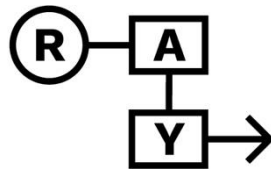




EUROPEAN UNION



Research-based
analysis of European
youth programmes

RAY ANALYSIS MEETING

10-12 December 2023

Reykjavik

HARVESTING, NOTES & DOCUMENTATION

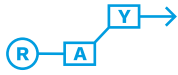
20 DECEMBER 2023

Erasmus+
Enriching lives, opening minds.



FINNISH NATIONAL
AGENCY FOR EDUCATION





1. SUMMARY

The first-ever RAY Analysis Meeting took place from 10 to 12 December 2023 in Reykjavik, Iceland. The meeting was organised, planned and implemented by the RAY Network Coordination (at the Finnish National Agency for Education, EDUFI) and the RAY Transnational Research Team. We are very grateful, that the Icelandic National Agency (at Rannís) was hosting this meeting and supporting us with the planning and logistics.

The aims of the meeting were to provide time and space to discuss the datasets and first findings from the monitoring surveys of Erasmus+ Youth & European Solidarity Corps as well as to connect and reconnect RAY researchers.

We had a diverse group of research colleagues (from nearly 20 partner countries), some who are involved in the RAY network and its research activities for a long time and some who only started working on RAY recently and attended their first-ever RAY meeting.

Our agenda included a variety of different sessions - from discussing tools for analysis and technical aspects, to providing enough time to brainstorm first ideas for future cooperation, e.g. regional collaborations between some research partners.

Together we explored the transnational datasets for the monitoring surveys and optionally national datasets if research partners had the possibility to take a look prior to the meeting. We discussed programme journeys of specific groups in both programmes, for example young people and youth workers. Furthermore, we also explored different topics, such as participation and inclusion aspects and related data as well as we talked about key differences between programme generations.

We adjusted the programme according to the needs of the participating researchers, e.g. we held a session on exploring the basics for getting started with working with national data sets, e.g. syntax, data cleaning...

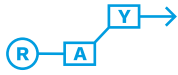
The adapted programme can be found below as well as a pdf attached.

2. ADAPTED PROGRAMME (231212)

SUNDAY 10 DECEMBER 2023		
<i>throughout the day</i>	<i>ARRIVALS</i>	
19:00	WELCOME DINNER	<i>optional</i>
MONDAY 11 DECEMBER 2023		
09:00	WELCOMING & The RAY B C's Who or what is RAY? Basic vocabularies for newcomers and not-so newcomers. Many chances for experienced RAY researchers to tell their RAY stories.	<i>official programme</i>
10:30	COFFEE BREAK	<i>other</i>



10:50	<p>RAY MON (Erasmus+ Youth) & RAY SOC (European Solidarity Corps). Tools for analysis.</p> <p>Look back at previous RAY Monitoring of the European youth programmes, the revamping of the surveys and the current data sets. What do the RAY surveys look like? What are the main tools to work with RAY data? (code book, syntax files, disaggregation etc.) Time for troubleshooting.</p>	<i>official programme</i>
11:50	<p>RAY IMPACT I</p> <p>A look back at what kind of impact RAY had in the past on different levels (practice, policy etc.). How can we continue and foster this into the future? Working on different contexts and impact levels.</p>	<i>official programme</i>
12:50	<i>LUNCH</i>	<i>other</i>
14:00	<p>RAYDY?</p> <p>What topics and data did we prepare? What should we adapt on the spot?</p>	<i>official programme</i>
14:30 (adapted)	<p>GROUP I: GETTING STARTED – BASICS FOR WORKING WITH NATIONAL DATA</p> <p>Exploring the basics for getting started with working with national data sets, e.g. syntax, data cleaning...</p> <p>GROUP II: INTERPRETATION OF TRANSNATIONAL DATA (INCLUSION AND PARTICIPATION)</p> <p>Interpretation of transnational data and discussing them along different contexts</p>	<i>official programme</i>
16:00	<i>COFFEE BREAK</i>	<i>other</i>
16:30 (adapted)	CONTINUATION OF GROUP WORK	<i>official programme</i>
18:00	END OF DAY 1	
		<i>other</i>



