A STUDY ON THE IMPACT OF INCLUSION MEASURES

– final report –

ENCORE RESEARCH

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BENEFICIARY

National Agency for EU Programmes in Education and Training (ANPCDEFP)

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GLOSSARY OF ABBREVIATIONS

ANPCDEFP – National Agency for EU Programmes in Education and Training (*Agenția Națională pentru Programe Comunitare în Domeniul Educației și Formării Profesionale*)

NA – National Agency for EU Programmes in Education and Training

EC – European Commission

VET – Vocational Education and Training

HE – Higher Education

SE – School Education

AE – Adult Education

E&T – Education & Training

KA 1– Key Action 1 – Mobility Projects

KA 2 – Key Action 2 – Strategic Partnerships

KA 3 – Key Action 3 – Youth Dialogue Projects

NGO – Non-governmental organisation

ESC – European Solidarity Corps

AP – Annual plan

CONTEXT

In 2016, ANPCDEFP proposed an inclusion strategy as an integral part of the European strategy for the purpose of the management of the Erasmus+ programme as an inclusion tool. The objectives of this strategy were to raise the number of inclusion projects (both projects targeting vulnerable groups and projects addressing inclusion topics) funded under the Erasmus+ programme; to improve the quality of the inclusion projects funded under the Erasmus+ programme; to raise the number of participants with few opportunities in projects funded under the Erasmus+ programme; to develop support tools relevant to inclusion, for Erasmus+ applicants and beneficiaries; and to promote the Erasmus+ programme as a tool for the inclusion of people with fewer opportunities.

ANPCDEFP focused its inclusion strategy on the following areas of intervention: **rural areas, people with special needs** and **Roma ethnics**. Reducing the rural-urban differences was a priority in the framework of national policies on inclusion, and the National Agency sought to respond to it. Roma students, children from poor communities and children with special educational needs constituted vulnerable groups to which more attention was paid in the context of the programme. The Erasmus+ programme complemented the objectives of the ESF programme for 2014-2020, bringing in a European and intercultural dimension of inclusion policies in education. As far as rural areas are concerned, NA focused on increasing the participation of schools, local authorities and NGOs from rural areas in the Erasmus+ programme.

The inclusion strategy set out the following specific objectives for each key action:

Specific objectives for Key Action 1:

- Encouraging the participation of people with special needs in HE projects and training projects
- Encouraging the participation of people with fewer opportunities in youth projects
- Encouraging the participation of people with fewer opportunities from rural areas (SE, VET, AE)

Specific objectives for Key Action 2:

- Encouraging the participation of people with special needs
- Encouraging the participation of young people with fewer opportunities in youth inclusion projects
- Improving the quality and the relevance of project outcomes
- Encouraging the participation of schools, local authorities and NGOs located in rural areas

Specific objectives for Key Action 3:

- Encouraging the inclusion of people with fewer opportunities in the youth sector

Given this desideratum, for the Erasmus+ programme to be a tool for involving people with fewer opportunities in international learning projects and mobility, in the period 2016-2020, the National Agency conducted a range of specific activities and initiatives, all of them in a strategic framework. This strategy addressed, on one hand, organisations already experienced in the implementation of Erasmus+ projects but

not concerned before with vulnerable people as a target group for such projects and, on the other hand, it pursued to include in the programme those organisations with inclusive specificity and activities but that were not involved before, for various reasons, in Erasmus+. The purpose of this approach was to raise both the number and the quality of submitted and funded projects addressing directly or indirectly people with fewer opportunities, irrespective of their status: school students, university students, teachers, young people or adults.

The actions undertaken varied and took place over several years: from information activities about the Erasmus+ opportunities (conducted both online and through the organisation of physical events and participation in such events) to specific courses and training workshops – national and international, guidance and counselling by ANPCDEFP experts, support from ANPCDEFP support networks: trainers, multiplicators, school inspectors, etc.

These training and information events were an essential tool intended to contribute to attracting a segment of target groups for inclusion projects, as they directly sought to inform and train potential applicants. Some of the most important events of this kind were[1]:

- **Workshops focused on inclusion topics in general** – workshops moderated by the trainers' network of the National Agency, focusing on writing project proposals, project management and what inclusion means. The workshops were concerned both with courses for writing proposals of strategic partnership projects and, especially, mobility projects (KA1), in various priority areas: rural areas/people with disabilities/special education schools. Target groups: schools in rural areas; organisations, institutions working with young people with special needs, VET, in residential settings for special education;
- **International training events**: this section included participants from all types of international events (like training courses, study visits, contact seminars) organised by Erasmus+ national agencies, including international events hosted by ANPCDEFP, having inclusion as a topic; among the objectives of such events there were: defining and unifying the concept of inclusion at international level, identifying international partners for future projects, exchanging inclusive good practices;
- **Teach for Romania events**: these consisted of courses for writing project proposals organised within a partnership with Teach for Romania, dedicated exclusively to teachers from this programme, which is implemented in rural and disadvantaged areas;
- **Role Models events:** included the participants in events organised in the framework of the Role Models initiative, where the National Agency has a partnership with UNICEF (and UNICEF works with Agenția Împreună as a partner in the organisation of events). The events consisted of information and training actions on inclusion, with a focus on schools from zones with Roma ethnics or rural population, where the school dropout rate is high and the social exclusion phenomenon is extended.

In order to evaluate the effectiveness of the inclusion measures taken so far and also to improve the Inclusion Strategy 2021-2027, ANPCDEFP conducted a study concerned both with applicants and beneficiaries of Erasmus+ projects and with the beneficiaries of the information and training measures previously mentioned.

[1]A more detailed presentation of support measures is given in part G, page 102, of this report.

THE OBJECTIVES OF THIS STUDY

General objective

- An evaluation of the impact of inclusion measures taken in the period 2016-2020
- Recommendations for the future national strategy on inclusion

Specific objectives

- To evaluate the support activities; for those who did not participate in training activities – what they would have expected from the programme, how they would have liked this support to be provided
- To identify the applicants' information sources
- To evaluate the application process
- To evaluate satisfaction with mobility activities which included vulnerable groups
- To identify the perceptions of rejected applicants
- To evaluate the training events: the effectiveness of training activities – whether they knew about the training actions, how did they find out about them, whether those actions resulted in writing and submitting project proposals, whether they attracted beneficiaries, whether they were better prepared after the workshops, what was missing, suggestions for improvement – what other measures would attract applicants from rural areas, applicants addressing vulnerable groups
- To make suggestions for inclusion measures to be proposed in the future national strategy

METHODOLOGICAL DESIGN

Target groups

- Project applicants under **KEY ACTION 1 – Mobility**, in the period 2017-2020, that addressed inclusion in their projects – a sample stratified across 4 sectors: adult education, school education, VET, youth
- Project applicants under **KEY ACTION 2 – Strategic Partnerships**, in the period 2017-2020, that addressed inclusion in their projects – a sample stratified across 4 sectors: adult education, school education, VET, youth
- Project applicants under **KEY ACTION 3 – Youth Dialogue**, in the period 2017-2020, that addressed inclusion in their projects
- Participants in **training events focused on inclusion** organised by the National Agency for EU Programmes in Education and Training in the period 2016-2020: events on general topics focused on inclusion, international events, events with representatives of Teach for Romania
- Representatives of organisations involved in partnerships and representatives of other **relevant organisations that are active in the field of inclusive education**: Teach for Romania, UNICEF, Agenția Împreună, etc.

Stratification and sampling criteria

- Number of applicants under **KEY ACTION 1 – Mobility**, in the period 2017-2020, that addressed inclusion in their projects – a sample stratified across 4 sectors: adult education, school education, VET, youth
- Number of applicants under **KEY ACTION 2 – Strategic Partnerships**, in the period 2017-2020, that addressed inclusion in their projects – a sample stratified across 4 sectors: adult education, school education, VET, youth
- Number of applicants under **KEY ACTION 3 – Youth Dialogue**, in the period 2017-2020, that addressed inclusion in their projects
- Number of applicants **admitted and rejected** for each KA and sector
- Number of participants in **training events focused on inclusion** organised by the National Agency for EU Programmes in Education and Training in the period 2016-2020
- Relevance of the activity of some **organisations in the field of inclusive education**: Teach for Romania, UNICEF, Agenția Împreună, other organisations identified together with the beneficiary

Research activities

SURVEYS OF APPLICANTS TO KEY ACTIONS

Sector	KA1	KA 2	KA 3
(1) School Education	200 questionnaires	200 questionnaires	40 questionnaires
(2) Adult Education	20 questionnaires	70 questionnaires	
(3) VET	100 questionnaires	70 questionnaires	
(4) Youth	300 questionnaires	130 questionnaires	
(5) TOTAL	620	470	40

SURVEYS OF PARTICIPANTS IN TRAINING EVENTS AND WORKSHOPS

Method	Number of respondents/ organisations	How
A survey among participants in workshops on inclusion topics in general	80 questionnaires	On phone and online
A survey among participants in Teach for Romania workshops	50 questionnaires	On phone and online
A survey among participants in international training events	70 questionnaires	On phone and online
TOTAL	200	

INTERVIEWS AND CASE STUDIES

Method	Number of respondents	How
Case studies with beneficiaries of KA1 and KA2 (Adult Education, School Education, VET, Youth); case studies under KA3	16 case studies under KA1 and KA2, distributed across all sectors 2 case studies under KA3	Desk research On phone and online
Individual interviews with rejected applicants under the 3 Key Actions and 4 sectors (Adult Education, School Education, VET, Youth)	10 individual interviews with rejected applicants	On phone and online
Individual interviews with beneficiaries of training-promotion measures (3 for each workshop)	12 participants in the 2018 events (3 for each workshop) 6 participants in the 2019 events (3 for each workshop)	On phone and online
Interviews with representatives of organisations with relevant activity in the field of inclusive education (UNICEF, Teach for Romania, Agenția Împreună etc)	5 individual interviews	On phone and online
TOTAL	18 case studies 33 individual interviews	

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

MAIN FINDINGS

INFORMATION: The most used information tool, both for participants in the events and for applicants within the calls initiated under the key actions, is the Erasmus+ website.

- The main source of information about the programme and also about the events initiated by the National Agency is the Erasmus+ website. Therefore, 28 % of the participants in training events on inclusion topics in general and 36 % of the participants in international events use the website as a primary mean of getting information. For the applicants to various calls for proposals, the percentage is even more substantial – almost two thirds (68 %) of the respondents indicate this source. Besides the website, the representatives of the target groups approached in the framework of this research (participants in events, applicants to calls for proposals) also indicate some secondary sources, some of them being other arrangements to provide information initiated by the National Agency (direct contact, newsletters, specialised forums, etc.). Training events and workshops have also become the main source of information for almost 40 % of applicants to Erasmus+ calls for proposals. A first finding is therefore concerned with the effectiveness of the information arrangements of the National Agency over the period 2017-2019.
- The respondents in the survey of applicants are, the majority of them, satisfied with the information sources made available by the programme, except for those on the Facebook page. In this case, the no-answer rate is higher but also the share of those saying they are rather satisfied is higher.
- Furthermore, for the applicants, the satisfaction with the information and documentation at the time of drafting the application is high. More than 87 % of the applicants are satisfied with the documentation and the information concerning the definition of vulnerable groups or inclusion. Nevertheless, a slight difference can be noticed, determined by a lower satisfaction with the aspects concerning inclusion.

TRAINING: The level of satisfaction with the participation in events organised by the National Agency is very high, 98 %, on average, of the participants from all training workshops declaring that they were "very satisfied" and "satisfied" after their participation.

- 99 % of those who participated in events on inclusion topics in general, 98 % of those who participated in international workshops and 97 % of those who attended the Teach for Romania workshops say they are "very satisfied" and "satisfied" with these events. However, of the three types of target groups of participants in events that were interviewed, the group of those who attended international events has the lowest percentage of respondents who were "fully satisfied" with the event (70 % compared to 78 % among the participants from Teach for Romania and 91 % for participants in events on inclusion topics in general).

- Among the applicants to Erasmus+ calls for proposals, slightly more than one third of the respondents participated in at least one event or workshop dedicated to inclusion or in events/ workshops that emphasised the issue of inclusion, organised by the National Agency. Their usefulness was acknowledged by 94 % of the participants. The participants in such events say they are, statistically significant, more satisfied with the actions of the National Agency to promote inclusion and give a better evaluation of the programme compared with non-participants. Only with regard to information, differences are not above the threshold of significance.

TRAINING: The level of satisfaction with the usefulness of the information provided at the events is also high among all the interviewed groups, with average scores of over 90 % for those "satisfied".

