels.

Youth work

- The EPYW has clearly enhanced awareness about the nature of youth work to a very high extent in the EaP countries.
- The EPYW was the largest funding instrument in this field in most EaP countries (except Azerbaijan¹).
- Need for higher focus on developing local capacities to improve outreach of young people with fewer opportunities.
- Training & Networking projects were identified as key instruments and spaces for sharing good practice in the sphere of youth work.
- The need for strengthening national structures in recognizing youth work and opportunities to practice youth work in their own local environment was identified as key to further strengthening of youth work in EaP countries.

Regional Co-operation

- Regional co-operation was not perceived as an important EPYW priority throughout the entire programme at both centralized and decentralized levels.
- The definition of 'regional co-operation' which combines the three Eastern European countries with the South Caucasus Countries was not seen as a key priority by beneficiaries.
- Necessity of a new mechanism in support of fulfilling the EU Association Agreement criteria (Youth Chapter) was highlighted by countries that signed the AA.

Capacity development for future cooperation

- The Window has considerably increased the cooperation between EaP and EU based organisations in the field of youth.
- Youth in Action, the Window and the Youth in Action strand of Erasmus+ have been and are currently the main sources of funding cooperation activities in the field of youth in the region.

Efficiency and quality of implementation

- Relevance of the implemented projects to EPYW objectives and priorities is mixed. Window's short-term character contributed to limited communication of EPYW objectives and priorities and challenges in balanced implementation of the Window.
- Balance of project activity types (European Voluntary Service, Youth Exchanges, Training&Networking) differed significantly between centralized and decentralized implementation methods.
- The geographical balance of EPYW projects was not assured which caused a considerable imbalance of project impact in the region. The lack of a mechanism ensuring such balance was negatively evaluated by some governmental stakeholders in the EaP region.
- The set-up and division into 'centralized' and 'decentralized' projects had limited impact on the efficiency of project implementation. Substantial differences occurred only with regards to administrative burden, ownership and monitoring.

¹ Azerbaijan Youth Foundation is Azerbaijan's largest national/governmental grant-giving body in the youth sector with an annual budget of 5 million EUR. It provides grants to Azerbaijani youth organisations for national and international youth projects.

Monitoring

- Limited capacities and financial constraints on implementing institutions have hindered regular monitoring of the projects at centralized and decentralized levels.
- Different monitoring procedures have been applied but with a limited scope in terms of numbers and geographical coverage.

Impact and effectivity

- The Window has effectively contributed to personal and social development of the target group to a very high extent.
- The high achievements reported at all levels highlight great potential of youth work to address needs of young people in a broad range of areas including employability, entrepreneurship, life- and soft skills as well as active citizenship.

Ownership

- Ownership was underlined very high especially in the context of EACEA-funded projects with a different, positive impact on project implementation.
- Centralized method of implementation was indicated in very clear terms as preferred way by most of the beneficiaries (also for future co-operation) as it had a positive impact on local beneficiary capacity, recognition of youth work, volunteering and non-formal learning as well as strengthening civil society.

Side effects (desired)

- Significant impact on the strengthening of civil society in EaP countries, as EPYW beneficiaries have very diverse profiles and deal with various target groups and themes in all social, economic, political and cultural spheres.
- Strong contribution to legitimising youth work and youth policy as credible and important sectors of civil society.
- Great support for beneficiaries from the youth sector to develop important financial capacities, allowing them to access other types of funding, notably larger grants provided by international donors.

The key recommendations regarding the future EaP youth programme are:

- Keeping the focus on youth work and the voluntary and civil society sectors at the core of the new programme.
- In order to address the needs of young people with fewer opportunities it should be obligatory for the funding agency to support at least 1/3 of projects which directly and actively involve this category of youth as active participants.
- Continuation of the Window within the new Erasmus+ Programme should be considered complementary to other funding opportunities.
- The new programme should include a provision for local project opportunities and national priorities and on the ground support (coaching, monitoring) in the EaP region with a specific focus on target groups that the EPYW seems not to have sufficiently reached in significant numbers, i.e. young people with fewer opportunities and in rural/deprived urban areas.
- The new programme should include a comprehensive cross-sectoral co-operation strategy.

Possible programme set-up:

- **Component 1:** Local capacity-building and development programme (grant) in the sphere of youth with a combined grant and sub-granting component. It should allow the creation of demand-driven co-operation between youth organisations sharing common values and facing similar challenges, but with different experience and capacities at national/local level. A comprehensive sub-granting facility at micro level shall be established providing direct coaching and ad hoc capacity-building support to grassroots level organisations from rural and deprived urban areas at the local level, working with young people with fewer opportunities. Priority shall be given to projects in line with national priorities and youth policy plans. The rationale is that this will encourage greater participation by smaller NGOs and individuals, who otherwise would most likely be excluded from participation

For the implementation of this component it is recommended to devolve grant management to a number of experienced organisations in each country, which can then provide capacity-building and coaching support and serve as grant making organisations for the small grant schemes. Small grants shall foster capacity building among those who receive grants for performing targeted, practical projects within their community.

- **Component 2:** Opening a “Window” under Erasmus+/Key Action 2 (Capacity-Building in the field of youth – priority given to mobility activities) for the EaP region, with the possibility for EaP-based beneficiaries to apply directly for funding. Geographical repartition of grants according to e.g. youth population size² with an option for countries who have signed the EU Association Agreement to have status equal to Programme Countries under Erasmus+ Key Action 2 “Strategic Partnerships”. No other specific additional priority necessary besides Erasmus+ if parallel to the above-mentioned local capacity-building and development programme.
- **Component 3:** For improved implementation and monitoring of the two above-mentioned components, as well as a tailored cross sectoral policy support, a TA office can be set up or existing framework with comprehensive experience in/with the region (SALTO RC EECA, NAs) can be used (or a mix of the two). The latter would ensure a broad use of synergies, existing competencies and capacities. Cooperation with Erasmus+ offices in EaP countries should be sought for the purpose of systematic dissemination of information about the programme and enhanced visibility. The new framework shall use the already established working relationships with all regional institutions through the Regional Youth Unit Project (EPYRU) to further support cross sectoral policy cooperation in the region and link them with the above-mentioned components.

² This need to be defined more in detail in a future step.

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 Overall objectives and scope of the evaluation

This evaluation covers the regional programme Eastern Partnership Youth in Action Window (EPYW). The specific objectives of the evaluation are:

- 1) To provide an independent evaluation of the ongoing regional programme Eastern Partnership Youth in Action Window from 2012 until now paying particular attention to the results achieved at centralized versus decentralized level as well as the level of involvement of the beneficiaries. This assessment should be based on a representative sample of projects managed by the Education, Audiovisual and Culture Executive Agency (EACEA) and by the four national agencies managing most of the Eastern Partnership Youth in Action Window projects (Germany, France, Poland and the United Kingdom).
- 2) To provide recommendations on the design of a future regional programme for disadvantaged youth with a focus on their social and economic needs, taking into account existing support for youth by the international donor community - including the EU - in the beneficiary countries.

The regional scope of the evaluation covers mainly the six EaP countries (Armenia, Azerbaijan, Belarus, Georgia, Moldova and Ukraine) and the temporal scope covers the period 2012-2014.

1.2 Structure of the report

This report is structured as follows:

- **Executive Summary:** This section provides an overview of the key evaluation findings, conclusions and recommendations.
- **Part 1:** Eastern Partnership Youth Window background: The section provides background information on EPYW, including policy context, its structure and architecture, implementation bodies, beneficiaries and financial information.
- **Part 2:** Methodology: This part describes in detail the methodology applied for this evaluation, including tools and sources of information as well as the Evaluation Questions subject to this evaluation.
- **Part 3:** Answers to the 11 Evaluation Questions which framed the evaluation.
- **Part 4:** Conclusions of the evaluation process.
- **Part 5:** Recommendations on the design of a future EaP regional programme.

It includes the following annexes:

- TOR
- List of persons/organisations consulted
- Literature and documentation consulted
- Case studies.

2. EASTERN PARTNERSHIP YOUTH WINDOW – BACKGROUND

2.1 EPYW context

The Eastern Partnership Youth Window forms part of the broader agenda for collaboration between the European Commission and the Eastern Partnership region set out in the revised ENPI East Regional Strategy Paper (RSP) and the ENPI East Regional Indicative Programme (RIP) 2010-2013, in which Youth is identified as one of the priority areas for funding³. The Window is an important component of the work programme of the Eastern Partnership Platform 4 "People to people" and has been the topic of several Platform discussions.

A need assessment conducted in 2011 has identified employability, skills development, lifelong learning, social inclusion and active citizenship as the main needs of young people in Eastern Partnership countries⁴. The priorities within the youth field, as identified in the course of the above-mentioned needs assessment, are closely matched to priority areas within the European Union in the sphere of youth, i.e.:

- Employability of young people, skills development, lifelong learning;
- Social inclusion of youth, access to services, opportunities;
- Health of young people – addressing key health concerns, promoting healthy lifestyle;
- Promotion of participation and active citizenship of young people⁵.

Challenges identified to respond to these needs included the capacity of EaP countries to provide a cross-sectoral approach to youth policy, the involvement of the young people into the formulation and implementation of responses to their needs at the policy and practice levels, the regional collaboration in the sphere of youth, the focus on the disadvantaged groups within the youth population, the setting up of a comprehensive system of youth work, the focus on the lifelong learning and non-formal education for youth.

EPYW was demand-driven, and aimed to foster the principle of ownership and development of capacity in the youth sector, in accordance with the Paris Declaration and the European Commission's Backbone Strategy on "Reforming Technical Cooperation and Project Implementation Units for External Aid"⁶.

In response to the political context and the needs analysis as well as the identified challenges, DG EAC and DG DEVCO worked together on a series of proposals including technical assistance to enhance cooperation with the Neighbouring Countries in the sectors of education and youth. As a result the Eastern Partnership Youth Window under the Youth in Action Programme was set up for the period 2012-2013 to help to address most of the above mentioned challenges through the promotion of regional cooperation between policy institutions, youth organisations, youth workers and youth populations.

2.1.1 Funding and expected outcome

As a basis for EPYW implementation, DG DEVCO made available an amount of 31.5 M EUR through the European Neighbourhood and Partnership Instrument (ENPI) for the years 2012 and 2013 in the form of an Eastern Partnership Youth Window to finance the participation of 21000 young people and youth workers in about 1400 additional joint projects involving Youth in Action Programme countries and the six Eastern Partnership countries.

³ ENPI East Regional Strategy Paper (RSP) and the ENPI East Regional Indicative Programme (RIP) 2010-2013, p. 45.

⁴ DG DEVCO, Youth Needs Assessment in EaP Countries (2011).

⁵ 'Council Resolution of 27 November 2009 on a renewed framework for European cooperation in the youth field (2010-2018), Council of the European Union, (2009/C 311/01) 'Addressing the concerns of young people in Europe – implementing the European Youth Pact and promoting active citizenship'; European Commission White Paper: A New Impetus For European Youth', Commission of The European Communities, Brussels, 30.05.2005.

⁶ European Commission, Reforming Technical Cooperation and Project Implementation Units for External Aid: A Backbone Strategy (2008).

2.1.2 Quantitative results

The original aim was to implement with the Eastern Partnership Youth Window about 1400 projects involving an additional 21000 young people and youth workers in joint youth activities between Eastern Partnership countries and Youth in Action Programme Countries.

Results are far beyond target: Youth in Action National Agencies funded 1183 Eastern Partnership Youth in Action Window projects while the EACEA allowed granting of 465 projects submitted by youth organisations from Eastern Partnership countries. The projects approved in 2012 and 2013 involved a total of 37247 young people and youth workers.

2.2 EPYW Objectives and priorities

The overall objective of the Eastern Partnership Youth Window was to support the response of the Eastern Partnership countries to the needs of youth in their societies through cooperation among young people and youth workers⁷.

The specific objectives were:

- To support partners countries in responding to the needs of disadvantaged young people;
- To promote youth work development⁸.

EPYW specific priorities were:

- To support young people with fewer opportunities living in rural or deprived urban areas
- Raising awareness about the nature of youth work
- Sharing of best practices in the sphere of youth work
- Regional collaboration (EaP level).

2.3 EPYW - Implementation of the programme

In agreement between DG DEVCO and DG EAC, the funds (31.5 M EUR) as well as the management of the programme were allocated by 2/3 (19 M EUR) to Youth in Action National Agencies at decentralized level (EU Member States + Croatia + Iceland + Lichtenstein + Norway + Turkey) and by 1/3 (12.5 M EUR) to the Executive Agency for Education, Audiovisual and Culture (EACEA) at centralized level, under the supervision of DG DEVCO's Authorising Officer.

It is to be underlined that when projects were managed at decentralized level (by National Agencies), EaP Organisations could not apply directly for grants, hence could only be project partners of a Programme country (EU Member States, Croatia, Iceland, Lichtenstein, Norway and Turkey). However when projects were managed at centralized level (by EACEA), EaP organisations were eligible to apply directly for EPYW grants.

The objective was to use these funds to support projects raising awareness about the nature of youth work, promoting the sharing of best practices, while demonstrating a clear commitment to provide support to young people with fewer opportunities living in rural or deprived urban areas.

The funds were allocated to two types of capacity-building and mobility actions:

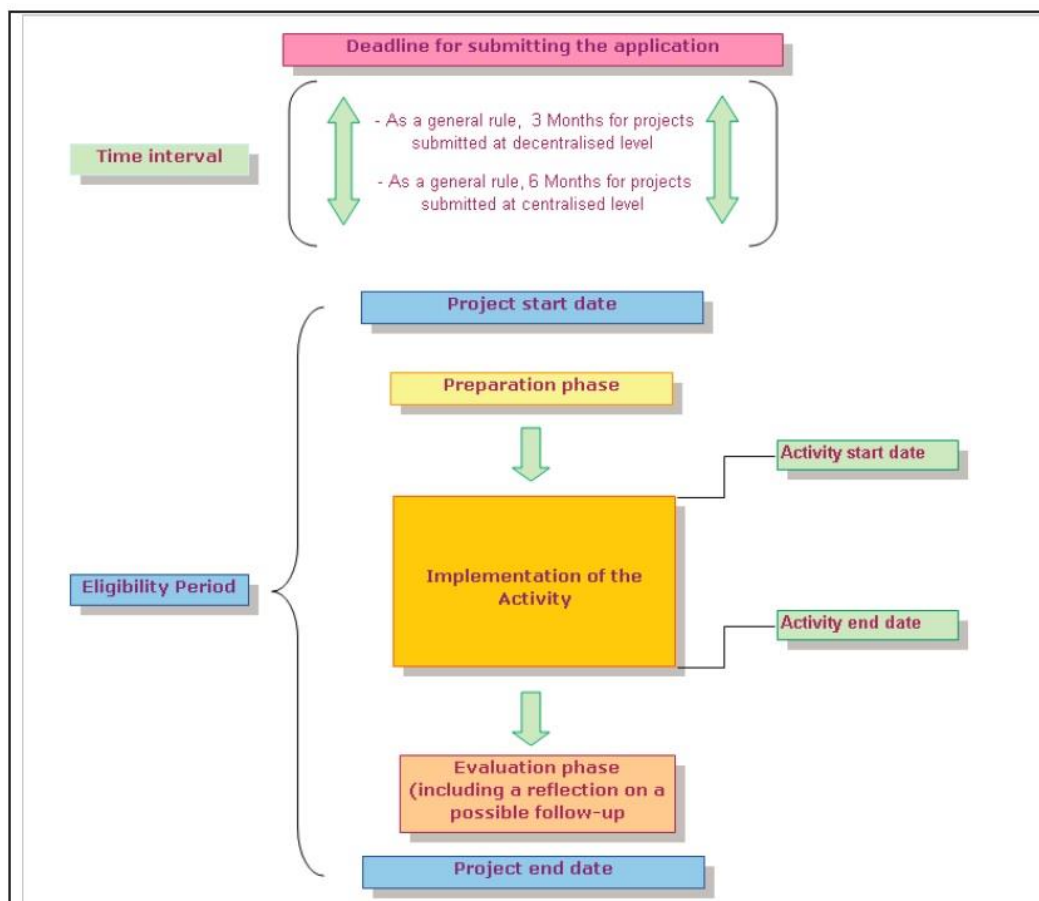
- European Voluntary Service which enables young people to carry out voluntary service for up to 12 months in a country other than their country of residence. Volunteers learn new skills and languages and discover other cultures.
- Cooperation with the Neighbouring Partner Countries of the EU in the form of youth exchanges, training in the field of youth, sharing of good practice and networking.

⁷ Those who work, on a professional or volunteer basis, with young people in supporting their social and personal development, principally in non-formal/informal learning contexts (Action Fiche).

⁸ Action Fiche for ENPI Regional East Action Programme 2012, CRIS : ENPI/2012 / 24307

2.3.1 Decision-making process

Figure 1⁹: YiA Project-cycle. Distinction between Project dates and Activity dates



EACEA

For projects submitted to the EACEA there were three deadlines per year: the 1st of February for projects starting between the 1st August - 31st December, the 1st of June for projects starting between the 1st December – 30th April and the 1st of September for projects starting between the 1st March – 31st July.

After each deadline and finalisation of a formal eligibility check, applications were assessed by external experts who assessed each application according to a provided selection grid in line with the official selection criteria under each action and sub-action.

After the expert assessment, projects were returned to the EACEA programme officers, who prepared these for the evaluation committee (incl. one or two representatives of DG DEVCO and DG EAC) to take the final decision on funding. During the selection committee meeting, projects were introduced, discussed and consequently approved or rejected. In addition the committees made proposals for funding which are then subject to approval by the EACEA Authorising Officer (Director). EACEA is bound by the Commission Financial Regulation which sets down a number of specific parameters for the selection and management of all projects, including those of the EPYW.

National Agencies

For EPYW projects submitted to a National Agency there were three application deadlines per year (both in 2012 and 2013: the 1st of February, 1st of May and 1st of October for projects starting

⁹ Source: YiA Programme Guide 2013

between the 1st May – 31st October, 1st August - 31st January, and 1st January – 30th June respectively.

After each deadline and finalisation of a formal eligibility check, applications were assessed directly by respective project officers at the German, French and Polish Agencies while the UK Agency hired external experts to perform qualitative evaluation. The assessed projects were then prepared for the national selection committees for final selection.

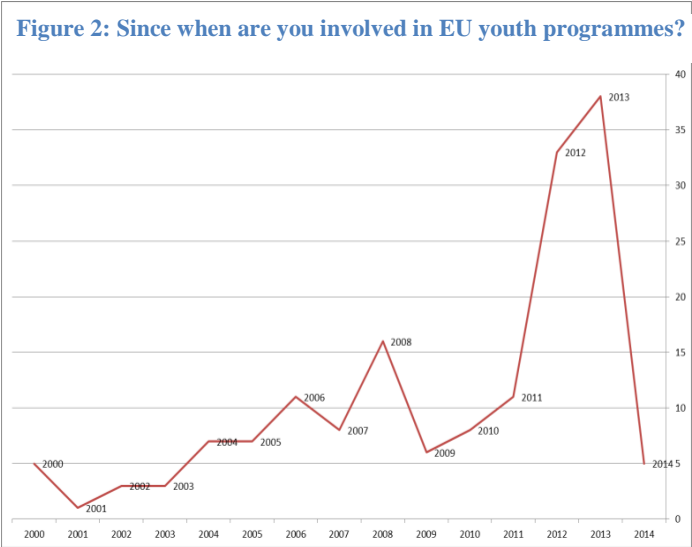
2.3.2 Beneficiaries

In order to be eligible for EPYW funding, beneficiaries had to fall within one of the following categories:

- Be a non-profit/non-governmental organisation; or
- A local, regional public body; or
- A body active at European level in the youth field; or
- An international governmental organisation; or
- (Only for EVS projects) a profit-making organisation (only when it organises an event in the area of youth, sport or culture).

Each EPYW beneficiary organisations (promoter) had to be based in a Programme Country or an Eastern Partnership country. Additionally, all EPYW Action 2 (EVS) beneficiaries had to have a valid EVS accreditation granted by the relevant body (National Agency for Programme Countries, SALTO EECA RC for EaP countries).

While the Window was rather slow to start in its first months in early 2012, where mostly experienced beneficiaries were involved, by mid-2013 a large number of new organisations got involved in EPYW, especially among those originating from the EaP countries. According to the data gathered from the online survey 46% of the EaP applicant organisations had no experience with YiA/Youth programme in the past while 54% had experience with the programme, some since as far back as 2000. The table also shows the rapid increase of the number of beneficiary organisations as a result of EPYW in the EaP region.



Source: Online Survey

3. METHODOLOGY

3.1 Structured evaluation approach

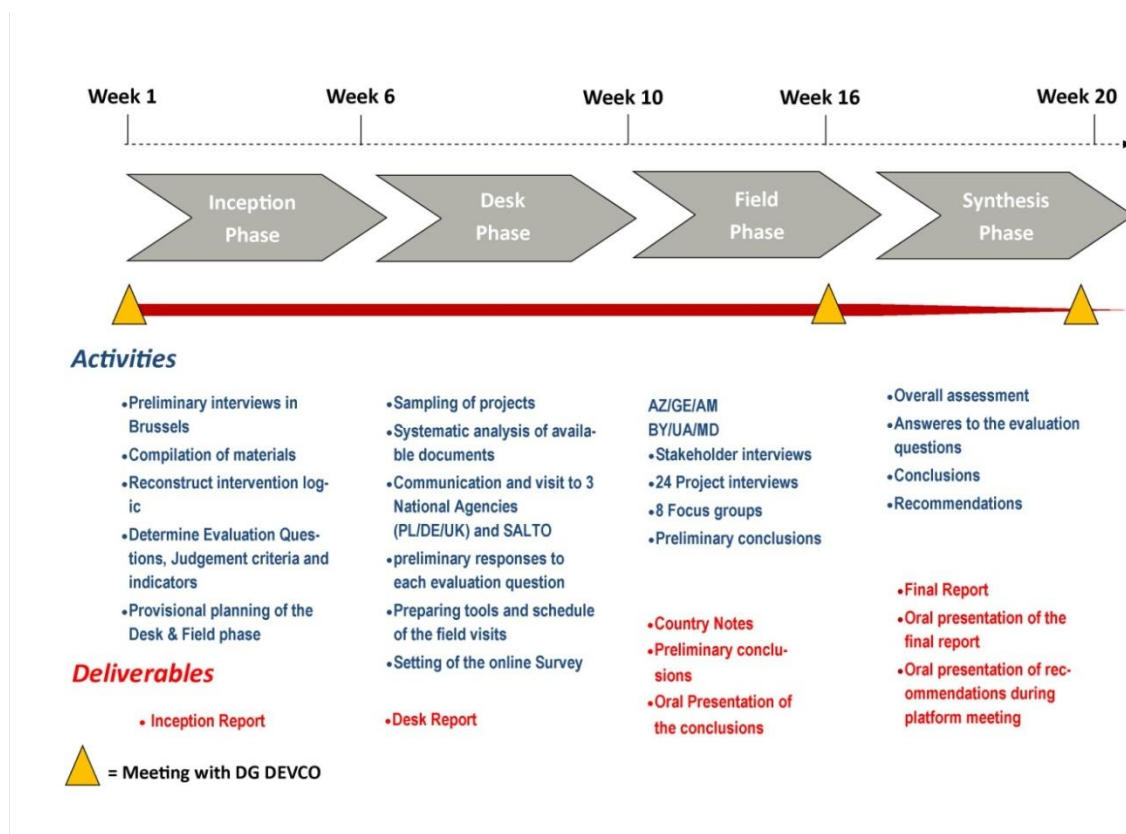
The methodology applied provided coverage of all relevant indicators of importance in the evaluation of the regional programme Eastern Partnership Youth in Action Window. As the goal of this evaluation was to provide recommendations for the design of a future 2015-2020 regional programme for disadvantaged youth with a focus on their social and economic needs, a comprehensive approach covering all relevant indicators has been adopted.

Particular attention was paid to qualitative indicators, while quantitative indicators were sought for the purpose of ensuring the representative character of the evaluation, including through the online survey.

To ensure that recommendations for a future regional programme are based on evidence and good practice, the ET paid particular attention to the EPYW dual method of implementation (NA/EACEA) and compared evaluation results with regards to both implementation methods in a number of OECD/DAC criteria (efficiency, effectiveness, ownership).

