

Kartalla

– findings on European youth programmes

Fact
Sheet

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Young people and youth workers who have participated in European youth programmes are satisfied with the experiences and skills gained from the projects

- 1.** The perceived significance and success of the projects was very high on average.
- 2.** The experienced closeness to Europe improved through participation in the projects.
- 3.** According to the respondents, the focus areas of European youth programmes were implemented very well in the projects with regard to the promotion of inclusion and participation, well with regard to support for sustainability and relatively well with regard to digitalisation.

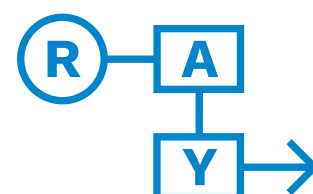
The views and experiences of those who responded to the RAY Network's survey regarding participation in Erasmus+ Youth and European Solidarity Corps projects are generally very positive. The respondents to the survey are very satisfied with their participation

in the projects as well as the activities, experiences, knowledge and skills offered by the projects. This can also be considered to be a success because the projects examined and the related surveys were carried out between 2021 and 2023, during a highly exceptional period of time in Europe due to the COVID-19 pandemic and the war that broke out in Ukraine, which had a significant effect on young people's lives. The projects and their participants form a diverse group in terms of their backgrounds, objectives and areas of interest.

The respondents are people who have taken part in a youth exchange or youth participation project (PP MON), youth worker mobility project (YWM MON) or volunteering project (VOL SOC) as a participant, in a project team as a member (PT MON) or in international training and seminars as a participant (TCA MON). In this fact sheet, we present results concerning the data from Finland.



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Background factors

- Of the young people who have participated in youth exchanges, youth participation projects or volunteering activities, one in five respondents lived in a rural environment.
- The majority gender identity among all groups of respondents was female.
- The goal of achieving a high level of education was highlighted among all groups of respondents.
- The majority of the young people who participated in youth exchanges or youth participation projects were either in education (60%) or in paid work (22%). Similarly, more than half of the youth workers were in paid work.
- One in four respondents described themselves as belonging to a group that is discriminated against (project team members and participants in youth exchanges, youth participation projects and volunteering activities).
- General satisfaction with life was high among all groups of respondents.

Experiences of participation

Motivation for participation:

The majority of respondents among those who had participated in youth exchanges, youth participation

projects, youth worker mobility projects and youth sector training and seminars identified either learning something new or gaining new experiences as the most important reason for their participation. The majority of those who had participated in seminars and training, as well as youth workers who had participated in youth worker mobility projects, considered exploring the project topic and improving something in their network or organisation to be important factors for their participation in the project. Knowledge-related and professional factors were highlighted as reasons for participation among these two groups.

Among the group who had participated in youth exchanges and youth participation projects, getting to know other cultures, having fun, challenging themselves and developing their language skills were highlighted as more important motivating factors for participation in projects than among the other groups of respondents. Among this group, individual factors related to knowledge and experiences were more strongly highlighted as reasons for participation in projects than among the other groups of respondents.

Programme priorities¹:

The project participants felt that the project objectives had been met very well with regard to the promotion of inclusion and participation, well with regard to support for sustainability and relatively well with regard to digitalisation.

Project experience:

The survey asked each of the five groups of respondents to assess their personal experience of the project on a scale of 1 (poor) to 5 (very good). The experiences were perceived to be very good among all groups: the

¹ The Erasmus+ and European Solidarity Corps programmes for 2021-2027 aim to promote inclusion and diversity, digital transformation, environmental responsibility, and active citizenship.

median and mode of the responses were the same, i.e. a full five, in each of the groups.

All groups considered participation in the projects to be relatively easy in terms of affordability. Moreover, all groups found it to be relatively easy to express themselves. Those who had participated in international youth sector training and seminars ranked self-expression as the easiest aspect, while those who had participated in youth exchanges and youth participation projects on average found self-expression to be slightly less easy than the other groups.