18:30	DINNER	
19:30	SPECIAL PROGRAMME: SKY LAGOON	<i>evening programme</i>
TUESDAY	12 DECEMBER 2023	
09:30	<p>START OF DAY 2</p> <p>Another chance to connect and reconnect while learning more about the insights harvested on day 1 and getting ready for the next group sessions.</p>	<i>official programme</i>
10:00	<p>COMPARISON ACROSS SURVEYS AND PROGRAMME GENERATIONS - GROUP WORK I</p> <p>Working on the interpretation of transnational data. Focus on comparison across surveys and comparison across programme generations</p>	<i>official programme</i>
<i>in between</i>	<i>COFFEE BREAK</i>	<i>other</i>
11:30 (adapted)	<p>GROUP WORK II</p> <p>Working on the interpretation of transnational data. Focus on young people within Erasmus+ Youth and youth workers as participants</p>	<i>official programme</i>
12:30	<i>LUNCH</i>	<i>other</i>
14:30 (moved from morning to afternoon)	<p>CROSS-COUNTRY COLLABORATIONS</p> <p>After all these insights from transnational data, this is the space to come together with other researchers from regional clusters, other countries with similar interests or similar youth work clusters</p>	<i>official programme</i>
15:30	<i>COFFEE BREAK</i>	<i>other</i>
15:45 (adapted)	<p>CROSS TABULATION</p> <p>A brainstorming on needs and wishes</p>	<i>official programme</i>
16:15	CLOSING SESSION	<i>official programme</i>



	We implemented our first RAY Analysis Meeting. Time for reflection and evaluation as well as next steps.	
17:00	END OF DAY 2	
18:30	DINNER-OUT	<i>optional evening programme</i>
WEDNESDAY	13 DECEMBER 2023	
	<i>DEPARTURE</i>	

3. PROGRAMME SPECIFICS, NOTES AND HARVESTING

DAY 1, 11 December 2023

We started the RAY Analysis Meeting with a **short hello and introduction** of the aims and the programme. This was followed by getting to know each other and connecting activities as well as a quiz on the RAY Network, RAY research and other activities as well as the European youth programmes.

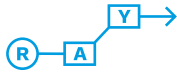
In the next session we looked at the revamping of the **RAY MON (Erasmus+ Youth) & RAY SOC (European Solidarity Corps) surveys**, including details on the modularisation, response data, attributes, tools for analysis such as information on data cleaning, non-responses, imputations etc. as well as had time for a Q&A and feedback on the surveys and tools for analysis.

In the **RAY Impact session**, we took a look back at what kind of impact RAY had in the past on different levels (practice, policy etc.). Two video messages (by Helmut Fennes and Ozgehan Senyuva) supported this. We started developing contexts which we need to focus on in the future to further foster RAY impact. A brainstorming (see question in the general slides pdf) on the development of the following contexts/generic impact level descriptions took place: youth work, (youth work) research, policy implementation, policy development. The groups introduced their outputs after the lunch break.

We decided to adapt the programme at this point in order to meet the needs and wishes of the participating researchers. Therefore, we changed our initial plan of discussing the transnational findings and contextualize them according to the four levels of impact. This was still done in some sessions but not as a general common thread within all group work sessions.

In the afternoon of day one, we worked in **two groups**:

>> Group I: Getting started – basics for working with national data: Exploring the basics for getting started with working with national data sets, e.g. syntax, data cleaning.



>> Group II: Interpretation of transnational data (inclusion and participation): Interpretation of transnational data and discussing them along different contexts

Group II discussed and developed the contexts further. Below are the harvested notes from this group:

Youth Research

SNAC¹. They actively draw on RAY data and some have collaborated with RAY before.

National context researchers may use RAY data. This depends on how big of a topic youth work is in Academia and other research contexts (i.e. research institutes) within each national context.