The evaluation was structured in four phases as summarized in following figure: an *inception phase* including preliminary interviews in Brussels, a *desk phase* involving a review of key documentation and interviews with National Agencies and SALTO, *consultations and field work* in all six EaP countries, and a *synthesis phase*.

Figure 3: Evaluation structure



The figure also indicates the **activities** that were undertaken during the different phases, the meetings held with DG DEVCO and other stakeholders in Brussels and the various **deliverables** produced at the different stages of the evaluation. Each phase started upon approval of the deliverable of the previous phase.

3.1.1 Sampling and selection of the projects

The sampling exercise was a key to ensure representativeness by considering adequate repartition between methods of implementation (NA/EACEA).

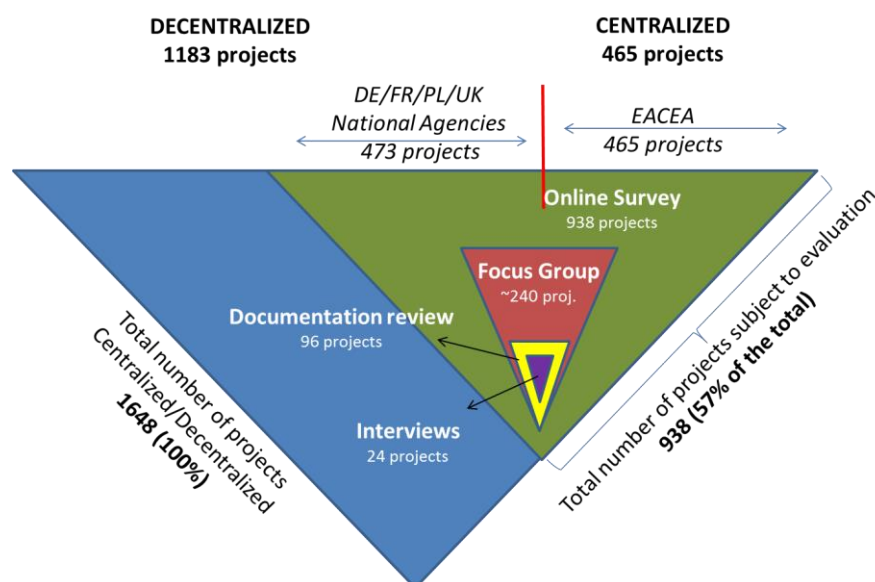
Around 1648 projects have been funded under EPYW, out of which 465 were funded at centralized level by EACEA and 1183 at decentralized level by 33 National Agencies. In total, 37247¹⁰ young people and youth workers participated in all activities, including 20859 at decentralized and 16388 at centralized level.

According to the information gathered through the online survey, it can be assumed that around one third (35%) EPYW project participants have participated only in one project (EVS or Youth Exchange or Training & Networking) while the other two thirds (65%) have participated in two and more (some up to 11) projects during the life time of the programme. In average each individual contributing as a “participant” in the survey (713) has participated in 3-4 projects. This suggests that the actual number of young people and youth workers who participated in EPYW funded projects is between 9 000 and 12 000.

In how many EPYW funded projects have you participated between 2012-2014 ¹¹ ?							
Answer Options	1	2-3	4	5-7	8-10	+11	Response Count
Youth Exchange	231	146	33	20	6	3	439
European Voluntary Service (EVS)	108	7	4	4	3	4	130
Training and Networking	201	158	50	32	7	8	456

The ET ensured the representative character of the evaluation by contrasting 473 projects funded by four selected NAs (DE/FR/PL/UK) with 465 projects funded at centralized level. On this basis, the scope of evaluation covered in total 938 projects (57% of 1648) at macro and 96 projects at micro level.

Figure 4: Overview of the evaluation sampling



This included:

- 465 projects at centralized level
 - o equal to 100% of projects funded through EACEA
 - o equal to ~30% of total population
- 473 projects at decentralized level
 - o equal to 100% of projects funded through 4 NAs – DE/FR/PL/UK
 - o equal to ~30% of total population.

¹⁰ Information according to the latest figures received from DG EAC in December 2014.

¹¹ It is not clear if contributing participants could clearly distinguish between YIA and Window funded projects in this regard.

3.1.1.1 Sampling of the projects at macro level

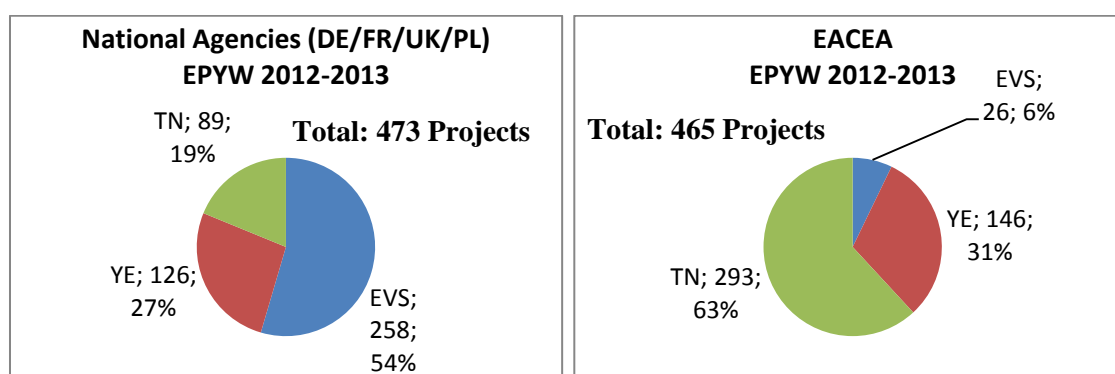
At project outset, 938 projects were evaluated using a set of four essential criteria:

- 1) **Method of implementation:** Projects were divided according to the funding institution (EACEA or one of the four National Agencies: France, Germany, Poland and United Kingdom).
- 2) **Activity Type:** Analysis entailed a division into EPYW actions: Action 2 (EVS), Action 3.1 Youth Exchanges and Action 3.1 Training and Networking projects.
- 3) **Geographical distribution:** Analysis according to the geographical distribution across all six EaP countries, as well as projects which took place in programme countries.
- 4) **EPYW objectives and priorities:** Projects were divided into high, mid-level and low relevance.

The analysis of the statistics provided by the EACEA and National Agencies produced results with regards to criteria 1, 2 and 3:

Criteria 1 and 2 – “Method of implementation” and “Activity Type”:

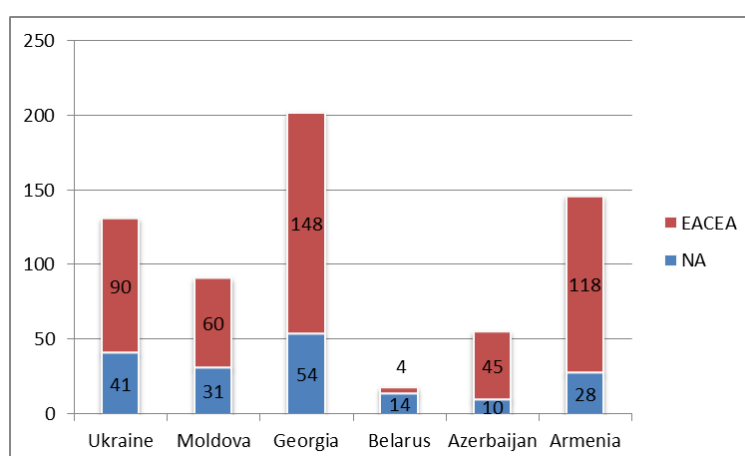
Figure 5: Repartition of activity types per method of implementation



Criterion 3 – Geographical distribution:

According to data supplied by EACEA, the four NAs subject to this evaluation and SALTO RC EECA, the following numbers of projects have been selected for funding in EaP countries:

Figure 6: Geographical repartition of projects by method of implementation¹²



Data supplied by the National Agencies did not allow for a full assessment on Criterion 2. Especially the number of youth exchanges and training and networking activities involving EaP participants but taking place in a programme country was not possible to establish.

¹² Source: EACEA, the four NAs subject to this evaluation and SALTO RC EECA.

According to the information received by DG EAC 31% of all NA¹³ funded projects took place in EaP countries.

Criterion 4: Relevance

Initial assessment included an analysis of final scores (divided into high, mid-level and low relevance) received by projects that have been awarded grants as well as descriptions of project activities.

3.1.1.2 Evaluation at macro level:

After completing the initial assessment the Evaluation Team proceeded to a more substantial, in-depth evaluation according to detailed Evaluation Questions.

Online Survey:

A survey was prepared and sent out to available contact list of 1.300 recipients, mainly to the applicant organisation's email addresses with regards to specific issues raised in Evaluation Questions. The survey initially targeted participants and beneficiaries (organisations) of 939 projects, but also participants/beneficiaries of other EPYW funded projects contributed to the survey. The ET aimed at a 20% response rate for the survey findings to be valid. In total 1273 persons contributed to the online survey between 01.09.-02.11.2014.

Focus groups:

During the field visits the ET has organised 1-2 focus groups in each targeted country. Since numerous EaP-based organisations have implemented several EPYW projects between 2012 and 2013 ET aimed at reaching with average of 20 representatives per meeting over 40 projects per country. ET could reach over 240 projects through the focus groups in the region.

3.1.1.3 Sampling and evaluation at micro level:

In total 96 projects (10% of the total figure of 939 projects) were selected for more detailed evaluation including a detailed post assessment of the respective projects (desk phase) and interview of 24 projects during the field phase.

A representative sample of EPYW projects funded by EACEA and four selected NAs were established based on rigorous selection criteria following the same model outlined above, with relevant adjustments to assure a balance between representation, proportionality and feasibility/efficiency of the evaluation process.

For the final evaluation the following selection was made per implementation method and type of action, respecting different repartition of the actions under each method of implementation:

	EVS	YE	TN	Total
EACEA	10 (10%)*	14 (30%)*	24 (60%)	48 (100%)
NA	24 (50%)	12 (25%)	12 (25%)	48 (100%)
Total	34	26	36	96

* Due to the fact that no EVS project was funded at centralized level to take place in Belarus, the ET has replaced one EVS with one Youth Exchange in order to keep the balance.

Consequently, 8 projects (4 NA / 4 EACEA) were selected per country in two rounds – ring-fenced – to give equal weighting to projects in each country. Belarus is a notable exception, as only five EACEA-funded projects have been approved out of which only two could be implemented.

¹³ National Agencies: Germany, France, Poland, United Kingdom

The final country distribution of representative samples for each round is summarised below:

	EACEA	NA	Total	
Armenia	1EVS/1YE/2TN	2EVS/1YE/1TN	8	3EVS/2YE/3TN
Azerbaijan	1EVS/1YE/2TN	2EVS/1YE/1TN	8	3EVS/2YE/3TN
Georgia	1EVS/1YE/2TN	2EVS/1YE/1TN	8	3EVS/2YE/3TN
Belarus	0 EVS/2YE/2TN	2EVS/2YE/0TN	8	2EVS/4YE/2TN
Moldova	1EVS/1YE/2TN	2EVS/1YE/1TN	8	3EVS/2YE/3TN
Ukraine	1EVS/1YE/2TN	2EVS/1YE/1TN	8	3EVS/2YE/3TN
Total			48	

The above-mentioned sampling of NA selected projects¹⁴ is based on following repartition by type of action and country:

	EVS	YE	TN	Total
France	1AM/1GE/1MD/1UA	1BY/1MD/1UA	1MD	8
Germany	2AZ/1MD/1UA	1AM	2AZ/1UA	8
Poland	1AM/1GE	--	1AM/1GE	4
UK	2BY	1BY/1GE	--	4
Total	12	6	6	24

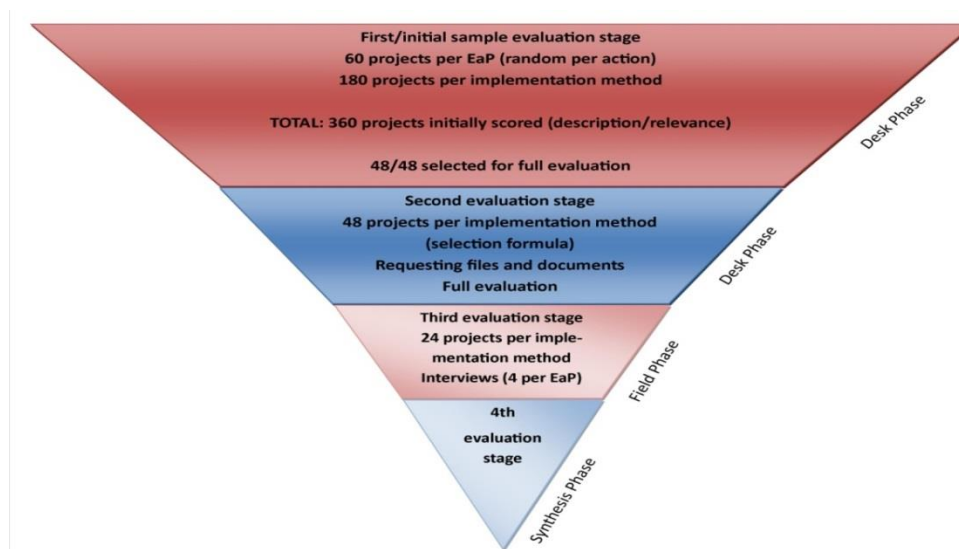
Considerations regarding EPYW decentralized projects which took place in programme countries (PC)

According to information obtained by the ET around 37% of projects funded at decentralized level were implemented in EaP countries. This group of projects are well considered in the entire evaluation. For the remaining 67% of projects, these projects were mainly subject to evaluation through the online survey as well as in the focus groups organised in each EaP country. In total 135 beneficiaries and 188 participants involved in PC-based projects have contributed to the online survey.

3.1.1.4 Evaluation process at micro level

Sampling and evaluation of projects were conducted in four stages as outlined in the figure on the next page.

Figure 7: Process of sampling and evaluation of projects



¹⁴ The German NA and French NA have financed the largest number of EPYW projects (176 and 136, respectively). Hence, their sampling includes eight projects per country. As the Polish and UK NAs have funded a smaller number of EPYW projects (86 and 65, respectively), sampling of PL and UK projects includes four projects for each NA.

3.2 Evaluation Questions

3.2.1 Specific objective 1: Evaluation of the ongoing regional programme Eastern Partnership Youth in Action Window

The EQs aim at addressing the key issues with respect to the implementation of the EPYW and its results. Table below lists the 11 questions.

Overview of the Evaluation Questions

EQ1	Relevance of the EPYW	To what extent have the regional programme objectives ¹⁵ (of Eastern Partnership Youth in Action Window) been relevant in addressing young people's socio-economic needs in the EaP region?
EQ2	Coherence – Young people with fewer opportunities	To what extent have the projects financed under this programme supported young people with fewer opportunities living in rural or deprived urban areas within the EaP region; what factors/obstacles prevented supporting this group ¹⁶ ?
EQ3	Coherence – Nature of youth work	To what extent have the projects financed under this programme enhanced awareness about the nature of youth work as well as exploration of the potential for developing the youth worker as a role; what eventually hampered achieving this goal?
EQ4	Coherence – Sharing good practice	To what extent have the projects financed under this programme offered the opportunity to share best practices in the sphere of youth work in general and with regard to its role as a means of meeting the needs of young people?
EQ5	Coherence – Commitment and capacities for cooperation	To what extent have the projects financed under this programme increased commitment and capacities for cooperation in the field of youth at regional level?
EQ6	Efficiency - Procedures	To what extent do the procedures put in place for the selection of proposals by EACEA and NAs ensure that the projects of the best quality are funded?
EQ7	Efficiency - Monitoring	To what extent have the mechanisms applied by EACEA and NAs for monitoring of projects ensured a proper implementation of the Window?
EQ8	Effectiveness and Impact	What are the key benefits and outcomes of the programme for young people involved? To what extent has the programme effectively contributed to personal and social development of the target group?
EQ9	Ownership	To what extent has the programme ensured local ownership of the projects by its beneficiaries?
EQ10	Sustainability	What are the Window sustainability (positive changes or trends induced by the Window expected to last) and the dissemination and exploitation of results (DEOR)?
EQ11	Unintended	To what extent have the activities under this programme resulted in unintended effects (both desirable and undesirable)?

The set of EQs allows coverage of the different evaluation criteria, while making sure that the evaluation has a clear focus, through a set of precise and well-defined questions.

¹⁵ Objectives: ... support the response of the Eastern Partnership countries to the needs of youth in their societies through cooperation among young people and youth workers. Specific:

- To support partner countries in responding to the needs of disadvantaged young people;
- To promote youth work development.

¹⁶ E.g. young people living in isolated rural communities; or affected by disabilities; or suffering from poverty, or discrimination due to their social, ethnic background or their gender

3.2.2 Specific objective 2: Recommendations for design of a future regional EaP Youth Programme

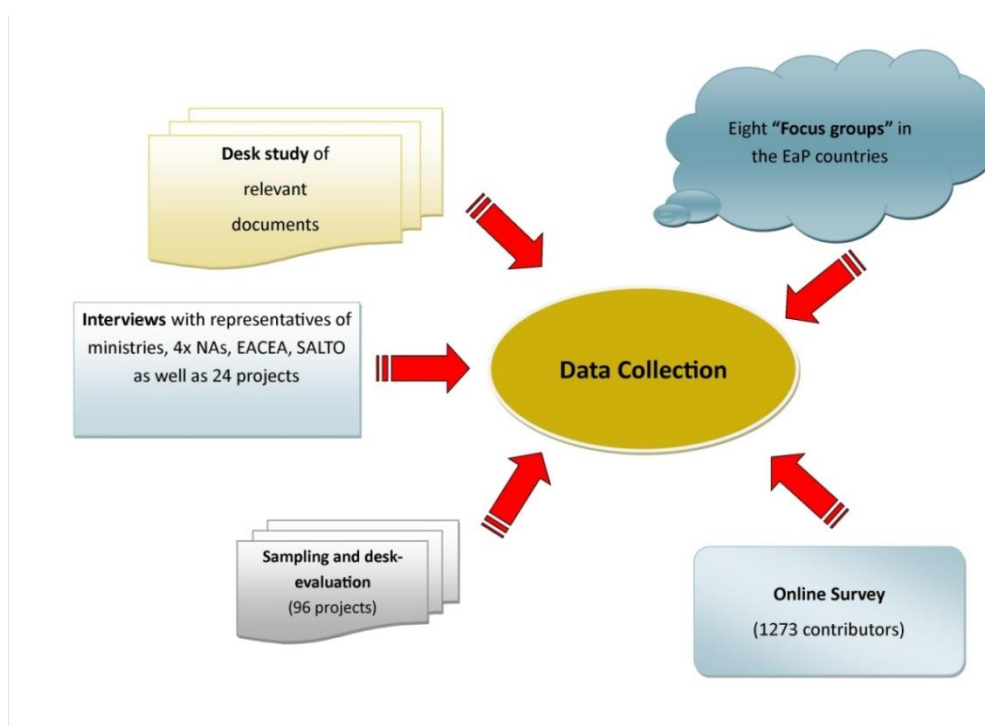
The following Evaluation Questions seek to acquire relevant information and ideas that could be useful to the ET when drawing conclusions and lessons learnt from the evaluation. As such, there is no need for judgement criteria or indicators in the methodology.

EQ12	How can programming and implementation of regional EaP youth programme be enhanced to more effectively address social and economic needs of disadvantaged youth in the beneficiary countries?
EQ13	How can programming and implementation be enhanced to improve the impact and sustainability of financial assistance of the programme?
EQ14	Which lessons can be learnt from the implementation of regional Eastern Partnership Youth in Action Window with regards to the above-mentioned specific objective 1 of this evaluation?

3.3 Evaluation tools

The information was collected by the ET through the use of specific **evaluation tools as represented below**:

Figure 8: Evaluation Tools



Institutional background Interviews

Seven¹⁷ interviews with the selected NAs and EACEA were conducted. They aimed at providing a better understanding of the way EPYW projects are selected and monitored by the respective institutions. Specific emphasis was given to the relevance and coherence of the projects to the aims,

¹⁷ Due to a delay in conducting an interview with French NA an alternative information meeting was arranged with the Austrian National Agency in Vienna. The interview with the French NA was conducted in early November.

objectives and priorities of the Window, the methods used for assessment and selection of the projects, monitoring and support systems applied, possible problems and gaps identified during the implementation of the Window and last but not least recommendations for improvement to better address the needs of YPfo from rural and deprived urban areas in EaP countries.

The interview with SALTO EECA RC aimed at gaining information concerning the role and activities of SALTO in the EaP countries, their impression and opinion about the relevance and coherence of the projects (especially EVS) and how far the programme could have an impact on addressing young people's socio-economic needs in general and those of the YPfo in particular. Furthermore the ET was interested in relevant information about the type of support SALTO provided to the Agencies (NAs/EACEA) and in this regards country specific requests and "peculiarities".

Stakeholder Interviews

Semi-structured stakeholder interviews were conducted face-to-face with different types of stakeholders during the field phase. This included mainly representatives of line ministries and state bodies responsible for youth sphere in EaP countries, the European Union Delegation in each country as well as experts in the field of youth and civil society. Interviews were conducted in English. In some cases the support of a local interpreter was sought. The aim of these meetings was next to general issues related to the implementation of EPYW also to find answers related to the second objective of this evaluation, namely the need, priorities and framework of a possible future youth programme.

Project interviews

Semi-structured project interviews were conducted with representatives (mostly a project manager and a participant) of 24 selected projects in Baku, Tbilisi, Kutaisi, Yerevan, Dilijan, Minsk, Lviv, Kiev, Chisinau and Cricova. In one case where a face-to-face meeting was not feasible (Odessa) the interview was conducted over Skype. Questions aimed here to find answers to key evaluation questions under each of the Evaluation Criteria (Relevance/ Coherence/ Efficiency/ Effectiveness-Impact/ Ownership/ Sustainability/ Unintended impact).

Focus group with EPYW Beneficiaries in EPYW Countries

The ET (with the help of local assistants) organised six focus group meetings with larger groups of stakeholders (up to 20 persons per meeting) during the field phase. Beneficiary organisations (management and staff), experts and support staff in EPYW projects, as well as young people were invited to take part in the meetings. The focus group meetings were conducted in English language. In some cases the support of a local interpreter was sought. The meetings were attended by large numbers and covered over 240 projects.

Online survey for participants and beneficiaries

During the desk phase an online survey was prepared and conducted in English and Russian language through one of the regular online survey platforms (Survey Monkey). The survey was based on 33 closed questions, with options to give additional comments.

The online survey was essential in order to draw more 'general conclusions' as it was impossible to have a representative sample of participants/beneficiaries otherwise. The survey targeted two different groups of stakeholders, the organisations (applicant or partner, trainers and other experts) and individuals (young people, youth workers, NGO representatives) who have participated in the projects. The online survey was initially promoted through the list of 939 projects, however as it was not possible to restrict the access also other EPYW funded project beneficiaries and participants contributed to the survey. The survey was tested with 10 individuals in the last week of August and launched on 01.09.2014. The survey was officially available until 02.11.2014.

In total, 1273 persons contributed to the survey, out of which, 1269 answered part or all of the questions. Among them 792 chose the option to contribute as a participant in one project funded under EPYW and 477 have indicated to have been involved in different roles in the organisation of an EPYW funded project.

3.4 Data gathering challenges

The following data gathering challenges were encountered at the various stages of the evaluation process.

Document analysis:

- *Implementation and management documents:* Some documents were not available to the ET due to data protection reasons; out of those available, there were notable differences in document templates, statistical information and procedures used by different National Agencies and the EACEA; this warranted additional standardisation and analytical work to provide a common platform for evaluation.

Interviews:

- *National Agencies:* due to the short time-frame of the evaluation assignment, partially overlapping with annual leave for large numbers of staff, the French National Agency was not available for interviews within the planned schedule; The interview with the French NA was rescheduled for early November;
- *EPYW beneficiaries:* some beneficiaries pre-selected for interviews were not available during the field phase; some planned interviews had to be replaced with second-choice interviews; some beneficiaries had limited awareness of EPYW objectives and priorities and thus were not able to fully evaluate certain aspects of the Window;
- *EaP country stakeholders:* in a number of EaP countries, EPYW was perceived as a highly important programme by governmental bodies; in others, such as Belarus, it was deemed a low priority; different perceptions of the Window affected the depth of analysis and feedback received; additional stakeholders were held in a number of countries to seek a full picture of the country situation regarding EPYW implementation.

Focus groups:

- Some FG participants had limited understanding of certain evaluation categories (including EPYW objectives and priorities, YPFO and deprived areas, amongst others); in order to allow for full participation in the FG, additional information and guidance had to be provided.