- 98 % of those who were present at the general inclusion workshop and 96 % of those who attended international workshops considered that the event led to a good understanding of the Erasmus+ opportunities for their organisation; 99 % of them deem the event contributed to "a very large extent" and to "a large extent" to a familiarisation with the specificity of the Erasmus+ programme and with the mobility/strategic partnership projects; at the same time, an average of 87 % of the respondents consider that the events contributed "to a very large extent" and "to a large extent" to the development of skills related to designing and planning an inclusion project in the Erasmus+ programme.

TRAINING: The main aspects clarified at the workshops referred to "understanding the needs of the target groups" and "inclusion in an Erasmus+ context". The least clarified aspects were related to "budget and financial management", "project impact", "monitoring and evaluation" and "working in partnership".

- As far as the clarity of information is concerned, 93 % of the participants in events on an inclusion topic in general, 94 % of those who participated in international workshops and 89 % of those who attended the Teach for Romania workshops consider that the events contributed to "a better understanding of the needs of the target group"; 94 % of the participants in events on an inclusion topic in general, 89 % of those from international workshops and 81 % of those from Teach for Romania workshops think that the events contributed to understanding the concept of "inclusion in an Erasmus+ context".

TRAINING: The strengths of the events organised were mainly related to trainers' professionalism and the practicality of the information approached.

- The participants in the events organised in the country appreciated the quality of the trainers and the explanations provided during the events, the relevance of information, the professionalism and the work methods employed by the instructors. Other appreciated elements were the practical examples, the case studies, the structuring of contents and the actual work on the application form.

- Concerning the international workshops, they appreciated: the diversity of participants and the opportunity for networking (16 %), the trainers (14 %), the quality of the information

provided (12 %), the opportunity to create partnerships (10 %) and the topics approached in the event (10 %).

- The participants in the Teach for Romania events were particularly content with the information they received (27 %), the concrete examples discussed (21 %) and also with the work on the application form (7 %). For a quarter of the respondents, the trainers are the strength of the event.
- The strategy of the National Agency to have a direct relation with potential applicants is also considered a strength.

TRAINING: The main "minus" of all events dedicated to training potential applicants is that the duration allocated to their organisation is too short and generated much condensation of the information approached.

- 23 % of those who attended events on an inclusion topic in general – those who think that there are aspects which need improvement – considered that the duration of the events was too short, which reduced the time allocated to applications and practical examples. Another category of participants thought that one of the problems with the events was the participants' heterogeneity with regard to their experience with the Erasmus+ programme. A lower number of complaints were about such elements as the venue of the event, the period of its organisation, the trainers and a lack of sustainability of training or of a follow-up for those who participated in training events.
- As concerns the weaknesses of international events, 40 % of the respondents think that the time allocated to the event was, considering the volume of the information provided, too short. Another criticised element about international events referred to the selection of participants, meaning that it was not sufficiently rigorous so as to offer an opportunity to identify partnerships or to discuss with decision-makers from organisations from other countries.
- 45 % of the participants in the Teach for Romania events – those who deem that there are also aspects to be improved – think that the time allocated to these events was, considering the volume of the information provided, too short. At the same time, 34 % of the respondents mentioned that the information presented at the event they attended was "too general".
- The manner in which the participants in general inclusion events were selected with regard to their experience in the programme and also the selection/quality of the participants in international events were also indicated as elements which could be improved.

TRAINING: One of the main benefits of participating in the events refers to increased motivation to submit a project. On average, two thirds of all the participants subsequently submitted applications to the Erasmus+ calls for proposals.

- In the total sample of respondents, approximately 11 % of the group who participated in events on a general inclusion topic, 25 % of those from international workshops and 29 % of those from the Teach for Romania workshops declared that, after the event, they did not submit any application to an Erasmus+ call for proposals.

- For those who subsequently did not submit any application under a call for proposals, the reasons are concerned with: a difficulty to make up a team to have a project approved and implement it, a difficulty to write/draw up the application, the lack of time and also the lack of a partner. With regard to the past year, the pandemic was also a hindrance to a decision to apply to Erasmus+.

IMPLEMENTATION: The main benefit in the area of social inclusion after the implementation of projects refers especially to the socio-emotional life of final beneficiaries

- What are the main benefits with regard to social inclusion? They are mainly concerned with the personal sphere of vulnerable groups (more self-esteem, developing social skills) or learning skills related to the work with vulnerable groups. Then, as a result, a higher level of social integration, better performance at school and the reduction of school dropout and more opportunities to access a job**.**

IMPLEMENTATION: The main challenges related to implementation and achieving the inclusion indicators assumed in the projects were amplified in the pandemic context.

- Basically, the entire undertaking, from selection to retention in the project, was affected by a drastic fall in people's mobility and in non-mediated social interactions. Besides, the wide range of challenges which have been mentioned indicate the need for some careful monitoring of the applications that received funding so as to distinguish both the causes of those challenges and the best solutions.
- About 10-12 % of the applicants encountered significant difficulties related to the supply of resources, how the outcomes met the needs of target groups or selecting and keeping the target groups in the programme. As for the last aspect, 27 % of the applicants who received funding indicated this was an average difficulty.

MAIN SUGGESTIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Intensify the sources for connecting the information directly with potential applicants to inclusion projects.

- The applicants' behaviour for information purposes is diversified, looking especially for sources directly connected with the Erasmus+ programme and the National Agency. Other sources (the media, social media) are rather conjunctural than systematic. The data of the study indicate that the interaction between the applicants and the National Agency is important for getting information and clarifying some aspects concerning the applications for funding or the implementation of projects. The information, whether accessed directly on the Erasmus+ website or from meetings with representatives of the Agency, is capitalised on by the applicants, so it needs to be permanently updated.
- The evaluation of the programme and the level of satisfaction with the actions undertaken, the information and the promotion of the inclusion component are high. A first consequence of the high level of satisfaction with the promotion measures taken so far consists in a recommendation **to continue the information activities conducted so far**, which ensured the visibility of the

programme as a whole and also of its sub-components and events.

- However, at the same time, there are also areas which should be improved in terms of information. Therefore, it is recommended to intensify **direct promotion in schools** (especially in schools from vulnerable areas), using every available channel (email, newsletter, direct presentations); to intensify **the provision of information through briefings and direct presentations**, organised in several locations, with groups of potential applicants identified and contacted directly in advance; and a **more aggressive presence in the social media**.

Increase the frequency of training workshops, their duration and pay more attention to the selection of participants.

- A first recommendation refers to increasing the frequency of training workshops; then the suggestion is to change their approach, meaning to approach smaller and more homogenous groups as regards their experience with the programme. Also, most of the suggestions for improving the training workshops refer to: **increasing the duration of courses** associated with a more spacious structure of the events in terms of schedule and the volume of the information provided, simplifying the information provided, more focus on practising actual situations and a more rigorous selection of participants.
- As regards the promotion of events in the future, there were relatively few recommendations, which were very homogenous. Thus, a substantial part of the respondents either have no suggestions or consider that **the promotion arrangements so far are appropriate, efficient and sufficient**. The limited number of recommendations referred to: more visibility on social networks, online seminars, a dedicated promotion website, sending the event calendars as newsletters.
- **Concrete activities** are also recommended (training workshops to support organisations working with people with fewer opportunities, workshops and courses to improve the quality of inclusion projects, workshops on project drafting, training workshops for trainers), doubled by **information campaigns**, on channels already established (the programme website, briefings), concerning either the information necessary for applications or examples of success and good practice; a focus of courses also on impact and on measuring the effects of the interventions; providing tools to evaluate the project outcomes; making training more efficient by focusing on clear profiles of beneficiaries – customising information and support measures depending on beneficiaries' experience with Erasmus+ projects.

Keep the traditional intervention areas of inclusion projects and also diversify them.

- Continue the intervention in school education with regard to socio-emotional skills.
- Extend the project Role Models so as to cover other types of vulnerabilities, too.
- The importance of a need analysis and of outlining the inclusion initiative together with the beneficiaries.
- A possible support mechanism for vulnerable schools with regard to the development of organisational and educational culture.
- Encourage partnerships between schools and NGOs.
- Diversify the target groups (for example – parents, substitute teachers, etc.)

Intensify the information component and also improve the selection process, including by privileging the inclusion component so as to raise the number of people with fewer opportunities participating in projects.

- With regard to the information component, there were mentions of measures such as: information activities carried out in vulnerable communities; more targeted communication with disadvantaged schools; sessions dedicated exclusively to special education schools; contacting directly the organisations dealing with people with fewer opportunities; communication activities dedicated to the final target group (preferably, offline, too, because many don't have access to online information), conducted in partnership with credible organisations, which are known in disadvantaged communities.
- Among the suggestions for improving the selection criteria: additional points in the evaluation for projects targeting as many people as possible; provide funding for more projects and raise the amounts allocated per project; give an advantage to inclusion projects.
- Among the support measures for the development of the institutional capacity: create partnerships and networks for the inclusion of vulnerable groups; provide counselling and mentoring for the organisational development of NGOs working at grassroots level with people from vulnerable backgrounds/people with fewer opportunities.

Suggestions for increasing the number of inclusion projects which receive funding focused on support and counselling directed at vulnerable zones, at groups of eligible organisations that did not apply before.

- Counselling for potential eligible organisations that have not applied before, so as to reduce the fear/anxiety of potential applicants/representatives of institutions to apply because they do not know how to handle correctly the funds they receive.
- Promote more the benefits of inclusion projects, both for potential beneficiaries and for people belonging to vulnerable groups, who might be attracted to these projects.
- Disseminate good practice examples in communities with the same specificity as that of successful projects.
- Ensure some sustainability of training and information courses so as to offer subsequent counselling for those who intend to propose projects.
- Identify a mechanism to motivate the teachers from target schools to propose projects.
- More support in identifying serious international partners.
- Organise potential applicants into categories, for example, a platform for NGOs.
- Simplify the applications.
- More transparency concerning the process and the evaluation criteria.

Suggestions for measures which might be taken by NA to ensure a better quality of inclusion projects

- More training courses.
- Promote examples of good practice.
- Organise workshops with the final beneficiaries of projects.
- Counselling, training and mentoring for applicants.
- Increase the financial motivation.
- Better accessibility for people with special needs.
- Assistance for writing the project proposals.

Suggestions for measures which might be taken by NA to ensure an increased number of participants with fewer opportunities in the projects receiving funding

- A broader dissemination of calls for proposals.
- Increase the number of training workshops.
- Consultancy/mentoring/training programmes for those who work with people with fewer opportunities.
- More intense promotion at grassroots level, communication as close as possible to the beneficiaries.
- More financial support.
- Support for writing project proposals.
- Increase the budget and provide funding for more projects.

Support for organisations and institutions from vulnerable areas that intend to apply

- An analysis activity, feedback and improvement of rejected applications; transparency of evaluation.
- Support for those potential applicants from schools where they are not encouraged either by the school management or by representatives of the inspectorates.
- Establish a grant scheme for the most vulnerable schools and create mechanisms to support those schools and offer them technical assistance.
- More frequent training in the territory so as to ensure that the applicants understand the parameters generating the quality of projects.
- Intensify the support provided during the phase of drafting and submitting applications by promoting success examples.
- Increase accessibility (physical, financial, etc.) for people in the target group.