RAY data adds evidence to inform bigger discussions in relevant disciplines such as social work, sustainability, digitalization, etc.

The EU-CoE Youth Partnership². Researchers in the context of the Youth partnership may draw from RAY data.

Policy development

European Commission is a clear target of RAY. They take decisions about the future of the programmes, bound by the CULT parliament committee who has to agree to the budget of the programme. Identify clear interest of European Commission (Proposals) & Parliament (Budget – Important when it comes to future of program given financial concerns). When are the next milestones when the Commission can be addressed? Example: the past consultation of EU Youth Strategy by the Commission. The midterm evaluation is the main interest right now.

National authorities could also meaningfully use RAY data for policy development. Some NAs have the structure and the power to influence national youth policy, for example with the input of RAY. National Agencies can also influence national level support

Organisations active at EU level (European youth forum, ERICA, Eurodesk, JEF Europe, Eyca) also have power when it comes to youth policy implementation at European level. What is the relationship between them and RAY data?

EU-CoE Youth Partnership². Draws on RAY data. How to further support this?

Value of new propositions and plans being evidence-based as a way to back up their value and ensure their usefulness.

Different interest of national actors towards youth policy:

Some view NAs as implementation of programme

Some view NAs as policy drivers

¹ Strategic National Cooperation Activities. They are a long-term TCA (Transnational Cooperation Activities) just like RAY. They also do research (and other activities) on specific topics of relevance such as digitalization or mental health in the context of the European Youth programmes.

² The EU-CoE Youth Partnership is a collaboration between the Council of EU and the Commission, a think tank on youth policy and youth work, with a pool of European researchers that gathers knowledge on youth policy and youth (best) practice, with a special interest on strengthening of democracy and active citizenship. It contributes to implementing The EU Youth Strategy, which provides policy guidance in the field of youth and provided the task of establishing the European youth work agenda



Policy implementation

National Agencies have power at the policy implementation level. They can use RAY data to determine how to support their beneficiaries in terms of reaching project outcomes, for example, by promoting specific project topics or deciding on the right workshop and training offer.

National Agencies are also interested to know how they are doing at meeting the goals of the programme.

Different interest of national actors towards youth policy:

Some view NAs as implementation of programme

Some view NAs as policy drivers

Value of new propositions and plans being evidence-based as a way to back up their value and ensure their usefulness.

SALTOs?³

Youth workers

3 main clusters of youth workers:

Organizations who are active at EU level and have an impact on policy.

Organizations at ground level (national) who are active in EU youth work.

Organizations at ground level (national) who are not active EU youth work.

How do they relate to RAY data, how could RAY data be useful for them?

In some national context: youth workers who work at national level are too busy with managing concrete problems of young people and do not have time to engage in youth work at European level, let alone look at European research. Could RAY data be useful in this context?

Youth workers need concrete, contextualized input that is readily applicable in their practice, such as: factsheets, recommendations, etc. What is the specific practice context of these youth workers?

Young people as data users

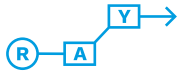
Young people are not the target of RAY data, but they have expressed interest in it in some contexts, especially after taking the surveys. We also observe that a lot of MON PP respondents intend to get a Phd in the German national sample, maybe in others as well. We could think of making the data more easily available to young people, even if it is not targeted to them. This is already underway with the RAY data portal.

Young People: very critical of how they can add to the process, especially to young people who aren't engaged with the programmes

> Should consider them as data users

> Make our reports more youthful? More accessible?

³ SALTO-YOUTH stands for Support, Advanced Learning and Training Opportunities for Youth. SALTO-YOUTH is a network of seven Resource Centres working on European priority areas within the youth field. **They were not mentioned in the discussion**, but they also draw from RAY data. Some SALTO Resource Centres are working cross-sectoral.