Online survey:

- According to feedback received from EPYW beneficiaries (organisations) some EPYW project participants perceived the survey as burdensome and complicated, and were reluctant to volunteer their time to complete the survey; this required additional clarification and information, and the final survey deadline was postponed twice to 02.11.2014 in order to facilitate reaching the desired number of respondents;
- Due to lack of direct contact to participants ET was dependent on the support of beneficiary NGOs to forward the information about the survey to their partners, staff and participants. According to feedback received not all NGOs communicate via email with participants but through social networks like Facebook. Hence in some cases the information was uploaded by beneficiary organisation to Facebook but not through direct mailing to the respective participants.

4. ANSWERS TO THE EVALUATION QUESTIONS

4.1 EQ 1 – On relevance of the EPYW

To what extent have the regional programme objectives¹⁸ (of Eastern Partnership Youth in Action Window) been relevant in addressing young people’s socio-economic needs in the EaP region?

*This question addresses the issue of **relevance**.*

It examines to what extent EPYW objectives been relevant in addressing: employability of young people, skills development, lifelong learning, social inclusion of youth, access to services and opportunities, promotion of participation and active citizenship of young people.

EQ 1 on Relevance of the EPYW - Answer Summary Box

The interim evaluation of the Youth in Action Programme (2011), as well as the RAY-survey, already show that YiA Programme has proven capacity to tackle these needs through its various actions and features by increasing e.g. creativity and entrepreneurship, stimulating further educational activities, improving employability skills and promoting active participation and citizenship.

Funded through a Window to the YiA Programme, EPYW projects are largely in line with the objectives of the Youth in Action Programme (although to a different degree), but not always with those of the Window itself which mainly aims at addressing needs of young people at regional (EaP) level. More specifically evaluation results show that the needs of disadvantaged youth in rural and deprived urban areas could not be addressed to a more specific extent through EPYW (Please refer to EQ2 for more information).

During the desk phase (review of sampled applications and reports) the regional focus of EPYW funded projects was identified as unclear or relatively low especially among those projects funded at centralized level (EaP based NGOs). The field phase activities helped to disprove this finding as in reality a high regional focus was noticeable at both centralized and decentralized levels. This may be a result of low experience of some of the beneficiary organisations in EaP e.g. in writing grant applications but also from an obvious information gap causing low knowledge about the specific objectives and priorities of the Window especially in the EaP countries. There was a certain lack of distribution of information about the programme in EaP countries. Among others it was noted that the EPYW description in the YiA Guide (both 2012 and 2013 editions) focused on the non-binding EPYW priorities, without explaining the more binding objectives of the Window.

It should be noted that Youth in Action is clearly a European mobility programme, with the global aim to inspire a sense of active European citizenship, solidarity and tolerance among young Europeans and to involve them in shaping the Union’s future. This fact is a recurring theme through most of the projects, where the “European” characteristics of the projects often outweigh the regional specifics. The mobility aspect and related skills were the most notable benefits both in the survey and during the focus group meetings. This includes: empowerment, intercultural learning and dialogue, language skills as well as fighting stereotypes.

According to the information gathered through the online survey as well as the focus groups the impact of the projects on employability was considered high while in this regard mainly skills and competences gained through non-formal education (such as team work, conflict and problem solving, intercultural competences, leadership and learning to learn) have played a major role.

JC1 - EPYW project relevance to employability of project participants

The Youth in Action programme supports through its objectives and priorities the "renewed framework for European cooperation in the youth field"¹⁹ which promotes a cross-sectoral approach to youth issues, for example, on young people’s employability and their active involvement in society.

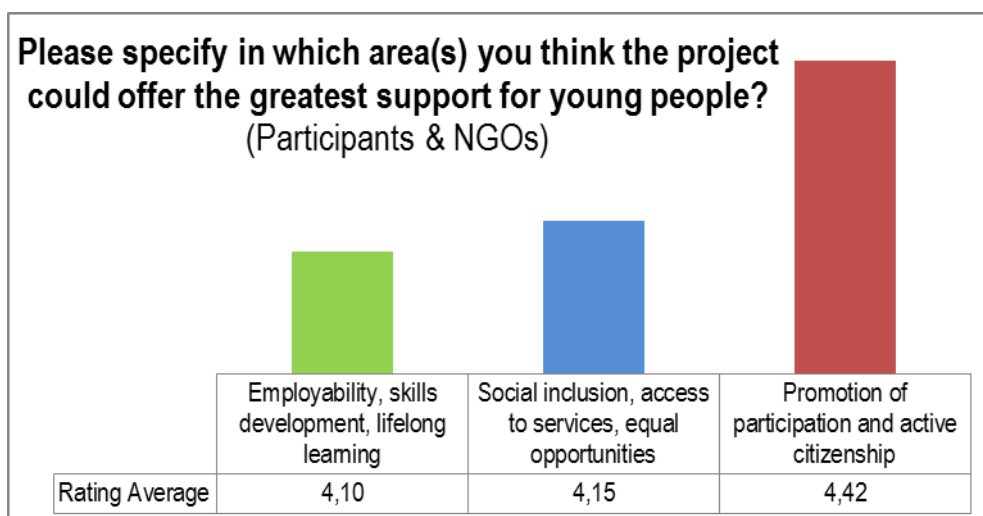
According to the survey analysis, as outlined in table below, both, participants and beneficiaries consider “Employability, Skills development, Lifelong learning” as the area which generally received less support through EPYW comparing to the other areas. However all three areas received high scoring with the average of 4 on the scale of 1-5 (Not at all – Fully).

¹⁸ Objectives: ... support the response of the Eastern Partnership countries to the needs of youth in their societies through cooperation among young people and youth workers. Specific:

- To support partner countries in responding to the needs of disadvantaged young people;
- To promote youth work development.

¹⁹ http://ec.europa.eu/youth/pdf/doc1648_en.pdf

Chart 1: EPYW areas of greatest support²⁰



5= fully, 4= almost, 3= partly, 2= A bit, 1= Not at all

The same levels of satisfaction are recorded when participants comment on how far the EPYW projects could address their personal socio-economic needs. Participants indicate, both during focus groups as well as the online survey, that the projects funded under EPYW had greatly contributed to their personal development. According to the online survey over 50% indicate that the projects have “strongly” increased their level of active participation, while 45% “strongly” believe that through their participation they gained more self-esteem. Only 16% think that the projects have “strongly” contributed to their personal development in the area of employability while this is followed by 32% who say that there was “much” contribution in this area. In total half of the online survey contributors believe that the projects were helpful to obtain a job (either full- or part-time. It was mentioned in several meetings, especially in those countries which have signed the EU association agreement that for EaP youth, already the participation in an EU-funded project, regardless of the theme, is an important reference point in their CV.

Especially the information received during the focus groups confirms that as a result of their participation young people were encouraged to learn and this helped them in many cases to look for more information or even to further study on that matter. A few cases were reported where participants have changed their career path due to their participation in the programme.

JC 3 - promotion of participation and active citizenship of young people in EPYW projects

According to the information provided in the “Needs Assessment Report 2011”²¹, the socio-economic needs of young people in the EaP region are, next to general economic and political obstacles which are typical for most of countries in transition, also strongly related to lack of skills and competences of young people in taking active role in shaping their own life.

The interim evaluation of the Youth in Action Programme (2011), as well as the RAY-survey, already shows that YiA Programme has proven capacity to tackle these needs through its various actions and features by increasing e.g. creativity and entrepreneurship, stimulating further educational activities, improving employability skills and promoting active participation and citizenship.

As highlighted earlier both participants and beneficiaries indicate through the online survey that EPYW was most useful in supporting young people’s needs in the area of participation and active citizenship. During the focus groups the increase of participation among young people was considered as one of the key impacts of EPYW in the region. On one hand, due to the rapid quantitative boost of projects in a short period of time, EaP beneficiary organisations were able to offer more opportunities for volunteer engagement and at the other, young people got more aware of issues and problems in their

²⁰ Source: Online Survey

²¹ “Needs Assessment Report” conducted by IBF on behalf of DG DEVCO in 2011

surroundings and learned about ways on how to address them. Beneficiaries report on a euphoric and creative time between the years 2012-2014 which was suddenly interrupted due to lack of funding after EPYW closed. The mobility aspect of EPYW and related skills are the most mentioned benefits both through the survey and during the focus group meetings. This includes: empowerment, intercultural learning and dialogue, language skills as well as fighting stereotypes.

The following word cloud describes best the key benefits identified during focus group meetings in all six EaP countries:

Figure 9: EPYW key benefits as expressed by focus group participants



4.2 EQ 2 – On young people with fewer opportunities

To what extent have the projects financed under this programme supported young people with fewer opportunities living in rural or deprived urban areas within the EaP region; what factors/obstacles prevented supporting this group²²?

*This question relates to the evaluation criteria of **coherence**.*

This question examines to what extent EPYW has directly addressed and/or supported young people with fewer opportunities living in rural or deprived urban areas.

Second, it examines factors and obstacles which prevented supporting this group throughout the programme.

EQ 2 on young people with fewer opportunities - Answer Summary Box

As indicated in the Action Fiche “Eastern Partnership Youth Programme”²³ – lessons learnt, programmes such as Youth in Action and Erasmus Mundus “clearly benefit the better educated, more privileged young people from higher social backgrounds, and from predominantly major urban centres” in the EaP countries. The Window was hence programmed to increase and expand the benefit also to less privileged young people with fewer opportunities, especially those living in rural and deprived urban areas.

This aim could be reached partly as the activities implemented under EPYW mostly supported young people with fewer opportunities indirectly, in the form of capacity-building activities for those who work with YPFO or through increased awareness on inclusion issues and on the situation of YPFO in general. Very few activities included YPFO directly to address their needs. Here especially EVS projects played a prominent role, as through them the direct relation to YPFO could be established most successfully both at urban as well as rural level.

Albeit many activities were implemented in rural areas, this often was rather due to cost efficiency reasons (mostly for accommodation and catering) than for the purpose of including young people from these regions in the activities. Among projects which took place in Programme Countries (PC) the level of participation of YPFO was reportedly the lowest. This concerns both YPFO in general and those living in rural and deprived urban areas in particular. Several reasons could be identified which hindered both, the disadvantaged youth to participate in EPYW funded activities and the NGOs to reach this group. The primary obstacles were language and financial barriers followed by general lack of regional/rural knowledge as well as missing structures and low capacities to deal with specific needs of these target groups.

There are substantial differences between what is indicated in the online survey and what was said during the focus group meetings concerning the involvement of YPFO under EPYW. This gives the impression that despite the information provided by the Programme Guide²⁴, the understanding of this specific group in the EaP countries is very diverse. In Belarus or Ukraine clear difficulties were observed in defining “deprived urban areas” as a regional priority, which was not further explained in the Programme Guide.

National Agencies and EACEA have applied different approaches concerning this aspect during the application and reporting phase, including changes in the application forms between 2012 and 2013 and using both EPYW and generic YiA documents: While in the 2012, some types of EPYW applications the involvement of young people with fewer opportunities from rural and deprived urban areas was not addressed at all (e.g. EVS applications), few changes were made (at decentralized level) for applications in 2013. The German National Agency has included a specific checklist with EPYW priorities in most EPYW application forms.

Most of the NAs as well as EACEA clearly stated that according to the Youth in Action Programme Guide support for young people from rural and deprived urban areas was not an eligibility criterion but a priority, and as such has not been strongly prioritised by beneficiaries themselves. This was confirmed by the beneficiaries during the focus group meetings and project interviews. While not being an eligibility criterion per se, this seems to be by far the weakest spot both at centralized and decentralized levels. During the focus groups, the lack of a stronger emphasis on YPFO was widely evaluated as a negative aspect of the Window. According to the beneficiary organisations, this was one of the main reasons why many beneficiaries have failed to address the needs of YPFO.

²² E.g. young people living in isolated rural communities; or affected by disabilities; or suffering from poverty, or discrimination due to their social, ethnic background or their gender

²³ CRIS : ENPI/2011 / 023-076 - By its Decision taken on 2nd July 2012, the European Commission decided to merge the grant scheme (component 2) of the “EaP Youth programme” with the Eastern Partnership Window under the Youth in Action Programme in order to avoid duplication and to provide a fast and effective response to target the needs of disadvantaged young people.

²⁴ http://eacea.ec.europa.eu/youth/programme/programme_guide_en.php

JC 1) Participation of young people with fewer opportunities living in rural or deprived urban areas in EPYW projects.

As indicated in the Action Fiche “Eastern Partnership Youth Programme”²⁵– lessons learnt, programmes such as Youth in Action and Erasmus Mundus “clearly benefit the better educated, more privileged young people from higher social backgrounds, and from predominantly major urban centres” in the EaP countries.

The Action Fiche hence underlines the “need to extend the impact of EC funding to more disadvantaged target groups within the youth population, such as those living in rural areas, young people with disabilities, discriminated young women, youth from ethnic minorities, etc.” The Window was to “provide significant added value, through its emphasis on regional collaboration by offering more non-formal learning opportunities to young people, with a special focus on young people with fewer opportunities with a view to enhance their skills, competences and active participation in society.”

Who is a young person with fewer opportunities and how would it be possible to identify such a person? The YiA Programme Guide provides the following information on this topic:

“Young people with fewer opportunities are young people that are at a disadvantage compared to their peers because they face one or more of the situations and obstacles mentioned in the non-exhaustive list below. In certain contexts, these situations or obstacles prevent young people from having effective access to formal and non-formal education, transnational mobility and participation, active citizenship, empowerment and inclusion in society at large.

- **Social obstacles:** young people facing discrimination because of gender, ethnicity, religion, sexual orientation, disability, etc.; young people with limited social skills or anti-social or risky sexual behaviours; young people in a precarious situation; (ex-) offenders, (ex-)drug or alcohol abusers; young and/or single parents; orphans; young people from broken families.
- **Economic obstacles:** young people with a low standard of living, low income, dependence on social welfare system; in long-term unemployment or poverty; young people who are homeless, young people in debt or with financial problems.
- **Disability:** young people with mental (intellectual, cognitive, learning), physical, sensory or other disabilities.
- **Educational difficulties:** young people with learning difficulties; early school-leavers and school dropouts; lower qualified persons; young people with poor school performance.
- **Cultural differences:** young immigrants or refugees or descendants from immigrant or refugee families; young people belonging to a national or ethnic minority; young people with linguistic adaptation and cultural inclusion problems.
- **Health problems:** young people with chronic health problems, severe illnesses or psychiatric conditions; young people with mental health problems.
- **Geographical obstacles:** young people from remote or rural areas; young people living on small islands or peripheral regions; young people from urban problem zones; young people from less serviced areas (limited public transport, poor facilities, abandoned villages).”

According to a number of sources²⁶, it is hard to correctly estimate the exact size of this group because “it is difficult to assess who is actually disadvantaged in the specific contexts at hand.”²⁷ The YiA interim report (2011) stipulates that the YiA Programme has made some good progress in defining this specific target group, but this task remains difficult as the situation differs in each country. The SALTO inclusion website suggests that “National and Executive Agencies shall address all of these situations/obstacles, **without excluding any particular target group**. However, it is very likely that young people confronted to one specific situation/obstacle face a disadvantage compared to their

²⁵ CRIS : ENPI/2011 / 023-076 - By its Decision taken on 2nd July 2012, the European Commission decided to merge the grant scheme (component 2) of the “EaP Youth programme” with the Eastern Partnership Window under the Youth in Action Programme in order to avoid duplication and to provide a fast and effective response to target the needs of disadvantaged young people.

²⁶ RAY-Survey; Youth in Action Interim Report

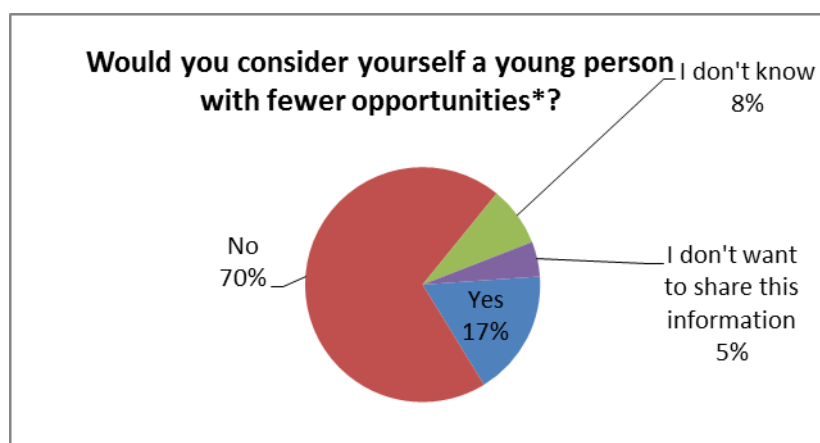
²⁷ RAY-Survey, page 15

peers in one country/region, but not in other places. Therefore, when needed, National and Executive Agencies will **further detail** the importance of the above-mentioned situations/obstacles in their contexts, but always in the spirit of the legal basis of the programme.²⁸

The variety of perception and observations when it comes to the identification of this specific group in the EaP countries is very large and controversial. This is what makes the answer to this evaluation question most challenging.

In the projects' online survey a contradicting phenomenon can be noticed in this regard: Over 70% of all responding participants do not consider themselves as YPfo.

Chart 2: Are you a young person with fewer opportunities?²⁹



At the same time both participants and beneficiary organisations indicate that an average of nine YPfo (with the variation between 1-60 YPfo) have participated in their projects. This is in strong contradiction with the information shared during the focus group meetings, after clear information on the definition of YPfo was provided. Also all stakeholders including the ministries and NGO representatives involved in project interviews denied the fact that a considerable number of YPfo participated or benefited from the projects funded under EPYW. Several reasons were given on why YPfo could actually not be reached by the Window in general as well as in rural and deprived urban areas:

- **Financial obstacles:** Due to limited financial resources, YPfo were often unable to pay for their travel to international events and/or cover the 30% self-contribution towards travel costs, which could not be covered through other means. It was a high burden for YPfo to advance the cost of travelling, a common practice by most of the NGOs. Not to mention the pocket money needed when travelling, while there was no budget available to cover such cost under EPYW.
- **Language barriers:** YPfo from EaP often do not speak a second language and if then, it is mostly Russian. However, majority of the organisations made it obligatory for the applicants to have basic English skills as a precondition to participate in EPYW-funded activities.
- **Regional distance:** NGOs claim that they have no proper access to YPfos who live in rural and deprived urban areas mostly due to lack of knowledge about them (the area) as well as capacities to include them into their work. According to the information obtained during the focus group meetings as well as the list of EaP-based applicants, most of the NGOs involved in EPYW apparently came from larger cities or are based in capitals with no specific focus on YPfo as such. Their access to YPfo hence strongly depends on their competencies and themes they are tackling.
- **Lack of appropriate civic structures in rural and deprived urban areas:** In addition to the above both NGO representatives as well as governmental stakeholders report that due to lack of appropriate civic structures in rural and deprived urban areas young people in these regions have very low knowledge about such kind of opportunities. Lack of information and appropriate mechanisms to spread information about EU programmes especially in rural areas is a crucial reoccurring problem which was not sufficiently addressed through the Window.

²⁸ <https://www.salto-youth.net/rc/inclusion/inclusionformas/inclusionstrategy/inclusiondefinition/>

²⁹ Source: Online Survey

Both NAs and EACEA officers had , relatively varied understanding of the term ‘fewer opportunities’ (despite the information provided by the Programme Guide) - starting from low educational level in relation to their age to unemployment, confrontation with obstacles in accessing education, work, mobility or participation in the society. In an interview with DG EAC, it was mentioned that probably too much focus on YPfo within a programme would lead to stigmatisation of the young people, making it more difficult to reach out to them.

Different approaches and procedures were applied by EACEA and different NAs concerning this aspect during the application and reporting phase, and the changes in EPYW application forms between 2012 and 2013: The involvement of young people with fewer opportunities from rural and deprived urban areas was not addressed directly in all types of EPYW activity documents. Example: EPYW application forms for Training and Networking (Action 3.1) applicants were only asked to tick a box if their project relates to the general priority “Inclusion of young people with fewer opportunities”, no information about number of participants from rural/deprived urban areas have been required. Only applications for Youth Exchanges and EVS projects contained different questions about young people from rural and deprived urban areas.

The application forms of the NAs and EACEA differed in this matter as well. The NA application forms for EVS projects from 2012 did not contain a specific question about young people from rural and deprived urban areas, whereas some 2013 EVS applications included a specific question about this. The EACEA Youth Exchange application forms did not include any specific questions about young people with fewer opportunities from rural and deprived urban areas. In addition, some forms used by the German NA included a specific checklist with EPYW priorities.

A significant number of participating individuals from EaP (and programme countries) are well educated, speak apparently at least two languages (since most of the activities were implemented in English) and many of them have participated already in similar projects. According to usual practice and experience with the region but also based on information gathered through the online survey many of them have participated in more than one project funded under YiA Window³⁰. Out of 1273 respondents (792 participants) of the online survey around 120 respondents have decided to use the Russian version (Mostly from Armenia, Belarus and Ukraine) of the survey³¹.

It should be mentioned that supported projects rarely included young people from rural and deprived areas, not to mention those with fewer opportunities among them. Most of the NAs as well as EACEA clearly stated that the rural aspect was not an eligibility criterion but an award priority, and as such has not been strongly prioritised by beneficiaries themselves. While not being an eligibility criterion per se, this seems to be by far the weakest spot both at centralized and decentralized levels. During the focus groups this issue was raised as an issue not supportive in finding ways and solutions on how to address this specific target group.

Number of YPfo living in rural and deprived urban areas involved in the EPYW funded projects: (according to self-reporting provided by the applicant organisations)	
Online survey³²:	Average: 7-8 participants per project (incl. both Action 3 and Action 2)
Percentage of involved YPfo out of total number of participants, per action:	
ALL 33 NAs:	A3: 15% / A2: 17%
Germany	A3: 20% / A2: 0,7%
Poland	A3: 4% / A2: 2,5%
UK	A3: 21% / A2: 0%
France	A3: 22% / A2: 28%
EACEA:	No relevant statistics is available

It must be noted that there is no proof of accuracy concerning the numbers of YPfo shown in the table as it is mainly based on NGO's self-reporting which may, as explained above, be differently perceived and understood. Accordingly this number could be much smaller than the table shows.

³⁰ See section 3.1.1.

³¹ The survey is offered in two languages English and Russian. The Russian version went online around one week after the English version was announced. All organisations have received an official reminder and information about the possibility to contribute to the Russian version.

³² In some cases it is possible that participants mixed up the total number of participants with the number of YPfo which has caused such high average number per activity.

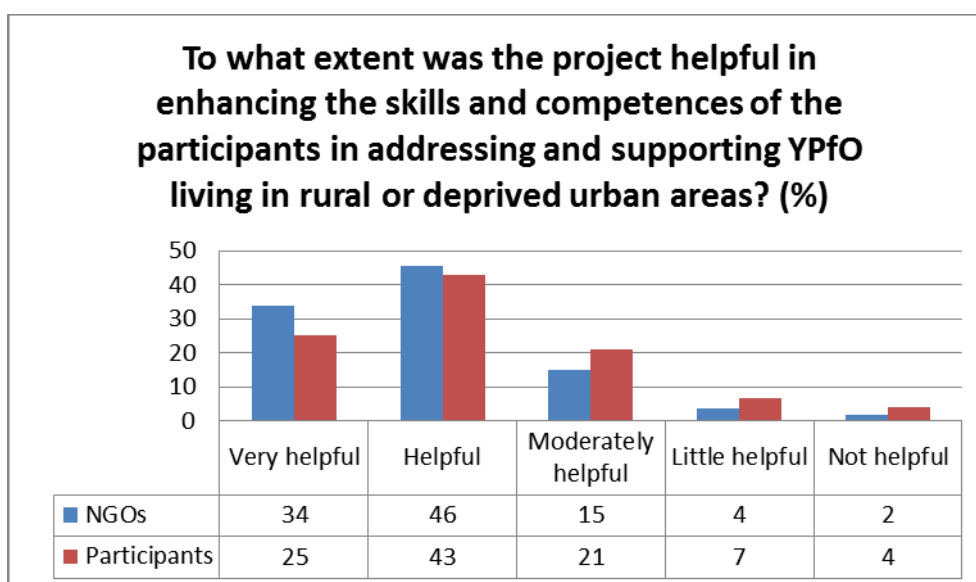
JC2) Enhanced capacities of beneficiaries (NGOs/civil society organisations/ institutions) to support young people with fewer opportunities living in rural or deprived urban areas

Under the Youth in Action Programme, the SALTO Inclusion Resource Centre, an important European partner and resource, identified two types of inclusion projects:

- **A-Inclusion projects:** consciously including young people with fewer opportunities as active participants in projects (providing tailor-made preparation, support, monitoring and follow-up for them).
- **B-Inclusion projects:** have a clear thematic focus on inclusion (on one or more of the situations/obstacles described above) and aim to improve the situation through awareness-raising, or working towards projects with young people with fewer opportunities (e.g. Training and networking), exchange of good practices, etc.