Support for organisations and institutions implementing inclusion projects by providing counselling on: project financial management, selecting and keeping the target group; support for disseminating the outcomes of some projects

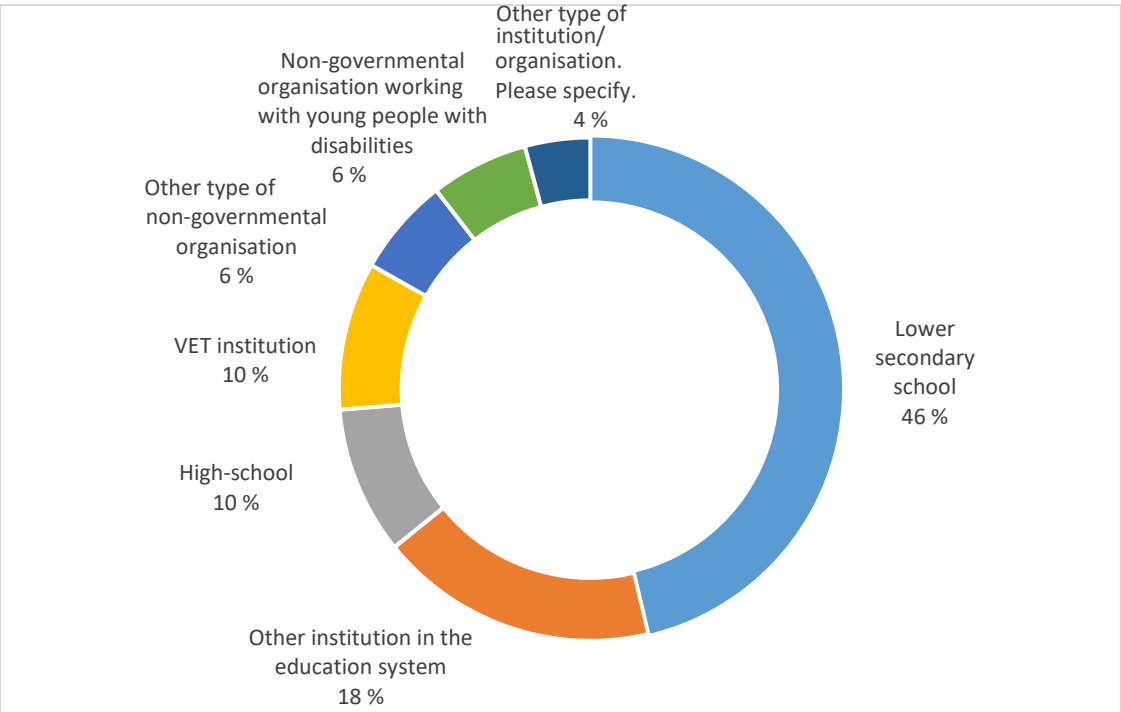
RESEARCH OUTCOMES

A. REPORT ON A QUANTITATIVE STUDY AMONG PARTICIPANTS IN TRAINING WORKSHOPS ON INCLUSION TOPICS IN GENERAL

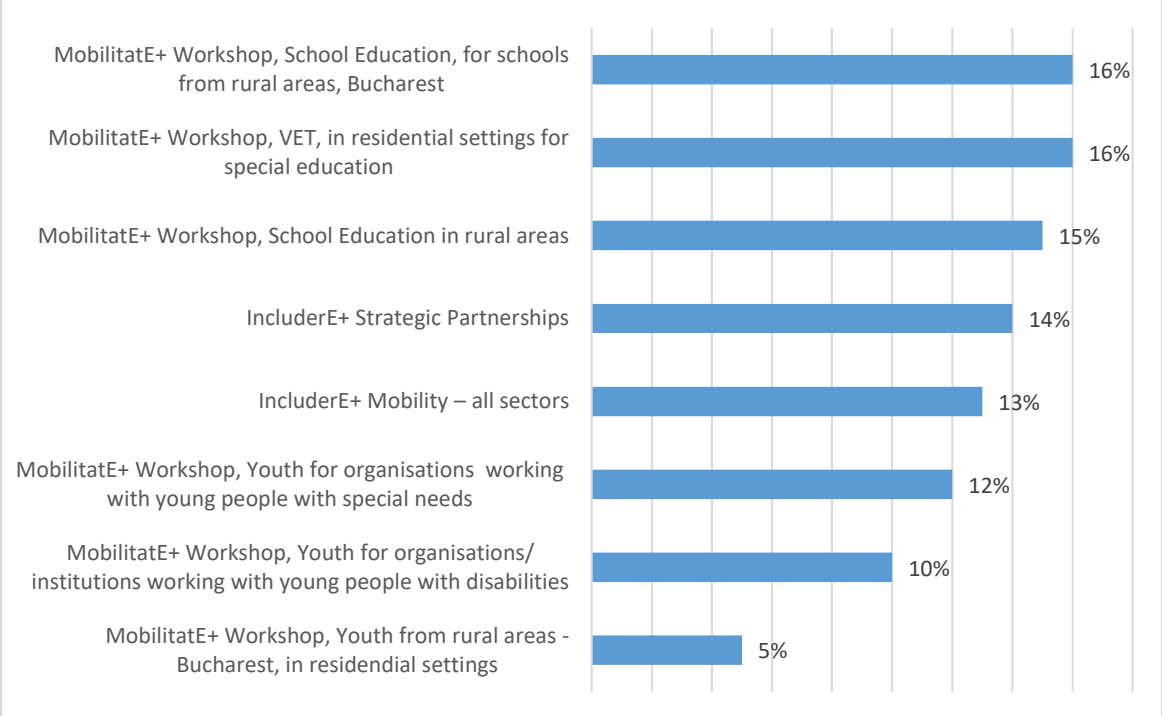
PARTICIPATION AND INFORMATION

- Among the respondents in the survey on the impact of events on inclusion topics in general, almost half of the sample were lower secondary schools (middle schools), 10 % high-schools, other 10 % were VET schools and 18 % other type of educational institutions. As for non-governmental organisations, 6 % of the respondents are NGOs working with young people with disabilities and another 6 % are other type of NGOs.
- As concerns the type of events the respondents participated in, they are distributed in relatively balanced shares: 16 % participated in the MobilitatE+ Workshop, School Education for schools from rural areas, Bucharest; 16 % participated in the MobilitatE+ Workshop, VET, in residential settings for special education; 15 % participated in the MobilitatE+ Workshop, School Education in rural areas; 14 % participated in IncluderE+ Strategic Partnerships; 13 % participated in IncluderE+ Mobility – all sectors; 12 % in the MobilitatE+ Workshop, Youth for organisations working with young people with special needs, and 10 % in the MobilitatE+ Workshop, Youth for organisations/institutions working with young people with disabilities. The least numerous respondents come from the participants in the MobilitatE+ Workshop, Youth from rural areas - Bucharest, in residential settings.
- Where did the participants find out about the training events? The Erasmus+ website is the main source of information for 28 % of the respondents, while 20 % were informed/invited to these events by an Erasmus+ representative. A first observation is that those information tools where the National Agency has the initiative, meaning it actively informs potential applicants, are the most efficient (the Erasmus+ website, newsletters, direct contacts initiated by Erasmus+ representatives are the main sources of information for more than 60 % of the participants in training events on inclusion topics in general).

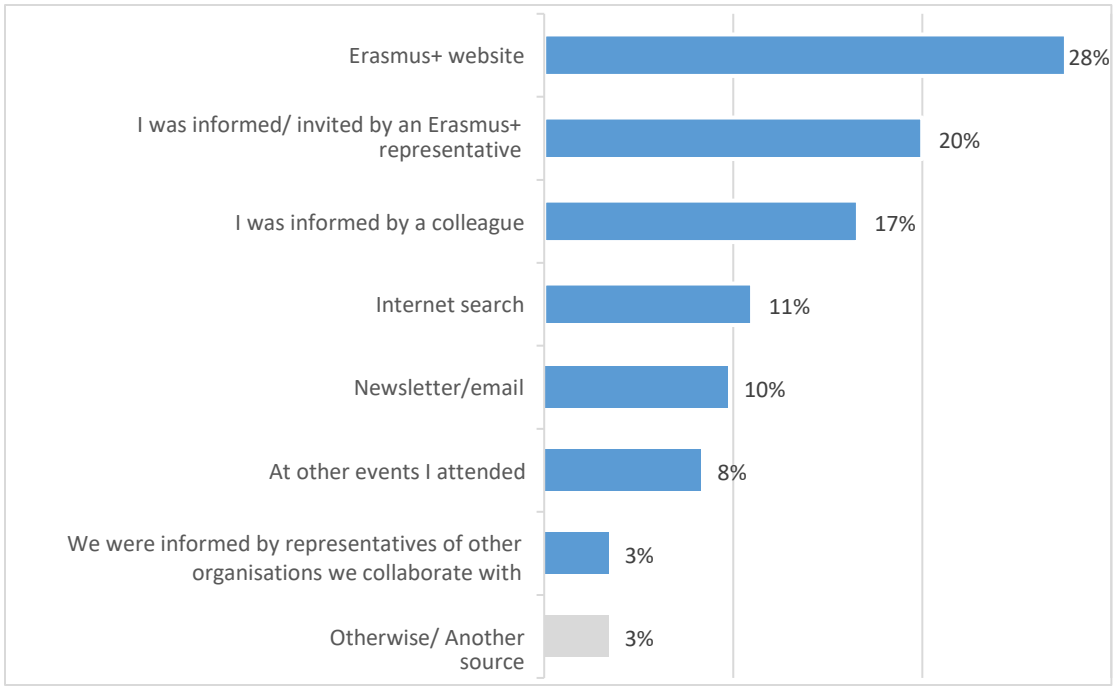
Q1. For what type of beneficiary institution/organisation do you answer the questionnaire?



Q2. In which of the following events did you participate? *(multiple answer)*



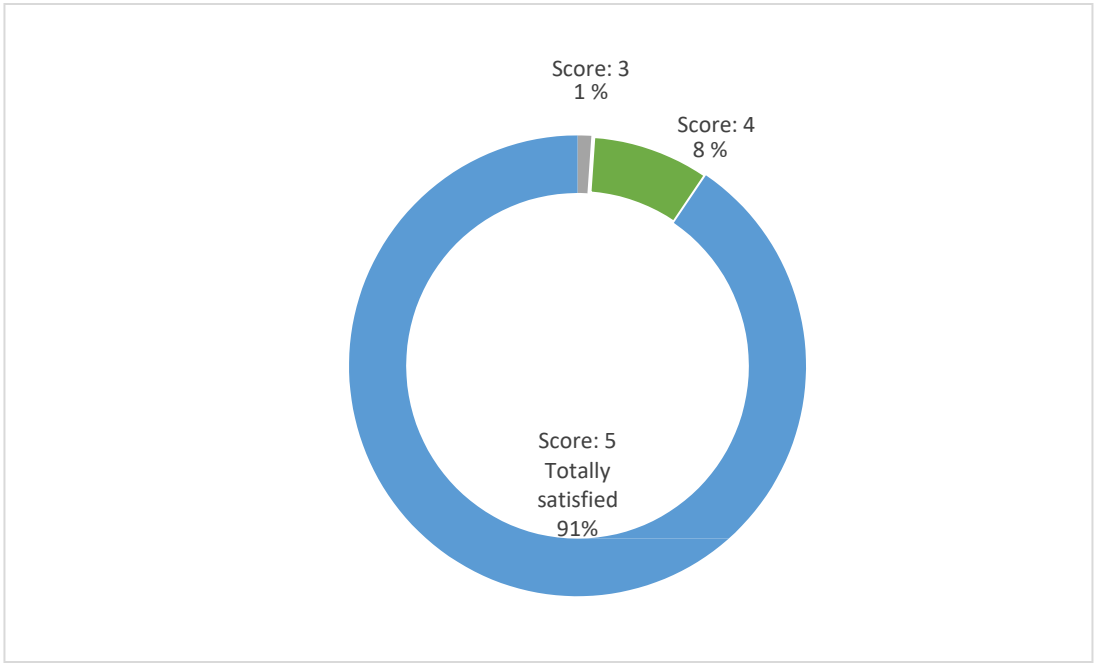
Q3. How did you find out about the Erasmus+ training events? *(multiple answer)*