DAY 2, 12 December 2023

The second day started with a small energizer as well as the introduction of the programme. We adapted the programme (see day one) and implemented **two group sessions** before lunch. We started with **comparisons across surveys and programme generations:**

Group 1: MON and SOC comparing impact and reflection

Group 2: MON impact and reflection across survey generations

The following notes were harvested for group 1:

Comparing of SOC and MON PP datasets where there are equivalent questions, except for the questions about the involvement of local community, which only appear in SOC

Q: How easy was it for you to fully express yourself in the project?

Solidarity projects are (more) self-organised than volunteering or exchange projects, this could be the reason why a higher percentage of the SOL participants gave a 10 out of 10 when asked how easy it was to express themselves in the project. This is 15percent more than VOL PP and 12percent more than MON PP. SOL seems to provide a group of self-organised peers that creates more space for participation than the other two kinds of projects. The difference between VOL and SOL is expectable, but MON seems a bit too low.

Q: How actively involved the local community/ how well was the project received? (VOL and SOL only)

SOL has a clearly higher percentage of 9s and 10s. Could be because the projects are born directly from local needs and expectations. Are they really better connected to the local community than VOL? It is reasonable to think so because VOL happen within an organization that already has a specific relation to the local community and it is still focused on “volunteering abroad”, while SOL is more bottom up, with the focus on supporting a self-organized youth initiative. On the other hand, it is difficult to feel confident about what these answers truly mean in terms of the relation to the local community, since they come from the volunteers themselves exclusively.

Q: How close to Europe did you feel before/after the project?

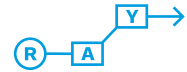
We should compute difference scores in the transnational sample, which is big enough

Q: In the project, I learned something about...

Items have the same ranking for VOL and SOC, except “using different languages for communication”, which ranks last for SOC and second for VOL. This makes sense taking into account that SOL is a local project and VOL international volunteering. However, the rate of agreement with the item in SOC is still quite high for a local project (over 30 percent). We think this relates to SOL projects that involve different local communities with different languages, possibly indicating how SOL projects contribute to inclusion and diversity. We could look at this in more detail by seeing whether the SOL participants who agreed belong to regions with multilingual communities.

Furthermore, when taking a look at the top 4 ranked items, we see that all MON, SOL and VOL chiefly result in learning about cooperation, communication, creativity and empathy. These seem to be (some of the) core learning outcomes of the European Youth Programmes. Interestingly, empathy scores about 10 percent higher in ESC (VOL and SOL) than in MON.

At the same time, using digital technologies ranks last or second to last in all datasets. We are surprised about this since these projects happened around COVID time. It may be that, while digital technologies were used in the projects, young people already knew about them, so they did not learn in this respect.



Q: After the project, I am more self-confident.

We would expect SOL PP to feel more self-confident after the project than MON (we do not have VOL for comparison) because they had more agency and opportunities to tackle challenges within their projects. However, there is virtually no difference. We conclude it may be because going abroad, which happens in MON, may be enough of a challenge to boost PPs confidence just as much as the challenges associated to putting together a SOL project.

It is interesting that the SOL format seems to foster participation within the project and attachment to it as well as strengthening the ties to the local community more than VOL and MON, but it does not seem to support the PPs confidence more than the other two.

Q: through the project, I improved my ability to engage in tackling societal (SOL) /sociopolitical challenges (MON).

It would be interesting to compare these questions, but we do not think they are comparable, since societal and sociopolitical challenges are not the same. Still SOC agree and strongly agree more than MON. It may be because sociopolitical challenges is something difficult to understand, since there is a lot of people responding neither agree nor disagree when compared to other questions (30 percent).

Also, it may not make sense to pool all MON PP together in this question. Youth participation projects should be more about sociopolitical challenges than YE. Maybe it would make more sense to compare those to SOL if we were to do so.

Methodological remarks:

Consider making societal/sociopolitical challenges comparable

Include more questions about problems / obstacles

Can we do something so that we do not end up with so many datasets?

The following notes were harvested for group II:

Brainstorming our approach to comparability to the MON data across survey generations. Questions from the MON PP Impact data were presented.