According to this division, EPYW has mostly supported B-inclusion projects with great success. Both participants as well as beneficiaries indicate in the online survey that the projects and activities implemented under EPYW “were helpful in enhancing the skills and competences of the participants in addressing and supporting young people with fewer opportunities living in rural or deprived urban areas?”

Chart 3: Enhanced skills and competencies in addressing and supporting YPfo³³



Action 3.1 TN projects, the largest group of activities funded under EPYW, had a strong focus on youth work and with it had the potential to include inclusion issues into their curricula. No matter if there was a direct focus on YPfo or not, the methods used in this area can with some advanced skills be used also in the framework of working and addressing the needs of YPfo.

Taking into account the strong and proven impact which projects implemented under Youth in Action have on development of youth work, recognition of non-formal education as well as promotion of social inclusion, in the long run, the impact of similar mobility activities under Window would definitely and considerably affect the situation of young people with fewer opportunities from rural and deprived urban areas in EaP. But at the moment, according to the statistics received from the NAs as well as the information gathered through the online survey this specific group, with an average of 15%-17% direct participants has not been directly reached by the Window in large numbers.

³³ Source: Online Survey

JC 3) EPYW complementary actions and events directly addressed and/or supported young people with fewer opportunities living in rural or deprived urban areas.

There is no considerable evidence of complementary direct support to young people with fewer opportunities living in rural or deprived urban areas under the Window. Complementary actions, especially few TCP activities organised by NAs and often in cooperation with SALTO EECA (and partly financed through the Window budget) had some focus on raising awareness about the situation of YPfo from rural and deprived urban areas. EACEA was not in charge of implementing thematic activities concerning the priorities and the target group of the Window.

Other themes and areas addressed under complementary actions (EaP Platform 4 Youth Event in Armenia, EaP Youth Forum in Lithuania, EaP Youth Policy Conference in Georgia) included volunteering, active citizenship, employment, cross sectoral youth policy cooperation as well as recognition of youth work and non-formal education in EaP countries.

4.3 EQ 3 – On nature of youth work

To what extent have the projects financed under this programme enhanced awareness about the nature of youth work as well as exploration of the potential for developing the youth worker as a role; what eventually hampered achieving this goal?

*This question relates to the evaluation criteria of **coherence**.*

This question examines first to what extent awareness about the nature of youth work in the EaP region could be enhanced throughout the programme.

Second, it assess how far the potential for developing youth worker as a role has been explored among EPYW project participants

In a third step knowledge on youth worker development gained by EPYW project participants will be explored.

EQ 3 on nature of youth work - Answer Summary Box

Projects supported under EPYW have clearly enhanced awareness about the nature of youth work in the EaP countries to a very high extent. This has been confirmed through different tools and methods used during the evaluation process. Both the group of participants as well as the beneficiary NGOs who contributed to the online survey responded positively (between 70-80%) to all relevant questions in this area. Interviews conducted with a range of stakeholders in charge of youth within EaP countries as well as the respective National Agencies, EACEA and SALTO RC Eastern Europe and the Caucasus pointed to “awareness raising on youth work” as the most successful achievement of the Window for the region.

Weak youth work support structures in the EaP countries at local level makes the Window the main considerable funding instrument in this field. EPYW is considered as a major tool (for some countries the only considerable tool) in promoting and supporting youth work in the EaP countries at all levels. Due to its nature as a mobility programme the region further lacks instruments to support and give a higher focus on developing local capacities. This was often mentioned during the focus group meetings as a crucial need which should be considered more concretely in the framework of a possible future programme.

Youth work approaches presented in some EPYW projects were criticised as lacking quality. For some NGOs more advanced exchange and imparting professional competences is required. A mechanism which considers different levels of expertise in the youth sector could be helpful in order to support progress.

Here large scale funding mechanisms supporting local capacity building and coaching interventions for NGOs is considered as an option for increasing the scope of quality in youth work at national level and for improving outreach of young people with fewer opportunities.

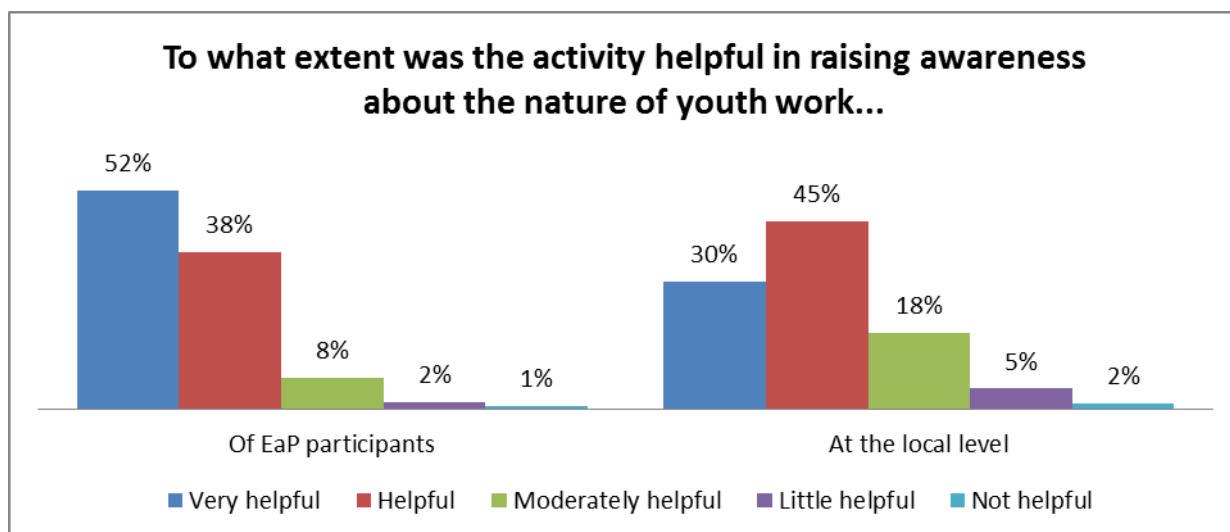
JC 1) Awareness about the nature of youth work in the EaP region has been enhanced

One of the main strengths of the Window was its ability to promote youth work throughout the EaP region. The most common element noticed within all actions was about ways to enhance awareness of the nature of youth work. This issue was pointed out as the most successful achievement of the Window for the region during the interviews with the EACEA, the NAs as well as SALTO EECA. According to the SALTO EECA, through its network within the EaP and profound knowledge about the region, the Window has strongly triggered a positive NGO-governmental dialogue concerning the themes “youth work” and “youth volunteering” in the region.

All sampled projects under both methods of implementation have used non-formal education and learning methods as a major tool during their projects, with the aim to increase cooperative learning through active sharing of experience and knowledge.

Participants from EaP countries who have responded to the online survey confirm these observations and opinions by outlining that activities in which they have participated were “very helpful” by 52% and helpful by 38% in raising awareness about youth work at individual level. The difference between participants and beneficiary NGOs in this respect was less than 2%.

Chart 4: Raised awareness about nature of youth work³⁴



EPYW is considered at all levels as the major tool (for some countries - the only considerable tool) in promoting and supporting youth work in the EaP countries. Due to its nature as a mobility programme the region further lacks instruments to support and give a higher focus on developing local capacities. This was often mentioned during the focus group meetings as a crucial need which should be considered more concretely in the framework of a possible future programme.

During the focus groups reservations were raised concerning the quality of youth work presented through some of the implemented projects. In this regard participants report a basic understanding of youth work which is certainly useful for grassroots but not always so for those who are more experienced. For some NGOs more advanced exchange and imparting professional competences were felt as desirable. A mechanism to consider different levels of expertise in the youth sector was considered helpful in order to support progress. Here mechanisms supporting coaching interventions among NGOs were considered as an option for increasing the scope of quality in youth work at national level and to improve outreach of young people with fewer opportunities.

The projects' purpose to raise awareness among local authorities and decision-makers is considered as "very helpful" by 30% and as helpful by 45% of both the beneficiary NGOs and Participants from who have contributed to the online survey. The difference between participants and beneficiary NGOs in this point is less than 5%. Participants from EaP countries who chose to report about an EVS project indicate in the survey that EVS was with around 86% "very helpful" or "helpful" in raising awareness on the nature of youth work at local level.

Information gathered during the field visits confirm that the level of awareness of ministries in charge of youth has considerably increased in comparison to the situation described in the "Needs Assessment Report 2011". As reported during the stakeholder meetings, the rapid numeric increase of youth projects in the EaP region under EPYW had positively influenced governmental considerations on youth work and voluntarism. This however is also a result of the ongoing "EaP Regional Youth Unit" project³⁵ (EPYRU) which is as a part of "EaP Youth Programme" the regional base for the provision of regional technical cooperation with governmental and non-governmental stakeholders through analytical, capacity building and communication activities in the field of youth policy reform.

During most of the conducted stakeholder interviews the impact and importance of EVS was "praised" as one of best practice methods in reaching YPFO at local level.

³⁴ Source: Online Survey

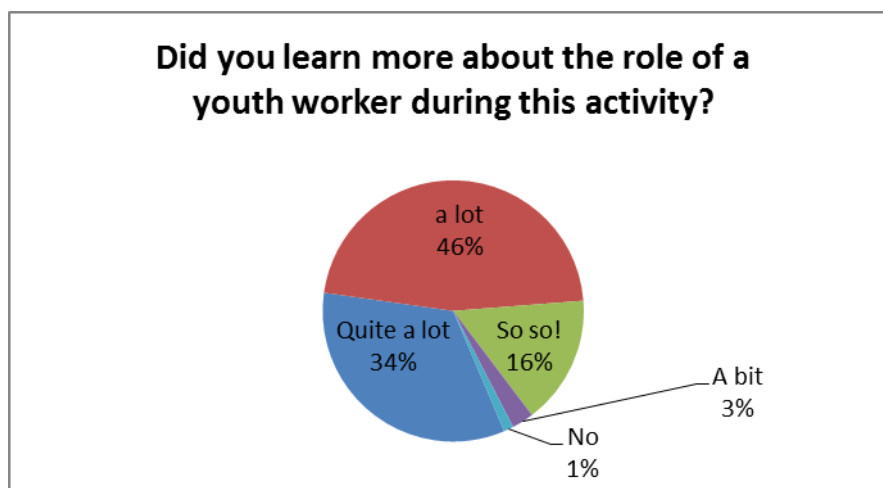
³⁵ <http://eapyouth.eu>

JC 2) Potential for developing youth worker as a role explored among EPYW project participants

JC 3) Knowledge on youth worker development gained by EPYW project participants

The question “Did you learn more about the role of a youth worker during this activity?” was answered with an overwhelming YES both during the focus group meetings as well as in the online survey. With no considerable difference between the three types of actions the participants indicate to have learned a lot about the role of a youth worker during an EPYW funded activity.

Chart 5: Learning about the role of a youth worker³⁶



Similar results can be extracted from the answers given by beneficiary NGOs with “quite a lot” 32% and “a lot” 49%.

The role of youth work in addressing the needs of young people in general was also standing in the focus of several EaP complementary activities, which were partly financed, depending on the type of activity, by the Eastern Partnership Platform 4, Youth in Action National Agencies and the SALTO-Youth Eastern Europe and Caucasus Resource Centre.

³⁶ Source: Online Survey

4.4 EQ 4 – On sharing good practice

To what extent have the projects financed under this programme offered the opportunity to share best practices in the sphere of youth work in general and with regard to its role as a means of meeting the needs of young people?

*This question relates to the evaluation criteria of **coherence**.*

This question examines to what extent good practices in the sphere of youth work have been shared during the implementation of the programme.

Second, it elaborates the extent to which the programme helped to raise understanding of the specific role of youth work as a means to meet young people's needs among the key stakeholders.

EQ 4 on sharing good practice - Answer Summary Box

Although youth work was not always a key priority of the implemented projects, it was as described under EQ3, running like a golden thread through the entire programme.

Especially Training & Networking projects were identified as the main instruments and spaces for sharing good practice in the sphere of youth work while EVS did at first sight not always had this theme as a priority. Youth exchanges were considered rather as a space to experience and “experiment” youth work at first hand.

EVS itself has been identified as good practice with the greatest potential for increasing awareness on the role of a youth worker as means of meeting the needs of young people especially those with fewer opportunities in rural and deprived urban areas.

The “opportunity to share good practices in the sphere of youth work” during an activity was offered regardless of the type of activity (YE/EVS/TN) almost equally high rated among both the beneficiary NGOs and participants. Training and Networking however was rated higher as the other two types of activities.

Lack of national structures in recognizing youth work and opportunities to practice youth work in their own local environment after gaining experience through EPYW is considered as an obstacle in further developing youth work at local level. In this regard it is crucial to consciously link trainings and exchange of good practice to national structures and priorities in order to boost possible cooperation at cross sectorial level.

JC 1) Good practices in the sphere of youth work have been shared

JC 2) Understanding of the specific role of youth work as a means to meet young people's needs has been raised among the key stakeholders

Sharing good practice in different areas relevant to youth work was well present in the descriptions of post-assessed application forms and reports. In reality, although youth work was not always directly a priority of the implemented projects, it was as described under EQ3, a key element of the entire programme.

Training & Networking projects were mentioned during the focus group meetings as the main instruments and spaces for sharing good practice in the sphere of youth work while EVS did at first sight not always had this theme as a priority. EVS however, despite its individual support character, seems to have the greatest potential for increasing awareness on the role of a youth worker as means of meeting the needs of young people especially those with fewer opportunities in rural and deprived urban areas (mainly due to its long term nature). Youth exchanges were considered rather as a space to experience and “experiment” youth work at first hand.

According to the information gathered from the online survey the “opportunity to share good practices in the sphere of youth work” during an activity was disregarded to the type of activity (YE/EVS/TN) almost equally high rated among both the beneficiary NGOs and participants. 28% indicate to have had “a lot” of opportunities and between 43% (Participants) and 46% (beneficiary NGOs) confirm to have had “many” opportunities to share good practices in the sphere of youth work. Training and Networking however was slightly (+2%) rated higher as the other two types of activities.

This result was also firmly underlined and confirmed by most of relevant stakeholders interviewed as well as the focus groups meetings held in each EaP country. However, lack of national structures in recognizing youth work and opportunities to practice youth work in their own local environment after the EPYW experience is considered as an obstacle in further development of youth work at local level. In this regard, although trainings may offer the opportunity to share good practice, due to lack of such structures these cannot be adapted and adjusted to local realities. In this regard there is a great need to link good practice to national structures and priorities in order to boost possible cooperation at cross sectorial level.

4.5 EQ 5 – On commitment and capacities for EaP regional cooperation

To what extent have the projects financed under this programme increased commitment and capacities for cooperation in the field of youth at regional level?

*This question relates to the evaluation criteria of **coherence**.*

EQ 5 on commitment and capacities for EaP regional collaboration - Answer Summary Box

The priority of regional collaboration was not well considered throughout the entire programme at both centralized and decentralized levels. It was not well communicated with stakeholders and beneficiaries. Stakeholders needed more guidance in this regard to understand the background of the priority and often confirmed that they have actually not been well informed about such priority.

EaP regional collaboration had generally the lowest priority for beneficiary NGOs and project participants while its sense was often questioned. Higher priority was always given to cooperation with EU countries and if at all regional, then mainly with the neighbouring countries.

According to the interviewed beneficiaries as well as the stakeholders the current regional definition which combines the three Eastern European countries with the South Caucasus Countries does not always match the latest developments and national interests in the region. Countries who have signed the agreement (Georgia, Moldova and Ukraine) would wish more exchange and collaboration with EU countries in the field of youth. The ministries in charge of youth in each of these countries underline the necessity of a new mechanism in support of fulfilling the agreement criteria.

While majority of projects had no considerable emphasis on supporting collaboration at EaP regional level, though their regional focus was sufficient.

Window has considerably increased the cooperation of EaP organisations in the field of youth with youth organisations in the EU, but not necessarily at regional (EaP) level. In this regard the Window/Erasmus+ is the main source of funding cooperation activities in the field of youth in the region so far. EVS had according to the survey the biggest stake in establishing a framework for further collaboration.

There are some funds available to support EaP regional collaboration in the youth field through other international donors and some limited national grants. National funds are however least attractive to NGOs, not only because of huge administrative burden but in some countries often also due to political dependence which comes by such support.

JC 1) Commitment to cooperation in the field of youth has been increased at regional level (EaP region) as result of the programme

JC 2) Capacities for cooperation in the field of youth has been increased at regional level (EaP region) as result of the programme

The Action Fiche “Eastern Partnership Youth Window” underlines the fact that *“priority in awarding grants will be given to those projects that demonstrate a clear commitment to, and capacity for, regional collaboration.”* The Youth in Action programme guide however did not mention this priority in neither of its updated versions (2012/2013); it was also not part of the application and assessment procedures. ET hence realises that this priority was generally not well considered throughout the entire programme at both centralized and decentralized levels. “Regional collaboration” apparently was mostly understood, as described also under general rules for Action 3.1., as the following: “At least half of the participants in the project come from the countries of the Eastern Partnership”.³⁷

ET’s questions concerning this specific priority were often met with surprise. Interviewees often needed further clarifications in this regard to understand the background of the question and often confirmed that they have not been well informed about such priority.

Nevertheless, it must be noted that this priority had generally the lowest priority for beneficiary NGOs and project participants who attended the Focus Groups while its sense was often questioned. Higher priority was always given to cooperation with EU countries and if at all regional, then mainly with the neighbouring countries. According to the interviewed beneficiaries as well as the stakeholders, the current definition of ‘regional co-operation’ which combines the three Eastern European countries with

³⁷ Youth in Action Programme Guide 2012+2013

the South Caucasus Countries does not always match the latest developments and interests in the region..

Especially in respect to the recent political developments in the region related to signing the EU association agreement, it was very clear that those countries who have signed the agreement (Georgia, Moldova and Ukraine) would wish more exchange and collaboration with EU countries in the field of youth. The ministries in charge of youth in each of these countries have clearly underlined during the interviews the necessity of a new mechanism in support of fulfilling the agreement criteria.

In addition to the above mentioned priority of regional collaboration the Action Fiche also indicates that “extensive networking among project teams working on related thematic areas around the Eastern Partnership region will be promoted and facilitated, to ensure that peer learning and exchange of best practice occurs.” Considering this as a thematic priority, ET decided to divide the regional aspect into two sub areas: collaboration and focus. In this regard it can be noted that while majority of projects had no considerable emphasis on supporting collaboration at EaP regional level, though their regional focus was sufficient. While in the sampled applications the regional focus was not always visible and in some cases totally absent (with a high number among the projects funded at centralized level), the intense project interviews could clearly elicit the specific regional focus in most of the projects.

JC3 - Number of co-operation initiatives in the field of youth at regional level has increased

According to the information gathered during the interviews with EACEA, the five NAs and SALTO EECA, projects financed under the Window seem to have considerably increased the cooperation in the field of youth especially between EaP and EU based organisations, but not necessarily at regional (EaP) level. 76% of the responding NGOs indicate in the online survey that the Window helped them to initiate new cooperation in the youth field within EaP³⁸ while this was the case only with 48% of the participants. However, over 60% of those initiatives were supported either by the Window (in the past) or will be through collaboration under Erasmus+. This shows that the Window/Erasmus+ is the main source of funding cooperation activities in the field of youth in the region, while Erasmus+ has no priority in supporting EaP regional cooperation so far. EVS had according to the survey the biggest stake in establishing a framework for further collaboration.

According to the information gathered through the online survey and the interviews made during the field phase pure EaP cooperation³⁹ in the youth field is mainly supported through other donors institutions such as EIDHR, UNDP, EYF, Visegrad Fund, The Black Sea Trust for Regional Cooperation (BST) or very limited (except Azerbaijan⁴⁰) national funds at local level.

The most frequent and relevant funding opportunity is the European Youth Foundation (EYF), which regularly supports cooperation between 47 CoE member countries (+Belarus). If not a part of international network, national and local organisations are eligible for two kind of funding: Pilot (up to 10.000 €) and International (up to 20.000 €) activities under three programme sectors (Democratic innovation, Diversity and Participation)⁴¹.

As a PPP, the Black Sea Trust for Regional Cooperation (BST) promotes regional cooperation⁴² and good governance in the Wider Black Sea region; accountable, transparent, and open governments; strong, effective civic sectors; and independent and professional media. Funds are available for regional cooperation projects in the areas of Confidence Building, Cross-Border Initiatives, Eastern Links and Civic Participation. Although youth is not an explicit target group youth NGOs who fulfil the technical eligibility criteria can apply for funding⁴³.

Other above mentioned funds do not target explicitly youth and are mostly short term while only very few youth organisations can fulfil the technical eligibility criteria for funding.

National funds are least attractive to NGOs, not only because of huge administrative burden but in some countries often also due to political dependence which comes by such support.

³⁸ ET assumes that due to the reasons explained above and the lack of clear instructions on this specific priority the question “Did the activity [...] increase [...] commitment and capacity for cooperation in the field of youth at regional level? (Within the EaP region)” may have been confusing for some which results into such high rating. This high rating firmly contradicts the data gathered during the Focus Group meetings and the interviews.

³⁹ Pure EaP cooperation: Cooperation (in the youth field) only between organisations from EaP countries

⁴⁰ The Azerbaijan Youth Foundation is Azerbaijan’s largest national/governmental grant-giving body in the youth sector with an annual budget of 5 million EUR.

⁴¹ EYF has an annual budget of approx. 3 million EUR for all 47 countries.

⁴² Eligible EaP Countries: Armenia, Azerbaijan, Georgia, Moldova and Ukraine

⁴³ BST grants generally range from \$5,000 and \$75,000, with most grants falling between \$20,000 and \$22,000.

4.6 EQ 6 – On procedures to ensure efficiency

To what extent do the procedures put in place for the selection of proposals by EACEA and NAs ensure that the projects of the best quality are funded?

*This question addresses the issue of **efficiency**.*

EQ6 on efficiency of the EPYW - Answer Summary Box
<p>The overall quality of projects funded under EPYW is good. All bodies adopted implementation procedures previously used within the Youth in Action Programme. This assured consistence with quality criteria of the YiA Programme and thus quality of projects selected under the Window. Beneficiary interviews revealed that many EaP beneficiaries have limited fundraising and management capacities and are thus not able to present their projects in EPYW applications in a quality manner.</p>
<p>The quality of EPYW projects with regard to relevance to EPYW objectives and priorities is mixed, mainly due to poor communication of EPYW objectives and priorities to beneficiaries, differences in EPYW documents and different methods of project assessment and evaluation by implementing bodies.</p>
<p>When it comes to EPYW project quality with regards to project profile (activity type) and geographical balance, the results of the evaluation are mixed. Balance of project activity types differed significantly between centralized and decentralized implementation methods. The geographical balance of EPYW projects was not assured. First of all, the programme's structure did not contain any provisions for geographical balance. Secondly, none of the implementing bodies interviewed had a geographical balance strategy in place, neither for beneficiary country of origin nor for project venue.</p>
<p>The set-up and division into 'centralized' and 'decentralized' projects had limited impact on the efficiency of project. There was limited direct communication between the NAs and EACEA, and if any, then not to build on synergies but for official reporting. Both methods of implementation could assure good quality and smooth implementation of the projects. Substantial differences occur only with regards to administrative burden (see Sub-question 3 below), ownership (See EQ9) and monitoring (See EQ7). None of the methods of implementation hampered the goals of the Window.</p>
<p>All EPYW projects taking place in EaP countries have limited supervision due to limited mandate and resources for project monitoring (See EQ7).</p>

EQ6 – Sub-Question 1: How effective was different procedures of project assessment under each method of implementation? (NA/EACEA)

JC 1 – Selected and funded projects are of high quality with regard to relevance, quality, profile and geographical balance.