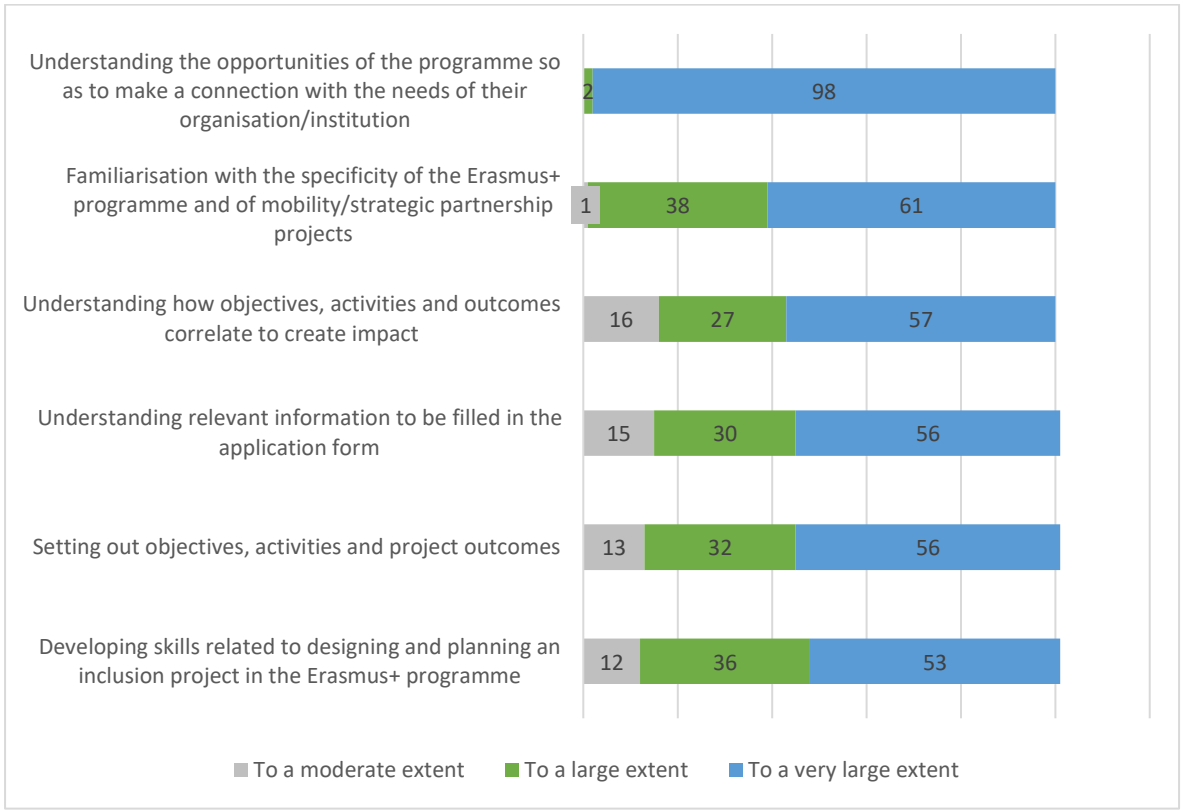
SATISFACTION WITH THE EVENTS

- The level of satisfaction with participation in events on inclusion topics in general is very high, with 99 % of the respondents "very satisfied" and "satisfied" after their participation.
- Respondents gave high scores for the usefulness of their participation in the events, too: 98 % considered that the event led to a better understanding of the opportunities provided by the Erasmus+ programme for their organisation; 99 % considered that the event contributed "to a very large extent" and "to a large extent" to their familiarisation with the specificity of the Erasmus+ programme and with the mobility/strategic partnership projects; moreover, 89 % of the respondents think that the events contributed "to a very large extent" and "to a large extent" to the development of skills related to designing and planning an inclusion project in the framework of the Erasmus+ programme.
- As regards the clarity of information, 93 % of the participants consider that the events contributed to a better understanding of the needs of the target group and to understanding the concept of *inclusion in an Erasmus+ context*.
- By comparison, the aspects they found the least clear about designing and implementing a project refer to *financial and budget rules*, *monitoring and evaluation*, *project impact* and *eligibility*.

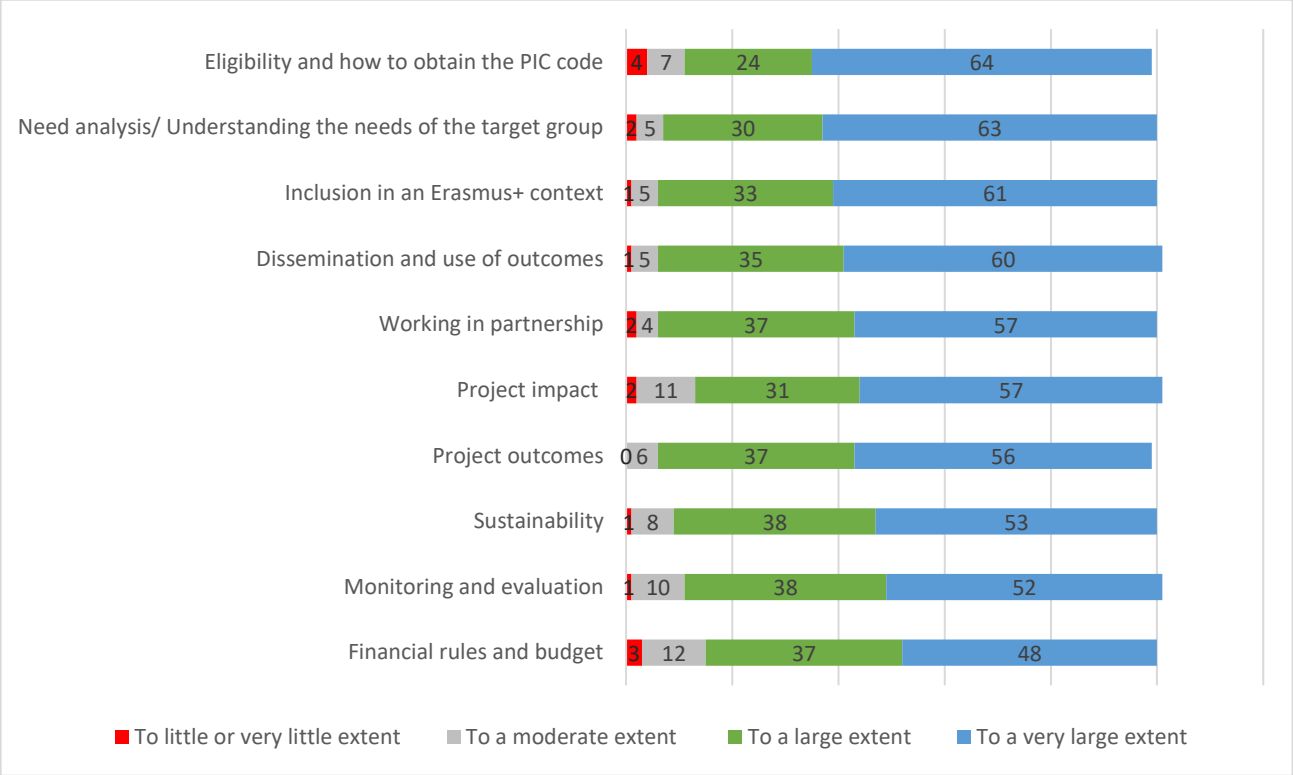
Q4. If you consider the training event you attended as a whole, on a scale of 1 to 5, where 1 means totally unsatisfied and 5 means totally satisfied, what score would you give it?



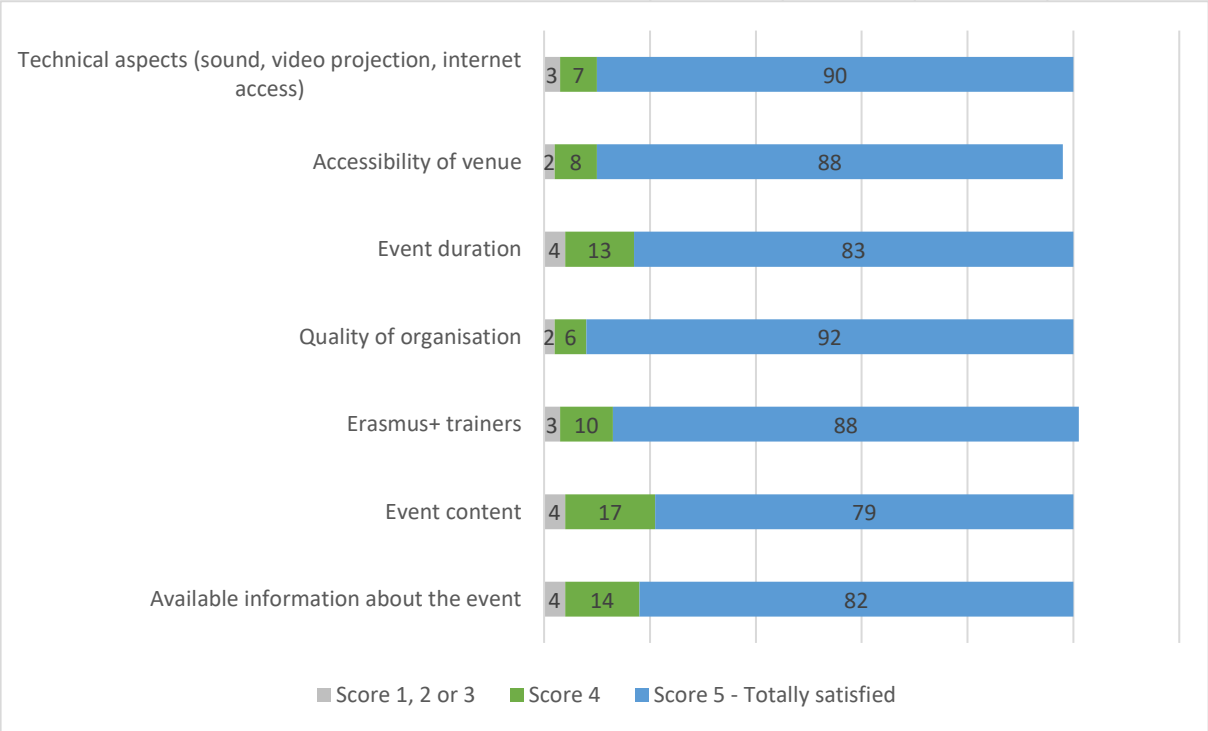
Q5. As far as you are concerned, after the workshop/event, to what extent you considered yourself informed, trained on the following topics? (%)



Q6. In your opinion, in the framework of the event you attended, to what extent the following topics have been sufficiently explained?

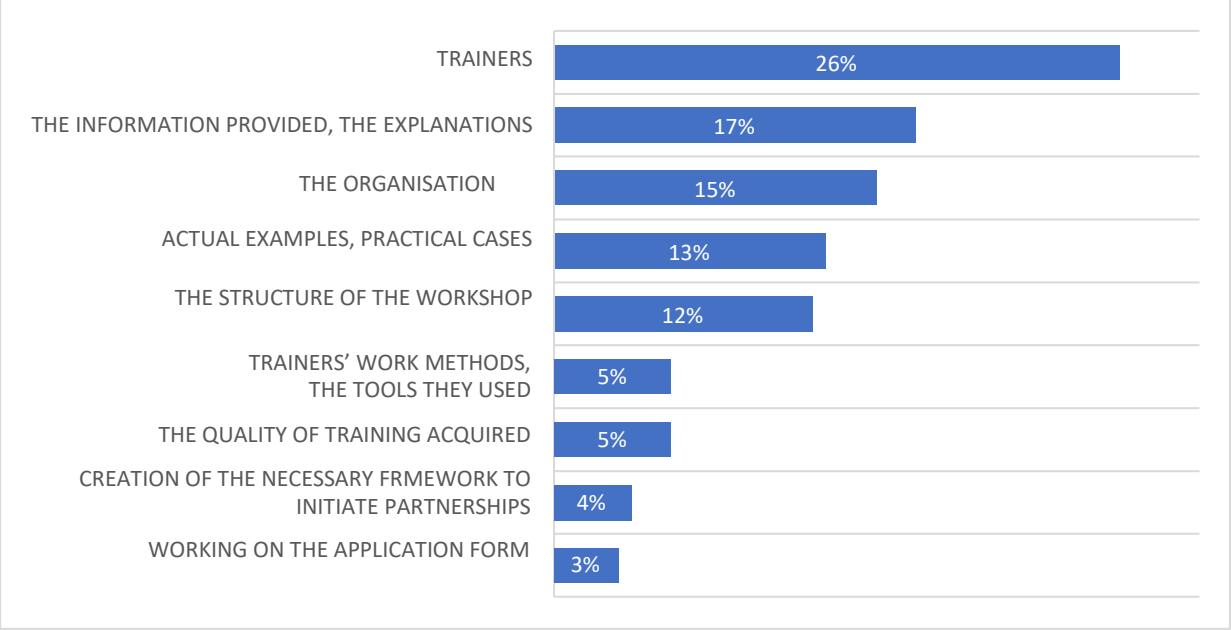


Q7. If you refer to the event you attended, on a scale of 1 to 5, where 1 means totally unsatisfied and 5 means totally satisfied, what score would you give for...

