

European Youth Programmes, and Youth Organisations

What are the challenges young people are facing?

European Youth Programmes make Europe a tangible experience for young people, for example through youth exchanges, voluntary services, school exchanges and exchanges of apprentices. Therefore, it is important that **youth programmes should be accessible to young people from all backgrounds**, and that they reach as many young people as possible. Although youth organisations can enable young people to participate in these programmes, the **visibility of youth organisations themselves is also low**, and there is a need for **greater state and EU support for the youth sector** as a whole.

According to young people who responded to the consultation, currently, programmes such as Erasmus+, **do not reach enough young people**. They are also **harder to access for young people from marginalised backgrounds** or with few opportunities. There is not enough **awareness** of youth opportunities amongst young people, or publicity of European programmes. For some young people the process of applying for opportunities can be **administratively complex**. It can be hard for new youth organisations or groups of young people to establish projects, because they are competing against more experienced organisations for funding. The **barriers that exclude particular groups of young people** were highlighted. For example, under 18s have fewer opportunities open to them, young people with disabilities struggle to find opportunities that meet their support needs and young parents find it hard to access family friendly programmes. In this regard **established youth organisations**, including local and national youth councils need to be **able to reach out** to more young people, and have adequate support to do it.

What is young people's vision for the future?

Many working group responses called for **greater financing and state support for European youth programmes and the youth sector** as a whole, so that no group of young people is excluded from these opportunities. Young people called for a **clear, transparent and easily accessible 'offer'** to young people. This should show benefits of taking up youth opportunities, the competencies gained and should be well published to both young people and parents.

European youth programmes should be **well integrated into formal education**. All schools and student counsellors should know about Erasmus + and participation in European youth opportunities should provide an official excuse from education.

The youth sector needs to be stronger and well supported. There should be greater recognition of youth work and volunteering, stronger networks between organisations and better training for youth workers. Youth organisations themselves should be supported to engage with a wider range of young people.

What solutions did young people propose in the consultation?

The consultation suggested a number of ways of increasing the opportunities available to young people:

- Measures to **improve the visibility of European youth programmes**, this included publicity through education, social services and social media
- Measures to **make European youth programmes easier to access**, such as reducing bureaucracy, removing financial requirements for participation, providing official excuses from education. This also changes to the programme to make it accessible to less experienced youth organisations, as well as increased support from National Agencies
- Measures to **increase resources and member state or EU support for European youth programmes**
- Measures to **increase resourcing and member state or EU support for youth organisations.**
- Measures to enable **youth organisations**, including local and national youth councils to **reach a wider range of young people** and strengthen and build the work they do.

The Survey Data

How important is this issue to young people?

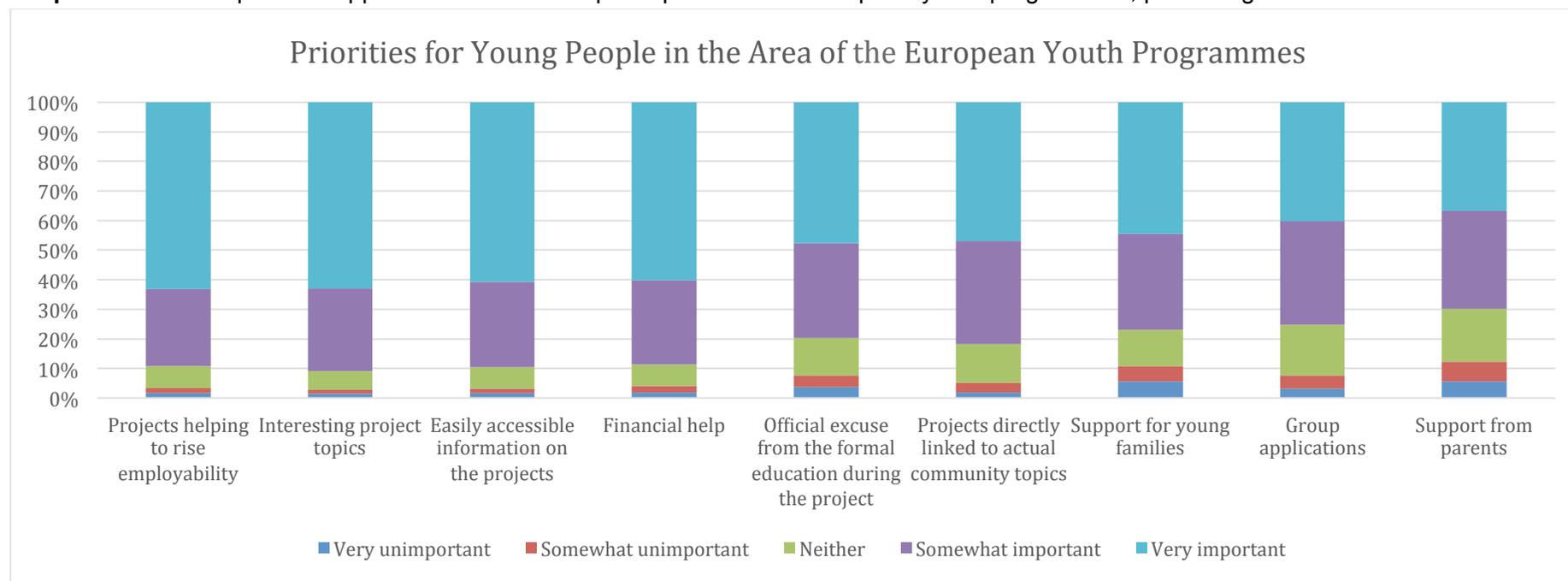
This issue ranks tenth and thirteenth among the priorities, as rated by the young people. It has been measured by two separate items, one focusing on more young people entering the European youth programmes (tenth place among priorities), and one aiming at a more diverse range of young people entering the European youth programmes (thirteenth priority).

What are the priorities for young people?

European youth programmes and their further development were discussed in surveys with the young people¹. In this case, interesting projects linked to the labour market usefulness and supported through easily accessible information and sufficient financial help seem to be the most important aspects to the young people. Surprisingly, support from the parents came to be the least important of all.

The detailed analysis below shows that the first four options are the most important to the young people, with the rest coming in as least important, but with none of the options being marked as completely irrelevant to the young people.

Graph: The most important support mechanisms for participation in the European youth programmes; percentages.



¹ The item read: “How important is the following to you in order to enable you to participate in the EU youth projects?”

Structured Dialogue Cycle VI Thematic report (please consult the Introduction document to the Final Reports for the methodology)
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Where does this report come from?

This report is based on responses to consultation question '*How can European programmes dedicated to youth and organised youth activities become accessible to a wider and more diverse range of young people?*'. This question was developed from harvesting tools submitted at the first conference. This report has also taken into account some of the issues raised within the Youth Spaces and Everyday participation report.