The overall **quality** of projects funded under EPYW is good. According to interview data and documents provided by the EACEA and four National Agencies, all bodies adopted implementation procedures previously used within the Youth in Action Programme. This assured consistence with quality criteria of the YiA Programme and thus quality of projects selected under the Window. All EPYW projects assessed during the desk phase of the evaluation were of good quality. Additionally, field phase interviews with beneficiaries confirmed good overall quality of the projects selected under EPYW. Beneficiary interviews revealed that many EaP beneficiaries have limited fundraising and management capacities and are thus not able to present their projects in EPYW applications in a quality manner. Therefore half of the projects assessed during the field phase were scored (on their relevance to EYPW objectives and priorities) higher after the field phase (see table below).

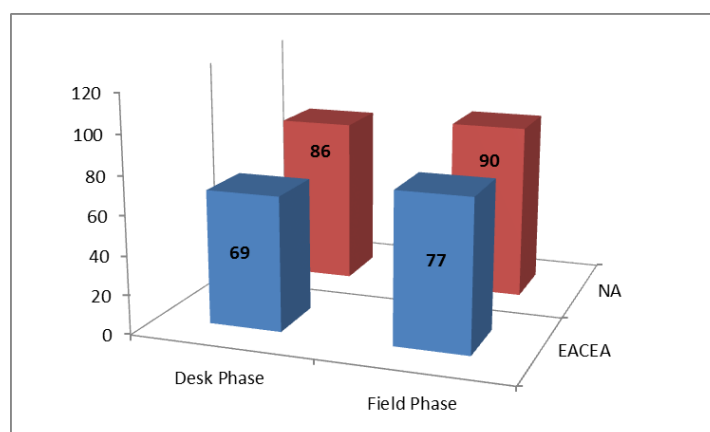
EACEA-funded projects Relevance to EPYW objectives and priorities desk phase vs. field phase interview scoring comparison		NA-funded projects Relevance to EPYW objectives and priorities desk phase vs. field phase interview scoring comparison			
	Desk Phase	Field Phase		Desk Phase	Field Phase
526xxx-3.1-AM--2012-R1	54	82	FR-21-xx-2012-R1	96	110
526xxx-2-MD-2012-R1	42	42	DE-21-xxx-2012-R2	80	92
526xxx-2-GE-2012-R1	66	100	DE-31-Exx-2013-R2	95	95
533xxx-3.1-GE-2012-R2	71	75	FR-31-Exx-2013-R3	83	70
534xxx-3.1-BY--2012-R3	95	95	PL-21-xx-2012-R2	83	83

535xxx-3.1-AZ--2012-R3	60	55	FR-21-xxx-2013-R2	88	88
540xxx-3.1-AZ--2013-R1	49	59	FR-21-xxx-2012-R2	91	96
541xxx-3.1-UA-2013-R1	94	94	FR-31-Exx-2013-R2	93	82
541xxx-3.1-AM-2013-R1	94	94	DE-21-xxx-2012-R2	90	105
541xxx-3.1-AM--2013-R1	64	64	FR-21-xxx-2012-R2	58	82
543xxx-3.1-BY--2013-R2	43	50	Max. scoring = 120		
547xxx-3.1-MD--2013-R2	91	100			
549xxx-3.1-UA--2013-R3	71	100			
550xxx-3.1-BY--2013-R3	70	70			

Max. scoring = 120

According to this table the average scoring of EACEA funded projects raised about 8 points while the NA funded raised about 4 points.

Chart 6: Average scoring EACEA vs NA funded projects

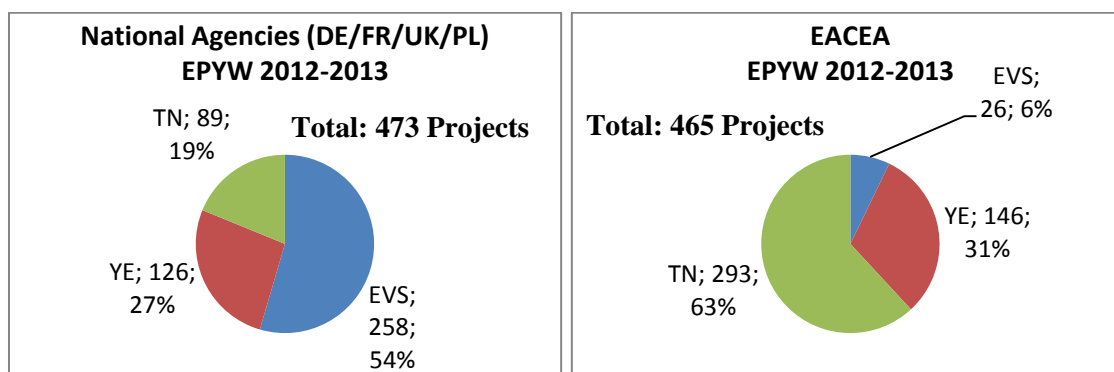


The quality of EPYW projects with regard to **relevance** to EPYW objectives and priorities is mixed. The objectives have not been communicated to EPYW beneficiaries in the YiA Guide (2012/2013), a key document for all beneficiary organisations. Not all EPYW priorities have been communicated to EPYW beneficiaries as the regional co-operation priority was not listed under EPYW priorities in the YiA Programme Guide. EPYW application forms differed between EACEA and National Agencies, and also changed between 2012 and 2013. This makes an overall assessment of the place EPYW objectives and priorities played in the selection process very difficult.

What is more, EPYW objectives and priorities constituted only a minor part of the overall scoring, within the 'relevance to objectives and priorities' criterion together with YiA permanent objectives and permanent and annual priorities (30% of the overall weighting). It was possible for an approved project to receive high overall scores and yet have low relevance to EPYW objectives and priorities. As underlined by the implementing bodies (EACEA and four NAs), EPYW objectives and priorities were not an eligibility criterion and it was thus not essential for beneficiaries to address them. Analysis of a sample of EPYW projects shows that a substantial number of EPYW projects were of low relevance to EPYW objectives and priorities. For EACEA-funded projects, 25 out of 45 projects assessed scored under 50% for relevance to EPYW objectives and priorities. For NA-funded projects, 13 out of 48 projects assessed scored under 50%.

Relevance to EPYW objectives and priorities (desk phase analysis)		
Implementation method	Low relevance (under 50%)	High relevance (over 50%)
NA	25	20
EACEA	13	35

When it comes to EPYW project quality with regards to project **profile** (activity type) and **geographical balance**, the results of the evaluation are mixed. For the NA-funded projects, the largest activity type was Action 2 (EVS) with an average of 54% project grants going to this action, with Action 3.1 (YE) and Action 3.1 (TN) receiving a smaller number of grants – 27% and 19%, respectively. For EACEA-funded projects, Action 3.1 (TN) received highest number of grants (63%) and Action 3.1 (YE) as well as Action 2 (EVS) receiving fewer grants – 31% and 6%, respectively. According to the French NA, EPYW funding received was equally divided into Action 2 and 3.1 funding, but this has not been reported by other NAs.



The **geographical balance** of EPYW projects was not assured. First of all, the programme's structure did not contain any provisions for geographical balance. None of the implementing bodies interviewed had a geographical balance strategy in place, neither for beneficiary country of origin (EACEA) nor for project venue (NAs). Projects were approved on the basis of eligibility and quality criteria. The Executive Agency approved a limited number of applications from some countries (Belarus – 4, Azerbaijan 45) and a very high number from others (Georgia 148, Armenia 118)

EQ6 – Sub-Question 2: How efficient/effective is the organisational model of the management and the division of the window into "decentralized" and "centralized" Actions and the supervision of its implementation?

JC 1) *The set-up and division of "decentralized" and "centralized"*

JC 2) *Actions does not hamper the goals of the window*

JC 3) *Actions do not hamper the supervision of the implementation.*

Interviews held with EACEA and four NAs shows that there was limited direct communication between the NAs and EACEA, and if any, then not for planning purposes or increase of synergies but rather for official reporting. NAs / EACEA are not well informed about each other's strategies, selection and support mechanisms.

The field visit interviews with beneficiaries confirmed that both methods of implementation could assure good quality and smooth implementation of the projects. Substantial differences occur only with regards to administrative burden (see Sub-question 3 below), ownership (See EQ9) and monitoring (See EQ7). None of the actions implemented hampered the goals of the Window. All actions taking place in EaP countries (all 'centralized' projects and those NA-funded projects that take place outside PCs) have limited supervision due to limited mandate and resources for project monitoring (See EQ7).

EQ6 – Sub-Question 3: Satisfaction

JC 1) *Satisfaction of NA/EACEA with procedures and assessment administrative burden*

All implementing agencies interviewed expressed high levels of satisfaction with procedures and assessment administrative burden.

EACEA

The EACEA has received in total 12.5M (incl. approx. 7% administration cost) to grant the project applications from EaP countries under the Window. In the last round of 2013 (R3 – 2013) EACEA has also opened the possibility for applicants from programme countries to apply directly.

The EACEA expressed its satisfaction with implementing the Window. EACEA states that it is not willing to accept new tasks delegated to them by the Commission in the future without adequate staffing resources. In comparison to the NAs who managed only a part of the decentralized budget, the EACEA was in charge of managing the entire centralized budget with limited staffing.

National Agencies

All in all, despite the fact that besides the Polish NA⁴⁴ none of the National Agencies received any financial administration support for managing the programme, NAs expressed high level of satisfaction with the Window. This was largely due to high levels of interest among national beneficiaries in co-

⁴⁴ SALTO EECA received EPYW funding; SALTO EECA RC forms part of the Polish NA.

operation with EaP countries. For some of the National Agencies, such as the Polish and the German NAs, the aspect of cooperation with the EaP region is strongly connected to other activities the organisations are involved in. For the Polish NA the cooperation within Eastern Partnership was a national priority in 2013⁴⁵.

All NAs welcomed the fact that the Window was implemented under the YiA Programme, and according to the interviewees they did not need to change any specific procedures or mechanism, and could easily integrate and run the window into their work.

The only negative feedback most of the NAs raised in this regard was related to lack of financial resources for implementing regular monitoring measures and to offer relevant capacity building support.

(2) Satisfaction of beneficiaries with procedures, assistance and administrative structure

Beneficiaries in EaP countries expressed satisfaction with general procedures and administrative structure of the Window, and mixed levels of satisfaction with regards to assistance received. Some beneficiaries highlighted the different approaches of NAs and EACEA and lack of common standards in project management, monitoring and evaluation within EPYW

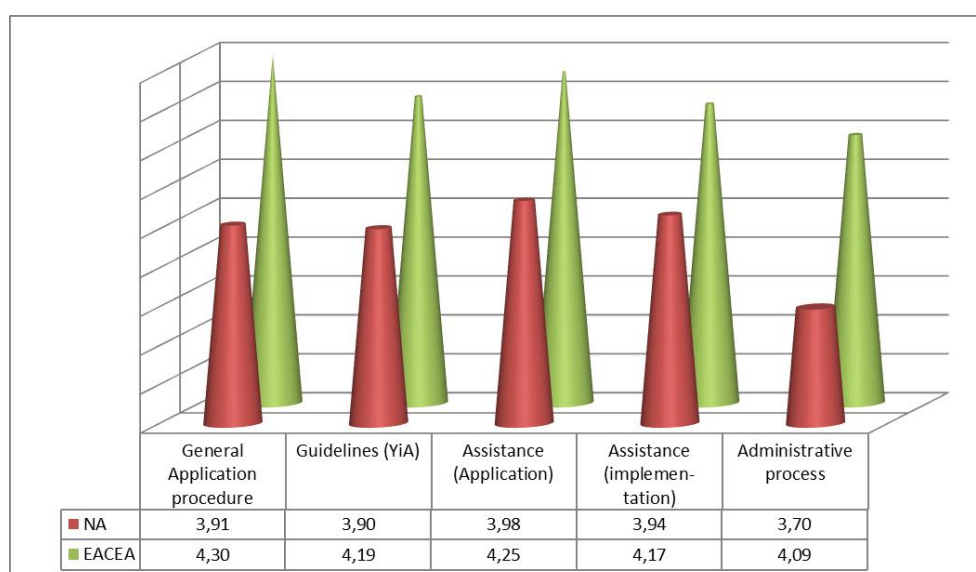
EACEA

According to the information received during focus group meetings as well as beneficiary interviews, and confirmed by information previously obtained by SALTO EECA, most EaP beneficiaries were highly satisfied with procedures and administrative burden when applying for grants under the 'centralized' implementation method. EACEA support during the application and reporting phase was highly rated by the EaP beneficiaries. Most beneficiaries had limited experience in fundraising and project management and EACEA's support during the application process was highly appreciated. EaP beneficiaries participating in focus groups highlighted lack of content-related feedback to final reports as a deficiency of the Window. They have also reported the need for use of monitoring as a support measure (See also EQ 7).

National Agencies

Most EaP beneficiaries had limited experience in dealing with National Agencies. They had no contractual relationship with them thus little feedback was received regarding administrative burden. EaP beneficiaries were highly appreciative of the National Agencies' expertise and knowledge of the EaP region (particularly the German and Polish NAs). Numerous focus groups and interview participants expressed the need for enhanced monitoring by NAs as a support measure (see also EQ7).

Chart 7: Level of NGO-satisfaction with administrative issues – Only EaP⁴⁶



5= Highly satisfied, 4= Satisfied, 3= Moderately satisfied, 2= Little satisfied 1= Not satisfied

⁴⁵ <http://www.mlodziej.org.pl/program/priorytety>.

⁴⁶ Source: Online Survey

4.7 EQ 7 – On monitoring

To what extent have the mechanisms applied by EACEA and NAs for monitoring of projects ensures a proper implementation of the Window?

*This question addresses the issue of **monitoring**.*

EQ7 on the efficiency of EPYW - Answer Summary Box

Limited capacities and financial constraints on implementing institutions have hindered regular monitoring of the projects at centralized and decentralized levels. Different monitoring procedures have been applied but in very low numbers and with relatively low impact. EACEA was the only agency able to conduct monitoring activities in the EaP countries while none of the NAs could only monitor projects which took place in their own countries.

Most beneficiaries highlighted the need for greater monitoring by both EACEA and NAs. This was expressed explicitly and frequently during both focus groups and individual project interviews. In this regard the need for quality feedback was raised as crucial for improvement of projects in terms of thematic and methodical approach.

JC1 - Monitoring mechanisms applied by EACEA and NA are appropriate and efficient

EACEA

EACEA has a limited budget for monitoring of the projects and hence is not able to regularly monitor EPYW projects. Very few projects (around 1%, according to EACEA) were subject to incidental monitoring, and in principle when irregularities were noticed or reported to the Agency. EACEA EPYW Unit has an annual monitoring strategy and all monitored EPYW projects adhered to it.

The EACEA has implemented one to two monitoring visits to each country during the entire period between 2012 and 2014. According to the monitoring reports received from EACEA, Agency staff has visited beneficiary organisations and projects as well national stakeholders - ministries and EUDs. In addition they organised an info day in each country. According to SALTO EECA, the EACEA has sent in few cases a request to SALTO to support them with EPYW monitoring.

NAs

NAs followed monitoring procedures developed for other YiA projects. Two NAs (UK and Poland) follow the monitoring mechanisms indicated in the "Book of Procedures" under ISO 9001. The German NA, although not ISO 9001 certified, follows a similar procedure. The French NA has its own monitoring procedure. Due to lack of mandate and limited financial resources only projects held in Programme countries have been monitored.

The role of SALTO EECA should be highlighted, especially with regards to monitoring the EVS activities, including accreditation procedures and provision of training activities for EVS volunteers. EVS activities are the most advanced part of the EaP Window activities in terms of monitoring through direct contact with beneficiaries and participants.

Beneficiaries

Most beneficiaries highlighted the need for greater monitoring by both EACEA and NAs. This was expressed explicitly and frequently during both focus groups and individual project interviews. Information gathered through the online survey on monitoring strongly contradicts with the interviews conducted on the field. It is assumed that the contributors did not fully understand and probably mixed up monitoring issues with activities related to reporting at the end of the project.

4.8 EQ 8 – On effectiveness and impact

What are the key benefits and outcomes of the programme for young people involved? To what extent has the programme effectively contributed to personal and social development of the target group?

*This question relates to the evaluation criteria of **effectiveness and impact**.*

The question examines to what extent EPYW has contributed to Personal and social development of the target group with regard to practical life skills, soft skills, employability, active participation, self-esteem, other relevant key competencies.

EQ 8 on effectiveness and impact - Answer Summary Box

The Window has effectively contributed to personal and social development of the target group to a very high extent. The high achievements reported at all levels, and this just as a result of two years programme implementation, are a crucial basis to underline the great potential of youth work in addressing needs of young people in a broad range of areas including employability, entrepreneurship, life- and soft skills as well as active citizenship.

The use of Youthpass has ensured a methodological and strategic approach towards identifying and reaching personal goals throughout the activity and beyond. Although not widely recognised by employers in EaP, Youthpass has played an important role in ensuring quality within the implemented projects.

Active participation stands out as the area of greatest impact of EPYW which was mostly also confirmed during the focus groups. The information gathered through the online survey strongly matches with what was mentioned during the focus group meetings by the participants concerning the key competencies gained during the implemented activities. In this regard “cultural awareness and expression” as well as “communication in a foreign language” were top two competences followed by “Social and civic competence”, “learning to learn” and “sense of initiative and entrepreneurship”.

JC 1) The projects and actions implemented under the Window have effectively contributed to personal development of the target group in the areas of:

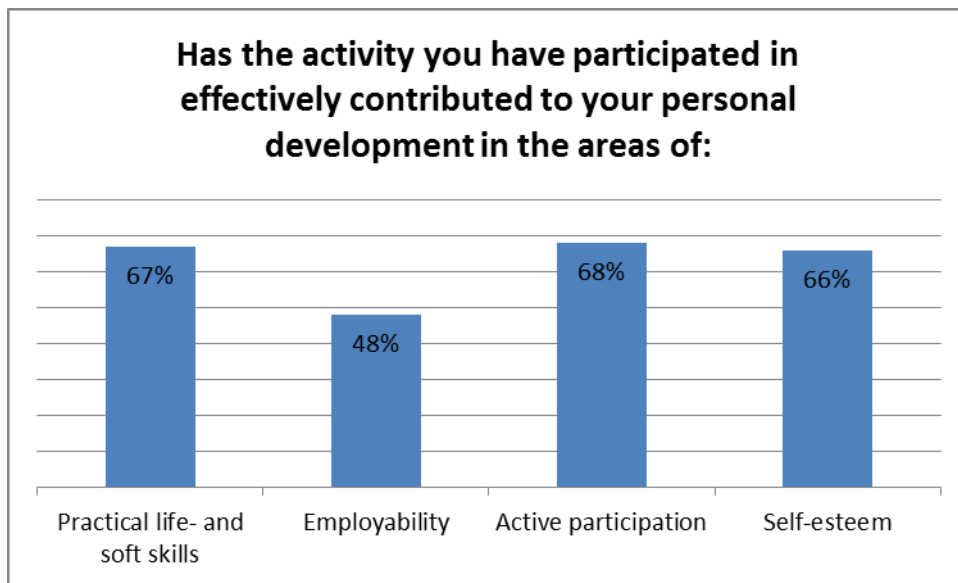
As confirmed by focus group participants, individual project interviews, stakeholders and survey contributors the Window has effectively contributed to personal and social development of the target group to a very high extent. The high achievements reported at all levels, and this just as a result of two years programme implementation, are a crucial basis to underline the great potential of youth work in addressing needs of young people in a broad range of areas including employability, entrepreneurship, life- and soft skills as well as active citizenship.

According to information gathered through the focus group meetings, all participants were in principle⁴⁷ entitled to receive a Youthpass after each activity what points to a methodological and strategic approach towards identifying and reaching personal goals throughout the activity and beyond. Youthpass, a recognized European recognition tool for non-formal and informal learning in youth work enables young people who participated in EPYW funded projects firstly to describe what they have done and to show what they have learnt. The process of identifying “the learning” is based on in-depth individual and group progress and is structured in a way to allow the learner to reflect upon the personal non-formal learning process.

Although it is reported that Youthpass is not widely recognised by employers in EaP countries, though the reflection process it provides is highly appreciated both by participants as well as beneficiary NGOs.

⁴⁷ Inception report lists judgement indicator - “Percentage of participants that received Youthpasses” – this was impossible to establish as not all reports were submitted to ET.

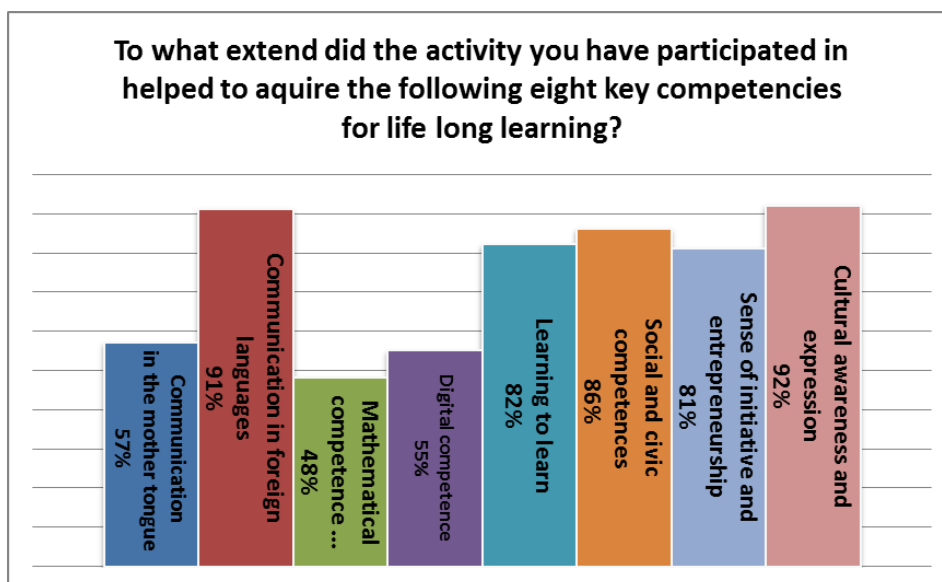
Chart 8: EPYW contribution to personal development⁴⁸



The above table shows that projects implemented under EPYW have effectively contributed to all relevant areas subject to this evaluation. Active participation however stands out as the area of greatest impact of EPYW which was mostly also confirmed during the focus groups.

With regard to the eight key competencies relevant to Youthpass it can be noted that the information gathered through the online survey strongly matches with what was mentioned during the focus group meetings. In this regard “cultural awareness and expression” as well as “communication in a foreign language” were top two competences gained by the participants followed by “Social and civic competence”, “learning to learn” and “sense of initiative and entrepreneurship”.

Chart 9: Acquiring the eight key competencies / Source: Online survey



⁴⁸ Source: Online Survey

4.9 EQ 9 – On ownership

To what extent has the programme ensured local ownership of the projects by its beneficiaries?

EQ9 on ownership of the EPYW - Answer Summary Box

Numerous national stakeholders – government bodies responsible for youth policy – underlined the importance of direct support to youth and civil society organisations as one of the greatest benefits of EPYW for the region.

Most of the comments pertained to ownership of centralized projects funded by the Executive Agency. Few comments have been received regarding ownership of decentralized projects.

Ownership was underlined very high especially in the context of EACEA-funded projects with a different, positive impact on project implementation. This method of implementation was indicated in very clear terms as preferred way by most of the beneficiaries also for future co-operation as it included a positive impact on local beneficiary capacity, recognition of youth work, volunteering and non-formal learning as well as strengthening civil society.

This was not shared in all EaP countries. Especially in those countries where restrictions on civil society organisations are applied, ownership is considered as less useful by the beneficiaries. Thus co-operation with Partner Country organisations in NA-funded projects may become a preferred method of co-operation for these countries in the future.

On average a lower local ownership of the projects by beneficiaries was felt in the framework of NA-funded projects. Level of co-operation between EaP beneficiaries and NAs, and therefore ownership, differs between National Agencies, and there is no common pattern for NA-EaP beneficiary co-operation.

JC1 - Local ownership of the projects is ensured

The issue of ownership featured very prominently during the field visit phase of the project. Both focus group participants and individual project interviewees highlighted the high importance of ownership to beneficiaries on the ground, and the changes brought about by EPYW by means of allowing for direct application and granting to EaP-based beneficiaries. In addition, numerous national stakeholders – government bodies responsible for youth policy – underlined the importance of direct support to youth and civil society organisations as one of the greatest benefits of EPYW for the region.