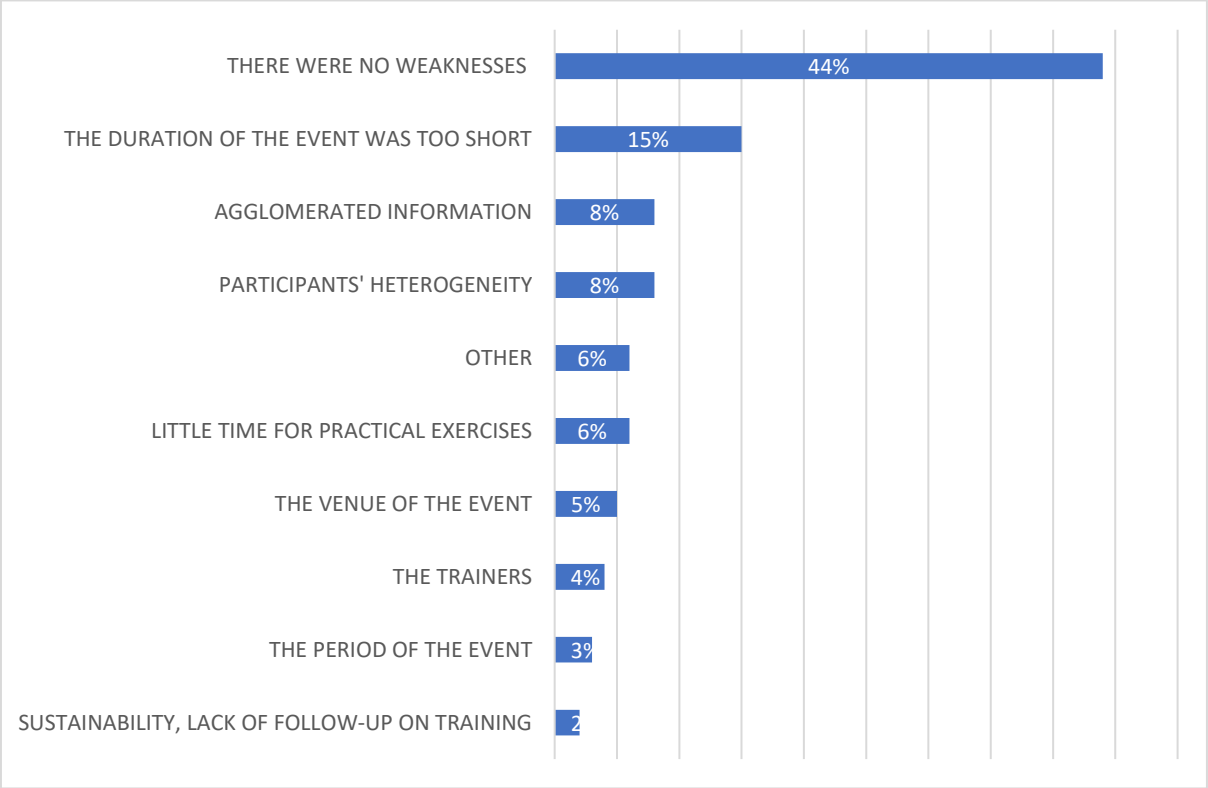


- The majority of participants said they were "satisfied" or "very satisfied" with all the aspects concerning the organisation of the event. Elements for which the level of satisfaction was slightly lower referred to *the event content*, *available information about the event* and also ***the event duration which was too short***.
- To tone up the respondents' perceptions, we also tried to find out, in the questionnaire, the strengths and weaknesses of the events with two open questions. About the strengths, the **trainers' quality** is the primary element appreciated due to the clarity of the information provided, the explanations offered during the events, the relevance of information, the trainers' professionalism and the methods they used. The elements they appreciated also included the **practical examples**, the case studies, the structuring of the workshop content and the actual work on the application form.
- As for the weaknesses of the events, almost half of the participants had no criticism. Among those who indicated aspects that should be improved, 23 % considered that **the duration of the events was too short**, which led to an agglomeration of the information provided and also reduced the time for practical applications. Another category of participants deemed that one problem with the events was the **participants' heterogeneity** in terms of experience with the Erasmus+ programme. A lower number of complaints were concerned with elements such as the venue of the event, its period (busy school periods, the dates were too closed to or, on the contrary, too far from the calls for proposals), the trainers and the lack of sustainability for the training, the lack of a follow-up in the training of those who attended the events.

Q11. What do you think the strengths of the events were? *(open question, with added coding of answers)*



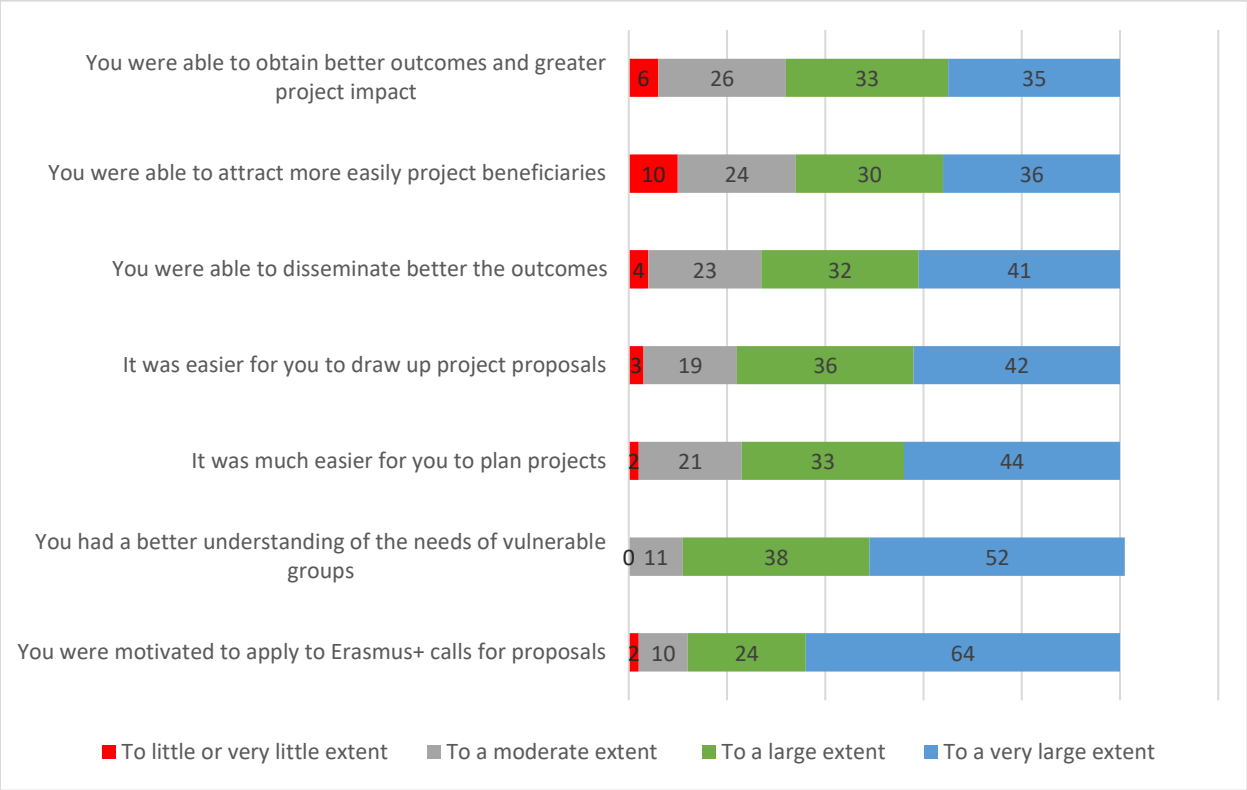
Q12. What do you think the weaknesses of the events were? *(open question, with added coding of answers)*



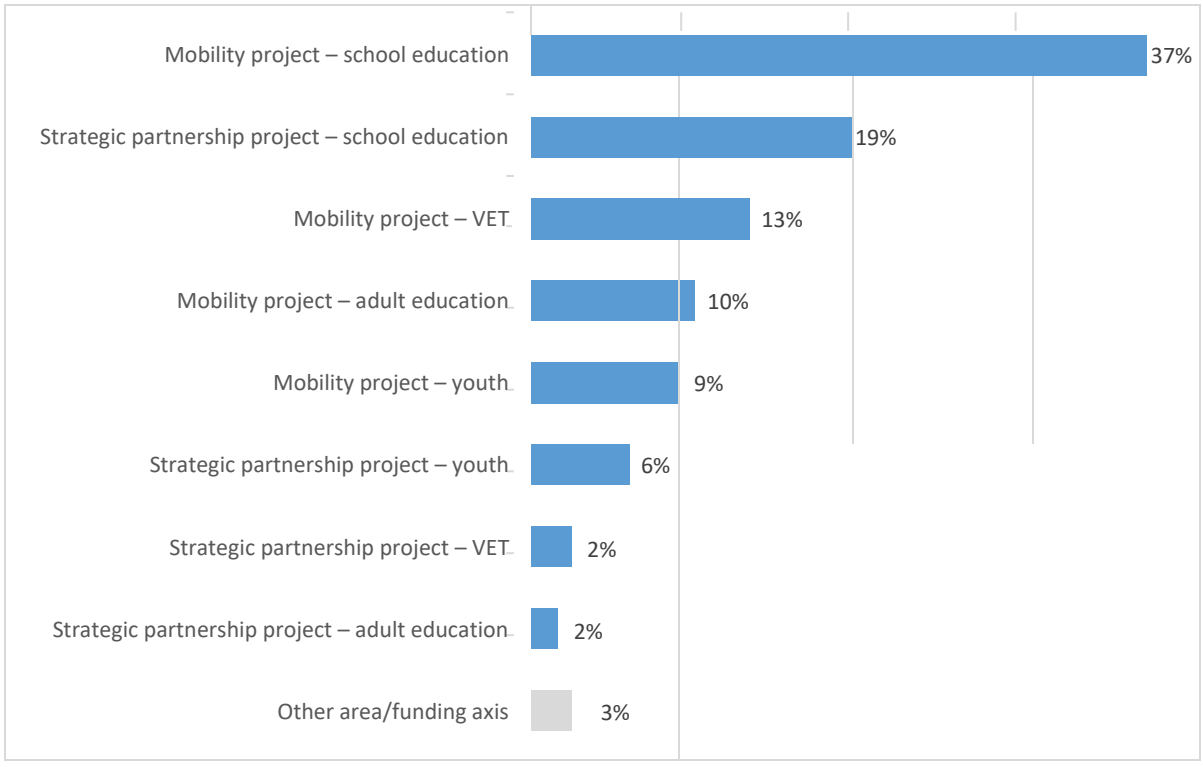
PERCEPTIONS OF THE EFFICIENCY OF PARTICIPATION IN THE EVENTS

- As regards the impact the events had on the participants, the main benefit is related to their motivation to apply to future Erasmus+ calls for proposals (88 % say that the event motivated them “to a very large extent” or “to a large extent” to submit an application under Erasmus+), and also to a better understanding of their target groups (90 %). The events contributed slightly to a less extent to identifying some strategies to attract beneficiaries more easily, to a better dissemination of outcomes or to achieving a higher impact within the projects.
- In of the total sample of respondents, about 11 % said that, after the event, they did not apply to any Erasmus+ call for proposals. A part of those who applied obtained funding for their projects, as we can see in table Q9_1. At the same time, more than half of the sample (54 %) say they would not have submitted an Erasmus+ project if they had not participated in the training events.
- For those who did not apply to any call for proposals, the reasons are linked first of all to a difficulty to write/draft an application (33 %), a difficulty to make up a team for getting a project approved and implement it (28 %), the lack of time (20 %) and also the lack of a partner (8 %). As regards the period of the past year, the pandemic was also a hindrance to a decision to apply to Erasmus+.

Q8. To what extent, in your case, after the event/events...?



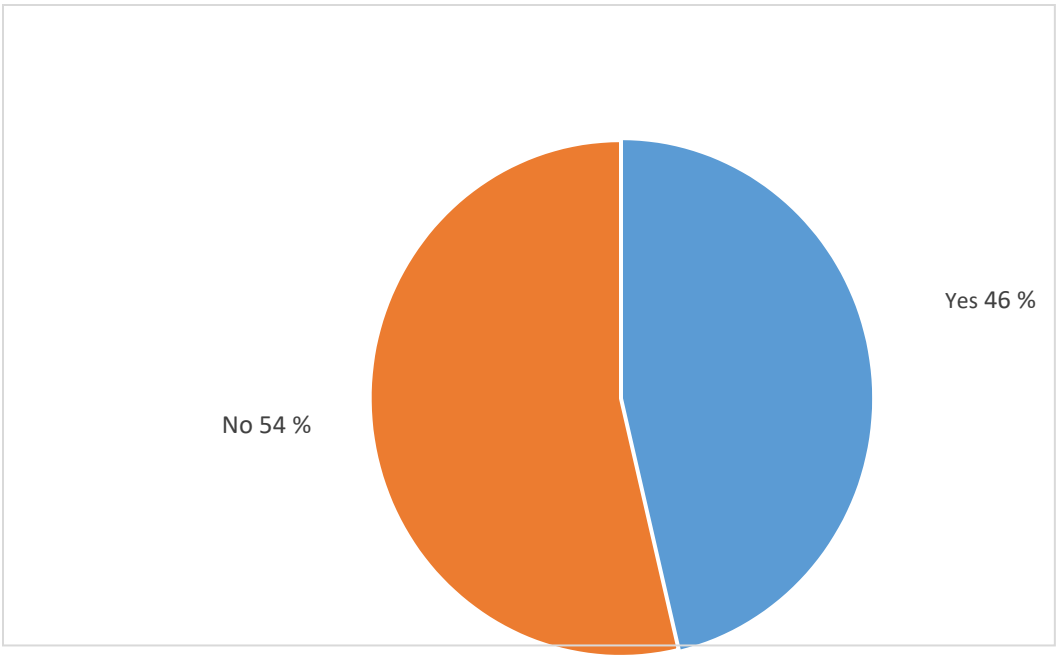
Q9. After the event, have you applied to any Erasmus+ call for proposals? *(multiple answer)*