Those who had participated in youth exchanges and youth participation projects, youth worker mobility projects and youth sector training and seminars were asked to assess how much they enjoyed participating in the project. Each of these three groups on average said that they very much enjoyed participating in the project,

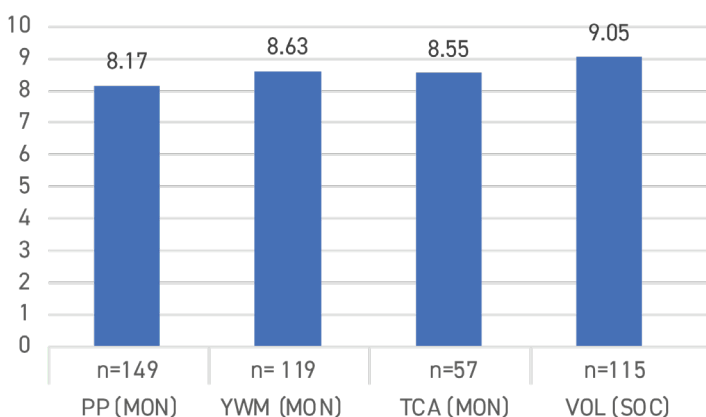
with this perceived level of enjoyment being slightly higher among those who had participated in training and seminars and slightly lower among those who had participated in youth projects.

Excluding project team members, all respondents were asked how meaningful the projects were to them. On average, the perceived significance of the projects was very high. The perceived personal significance of the projects was particularly high among those who had participated in volunteering activities (graph 1).

Among each group of respondents, experienced closeness to Europe improved through participation in the project. The comparatively largest improvement in the experienced level of closeness occurred among the groups who had participated in volunteering projects, youth exchanges and youth participation projects (graph 2).

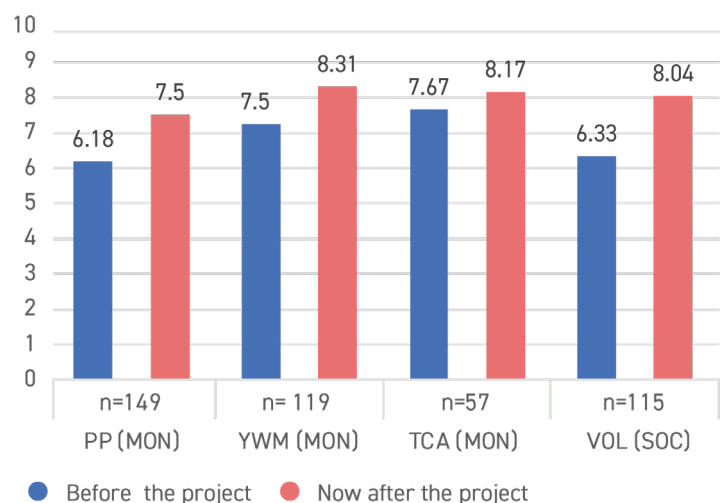
Graph 1: **How meaningful was the project for you? 0 (not at all meaningful) – 10 (very meaningful)**

Average scores by respondent group



Graph 2: **Thinking back, how close did you feel to Europe before the project? And how close do you feel to Europe now? Scale 0-10**

Average scores by respondent group



Each group of respondents was asked to assess the impact of recent crises on the projects, as the COVID-19 pandemic was still ongoing at the time of the survey, and the war in Ukraine started in Europe. However, the effects of these crises were perceived to be relatively low, although there was great variation in the responses among those who had participated in youth and volunteering projects. The perceived effect was the highest among the project team members.

Youthpass:

Youthpass is a certificate of participation in which the participant lists the learning outcomes that are acquired during the project. It is also a tool for recognising non-formal learning in European youth programmes. The majority of respondents had not used a Youthpass certificate, but the perceived usefulness of Youthpass was clearly higher among the groups of respondents that most actively used the certificate (i.e. participants in

youth worker mobility projects and participants in training and seminars) compared to the other groups.