Most of the comments pertained to ownership of ‘centralized’ projects funded by the Executive Agency. Few comments have been received regarding ownership of ‘decentralized’ projects (see JC2).

JC2 - Ownership levels for projects organised by EaP beneficiaries (EACEA) versus ownership levels for projects organised in co-operation with Programme country beneficiaries (NA)

EACEA

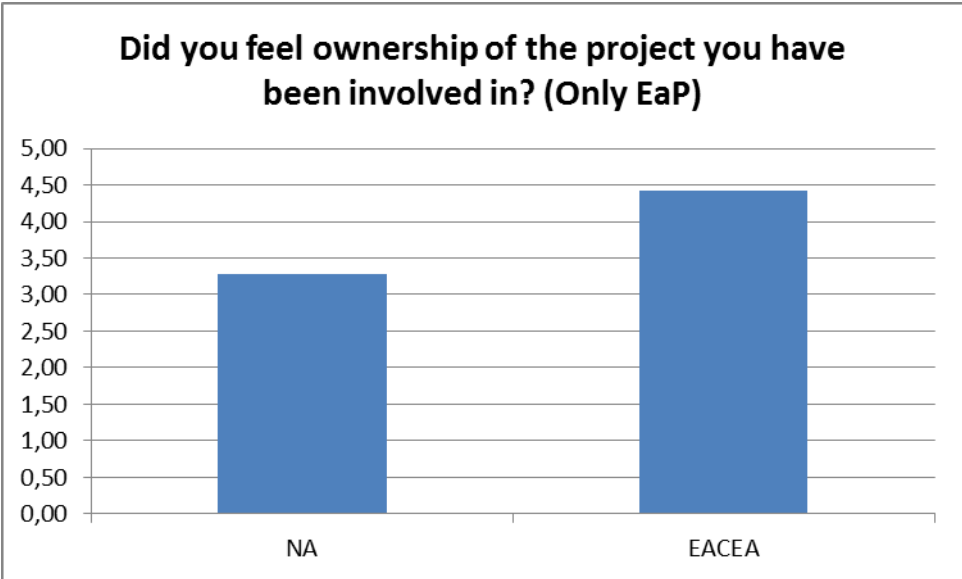
Focus groups in five countries (Armenia, Azerbaijan, Georgia, Moldova and Ukraine) underlined very high ownership of EACEA-funded projects and a different, positive impact of project implementation for ‘centralized’ EPYW projects. In four countries (Armenia, Georgia, Moldova and Ukraine) this method of implementation was indicated in very clear terms as preferred way of future co-operation. Main reasons for that included a positive impact on local beneficiary capacity, recognition of youth work, volunteering and non-formal learning as well as strengthening civil society – all contributing to greater ownership of EACEA-funded projects. In Belarus it was noted that due to the complex national legislation concerning the registration of foreign donor funds by Belarusian civil society organisations, dealing directly with foreign donors is very complicated. Out of five EACEA-funded projects granted to Belarus beneficiaries, only two have been implemented, and the remaining three encountered problems with governmental registration. This made a comprehensive assessment of EACEA-funded project ownership impossible in Belarus. What is more, the legal problems encountered at national level in Belarus make direct EACEA granting less favourable to partnership with a beneficiary in a Programme Country (the main mode of operation for NA-funded projects). In Azerbaijan it was further noted that although EACEA-funded projects allowed for greater ownership, the changing legal situation of Azerbaijani civil society organisation makes it more difficult to register foreign donor grants and thus co-operation with Partner Country organisations in NA-funded projects may become a preferred method of co-operation in the future. In this context, focus group participants noted that the

general lack of monitoring and project visits negatively affected the level of co-operation and indirectly impacted local ownership. Beneficiary NGOs report in some cases about felt atmosphere of disinterest and indifference.

National Agency

Participants of all focus groups noted that NA-funded projects ensure – on average – a lower local ownership of the projects by beneficiaries. Most focus group participants who implemented NA-funded projects in EaP countries in co-operation with PC beneficiaries had little or no contact with the funding National Agency. EaP beneficiaries with NA co-operation experience noted that level of co-operation between EaP beneficiaries and NAs, and therefore ownership, differs between National Agencies, and there is no common pattern for NA-EaP beneficiary co-operation. Focus group participants in Georgia, Belarus, Moldova and Ukraine singled out the German and Polish NAs as particularly supportive and competent in EPYW implementation.

Chart 10: Ownership – Source: Online Survey



5= Fully, 4= Almost fully, 3= So so, 2= A bit, 1= No

4.10 EQ 10 – On sustainability

What are the Window sustainability (positive changes or trends induced by the Window expected to last) and the dissemination and exploitation of results (DEOR)?

*This question addresses the issue of **sustainability**.*

It examines the Window's sustainability and the dissemination and exploitation of results.

EQ10 on sustainability of the EPYW - Answer Summary Box

The Window induced a number of positive changes and trends in the EaP region, notably with regards to youth work and volunteering, but the mechanisms and measures applied were deemed insufficient by a number of beneficiaries and EaP stakeholders.

The Window has strongly influenced the perceptions and understanding of youth relevant issues among the decision makers at policy level (complemented by the functioning of "EaP Regional Youth Unit"). The rapid and short-term surge in support for youth projects in the EaP region had a considerable impact on improving the visibility of youth work in the region. Consequently serious improvements and reform of youth policy and the youth sector occurred since 2012. One of the main impacts of the Window in the region was increased recognition of youth work and voluntary work in the region.

However, despite a positive impact on youth work development, the sector's capacity remains low and requires further development.

Window's design did not foster long-term sustainability. As a short term initiative it resulted in a sharp increase in number of projects and capacities of youth organisations in EaP region. But the abrupt end of the Window and lack of a new initiative in 2014 has already negatively impacted long-term sustainability of the Window.

National Agencies claim that the current budget reserved for the region is insufficient to meet demands in four countries in question (Germany, Poland, UK, France) while EaP beneficiaries have no possibility to apply for grants directly, which affects not only sustainability but also ownership.

Lack of strategic, large-scale EPYW funding (including long-term project grants) is considered as an impediment to sustainability.

JC1 - Effective measures and mechanism applied (micro/macro level) to ensure sustainability of the programme

Macro level

As the Window was open between 2012 and 2013, with the majority of EPYW projects implemented in 2013-2014 and a small number lasting until 2016⁴⁹, a rapid and short-term surge in support for youth projects in the EaP region had a considerable impact on improving the visibility of youth work in the region. It must be noted, that the functioning of "EaP Regional Youth Unit" in parallel to the Window has strongly influenced the perceptions and understanding of youth relevant issues among the decision makers at policy level. According to SALTO EECA Moldova is an important case in point, where serious improvements and reform of youth policy and the youth sector occurred since 2012. According to SALTO EECA one of the main impacts of the Window in the region was increased recognition of youth work and voluntary work in the region. Those positive impacts were also confirmed by focus group participants across all EaP countries as well as by national stakeholders including youth ministries in five EaP countries (Armenia, Azerbaijan, Georgia, Moldova and Ukraine⁵⁰). EaP beneficiaries further confirmed that despite a positive impact on youth work development, the sector's capacity remains low and needs to be further developed.

On the other hand, beneficiaries from EaP countries noted that the Window's design did not foster long-term sustainability. The Window was a short-term initiative, spanning two years only (whereas the whole Youth in Action Programme lasted seven years, 2007-2013, and most of its project formats continue within Erasmus+ Youth between 2014 and 2020) and resulted in a sharp increase in number of projects and capacities of youth organisations in EaP region implementing them. Focus group

⁴⁹ Information provided by EACEA.

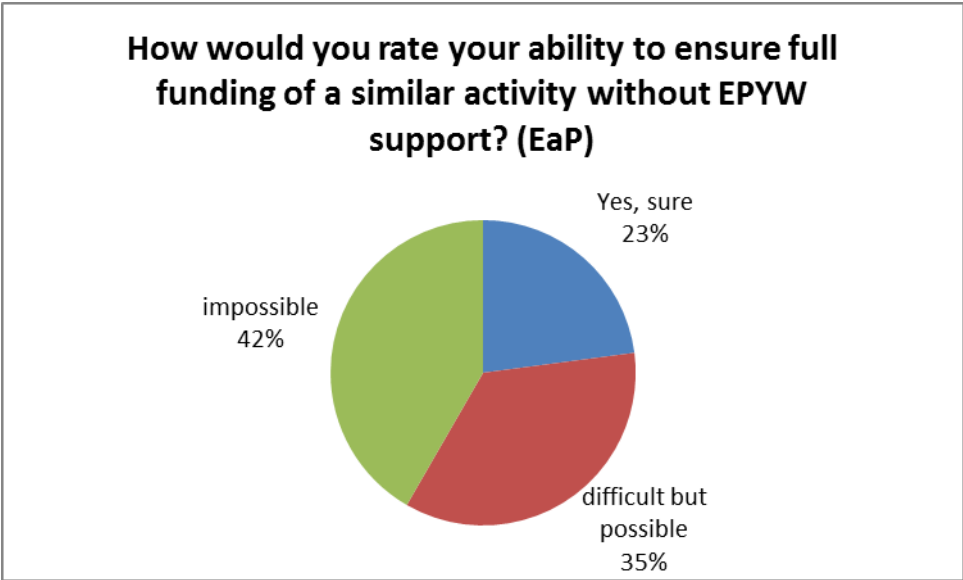
⁵⁰ No meeting with governmental institutions took place in Belarus.

participants noted that the abrupt end of the Window and lack of a new initiative in 2014 has already negatively impacted long-term sustainability of the Window. Focus group participants reported an acute lack of international mobility and volunteering opportunities for EaP youth, especially in the context of Erasmus+ limits on co-operation with partner countries. According to National Agencies, the initial limit was 15% of Erasmus+ Youth budgets increased to 25% during 2014, but all National Agencies claim this is insufficient to meet demands in four countries in question. Additionally, EaP beneficiaries have no possibility to apply for grants directly, which affects not only sustainability but also ownership (see EQ8).

Micro level

Most EPYW projects involved short-term activities such as Youth Exchanges and Training and Networking activities (training courses and seminars), thus making it difficult to measure sustainability in the long term. EaP beneficiaries quoted the lack of strategic, large-scale EPYW funding (including long-term project grants) as an impediment to sustainability.

Chart 11: Ability to ensure funding of projects – Source: Online Survey



JC2 - The dissemination and exploitation of the results are satisfactory and comprehensive

EaP beneficiaries reported lack of monitoring and content-related feedback as factors negatively impacting dissemination and exploitation of results strategies of EPYW projects in the EaP region. Beneficiaries in EaP countries lack capacity and outreach to substantially contribute to dissemination of results at local and national level. Furthermore, short term character of most EPYW activities lack of long-term project support limits opportunities for dissemination and exploitation of results. There is no openly accessible central database of “only” EPYW projects. There is no other comprehensive framework or structure to detain results and to further disseminate them. Implementing organisations do not provide a single facility for dissemination and exploitation of results of EPYW projects. EaP beneficiaries highlighted the important role of SALTO EECA RC in the dissemination and exploitation of results process, as SALTO implemented a number of complementary events for beneficiaries from the region, allowing for some dissemination and exploitation of results. Beneficiaries further noted limited links between EPYW and other platforms and the lack of outreach to other sectors of civil society, education and volunteering. One of the key dissemination and exploitation of results strategies, mainstreaming, is limited in its scope due to the weak capacities of youth work sector and lack of a wider support network for youth activities beyond EPYW. National stakeholders in five EaP countries (Armenia, Azerbaijan, Georgia, Moldova and Ukraine) noted the lack of co-operation between EPYW and national stakeholders as an obstacle to dissemination and exploitation of results.

4.11 EQ 11 – On unintended effects

To what extent have the activities under this programme resulted in unintended effects (both desirable and undesirable)?

*This question addresses the issue of **unintended effects**.*

EQ7 on unintended effects - Answer Summary Box

EPYW activities resulted in a number of unintended effects, both desirable and undesirable. The overall importance of desirable unintended effects is high, and the importance of undesirable unintended effects is low.

Window had a significant impact on the strengthening of civil society in EaP countries as EPYW beneficiaries have very diverse profiles and deal with various target groups and themes in all social, economic, political and cultural spheres.

The Window contributed strongly to legitimising youth work and youth policy as credible and important sector of civil society and was a great support for beneficiaries from the youth sector to develop important financial capacities, allowing them to access other types of funding, notably larger grants provided by international donors.

Significant increase and lasting interest in the Eastern Partnership region and increased demand for co-operation with EaP region among civil society and youth organisations from programme countries was noted as an important effect of the Window which is also visible within the new Erasmus+ Youth programme.

One undesirable note can be made: The rapid and short-term increase in funding distorted the profile of some few civil society organisations and particularly youth organisations in the region. One side effect of this phenomenon is the increased capacity of youth and other civil society organisations in the EaP region to work at international level – now largely obsolete in the absence of funding alternatives to EPYW.

JC1 – Importance of unintended effects of EPYW activities indicated by beneficiaries and participants

Desirable

The Window has had a significant impact on the strengthening of civil society in EaP countries, not only in the youth sector, but also in other sectors. EPYW beneficiaries have very diverse profiles and deal with various target groups and themes in all social, economic, political and cultural spheres. EPYW funding was substantial compared to other foreign donor programmes available in EaP countries, thus making a significant impact on civil society in the region. What is more, focus group participants in all six countries indicated that the Window had a number of important impacts on the youth sector. First, it legitimised youth work and youth policy as credible and important sector of civil society. Secondly, it helped beneficiaries from the youth sector develop important financial capacities, allowing them to access other types of funding, notably larger grants provided by international donors.

The French National Agency indicated significantly increased and lasting interest in the Eastern Partnership region and increased demand for co-operation with EaP region among French civil society and youth organisation. This trend is also visible within the new Erasmus+ Youth programme, as an important unintended effect.

The United Kingdom National Agency indicated that EPYW prompted the Agency to reflect upon its own priorities and especially geographical priorities, as the EaP region was not an important priority for the UK youth work sector and yet EPYW was met with very high demand among the UK-based beneficiaries.

Undesirable

No significant undesirable effects of the Window have been reported. Some focus group participants in Georgia and Armenia indicated that due to the very high amount of funding available under EPYW, a number of youth organisations have either been created with the sole purpose of obtaining EPYW funding. In addition, a number of civil society organisations have changed their profile and type of activities to implement EPYW funding. In certain beneficiaries' view, such a rapid and short-term increase in funding thus distorted the profile of civil society organisations and particularly youth organisations in the region. One side effect of this phenomenon is the increased capacity of youth and other civil society organisations in the EaP region to work at international level – now largely obsolete in the absence of funding alternatives to EPYW.

5. CONCLUSIONS

On Relevance to the objectives and priorities

- **Eastern Partnership Youth Window has successfully addressed most of its planned objectives** and has significantly contributed to addressing socio-economic needs of young people in the EaP region. EPYW was most useful in supporting young people's needs in the area of participation and active citizenship. Intercultural learning and mobility were considered as major benefits followed by employability and empowerment.

On addressing the needs of young people with fewer opportunities

- **Young people with fewer opportunities could not be effectively directly reached by the Window.** There have been several obstacles at personal level, strategic and procedural gaps in the implementation of the programme as well as lack of competencies and knowledge of NGOs in reaching these groups which prevented them from participating in the programme. Especially youth from rural and deprived urban areas are the most neglected in this framework.
- However EPYW mostly supported young people with fewer opportunities indirectly, in the form of capacity-building activities for those who work with YPFO or through increased awareness on inclusion issues and on the situation of YPFO in general. (Thematic training and seminar activities for youth workers dealing with YPFO and well as international conferences partly targeting this group of young people.)
- **European Voluntary Service (EVS)** was identified as one of the most prominent activities under the EPYW with high potential in reaching young people with fewer opportunities at all levels. EVS has been also identified as good practice with the greatest potential for increasing awareness on the role of a youth worker as means of meeting the needs of young people especially those with fewer opportunities in rural and deprived urban areas.

On Youth work

- **EPYW have clearly enhanced awareness about the nature of youth work** to a very high extent in the EaP countries. Weak youth work support structures in the EaP countries at local level makes the Window as the **only instrument in this field**. EPYW is considered at all levels as a major tool (for some countries the only considerable tool) in promoting and supporting youth work in the EaP countries. Due to its nature as a mobility programme the **region further lacks instruments to support and give a higher focus on developing local capacities**. Here large scale funding mechanisms supporting local capacity building and coaching interventions for NGOs is considered as an option for increasing the scope of quality in youth work at national level and for improving outreach of young people with fewer opportunities.
- Especially Training & Networking projects were identified as the main instruments and spaces for sharing good practice in the sphere of youth work while EVS did at first sight not always had this theme as a priority. Youth exchanges were considered rather as a space to experience and "experiment" youth work at first hand.
- Lack of national structures in recognizing youth work and opportunities to practice youth work in their own local environment after gaining experience through EPYW is considered as an obstacle in further developing youth work at local level. In this regard it is crucial to consciously link trainings and exchange of good practice to national structures and priorities in order to boost possible cooperation at cross sectorial level.

On Regional Cooperation (EaP)

- The priority of regional collaboration was not well considered throughout the entire programme at both centralized and decentralized levels. It was not well communicated with stakeholders and beneficiaries. Stakeholders needed clear explanations in this regard to understand the background of the question and often confirmed that they have actually not been well informed about such priority.

- According to the interviewed beneficiaries as well as the stakeholders the current regional definition which combines the three Eastern European countries with the South Caucasus Countries does not always match the latest developments and interests in the region. Countries who have signed the agreement (Georgia, Moldova and Ukraine) would wish more exchange and collaboration with EU countries in the field of youth. The ministries in charge of youth in each of these countries underline the necessity of a new mechanism in support of fulfilling the agreement criteria.

On Capacities for future cooperation

- Window has considerably increased the cooperation in the field of youth especially among EaP and EU based organisations, but not necessarily among those at regional (EaP) level. In this regard the Youth in Action Programme, the Eastern Partnership Youth Window and the Youth in Action strand of Erasmus+ are the main source of funding cooperation activities in the field of youth in the region so far. EVS had according to the survey the biggest stake in establishing a framework for further collaboration.

On Efficiency and Quality

- The quality of EPYW projects with regard to **relevance** to EPYW objectives and priorities is mixed, mainly due to poor communication of EPYW objectives and priorities to beneficiaries, differences in EPYW documents and different methods of project assessment and evaluation by implementing bodies.
- Balance of project activity types differed significantly between centralized and decentralized implementation methods. The **geographical balance** of EPYW projects was not assured which caused a considerable imbalance of project impact in the region. First of all, the programme's structure did not contain any provisions for geographical balance. Secondly, none of the implementing bodies interviewed had a geographical balance strategy in place, neither for beneficiary country of origin nor for project venue. This was negatively evaluated by some governmental stakeholders in the EaP region.
- The **set-up and division into 'centralized' and 'decentralized'** projects had limited impact on the efficiency of project. Both methods of implementation could assure good quality and smooth implementation of the projects. Substantial differences occur only with regards to administrative burden (see Sub-question 3 below), ownership (See EQ9) and monitoring (See EQ7).

On Monitoring

- Limited capacities and financial constraints on implementing institutions have hindered regular monitoring of the projects at centralized and decentralized levels. Different monitoring procedures have been applied but in very low numbers and with relatively low impact.

On Impact and Effectivity

- The Window has effectively contributed to personal and social development of the target group to a very high extent. The high achievements reported at all levels, and this just as a result of two years programme implementation, are a crucial basis to underline the great potential of youth work in addressing needs of young people in a broad range of areas including employability, entrepreneurship, life- and soft skills as well as active citizenship.

On Ownership

- Ownership was underlined very high especially in the context of EACEA-funded projects with a different, positive impact on project implementation. This method of implementation was indicated in very clear terms as preferred way by most of the beneficiaries also for future co-operation as it included a positive impact on local beneficiary capacity, recognition of youth work, volunteering and non-formal learning as well as strengthening civil society.

On desirable unintended effects

- The Window induced a number of positive changes and trends in the EaP region, notably with regards to youth work and volunteering, but the mechanisms and measures applied were deemed insufficient by a number of beneficiaries and EaP stakeholders.
- Window had a significant impact on the strengthening of civil society in EaP countries as EPYW beneficiaries have very diverse profiles and deal with various target groups and themes in all social, economic, political and cultural spheres.
- The Window contributed strongly in legitimizing youth work and youth policy as credible and important sector of civil society and was a great support for beneficiaries from the youth sector to develop important financial capacities, allowing them to access other types of funding, notably larger grants provided by international donors.

On undesirable unintended effects

- The rapid and short-term increase in funding distorted the profile of some few civil society organisations and particularly youth organisations in the region. One side effect of this phenomenon is the increased capacity of youth and other civil society organisations in the EaP region to work at international level – now largely obsolete in the absence of funding alternatives to EPYW.

EQ 12 - How can programming and implementation of regional EaP youth programme be enhanced to more effectively address social and economic needs of disadvantaged youth in the beneficiary countries?

EPYW's outreach to disadvantaged youth was limited, and so was its efficiency in addressing social and economic needs of this target group.

In order to address this challenge, the following programming and implementation enhancements should be considered:

Provision for local and national projects

- The future EaP youth programme should contain also a provision for projects at local and national level targeting young people from one country, especially those who seem not to be sufficiently reached by transnational activities (to overcome the two most commonly identified obstacles: distance and language problems).

Improved cross-sectoral approach and cooperation

- The future EaP youth programme needs to consider a cross-sectoral approach to allow for co-operation with other sectors of youth work (including governmental and local authority levels in EaP countries), other sectors of civil society as well as formal and vocational education, amongst others.

Tailored actions to the country's specific needs

- The future EaP youth programme needs to take into consideration the different national and regional needs; EaP beneficiaries and stakeholders in all EaP countries confirmed that the needs and realities of disadvantaged youth differ greatly across the six countries, and in order to be efficient the new programme has to be tailored to those needs.

Enhanced information provision and dissemination

- The future EaP youth programme needs to take into consideration the need for enhanced information provision and support to local beneficiaries, in order to allow for better outreach to disadvantaged youth organisations and their target groups.

EQ 13 - How can programming and implementation be enhanced to improve the impact and sustainability of financial assistance of the programme?

The results of EPYW evaluation have shown that the Window achieved a high direct impact on participants and beneficiaries as good indirect impact on a number of stakeholders and civil society sectors (see EQ8). When it comes to sustainability, the results of evaluation are mixed – in some respects the Window assured good sustainability and in others important gaps were identified (see EQ10).

When it comes to possible enhancement of programming and implementation that could assure impact and sustainability of financial assistance, the following conclusions stem from the EPYW evaluation:

Strategic, long term financial assistance

- Beneficiaries and young people in the EaP region would benefit from more strategic, long-term and lasting financial assistance; possible forms of this involve multi-activity grants or larger schemes like Erasmus+ Key Action 2; this would enhance programme impact and sustainability;
- The new programme would benefit from a longer timeframe; the Window's short-term character was indicated as one of its most important structural weaknesses; long-term programming would greatly enhance sustainability and impact.

Strengthening capacities at local level

- Certain beneficiary groups – notably disadvantaged youth and those from rural and deprived urban areas – can only be reached through local and national-level projects, tailored to local needs and conducted in a local/national language, without the need for extensive expenditure and travel; this would greatly increase impact on vulnerable groups targeted by the programme.

Improved monitoring and quality feedback

- Direct, on the ground project monitoring in EaP countries would benefit both EaP beneficiaries and the overall programme impact in the region as quality based monitoring is an important factor for capacity development.

Coordinated use of existing synergies for better impact

- Building synergies with other EU programmes and youth policy structures and programmes (SALTO EECA RC, Council of Europe, EPYRU etc.) would greatly enhance the impact and sustainability of the programme's financial assistance.

Linking actions to individual country relations with the EU

- Acknowledging differences between needs of EaP countries and the different socio-economic realities of young people within them, including linking the new programme with the individual countries relations with the EU (e.g. Association Agreements signed by three EaP countries) as well as adding national priorities would enhance impact at national level.