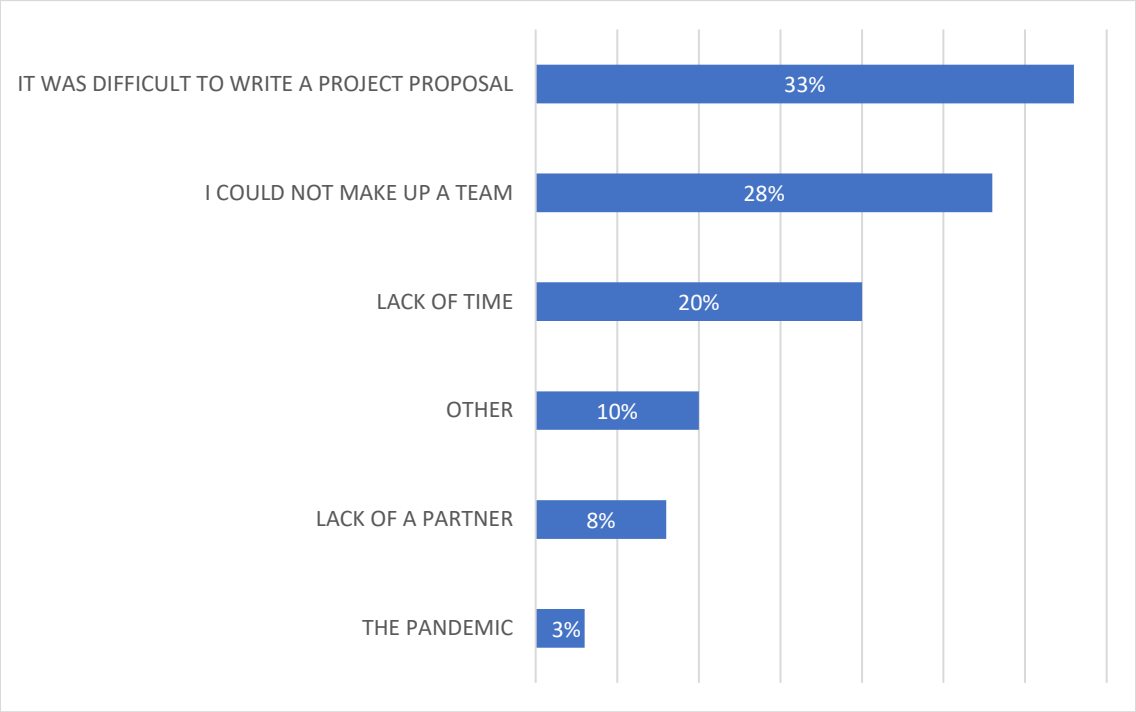
Q9.1. Have you received funding?

	Yes	No
Call for proposals: mobility projects – adult education	7	5
Call for proposals: mobility projects – school education	23	23
Call for proposals: mobility projects – VET	9	7
Call for proposals: mobility projects – youth	9	2
Call for proposals: strategic partnership projects – adult education	0	2
Call for proposals: strategic partnership projects – school education	16	8
Call for proposals: strategic partnership projects – VET	2	1
Call for proposals: strategic partnership projects – youth	0	7
A call for other area/funding axis	3	12

Q9.2. If you had not participated in this event, would you have applied to any Erasmus+ call for proposals?



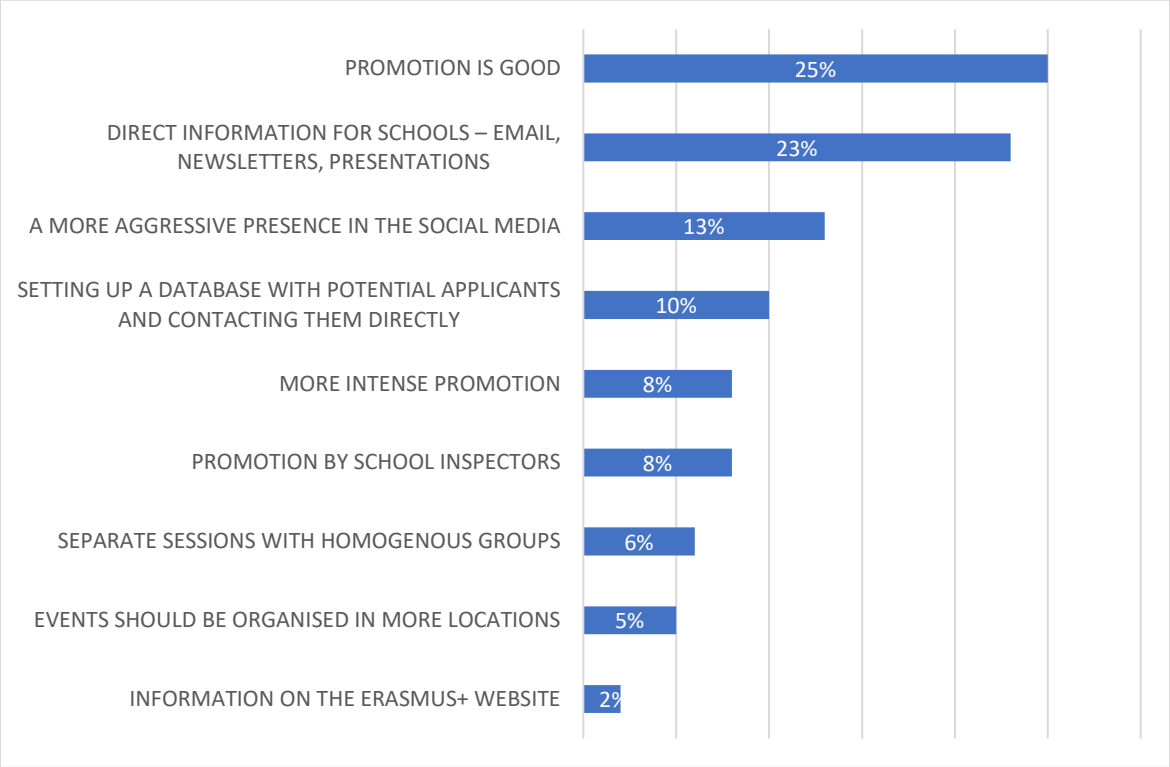
Q10. If you have not applied to any Erasmus+ call for proposals, why is that?



SUGGESTIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS FOR THE FUTURE

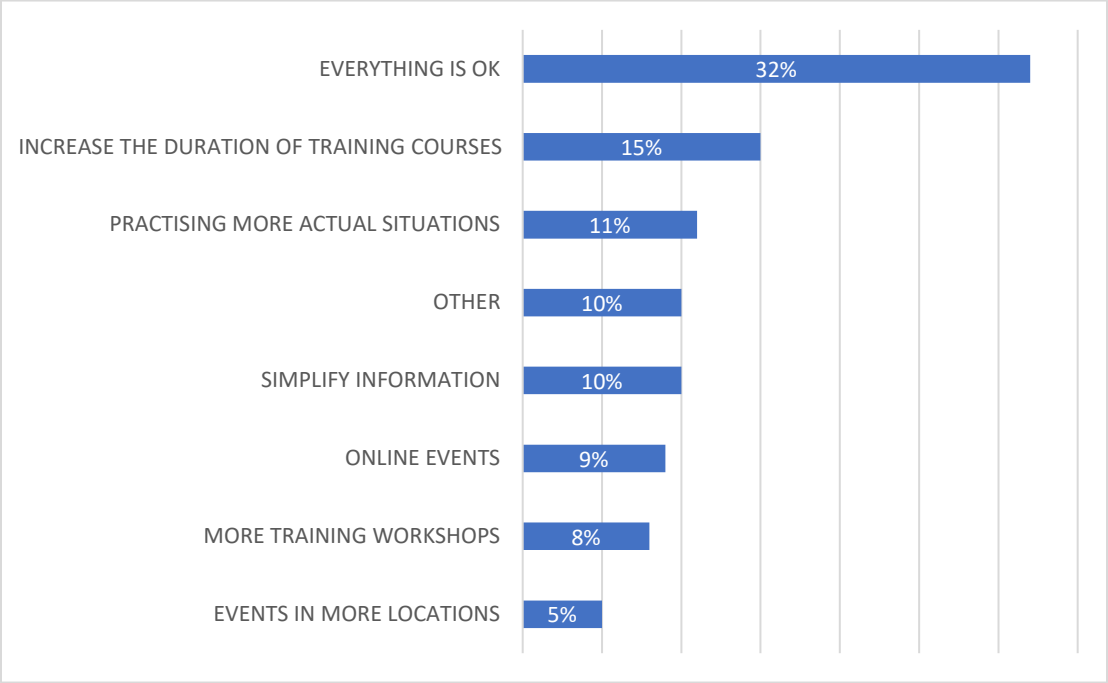
Only half of those who completed the questionnaire made suggestions about the promotion of these events in the future. A quarter of them consider that the promotion arrangements so far are very good and they should be kept like that in the future, while 23 % deem that direct promotion in schools on all channels (email, newsletter, direct presentations) should be intensified, and other 8 % consider that promotion could be mediated more by the school inspectorates, too. Another range of recommendations are concerned with more intense information through briefings and direct presentations, organised in more locations, with groups of potential applicants identified in advance and contacted directly. A more aggressive presence in the social media is suggested by about 8 % of the respondents.

Q13_1. What suggestions for the future would you make concerning the promotion of these events?

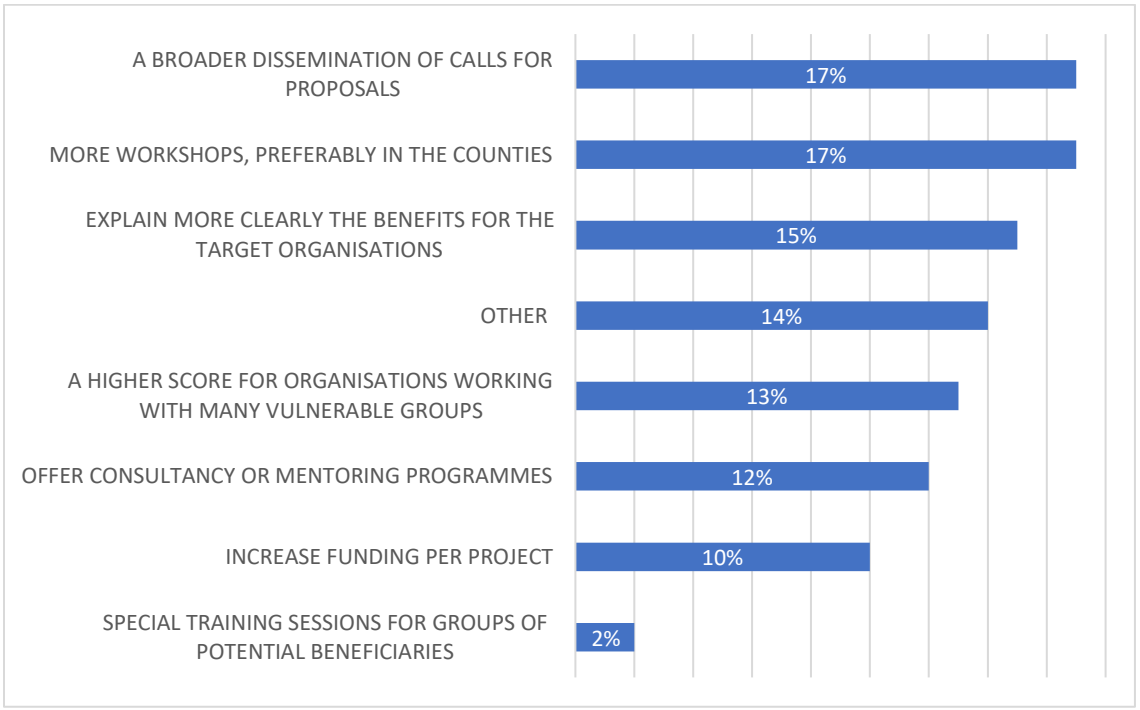


More than one third of the respondents would not change anything about the training events and workshops. Among the suggestions for improvement, the most numerous recommendations are **to increase the duration of courses** because they are too concentrated at present in terms of information. Then, there are suggestions referring to simplifying the information provided and focusing more on practising actual situations. Other recommendations made by the respondents were to increase the number of training workshops, to organise them in more locations (preferably in as many counties as possible) and also more frequent online events.