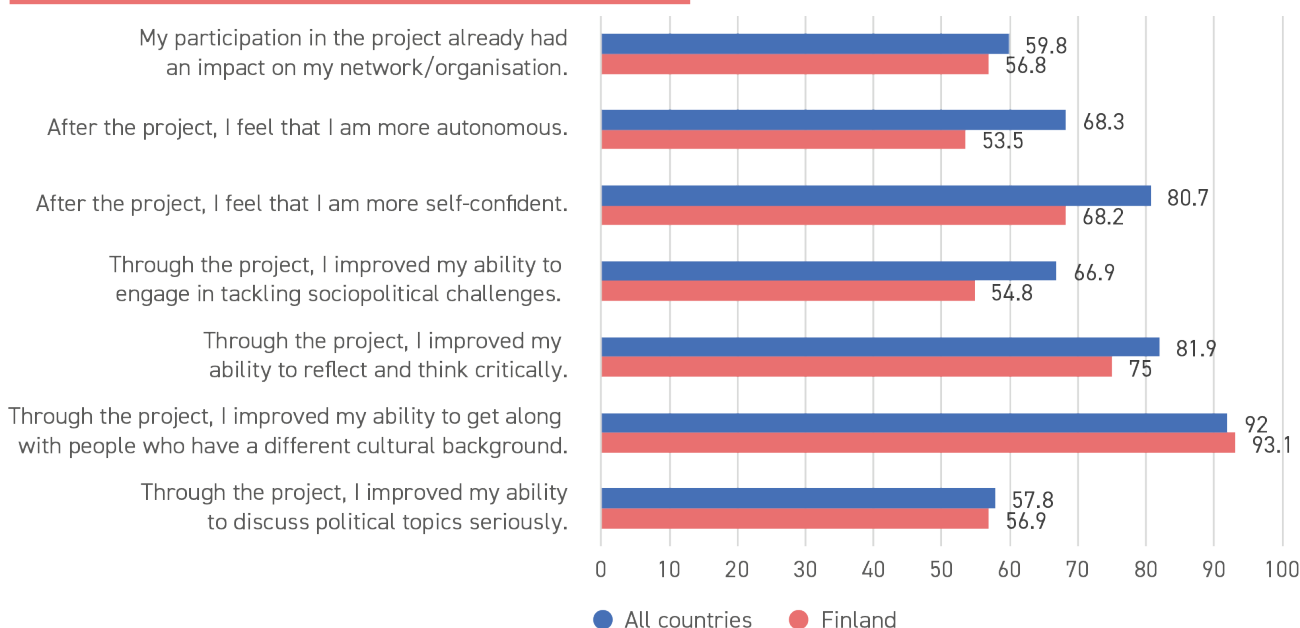
Perceived impact

Participants in youth exchange projects and youth participation projects:

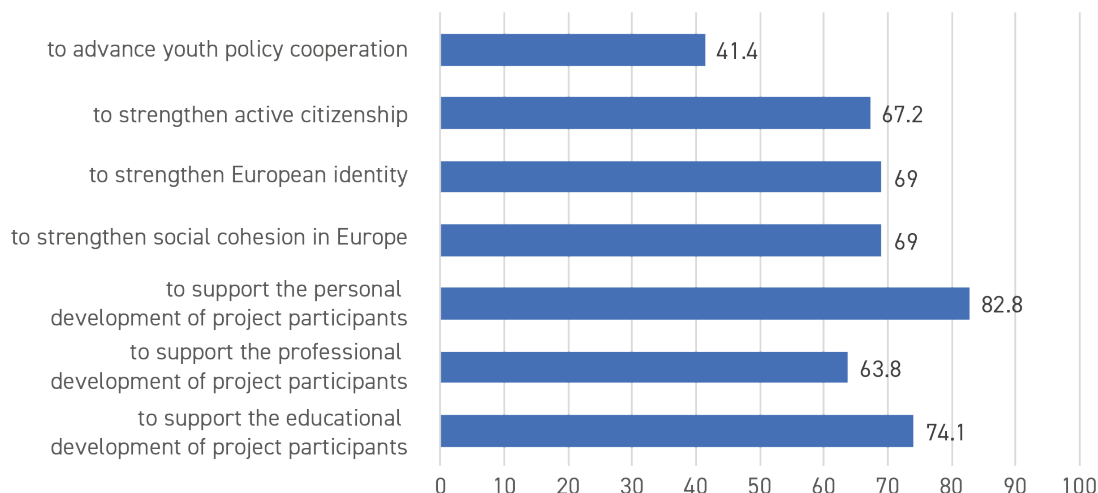
The respondents clearly either agreed or strongly agreed the most with the statements that the project had improved their ability to get along with people from different cultural backgrounds (93%), taught them how to reflect and think critically (75%) and improved their self-confidence (68%).

Compared to the Finnish respondents (graph 3), the pan-European data showed higher perceptions of the project having improved the respondent's self-confidence or increased their sense of independence,

Graph 3: **The impacts of the project, PP (MON). Respondents from Finland and all European countries who agree or strongly agree (%)**



Graph 4: **In your opinion, to what extent did the project contribute to the general objectives of the Erasmus+ programme?** PT (MON) (%)



improved their ability to tackle societal challenges or improved their ability to reflect and think critically.