6. RECOMMENDATIONS

Taking into consideration the above-mentioned evaluation conclusions and programming considerations, the following recommendations are put forward for the future EaP youth programme: (ranking by priority)

1. The focus on youth work and the voluntary and civil society sectors should remain at the core of the new programme; youth work provides a very good tool to address socio-economic needs of young people in the EaP region at all levels including employability, entrepreneurship and active citizenship.
2. In order to address the needs of young people with fewer opportunities it should be obligatory for the funding agency to support at least 1/3 of projects which consciously involve this category of youth as active participants.
3. As lack of local project opportunities and national support and monitoring structures have been identified as weaknesses hindering EPYW's impact and efficiency, the new programme should include a provision for national priorities and on the ground support in the EaP region; it is important that this new structure focuses on the groups that EPYW seem not to sufficiently reach in significant numbers, i.e. young people with fewer opportunities and in rural/deprived urban areas.
4. The Eastern Partnership Youth Window was, by and large, a good tool to address most of the planned objectives and significantly contributed to addressing socio-economic needs of young people in the EaP region, and therefore some continuation of the Window within the new Erasmus+ Programme should be considered.
5. The new programme should include a comprehensive cross-sectoral co-operation strategy, including identifying ways of co-operation with national and local authorities, other international organisations and donors as well as a provision to update and take into account the needs of young people in the region on a regular basis.

Possible programme set-up:

- **Component 1:** Local capacity-building and development programme (grant) in the sphere of youth with a combined grant and sub-granting component. It should allow the creation of demand-driven co-operation between youth organisations sharing common values and facing similar challenges, but with different experience and capacities at national/local level. A comprehensive sub-granting facility at micro level shall be established providing direct coaching and ad hoc capacity-building support to grassroots level organisations from rural and deprived urban areas at the local level, working with young people with fewer opportunities. Priority shall be given to projects in line with national priorities and youth policy plans. The rationale is that this will encourage greater participation by smaller NGOs and individuals, who otherwise would most likely be excluded from participation.

For the implementation of this component it is recommended to devolve grant management to a number of experienced organisations in each country, which can then provide capacity building and coaching support and serve as grant making organisations for the small grant schemes. Small grants shall foster capacity building among those who receive grants for performing targeted, practical projects within their community.

- **Component 2:** Opening a "Window" under Erasmus+/Key Action 2 (Capacity Building in the field of youth – priority given to sub action: Mobility activities) for the EaP region, with the possibility for EaP-based beneficiaries to apply directly for funding. Geographical repartition of grant according to e.g. youth population size⁵¹ with an option for countries who have signed the EU Association Agreement to have status equal to Programme Countries under Erasmus+ Key Action 2 "Strategic Partnerships". No other specific additional priority necessary besides Erasmus+ if parallel to the above mentioned local capacity-building and development programme.

⁵¹ This need to be defined more in detail in a future step.

- **Component 3:** For improved implementation and monitoring of the two above-mentioned components, as well as a tailored cross sectoral policy support, a TA office can be set up or existing framework with comprehensive experience in/with the region (SALTO RC EECA, NAs) can be used (or a mix of the two). The latter would ensure a broad use of synergies, existing competencies and capacities. Cooperation with Erasmus+ offices in EaP countries should be sought for the purpose of systematic dissemination of information about the programme and enhanced visibility. The new framework shall use the already established working relationships with all regional institutions through the Regional Youth Unit Project (EPYRU) to further support cross sectoral policy cooperation in the region and link them with the above-mentioned components.

Annex I: TOR

**Specific Terms of Reference
Evaluation of the EaP Youth in Action Window
FWC COM 2011 - LOT 1**

Region	Eastern Neighbourhood
Beneficiary Countries	The Republic of Armenia, the Republic of Azerbaijan, the Republic of Belarus, Georgia, the Republic of Moldova and Ukraine.
Sector	Social/welfare services - DAC Code 16010
CRIS reference	ENPI/2012/24307 "Eastern Partnership Youth Window - 2012 budget" ENPI/2012/24308 "Eastern Partnership Youth Programme - 2013 budget - funds to be managed by EACEA" ENPI/2013/24905 - Implementation of the EaP multilateral dimension and Support to the Implementation of the Black Sea Synergy and the Northern Dimension- Commission decision for the evaluation of the EaP Youth in Action window

1. BACKGROUND

Following a 2010 need assessments of young people in Eastern Partnership countries which identified employability, skills development, lifelong learning, social inclusion and active citizenship as their main needs as well as the adoption of the Joint Communication "A New Response to a Changing Neighbourhood – A review of European Neighbourhood Policy" in May 2011, the European Commission's services in DG EAC and DG DEVCO worked together on a series of proposals including technical assistance to enhance cooperation with the Neighbouring Countries in the sectors of education and youth.

Challenges identified to respond to these needs included the capacity of partner countries to provide a cross-sectoral approach to youth policy, the involvement of the young people into the formulation and implementation of responses to their needs at the policy and practice levels, the regional collaboration in the sphere of youth, the focus on the disadvantaged groups within the youth population, the setting up of a comprehensive system of youth work, the focus on the lifelong learning and non-formal education for youth.

The Eastern Partnership Youth Window under the Youth in Action Programme was set up for the period 2012-2013 to help addressing most of the above mentioned challenges through the promotion of regional cooperation between policy institutions, youth organizations, youth workers and youth populations. The Eastern Partnership Youth Window aims to offer more non-formal learning opportunities to young people, with a special focus on young people with fewer opportunities, to enhance their skills, competences and active participation in society.

The Eastern Partnership Youth Window is demand-driven, and aims to foster the principle of ownership and development of capacity in the youth sector, in accordance with the Paris Declaration and the European Commission's Backbone Strategy on "Reforming Technical Cooperation and Project Implementation Units for External Aid". The Eastern Partnership Youth Window is embedded in the broader agenda of cooperation between the European Commission and Eastern Partnership countries set out in the revised ENPI Eastern Regional Strategy Paper and ENPI East Regional Indicative Programme 2010 -2013, in which youth is identified as a priority field for funding. It is also an important component of the Eastern Partnership Platform 4 "people to people" where it has been the topic of several platform discussions.

Eastern Partnership Youth Window: Implementation of the programme

Based on the political context and this needs assessment, DG Development and Cooperation (DG DEVCO) made available an amount of 31.5 M EUR through the European Neighbourhood and Partnership Instrument (ENPI) for the years 2012 and 2013 in form of an Eastern Partnership Youth Window to finance the participation of 21 000 young people and youth workers in about 1 400 additional joint projects involving Youth in Action Programme countries and the six Eastern European Partner countries (the Republic of Armenia, the Republic of Azerbaijan, the Republic of Belarus, Georgia, the Republic of Moldova and Ukraine) participating in the Eastern Partnership (EaP).

In agreement between DG DEVCO and DG EAC, the funds (31.5 MioEUR) as well as the management of the programme were allocated by 2/3 (19 MioEUR) to Youth in Action National Agencies at decentralised level (EU Member States + Croatia + Iceland + Lichtenstein + Norway + Turkey) and by 1/3 (12.5 MioEUR) to the Executive Agency for Education, Audiovisual and Culture (EACEA) at centralised level, under the supervision of DEVCO's Authorising Officer.

It is to be underlined that when projects are managed by National Agencies, EaP Organisations can not apply directly for grants, they can only be project partners of a Programme country (EU Member States, Croatia, Iceland, Lichtenstein, Norway, Turkey). However when projects are managed by EACEA, EaP Organisations are eligible to apply directly for grants.

The objective was to use these funds to support projects raising awareness about the nature of youth work, promoting the sharing of best practices, while demonstrating a clear commitment to provide support to young people with fewer opportunities living in rural or deprived urban areas;

The funds were allocated to two types of actions: **capacity building and mobility projects**:

- European Voluntary Service which enables young people to carry out voluntary service for up to 12 months in a country other than their country of residence. Volunteers learn new skills and languages and discover other cultures.
- Cooperation with the Neighbouring Partner Countries of the EU in the form of youth exchanges, training in the field of youth, sharing of good practice and networking.

Results achieved so far

The target of implementing 1400 projects involving about 21 000 young people and youth workers at application level has been reached. *National agencies funded 1,118 Eastern Partnership Youth Window projects while the EACEA allowed granting of 586 projects submitted by youth organisations from Eastern Partnership countries.* These projects involved in 2012 and 2013, according to figures established at application level - in total 19,754 young people.

For about 340 projects ending in 2013 and managed by national agencies a final report was already received and approved.

Complementary Activities

The implementation of the Eastern Partnership Youth Window at project level is complemented by policy dialogue and youth forum and events undertaken within the Eastern Partnership Platform 4 Youth Event.

One of the major events in this field was the Eastern Partnership Youth Forum that took place in Kaunas, Lithuania 22 – 25 Oct 2013, where an important outcome was the request to continue supporting youth activities through the Window. Both policy makers and young people confirmed in 2013 the need to take action in favour of young people with fewer opportunities living in rural or deprived urban areas. Youth people and representatives of youth organisations underlined the need to build up and support youth organisations in the region and their availability to network across borders. Participants also expressed their interest in the continuation of Eastern Partnership related youth support systems. The Eastern Partnership Platform 4 "Contacts between People" work programme 2014 - 2017 envisages that an Eastern Partnership Youth Forum could take place prior to the Eastern Partnership Summit 2015 with the aim to share strategies, tools and experiences on how to strengthen youth work and non-formal learning in Eastern Partnership countries.

Technical assistance is also provided via the Eastern Partnership Youth Regional Unit based in Ukraine. It aims at facilitating the development of a more comprehensive evidence base for youth policy and youth affairs, and at using it to develop effective capacity-building; also it aims at facilitating the mainstreaming of youth issues across relevant policy spheres, and thus foster a cross-sectorial approach to responding to the needs of youth

2. DESCRIPTION OF THE ASSIGNMENT

➤ Global objective

The global objective of this assignment is to evaluate the on-going regional programme EaP Youth in Action Window and to provide recommendations for the design of a future 2015-2020 regional programme for disadvantaged youth with a focus on their social and economic needs. Geographically the scope of the evaluation covers the 6 EaP countries: Armenia, Azerbaijan, Belarus, Georgia, Moldova, and Ukraine.

➤ Specific objectives

The specific objectives are:

- 1) to provide an **independent evaluation of the ongoing regional programme EaP Youth in Action Window** from 2012 until now paying particular attention to the results achieved and the level of involvement of the beneficiaries. This assessment should be based on a representative sample of projects managed by EACEA and by the 4 national agencies managing most of the Youth Window projects (Germany, France, Poland, United Kingdom). The evaluation should assess:
 - **the relevance** of the objectives of the programme in relation to the youth's socio-economic needs;
 - **the coherence** of a representative sample of selected projects in relation to the objectives and priorities of the Youth window (support young people with fewer opportunities living in rural or deprived urban areas; raising awareness about the nature of youth work; sharing of best practices in the sphere of youth work, priority in awarding grants given to those projects that demonstrate a clear commitment to, and capacity for, regional collaboration);
 - **the efficiency** of the EACEA and the national agencies in managing the projects (selection, implementation, monitoring of the projects). The evaluators could build upon the existing interim evaluation of EACEA (2013).
 - **the effectiveness** in reaching the expected objectives/results and in reaching out to the target groups (ie: number of disadvantaged youth involved). This part should underline the concrete benefits and impact of the programme for the youth itself (ie: which skills they learnt, to which extent the programme increased their employability). The analysis should go beyond outputs, focussing on results and impact of the programme.
 - the level of local **ownership** of the projects by the beneficiaries
 - the level of **sustainability** of the projects.
- 2) to provide **recommendations** on the design of a future regional programme for disadvantaged youth with a focus on their social and economic needs, taking into account existing support for youth by the international donor community – including the EU – in the beneficiary countries. The recommendations should be presented in a structured way, ranking them by degree of priority. Each recommendation should mention to which stakeholder it is addressed and within which timeframe it should (ideally) be picked-up.

Evaluators should be aware of the political and socio-economic differences between the countries involved as well as the diversity of profile and needs of the target population "disadvantaged youth" and factor them into their methodology and analysis. The evaluation should integrate whenever relevant the perspective of the disadvantaged youth population itself to respond to these evaluation objectives.

➤ Evaluation approach and main deliverables, including suggested methodology

The evaluation process will be carried out in four phases: an Inception phase, a Desk phase, a Field phase, a Synthesis phase. Deliverables in the form of reports and slide presentations should be submitted at the end of the corresponding stages.

Inception phase

The process will start with a kick-off meeting in Brussels with DEVCO F3 staff. Half-day presence of the team leader and of one of the senior expert is required. In the Inception Phase, the evaluation team shall carry out the following tasks:

- Fine-tune maximum 15 evaluation questions proposed in the offer based on the issues to be studied, propose judgement criteria and identify provisional indicators and their means of verification
- Fine-tune the methodology for the overall assessment of the programme.
- Describe the approach for answering each evaluation question.
- Establish selection criteria for the selection of the case studies (see 3.1.3).
- Propose a fine tuned work plan.

At the end of the inception stage a short inception report shall be prepared (see section 6). This report shall be approved by the contracting authority before proceeding to the next stage.

Desk phase

In the Desk Phase, the evaluation team shall carry out the following tasks:

- Analyse systematically the relevant available documents provided by DG EAC, DG DEVCO, EACEA, national agencies (in particular the existing youth needs assessment in EaP countries).
- Provide preliminary responses to each evaluation question stating the information already gathered and their limitations; identify the issues still to be covered and the assumptions to be tested (gap identification), and describe a full method to address the question.
- Identify and present the list of tools to be applied in the Field phase;
- Justify and propose field visits;
- List all preparatory steps already taken/to be taken for the Field phase.

At the end of the desk phase a desk report will be prepared including a detailed field work plan, the list of people to be interviewed, data collection tools to be used, dates of visit, itinerary, and name of team members in charge.

Field phase

The Field Phase starts in principle after approval of the Desk phase report by the evaluation manager.

If any significant deviation from the agreed work plan or schedule is perceived as creating a risk for the quality of the evaluation, these should be immediately reported to the evaluation manager and require its approval.

During the Field phase, the evaluation team shall meet relevant project managers and relevant beneficiaries in the country of implementation, in particular young people involved in the Youth in Action Window projects in order to have their feedback on the programme and to better understand their needs.

At the end of the Field phase, the evaluation team shall send DEVCO F3 country notes summarising key findings of the field visit. Each country note shall contain 2 suggestions for case studies (12 in total) that will be developed in more detail during the Synthesis phase. Case studies shall be selected on the basis of the selection criteria developed in the Inception phase. The consultant shall present its work and preliminary findings to the evaluation manager in Brussels. Half day presence of the team leader or the senior expert is required.

Synthesis phase

This phase is mainly devoted to the preparation of the draft final report. The evaluation team will present in a single document their findings, conclusions and recommendations in accordance with the agreed structure (Annex II). In addition to this, 3 case studies will be selected from the list issued from the country reports. These 3 case studies shall be drafted and presented so as to be quickly adapted to the DEVCO case studies online application (ie: http://ec.europa.eu/europeaid/documents/case-studies/ukraine_education_metal_en.pdf). The DEVCO step by step guidelines for creating these case studies can be provided by DEVCO F3.

The evaluation team will make sure that:

- Their assessments are objective and balanced, statements accurate and verifiable, and recommendations realistic.
- When drafting the report, they will acknowledge clearly where changes in the desired direction are known to be already taking place.

The team leader and one of the senior expert will present (half day presence maximum is required) the draft final report to DEVCO F3 in Brussels to discuss the draft findings, conclusions and recommendations. On the basis of comments expressed, the evaluation team has to amend and revise the draft report. While potential quality issues, factual errors or methodological problems should be corrected, comments linked to diverging judgements may be either accepted or rejected. In the latter instance, the evaluation team should explain the reasons in writing.

Methodology

The contractor will have a free choice as to the methods used to gather and analyse information and for making the assessment, but must take account of the following:

- The evaluation should be based on recognised evaluation techniques.
- The choice and a detailed description of the methodology must form part of the offer submitted. There should be a clear link between the evaluation questions addressed and the corresponding methodology proposed. The evaluation questions can be further elaborated, e.g. by providing operational sub-questions under each question.
- In addressing the evaluation questions, quantitative indicators should be sought and used as far as possible. The contractor must support findings and recommendations by explaining the degree to which these are based on opinion, analysis and objectively verifiable evidence. Where opinion is the main source, the degree of consensus and the steps taken to test the opinion should be given.
- It is not expected that all individual projects be assessed, but the sample of projects examined should be drawn up in a manner suitable for each evaluation question addressed, and should be such as to enable the evaluators to draw general conclusions on the actions.

- As part of the chosen methodology, the contractor's approach should include field missions involving the various stakeholders concerned such as youth workers, youth, relevant ministries, employers, local authorities, etc.

3. EXPERTISE

The contract to be signed for this assignment will be a **global price contract**. It is the responsibility of the Team leader to set up his own team and mobilise human resources as needed. The team should be composed of at least one other senior expert and a junior expert. The CVs of the experts involved in this contract must be enclosed with the bid.

The number of man days requested per expert is as follows: **Team Leader** – 45 man days; **Senior Expert** -54 man days; **Junior Expert** – 80 man days.

The Team leader should possess the following minimum qualifications, skills and professional experience (to be presented in bold in the technical offer).

➤ **Team leader**

The team leader must possess the following minimum qualifications, skills and professional experience (minimum requirements).

Qualification and Skills

- Masters-level degree in social policies, employment issues and/or political sciences or degrees related to the domains of this assignment.
- Proven knowledge of evaluation methods.

Experience

- 10 years professional experience gained in project management, evaluation or consulting.
- At least 3 years of experience as a team leader of evaluation missions
- Proven experience in applying data collection methodologies and techniques.
- Proven experience in the youth, education or employment sector
- Experience in international cooperation projects/programmes.

Language skills

- Excellent drafting and communication skills in English.

Asset

- Experience in international cooperation projects/programmes in the EaP regions is an advantage.
- Experience in the youth, education or employment sector in the EaP region is an advantage
- Knowledge of Russian is an advantage (otherwise the possibility is offered to the Contractor to replace these language skills by an interpretation service when necessary. (ie: field mission in EaP countries).

➤ **Project team¹**

The project team should cover the following fields of expertise:

Qualification and Skills

- Each team member should have at least a Master's Degree Academic level in areas relevant to the evaluation
- excellent knowledge of quantitative and qualitative research methodologies
- excellent knowledge of evaluation methodologies
- proven knowledge of labour economics, education or youth policies;

General professional experience

a) *Senior: at least 10 years' experience*

b) *Junior: at least 3 years' experience*

- strong experience in applying evaluation methodologies and techniques
- experience in evaluating social and/or youth policies and programmes in particular;
- proven expertise in project management, consulting or research;
- proven experience in international cooperation projects/programmes in the EaP regions;

In his proposal, the contractor is expected to explain how these fields of expertise are covered by the members of the project team. Ideally also tasks and responsibilities should be allocated to each member of the team. The overall team constellation will be assessed by the contracting authority.

Language skills

- Each project team will have excellent drafting and communication skills in English

4. LOCATION AND DURATION

Starting period: Monday 16 June 2014.

Foreseen finishing period or duration: Monday 17 November 2014

¹ In the technical offer, a CV may not exceed 4 pages. References and data relevant to the assignment must be highlighted in bold (font minimum Times New Roman 12 or Arial, 11)

Indicative Planning

Description of Activity	Timetable
Launch of assignment and briefing session in Brussels (should be combined with meetings with EAC/EACEA)	Week 1 (June)
Submission of Inception report (3 weeks foreseen for its preparation)	Week 4 (July)
Desk report (2 weeks foreseen)	Week 5 to 6 (July-August)
Field visits (1 month foreseen)	Week 7 to 10 August)
Presentation of main findings of the field visits in Brussels	Week 11 (September)
Submission of Draft final report (be sent to the contracting authority 3 weeks before the end of the contract)	Week 14 (September)
Submission of Final report	Week 15 (October)
End of the contract	Week 17 (November)

➤ Locations of assignment

The base of operation will be that of the consultant's office location. Missions are foreseen

- to Brussels (Belgium) as it is expected that the contractors participate in three meetings in Brussels (launch meeting, after the field visits, after submission of the draft final report).
- to all the EaP countries (Specific locations will be determined during the Inception phase).

5. REPORTING REQUIREMENTS

➤ Content

The text of the report should be illustrated, as appropriate, with maps, graphs and tables. The evaluation team will submit the following reports:

	Number of maximum pages (excluding annexes)	Main Content	Timing for submission
Inception report	15 pages	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 15 Evaluation questions (maximum), Judgement criteria and Indicators • Encountered and anticipated difficulties • Detailed evaluation approach and workplan • Criteria for the selection of the case studies 	End of Inception phase
Desk report	20 pages	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Preliminary answer to each evaluation 	End of the

		<p>questions stating the information already gathered and their limitations</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Issues still to be covered and the assumptions to be tested • Full description of the methodology used to answer the evaluation questions • Field phase detailed plan • Revised outline of the draft final report- see Annexe 2 (if necessary) 	desk phase
Country notes, Powerpoint presentation and case studies	<i>5 pages per country for the country notes</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Key findings of the field visit (notably youth feedback on the programme and on their needs) • List of people interviewed • Case studies suggestions from the EaP Youth in Action Programme. 	End of the field visit
Draft Final report	55 pages	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <u>Cf. detailed structure in Annex 2</u> • Answer to the evaluation questions • Synthesis of all findings, conclusions and recommendations for a future youth regional programme (2015-2020) • Final case studies (3) illustrated with concrete examples and "temoignage" from the beneficiary (annexe) 	End of Synthesis phase
Final report		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Same specifications as above, incorporating any comments received from the concerned parties on the draft report that have been accepted 	

➤ Languages

The working language of the assignment will be English. All reports will be in English using Times New Roman 12, single spacing.

➤ Submission/comments timing

For each report, the Evaluation manager will submit comments within 15 calendar days. The revised reports incorporating comments received shall be submitted within 15 calendar days from the date of receipt of the comments. The evaluation team should provide a separate document explaining how and where comments have been integrated or the reason for non-integration of certain comments.

- Number/Format of reports copies

The Final Report (final version) will be provided in electronic version and in 3 hard copies. Each draft report will be submitted in electronic editable version.

6. ADMINISTRATIVE INFORMATION

- Interviews if necessary indicating for which experts/position

Phone interviews may be held with the proposed Team Leaders, if two offers obtain close scores following evaluation)

- Other authorized items to foresee under 'Reimbursable'

Reimbursable costs covers:

- Per Diem within the EU for meetings with DEVCO Headquarters.
- Per Diem outside the EU.
- International Travel to EaP Countries (inclusive of visa costs).
- International Travel within the EU for meetings with DEVCO Headquarters.
- Local travel (inter-city) within EaP Countries.

Should the contractor wish to include translation of any documents or provide translation of all or part of the reports, translation expenses can also be part of the reimbursable costs, with the provision that the total budget cannot be increased. Reimbursable can also cover the cost for interpretation in the mission.

No equipment can be supplied via the framework contract. The same applies to the purchase of software. An exception could be authorised in writing by the EC Task Manager and will be limited to the purchase of documents, statistics, legislative texts and similar items only when the Contractor proves to the EC Project Manager that none of the documents requested can be obtained free of charge from the Beneficiaries or from any other source. The documents will become the property of the EC at the end of the mission. The related costs must be only a negligible part of the total of the assignment. Any cost related to such documents must be approved in advance and in writing by the EC Task Manager.

- Taxation

Where a Framework Agreement is applicable, which includes more detailed provisions on this subject, these provisions shall apply.

The Contractor shall complete all the formalities with the relevant authorities to ensure that the goods and services required for performance of the Contract are exempt from taxes and duties, including VAT.

➤ Conflicts of interest

The Framework contractor and the evaluation team members must not have had a direct role in the planning or implementation of the EaP Youth in Action window. In case of doubt in the course of the assignment, the Framework contractor must inform the Contracting Authority as soon as possible of any risk of conflict of interest.

➤ Other

During all contacts with project partners, stakeholders or any other organisations, the experts will clearly identify themselves as independent consultants and not as official representatives of the European Commission.

ANNEX I: INFORMATION THAT WILL BE PROVIDED TO THE EVALUATION TEAM

- Relevant Commission decision and action fiche
- List of applicants
- List of selected projects
- Final reports of projects already received and approved
- EACEA interim evaluation, EACEA 2012-2013 annual activity reports
- DEVCO Guidelines for the creation of case studies

Note: The evaluation team has to identify and obtain any other document worth analysing, through its interviews with people who are or have been involved in the design, management and supervision of the project / programme. Resource persons to collect information and data are to be sought in the EC services, implementing body and / or public service in the partner country

ANNEX II: STRUCTURE OF THE EXECUTIVE SUMMARY & FINAL REPORT

The final report should not be longer than the number of pages indicated. Additional information on overall context, programme or aspects of methodology and analysis should be confined to annexes.