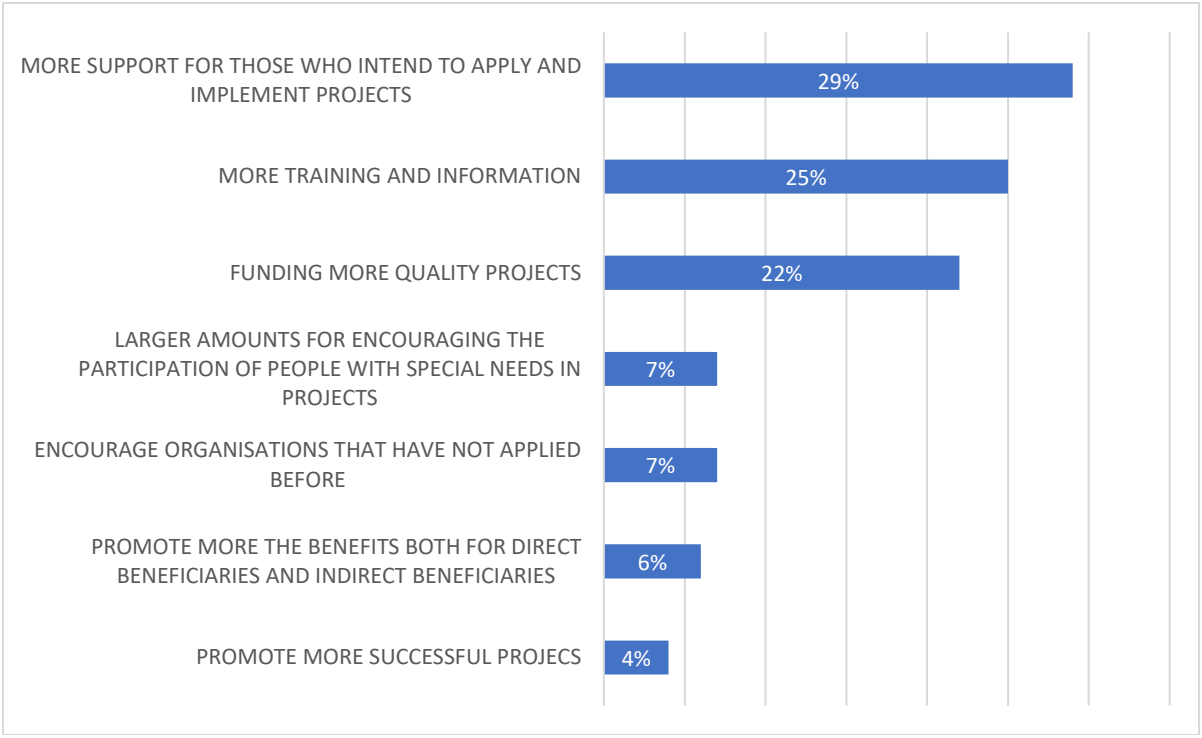
Q13_2. What are your suggestions for improving training events/workshops in the future?



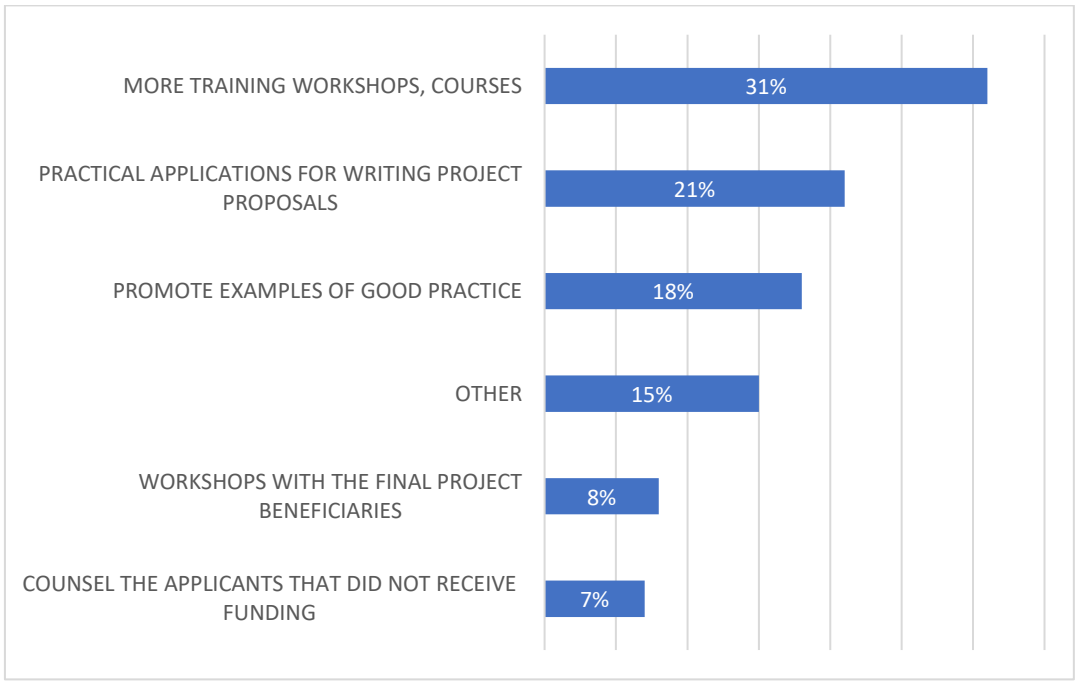
Q14_1. What are your suggestions for the future so as the Erasmus+ programmes ensure an increase in the number of people with fewer opportunities participating in the funded projects?



Q14_2. What are your suggestions for the future so as the Erasmus+ programmes ensure an increase in the number of inclusion projects receiving funding (and targeting people with fewer opportunities)?



Q14_3. What are your suggestions for the future so as the Erasmus+ programmes ensure an increase in the quality of inclusion projects?

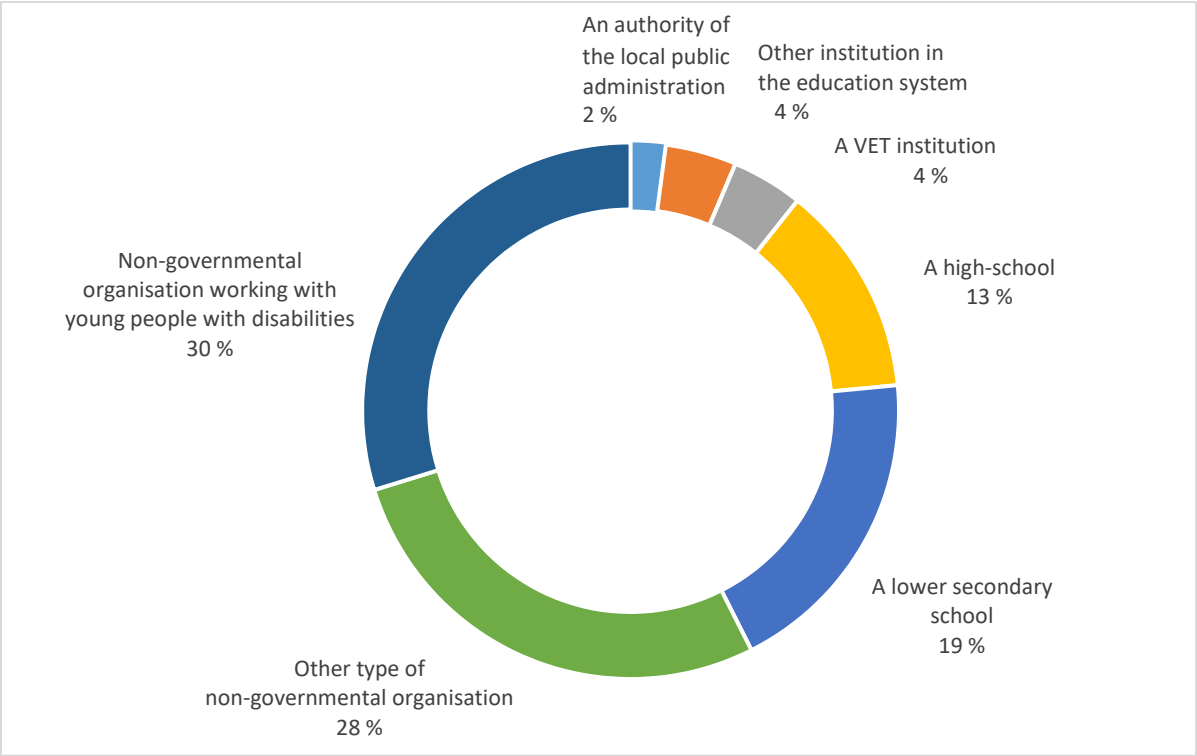


B. REPORT ON A QUANTITATIVE SURVEY OF PARTICIPANTS IN INTERNATIONAL EVENTS

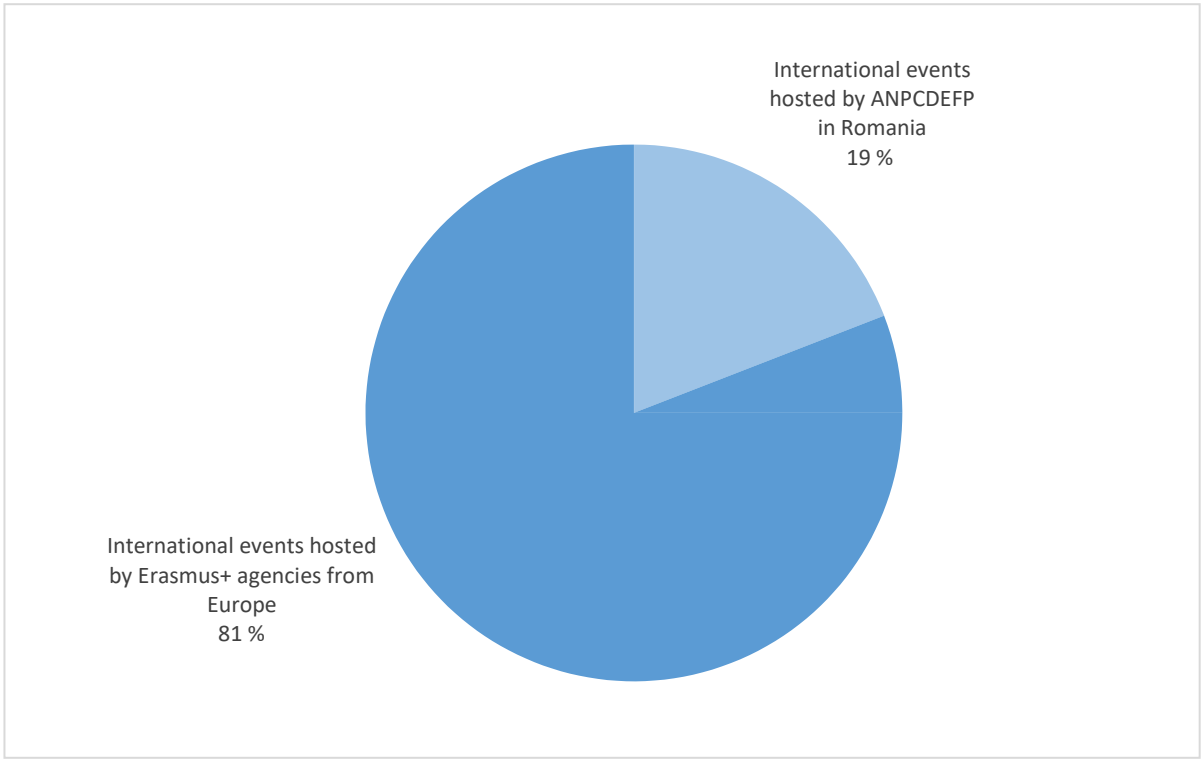
PARTICIPATION AND INFORMATION

- Among the respondents in the survey on the impact of international events, 30 % of the sample were NGOs working with young people with disabilities, 28 % were other type of NGO, 40 % were educational institutions and 2 % institutions of the local public authorities.
- Considering the venues of events, 81 % of the respondents are participants in international events hosted by other Erasmus+ agencies from Europe, while the remaining 19 % are participants in international events hosted by ANPCDEFP in Romania.
- For more than half of the respondents, the event they attended was a training course, for 30 % of the respondents, it was a contact seminar, 11 % attended a conference, 2 % study visits and 6 % participated in other type of international event.
- Where did the participants find out about the training events? The Erasmus+ website is the main source of information for 36 % of the respondents (the percentage is higher than for participants in events on inclusion in general), while 10 % were invited to these events by an Erasmus+ representative. For this category of participants, the information sources are more diversified and the proportion of those who found out about the events in their own search for information is higher than for the participants in the previous events. Therefore, 17 % found out about the international events searching the internet, 9 % after visiting dedicated forums, 9 % at other events they attended and 10 % were informed by their colleagues or collaborators.