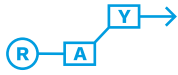
Take aways from the discussion:

- > *In general, methodological speaking: The 5-point likert scale is becoming the standard, research exist that can be referenced to explain what happens when the neutral option is added into response options.*
- > *There are methodological pitfalls for comparing survey generations. The group worked very well wrapping our collective heads around the intricacies of comparability. In the end we set the stage for us to reflect on how we wish to address the methodological pitfalls. The change was understood and received by the group. Things we wanted to consider:*
- > *How generous can we be in saying questions are comparable?*
- > *What does it mean for longitudinal analysis?*
- > *Should we be more pragmatic or intricate?*
- > *Be confident when you say we cannot compare, and aware of the complexity when we can*
- > *Possible options to addressing comparability that were mentioned:*
- > *Using qualitative methods to supplement our understanding of the concepts we wish to capture in the quantitative questions*
- > *Statistical approaches?*

The second group work session (the participants could choose from five options) was aiming of **discussing and interpreting transnational data along the following respondents:**

Group I: Youth workers as participants

Group II: Young people MON



We continued after lunch with the **session on cross-country collaborations**. We provided the space (see guiding questions in the general slides pdf) for cooperation between researchers, and the participants chose how they want to form the groups and what they want to brainstorm, e.g. discuss with other researchers from regional clusters, other countries with similar interests or similar youth work clusters.

Four groups were formed and fruitful discussions took place:

1. European Identity Group: analysis on national data, share and see what we can compare and discuss (touched upon EU enlargement and what it means for EU identity)
2. Nordic Group: next steps in national analysis, what limitations there are, discuss with NAs what their interests are
3. Eastern Group: a lot of qualitative ideas. In the eastern context, youth workers who work with young people every day are sometimes not able to participate in youth worker mobilities themselves. Using transnational data, to look at what are the predictors of learning be sure to look at where these learners are located to be useful for National Agencies.
4. Germany/Romania/Turkey: Germany shared methodology, Romania makes first national reports next year. Discussion of methodology and numbers of participants as some countries were missing, turns out they went to Turkey. Germany and Turkey decide to cooperate in the future.

Following, a **short session on cross tabulation** took place. We brainstormed together what types of cross tabulations make sense and came up with the following:

Past cross tabulations

- > Educational level
- > YPWFO
- > Gender

Wishlist

- > Discrimination experience / binary
- > Gender
- > Previous project experience
- > Crisis affected
- > Level of experience of youth workers
- > Digital & face to face

The last session was dedicated to **reflection and feedback**. Personal take-away points were discussed in groups as well as an evaluation form was filled in. The next steps for the analysis of the data sets as well as a communication activities outlook were presented (see general slides pdf).

5. DOCUMENTATION

>> The following can be found via this link: <https://data.researchyouth.net/s/EdeXHtH7Xo-PRMLE?path=%2F>

- The presentations from the RAY transnational research team, including a (nerdy) overview of the surveys (details on the survey and modularisation, response data, attributes, tools for analysis such as information on data cleaning, non-responses,



imputations etc) as well as first transnational research findings (diversity, participation, MON/SOC comparison, young people, youth workers, etc.) which were discussed during the meeting.

- Files: Syntax for data cleaning, syntax for initial analysis RAY MON, syntax for initial analysis for RAY SOC

>> The general slides including the daily programme as well as the next steps for the analysis of the data sets and a communication activities outlook can be found here: https://www.researchyouth.net/wp-content/uploads/2023/12/General-slides_RAY-Analysis-Meeting-10-12-December-2023_revised.pdf

>> The quiz from day one can be found here: <https://www.researchyouth.net/wp-content/uploads/2023/12/The-RAY-BCs.pdf>

>> A short article on the RAY website as well as photos (by Tom Pincus and Erik Dubs) from the meeting and the digital graphic recording by Filippo Buzzini from Sketchy Solutions (www.sketchysolutions.ch) can be found here: <https://www.researchyouth.net/news/ray-analysis-meeting-10-12-december-2/>

>> Related postings can be found on the RAY social media channels: [Facebook](#), [Instagram](#)