The cover page of the report shall carry the following text: *'This evaluation is supported and guided by the European Commission and presented by [name of consulting firm]. The report does not necessarily reflect the views and opinions of the European Commission'*.

The main sections of the evaluation report are as follows:

Executive Summary

A tightly-drafted, to-the-point and free-standing Executive Summary is an essential component. It should be short, no more than five pages. It should focus on the key purpose or issues of the evaluation, outline the main analytical points, and clearly indicate the main conclusions, lessons to be learned and specific recommendations.

1. Introduction

The introduction will include a description of the programme and the evaluation, providing the reader with sufficient methodological explanations to gauge the credibility of the conclusions and to acknowledge limitations or weaknesses, where relevant.

2. Answered questions/ Findings

This chapter will be presenting the evaluation questions and conclusive answers, together with evidence and reasoning.

3. Overall assessment

A chapter synthesising all answers to evaluation questions into an overall assessment of the project/programme. The detailed structure of the overall assessment should be refined during the evaluation process. The relevant chapter has to articulate all the findings, conclusions and lessons in a way that reflects their importance and facilitates the reading.

4. Conclusions and Recommendations

4.1 Conclusions

The conclusions should be organised in clusters in the chapter in order to provide an overview of the assessed subject. A paragraph or sub-chapter should pick up the 3 or 4 major conclusions organised by order of importance, while avoiding being repetitive. This practice allows better communicating the evaluation messages that are addressed to the Commission. If possible, the evaluation report identifies one or more transferable lessons, which are highlighted in the executive summary.

4.2 Recommendations on a future EaP youth programme (2015-2020)

This section should help DG DEVCO prepare the design of a new intervention for the next cycle supporting disadvantaged youth in EaP countries.

5. Annexes of the report

The report should include the following annexes:

- The Terms of Reference of the evaluation
- The names of the evaluators and their companies (CVs should be shown, but summarised and limited to one page per person)
- Detailed evaluation method including: options taken, difficulties encountered and limitations. Detail of tools and analyses.
- List of persons/organisations consulted
- Literature and documentation consulted
- Detailed answer to the Evaluation questions, judgement criteria and indicators (evaluation matrix)

Annex II: Literature and documentation consulted

- “Need Assessment Report” conducted by IBF on behalf of DEVCO in 2011
- Action fiche “ENPI East Regional Action Programme 2012 part III” (ENPI/2012/24307 and ENPI/2012/24308)
- Commission Implementing Decision (C(2012) 8530 final)
- Youth in Action Programme Guide, updated versions 2012 and 2013
- Ray Survey: Helmut Fennes, with Susanne Gadinger, Wolfgang Hagleitner: “Transnational Analysis”, Results from the surveys with project participants and projects leaders in November 2010 and May 2011; Extended version March 2014.
- Report of the 1st Eastern Partnership Youth Forum
- EACEA interim evaluation, EACEA 2012-2013 annual activity reports
- 2011 Youth in Action interim report
- 2011 Monitoring Survey of Youth in Action
- Youth in Action programme Activity Report 2012
- Statistical information from EACEA and DG EAC as well as NAs (DE/FR/PL/UK) and SALTO RC EECA.
- SALTO - REPORT on YiA development in EECA 2007-2011
- SALTO RC Inclusion - website
- EU Accession Agreement text (Youth Chapter) – Georgia, Moldova, Ukraine
- Project documents (application forms/reports) from 96 projects (48 EACEA/48 NA)

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Annex IV: Case Studies

Case Study I: EVS Caravan – Georgia

FIELD	INFO
Project reference	526628-2-GE-2012-R1
Country	Georgia
Title	Human Rights EVS Caravan
Subtitle	N/A
Abstract	Ten volunteers from Lithuania, Poland, Turkey, Sweden and Austria worked in Georgia for two months. The volunteers visited different youth centres in towns of the regions in Georgia organising human rights education activities. This project took place in different cities of Georgia in the summer of 2012.
Quote	<p>Nejdet Baran (Turkey): "With this project I could challenge myself, I gained a lot of competences and I could introduce Kurdish culture to my colleagues, and it was a great learning experience to work and live with people from different countries"</p> <p>Balys Rutkauskas (Lithuania): "For me this project was a life-changing experience (...) I think this project was important for the local communities we worked in, but also it changed my life, thanks to the skills gained during the Caravan I had more work opportunities, and even my self-esteem has increased"</p> <p>Paulina Lisik (Poland): "I will use the skills gained in my job when I will be back in Poland, And I am really glad that I could develop my facilitation skills during the Caravan"</p> <p>The slogan of the project was created by the EVS volunteers: "Take balloons, make them fly. Human Rights are not too high!"</p> <p>Arianna Karpati – Italy "During the two months that we've spent with the EVS Human Rights Caravan, we have gotten very close to each other and learnt a lot about Georgian culture. It has been great in so many ways. It was amazing to see how much we have been able to both give and receive through the project. I know that I will recommend the EVS scheme to my friends, because it is such a great opportunity to learn more about yourself, other people and also the rest of the world. For me, it was incredible to make all the different kids we have worked with smile and laugh but at the same time also think about themselves and how their actions affect the world around them. I believe that these kinds of projects really are a wonderful way to share ideas and values and in that way make the world a more connected and understanding place to live in. So to sum it all up, volunteering is an amazing way to improve the world and at the same time, yourself."</p>
Context	<p>The project targeted disadvantaged children and teenagers in Georgia with no access to non-formal education and no volunteering and no international experience. This included young people from different backgrounds: public school pupils in disadvantaged areas, users of day care centres for youth with economic difficulties, orphans and IDP (Internally Displaced Person) children. The main workshops and visits were taking places in IDP settlements, which often are far from the cities and are isolated. For most of the children, this was the first time they worked in an international/intercultural context. EVS volunteers organised different workshops and games, aiming to raise their awareness about human rights, sustainable development, at the same time giving young people a chance to express themselves and use their creativity and initiative, having the opportunity to get to know people from different countries and share their own experiences and concerns with them.</p> <p>The project also included visits to NGOs to get to know and understand the reality of youth work in Georgian regions and rural areas, the challenges that youth faces in those regions, their motivations and expectations. The EVS volunteers got to know the work of these NGOs, they have the opportunity to share their own experience and perception of Georgian society during their EVS.</p> <p>The project very much helped to promote volunteering, involving International volunteers motivated DRONI's Local volunteers to be more actively involved in the youth activities. All above very much helping to combat the Post-Soviet mentality of 'Forced Voluntarism', as in Georgian society still people don't understand – "why you should do something for nothing".</p>
Objectives	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - To raise awareness in Human Rights of youth in Georgia - To create a space in which youth can express themselves in freedom, without any kind of coercion - To get to know the reality of Georgian youth in the regions, and how NGOs work

	<p>in those places</p> <p>- To raise the European awareness and promote the European citizenship among the beneficiaries, but also between the EVS volunteers.</p>
Impact	<p>All the activities organised during the EVS Caravan were addressed to the local community, especially children and teenagers. The Caravan visited schools and NGOs in the regions in order to meet youth from the rural areas of Georgia, less developed than the biggest cities. In those regions youth has more difficulties to have intercultural opportunities and more social and economic difficulties. Project activities in Tbilisi, the capital, were focused in IDP settlements and Day Care Centres for orphans and children with fewer opportunities.</p> <p>The impact on beneficiaries was very strong and visible from the very first moment. The children and teenagers of regions have few opportunities to meet and implement activities with foreigners, and less chances to do it with people from many different countries at the same time. That facilitate to catch their attention and they show their interest and curiosity in the countries and background of the volunteers.</p> <p>This impact is reinforced by the activities that facilitated free expression of the participants, their opinions and thoughts about Human Rights. Children and teenagers have not many opportunities to express themselves freely, like in this case, with no teachers or any person that may hinder or 'control' their opinions. Most of the topics touched during activities (gender equality, discrimination, professional expectations...) create interesting debates between the participants that bring many knowledge and understanding to the EVS volunteers; who during most of the activities acted as facilitators, no active participants, giving to the children/teenagers the opportunity to express themselves without any restriction, only respect for others.</p>
Testimonial	<p>The EVS caravan gave to DRONI organisation great experience of how to work effectively with disadvantaged young people in rural areas, helped to develop new tools and activities such a "Cultural Cocktail", "Flying Babylon" where the target group was actively taking part. It made young people more enthusiastic and motivated to learn new languages, keep in touch with EVS volunteers and take part in other local and in international activities. The impact was long-term, we still see the positive outcomes – two young people (Zaza Gachava and Ledi Oqroshvili) from Skra Village and Tbilisi Sea IDP settlements participated in a short-term EVS project in 2014 in Romania.</p>
Facts & Figures Including partners and budget	<p>Project duration: three months (01/08/2012-03/11/2012) EU contribution: 12560 EUR Total budget: 14123 EUR</p> <p>Applicant and Hosting Organisation: Youth Association DRONI (Georgia)</p> <p>PARTNERS Sending Organisations:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Xena, Centro Scambi e Dinamiche Interculturali (Italy) • Europejskie Forum Młodzieży (Poland) • VšĮ Socialinis Veiksmas (Lithuania) • KEKS/ Youth Centres in the city of Molndal (Sweden) • Gaziantep Gençlik ve Kültür Derneği (Turkey)
Final useful footnotes	<p>www.droniweb.org www.facebook.com/droniorg www.facebook.com/EvsHumanRightsCaravan</p>

Photos



Official T-shirt from the Human Rights Caravan 2012, with the slogan and the places visited by the project.



Graffiti done by one of the EVS volunteers in Baratishvili Bridge, during the Street Action that was organised to close the project in November 2012.



EVS volunteers and beneficiaries from Shaumiani IDP Settlement in South Georgia during one of the workshops.



Local volunteers and EVS volunteers during one of the workshops in Caritas Day Care Center (Tbilisi)



Workshop with young people from Shaumiani IDP Settlement

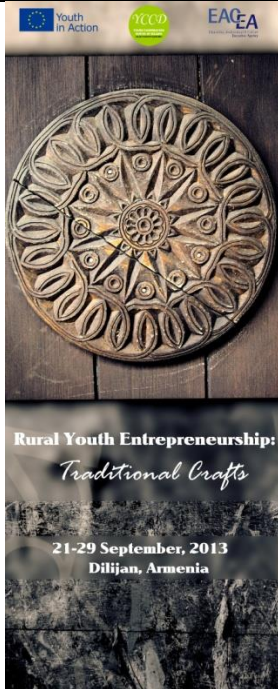
Case Study II: Rural Youth Entrepreneurship: Traditional Crafts – Armenia

FIELD	INFO
Project reference *	541163-3.1-AM-2013-R1
Country	Armenia
Title	Rural Youth Entrepreneurship: Traditional Crafts
Subtitle	N/A
Abstract	The project was an EPYW international Youth Exchange, bringing together young people from six countries for a programme of non-formal learning and intercultural exchange in Dilijan, Armenia. The project's main theme was rural entrepreneurship with a particular focus on traditional crafts.
Quote	<p><i>We value the opportunity to such projects with the European Union's support, as it is helping local youth to become more self-confident, active in the community and more aware other cultures and lifestyles. While organising this Youth Exchange, we understood that all young people have almost the same daily problems and challenges, even though they are living in different parts of Europe, and are involved in different cultural and social environments. As the lead/applicant organisation in this project, we are happy and proud of its impact, as it touched upon very relevant topics and was very visible in the local community.</i></p> <p><i>We would like to note, that the project has increased the profile of youth work as a tool to address young people's needs in an inclusive and flexible way, and boosted the reputation of YCCD NGO both in the community and in the region, said the president of the hosting and main applicant organisation, Artur Ghazaryan.</i></p>
Context	<p><i>Access to education and professional development opportunities among rural youth is very limited compared to those from cities. Therefore, outward migration and unemployment persist in rural areas. At the same time, many educated youth search for employment opportunities using the traditional channels: employment agencies, acquaintances and online sources. After a long search for employment, young people often fall into despair, feel a sense of apathy, and lose faith in their own capabilities. Young people rarely realize where their own capacities and potential to work for themselves and to set up their own enterprise.</i></p> <p><i>Youth Co-operation Center of Dilijan is located in Tavush region of Armenia, and it works with rural young people. One of the main issues encountered in YCCD's daily work is that young people living in rural areas are more prone to exclusion, do not benefit from the same personal and professional development opportunities as their urban peers, also lacking self-confidence and self-presentation skills. Formal education may be difficult to assess (as it is offered in urban centres) and vocational training often fails to respond to current learning needs and learning styles. As a result, rural youth often appear less competitive and skilled to potential employers.</i></p> <p><i>Based on their local experience in the Tavush region, YCCD decided to apply for EPYW funding to address the needs and problems of local youth in co-operation with other organisations from the region and the EU. The original project idea was to help rural youth from different countries realise their potential. In this case, traditional crafts were identified as the most appropriate field to be adopted for entrepreneurship in a rural settings, as traditional crafts are often better known in rural areas and provide a 'competitive advantage' for rural youth.</i></p> <p><i>Crafts as a self-employment tool functioned in rural areas for many centuries, and many ancient crafts are still alive and in demand across Europe. At the same time, changes in global and local economy put strains on this areas of economic activity.</i></p> <p><i>This project enabled young people to explore opportunities to live in their home communities and countries and help to address their needs locally rather than through migration. This idea builds on existing competences of young people with employment and skill development opportunities. In addition, rural youth are isolated and more than anyone need a chance for making new, especially international friends, and learn broader perspectives and cultures. These are the factors which encouraged us to develop this idea. Combining rural crafts with an international exchange programme addresses a number of important youth needs at the same time.</i></p> <p><i>Through this youth exchange, six youth NGOs from EU and EaP countries, working in partnership, offered a non-formal learning and intercultural exchange opportunity for young people from six countries to combine entrepreneurial skills with intercultural dialogue and to</i></p>

	<p>learn how to improve their own lives and also serve as good example for their peers and rural communities they live in.</p> <p>Youth Exchange intended to reach not only the direct participants – young people from rural areas - to find comprehensive ways of entrepreneurship, but also to help in rehabilitation and preservation of cultural heritage in six participating countries.</p>
Objectives	<p>The project's main objective was to encourage young people to discover and preserve their cultural heritage while using it as a tool to develop their creativity and entrepreneurship, thus increasing young people's self-confidence and reducing the level of unemployment.</p>
Impact	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • New handicraft techniques were shared through practical (learning by doing) methods • New fields of handicraft work (culture) discovered by the participants, leading to new business ideas • Network of rural young people formed, to be used for future cooperation (online master classes, sharing new achievements and skills, etc.) • Raising awareness of e-business including marketing and branding tools • Community fair of Intercultural handicraft and souvenirs in the town of Dilijan, including national dances and music • Practising 'local business cycle', including selling the handicraft items made during the workshops at the Community Fair in Dilijan • A Facebook page in order to promote and sell local handicrafts and souvenirs • A video by local TV on the project, including participants' impressions and Community Fair; the video has been broadcasted by regional TV and online
Testimonial	<p>Through his participation in the YE program Armenian participant Tigran Atabekyan learnt the popular handicraft decoupage from the Polish group. As an active participant of the decoupage workshop, Tigran learnt and got interested in the technique, and thinks that, this new type of handicraft could be very interesting and useful for his community.</p> <p><i>"As a graduate student from Yerevan Fine Arts Academy - Dilijan Branch, I thought that I already knew a lot, but during the workshops I observed and learnt so many techniques and types of working, which I am going to combine in the handcrafting field I am currently working in (carpet-making), so I will get a new type of final product. While participating in this Youth Exchange, my first international experience, I had a great chance to live in an intercultural environment for one week. Through this programme I developed my knowledge about Poland, Lithuania, Georgia, Moldova and Romania, improved my English and made a solid network of young people, which will be useful during my future activities. Recently I opened a Facebook page called 'Handmade in Dilijan' through which I will present and sell local souvenirs and handicrafts. I will also include other local young people in this. I believe this will be a profitable and sustainable activity for me" says Tigran [Tigran's photo below]</i></p> <p><i>The recruitment of the participants from all six countries was based on their geographical and educational background. Six partner organisations did their best to actively involve young people from rural communities, and who were familiar with national handcrafting technique (to be shared with others), and who have high motivation and interest in developing their entrepreneurial knowledge and skills and run their own small business - says Ina Ciobanu, the Romanian group leader.</i></p>
Facts&Figures Incl. partner and budget info	<p>Project duration: five months (12/08/2013-20/12/2013)</p> <p>Six partner organisations involved in the Youth Exchange. Each Partner organisation worked a group of five young people - one team leader and four participants, coming mainly from rural areas of each country.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - "EurogemsLt" Association for Social Initiatives, Lithuania - "Asociatia Super Tineri", Romania - Stowarzyszenie "Dorosli-Dzieciom" (Association "Adults for Children"), Poland - CISV, Georgia - "MilleniuM" Training and Development Institute, Moldova - Youth Cooperation Center of Dilijan NGO, Armenia <p>EU contribution = 15776 EUR Total budget = 18715 EUR</p>
Final useful footnotes (website)	<p>Album with YE Photos:</p> <p>https://www.facebook.com/media/set/?set=a.615146348536081.1073741831.119492428101478&type=3&uploaded=31</p>

Video about the YE from Tavush TV (regional TV station in Armenia):
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=7timj0T_9u8#t=223

Photos



Project Banner



Visiting local handicraft shops in Dilijan – wood ornament workshop (YE participant from Georgia, Robert Kavtiashvili)



YE participants developing their own craft ideas



Visiting local handicraft shops in Dilijan – wood ornament workshop (YE participant from Armenia, Tigran Atabekyan)



Rural Crafts Community fair in Dilijan

Case Study III: Formal + Non-Formal = Impact – Moldova

FIELD	INFO
Project reference *	547390-3.1-MD-2013-R2
Country	Moldova
Title	Formal + Non-Formal = Impact
Subtitle	N/A
Abstract	The training course aimed at bringing together teachers from EU and EaP countries to build mutual understanding and exchange experiences on how best to combine formal and non-formal learning (NFL) methods to increase the impact of learning process and to encourage self-development of young people.
Quote	<p>In the last 2 years, EPYW helped in particular our organisation to achieve its main aim. We've established an impressive number of partnerships which resulted in our participation in different training courses, youth exchanges or EVS projects. The organisation promoted itself at the international level, provided its members with quality learning opportunities to put in practice their project ideas. Moreover, we offered chance to more than 400 young people to take active part in an international training and to develop their skills in different fields. On the other hand we got the chance to organise projects in Moldova, by applying directly to Executive Agency. This helped "MilleniuM" to get more experience in organising and managing international projects in Moldova.</p> <p>The main mission of "MilleniuM" Training and Development Institute is to contribute to the local development through collaboration and partnership, through offering educational support in a non-formal way and through providing opportunities for young people to increase their competences and gain multicultural experiences.</p> <p>Lately, we started to work with teachers on using non-formal education methods in their work. We discovered that this sector is one with the biggest potential in Moldova. Formal education is perceived as being very rigid and less inclusive, comparing to non-formal education. By giving the chance to the teachers to experience different non-formal methods, we ensure a quality educational support from all points of view.</p> <p>- Vitalie Cirhana, MilleniuM Director</p>
Context	<p>The Training Course "Formal + Non-Formal = Impact" aimed at bringing together teachers from different European and Eastern European and Caucasian countries to build mutual understanding and exchange experiences on how to combine formal and non-formal learning methods in the best way.</p> <p>Using a wide variety of learning methods (group work, discussions, interactive presentations, creative workshops, study visits, etc.), the participants worked on making the learning process interactive, effective, fun and as creative as possible. The project inspired teachers to bring these practices back home and improve their daily work with their pupil.</p> <p>In many rural areas, children and teenager often do not have the possibility to go to youth centres or associations, because they do not exist there. The only institutions, in which youth work can be practiced is quite often the local school. Teachers have to fill this gap and provide children and teenagers with all the important competencies, which are needed in today's world. This training allows teachers to think outside of the box, to see their work in a different light and to find out more about effective and fun learning methods. Youth work also provides an open and inclusive platform to reach out to young people at risk of exclusion, regardless of their educational background.</p>
Objectives	<p>All topics of the training was focused on:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Different types of learning and education (formal, non-formal, informal, lifelong learning) • Practical part: Developing skill on facilitating NFL activities. • Reflection about your learning outcomes, YouthPass key competencies, Intercultural learning. • ERASMUS+, Partnership building, follow-up ideas, future cooperation.
Impact	<p>As a results of the project teachers:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Understanding the benefits of combining non-formal learning methods into their curriculums, and • Understanding the role of non-formal education that becoming more recognized as beneficial to the life-long learning context of every human being • Increasing the understanding of non-formal education techniques and increasing participants' competencies on how to plan, facilitate, and evaluate the non-formal learning process and how these methods can be incorporated into their daily work with youth and during Erasmus+ projects.

Testimonial	<p>Alisa Yasiuk has been working as a teacher of the English language in the Private Linguistic Gymnasium in Ukraine, Kyiv for almost 3 years. Before that she worked as a teacher of German (4 years).</p> <p>It was the first time she participated in an international training course and many things were a discovery for her – the power of working in a team together with colleagues (teachers) from other countries and experiencing non-formal learning activities, which were not only useful to gain new ideas on approaches and methods on working with youth, but also highly involving and fun for the learners.</p> <p>„Before coming to the training I knew almost nothing about non-formal education, but I gained a lot of concrete ideas on how to apply non-formal learning elements in my daily teaching at school. I see a lot of potential in changing the approach to teaching and learning at schools in my country – we can all achieve a lot more if students are actively involved in the learning process, see the use of it and enjoy it. Non-formal learning methods can help a great deal in it! I have already shared my experiences with the other teachers at school and we intend to cooperate more actively with the local NGO Vinnytsia Regional Centre for Information "Kreativ" to introduce more non-formal learning in our school.”</p> <p>“I did not expect that the training will be so intensive – almost all the time we were busy with some activities, but I enjoyed it a lot, because the time passed by quickly, through great interaction with colleagues from other countries I broadened my outlook on the world and learning process and in general it helped me to become more imaginative at my work with my students.”</p> <p>“I communicated regularly in English, for I wanted to develop my communicative skills, as it is almost impossible to communicate with native speakers at my gymnasium. Sometimes it was a little bit complicated to express my feelings and emotions (I tried to think at first in my mind how to say it in English), but I managed it and really enjoyed making friends from many different cultures.”</p> <p>Ciro Sabatino has been working as a teacher of Italian Grammar and Literature, History in Centro Scolastico "Napoli Est" in Napoli, Italy for 2 years.</p> <p>“It was my first participation in this kind of project and in general I had never been in Eastern part of Europe. It was a great chance for me to connect myself to the rest of the world, to meet very interesting people, who are teachers in other countries, express myself creatively, enjoy the pleasure of being a role of learner and discover the new way of how the learning process could be organised – a non-formal learning approach. This training course has changed my point of view.”</p> <p>“I see a lot of potential of using non-formal learning in school, particularly as the way to develop in the people the sense of citizenship, promote cooperation and respect to each other.”</p> <p>“After coming back from the training I already have taken many ideas from non-formal learning and apply them during my lessons – for example, teaching Geography I used the same project I have made with my team, during the training to teach to pupils how is important to focus on poverty in the world. For Italian Literature classes I involved my students in analysing ‘Divine Comedy’ and all together we made a short show when everyone was a character. I have observed that my students were very surprised about those new ways of teaching but, after the beginning disorientation, they were so happy being involved in these project and to be a very active part of the cultural process!</p> <p>“In Italy we are used to have very formal lessons, but if we apply more non-formal learning elements in school, this would mean that students don't imagine a schools as a "jail" but a place where culture means creativity and passion!”</p>
Facts&Figures Incl. partners and budget	<p>Georgia - Axalgazrda liderta klubi (ALK) Italy - Insight_education project design Romania - ASOCIAȚIA DE TINERI DIN ARDEAL Slovenia - Povod, Institution for culture and and development of the international relations in culture Ukraine - Vinnytsia Regional Centre for Information “Kreativ” Belarus - Public Union “Education Center “POST” Latvia - ASSOCIATION OF INITIATIVES AND COOPERATION “YARD” Turkye - Kaş İlçe Milli Eğitim Müdürlüğü</p> <p>The total amount of the EU grant was 18414,00 EUR (94% of the project budget)</p>
Final useful footnotes	Facebook group: Formal+NonFormal=Impact

Photos:



Getting to know each other using non-formal teacher profile



Needs of young people and 21-st century competences



Course participants – group photo