Participants in youth worker mobility projects:

Most of the respondents felt that the project had taught them something new about youth work (75%), non-formal learning (73%) and the organisation's learning and development (61%). In contrast, only a little over one in four (28%) respondents felt that they had learned something about youth policy. With regard to the other options (youth realities, professional development and project management), approximately half of the respondents said that they had learned something about these themes during the project.

A significant difference in the pan-European data was related to the perceptions of having learned about youth policy and youth realities: for these themes, the result was almost ten percentage point higher in the pan-European data compared to the Finnish data.

The youth workers felt that they had primarily learned about youth empowerment (66%) and peer learning

(61%). Only a clear minority (29%) felt that they had learned about power and power relations in the project. The most significant difference between the Finnish and European groups of respondents was found in learning about power and power relations: the proportion of respondents who felt that they had learned about power and power relations was more than 10 percentage point higher among the respondents in the pan-European data.

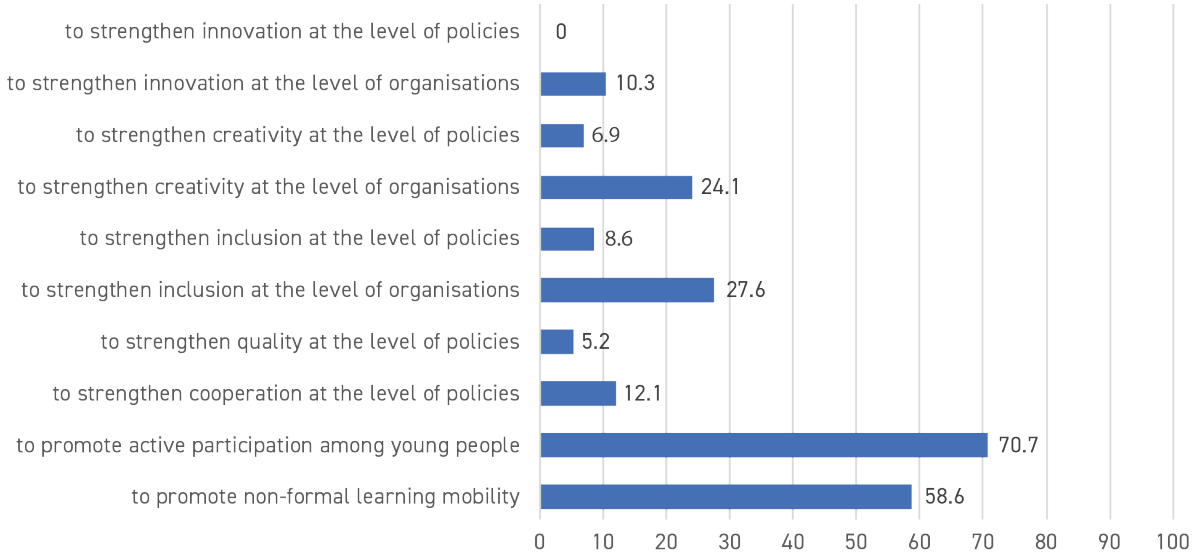
Project team members, project leaders:

Project team members and project leaders were asked to assess how the projects have promoted the general objectives of the Erasmus+ programme. The majority of respondents felt that the programme objectives had been achieved well in the projects. The most common opinion among the respondents was that support for the educational development and personal development of the project participants had succeeded well in the projects (graph 4).

Project team members were also asked to assess how the project had promoted the strategic objectives of the programme. The majority of respondents said that the



Graph 5: **In your opinion, to what extent did the project contribute to the strategic objectives of Erasmus+ Youth? PT (MON) (%)**



objectives of promoting active participation of young people (71%) and promoting a transition to non-formal learning (59%) had been met (graph 5).

A clearly larger proportion of Finnish respondents considered the objective of promoting active participation of young people to have been implemented better in the project compared to the pan-European level.

RAY Network survey:

Participants in the Erasmus+ Youth and European Solidarity Corps programmes are satisfied with the projects

The survey data of the international RAY Network comprised a total of eight themed surveys targeted at different groups of respondents. With regard to the Finnish survey data, only five surveys are included in the research report. Three surveys (out of a total of four surveys targeted at the European Solidarity Corps) had to be excluded because the number of respondents was too low. Moreover, due to a technical error in the survey implementation phase, some of the themed questions of the five surveys reported had to be excluded.

The Finnish data was analysed by project researcher **Kari Saari** from Youth Research and Development Centre Juvenia of South-Eastern Finland University of Applied Sciences.