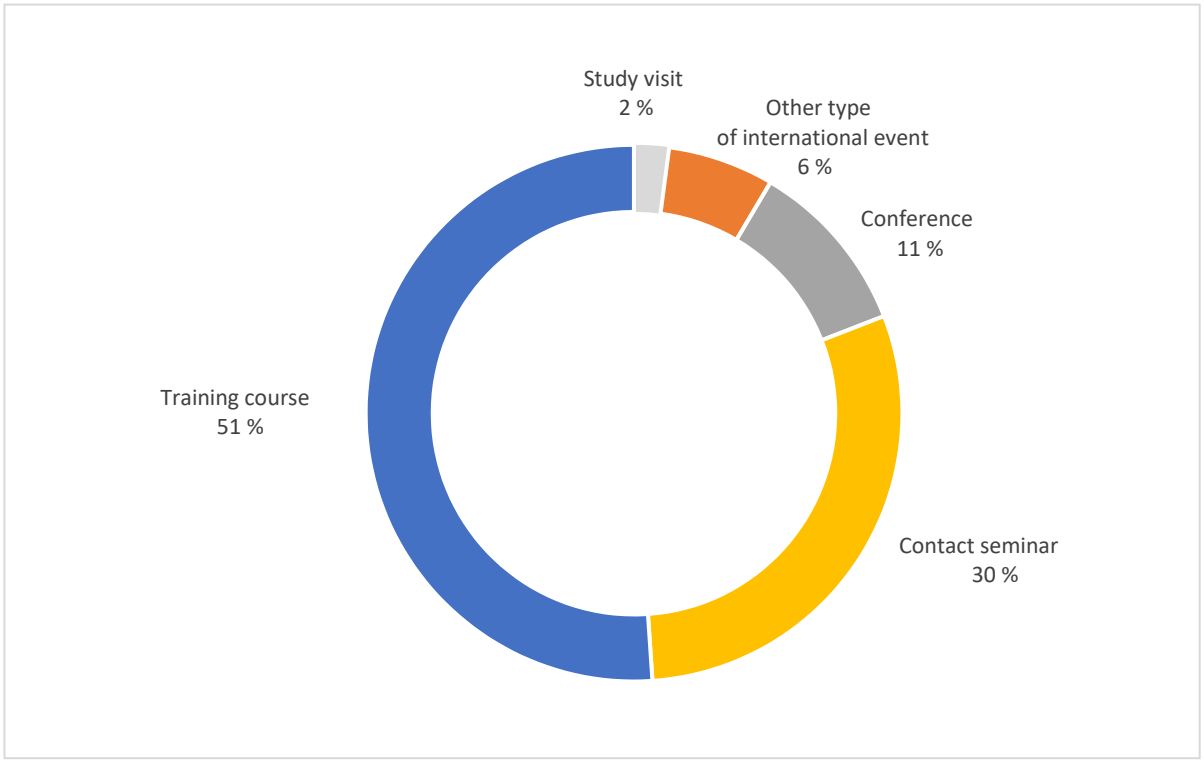
Q1. For what type of beneficiary institution/organisation have you answered the questionnaire?



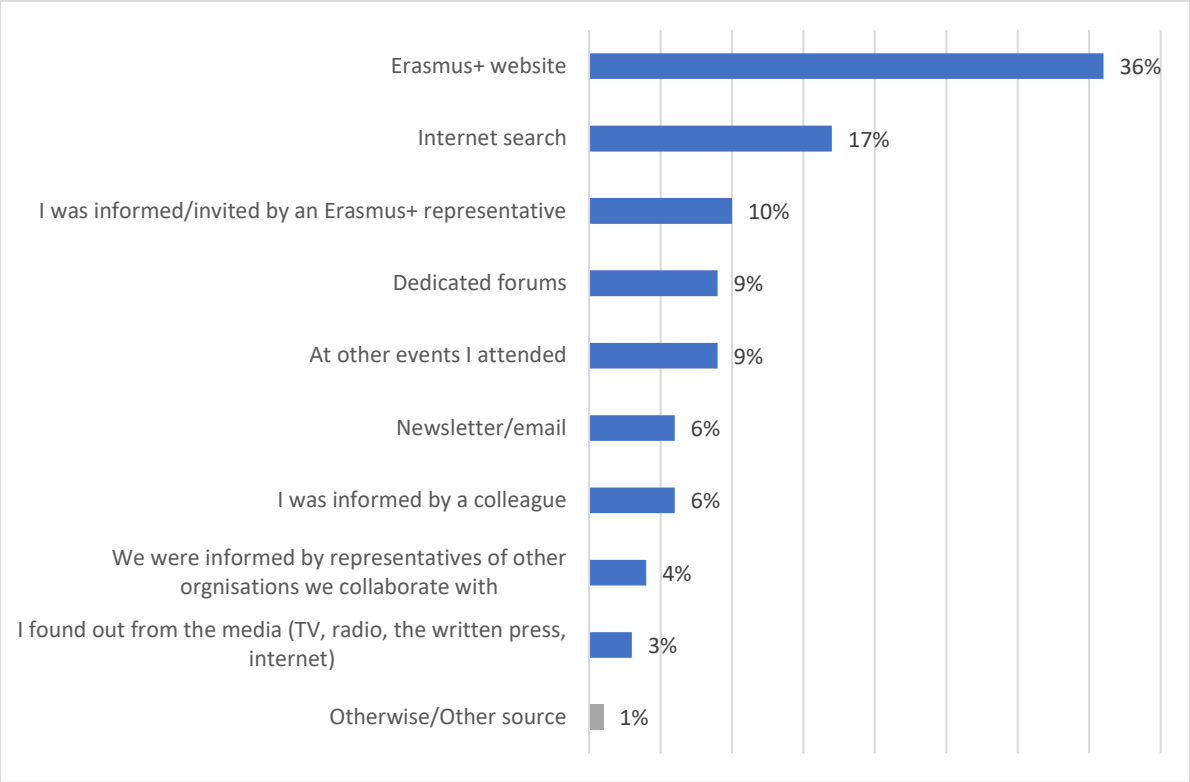
Q2. In which of the following events did you participate?



Q2_1. What type of event was it?



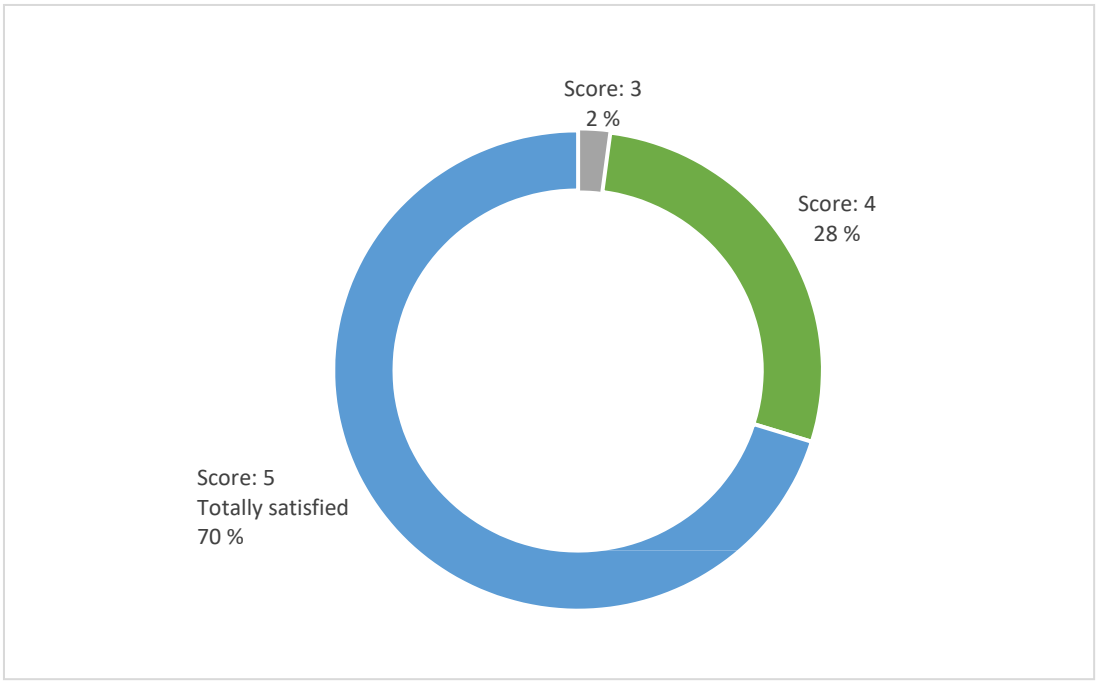
Q3. How did you find out about the Erasmus+ training events? *(multiple answer)*



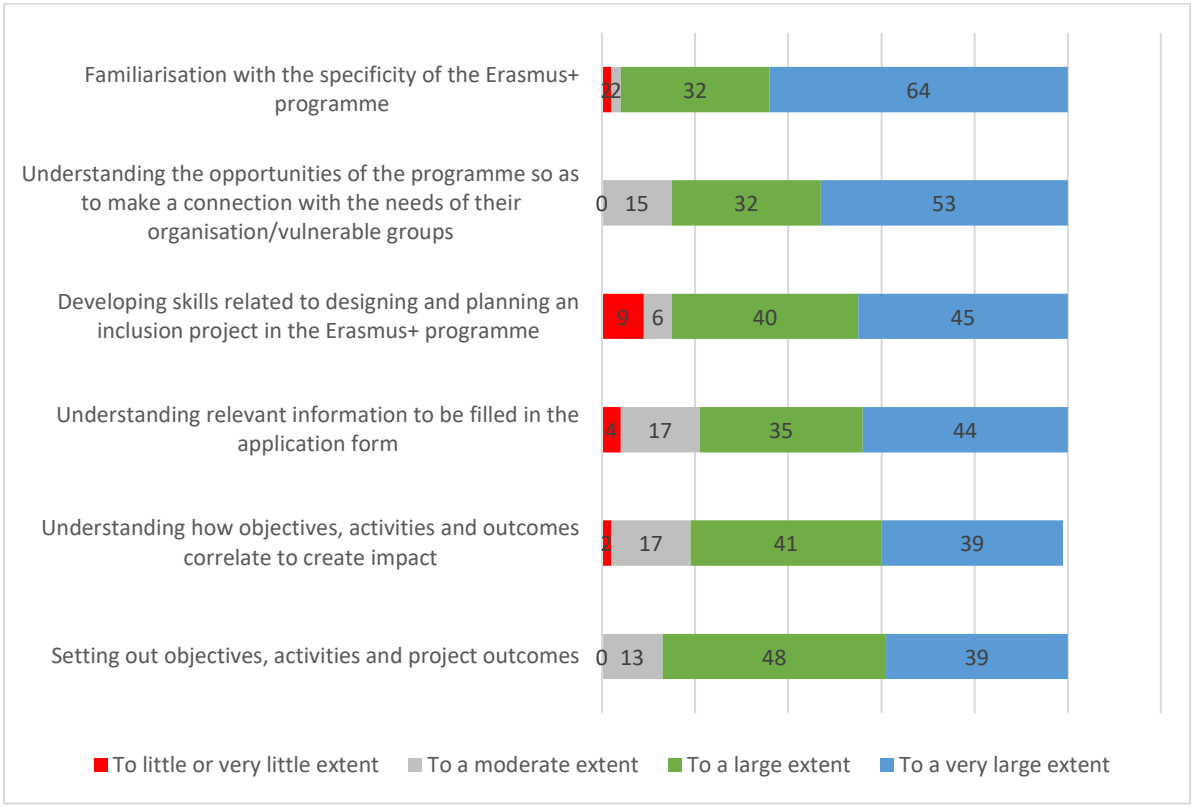
SATISFACTION WITH THE EVENTS

- The level of satisfaction with the participation in international events is very high: 98 % are very satisfied and satisfied with the event. However, of the three types of target groups interviewed about their participation in events, this group has the lowest percentage of respondents "totally satisfied" with the event (70 % were totally satisfied compared to 78 % for participants in Teach for Romania and 91 % for participants in events on general topics).
- The respondents also gave high scores for the usefulness of their participation in the event: for 96 % of the participants, the workshop contributed "to a large extent" and "to a very large extent" to their familiarisation with the specificity of the Erasmus+ programme. For 84 % of the respondents, the events contributed "to a very large extent" and "to a large extent" to the development of skills related to drafting and planning an inclusion project in the framework of the Erasmus+ programme.
- With regard to the information they received, the respondents in this category consider that the best explanations were about information referring to *inclusion in an Erasmus+ context* (94 %), *dissemination and use of outcomes* (90 %) and *the project impact*. The aspects which received lower scores in terms of clarity of information were *working in a partnership*, *aspects related to project management*, *sustainability* and *good practice from other projects*.

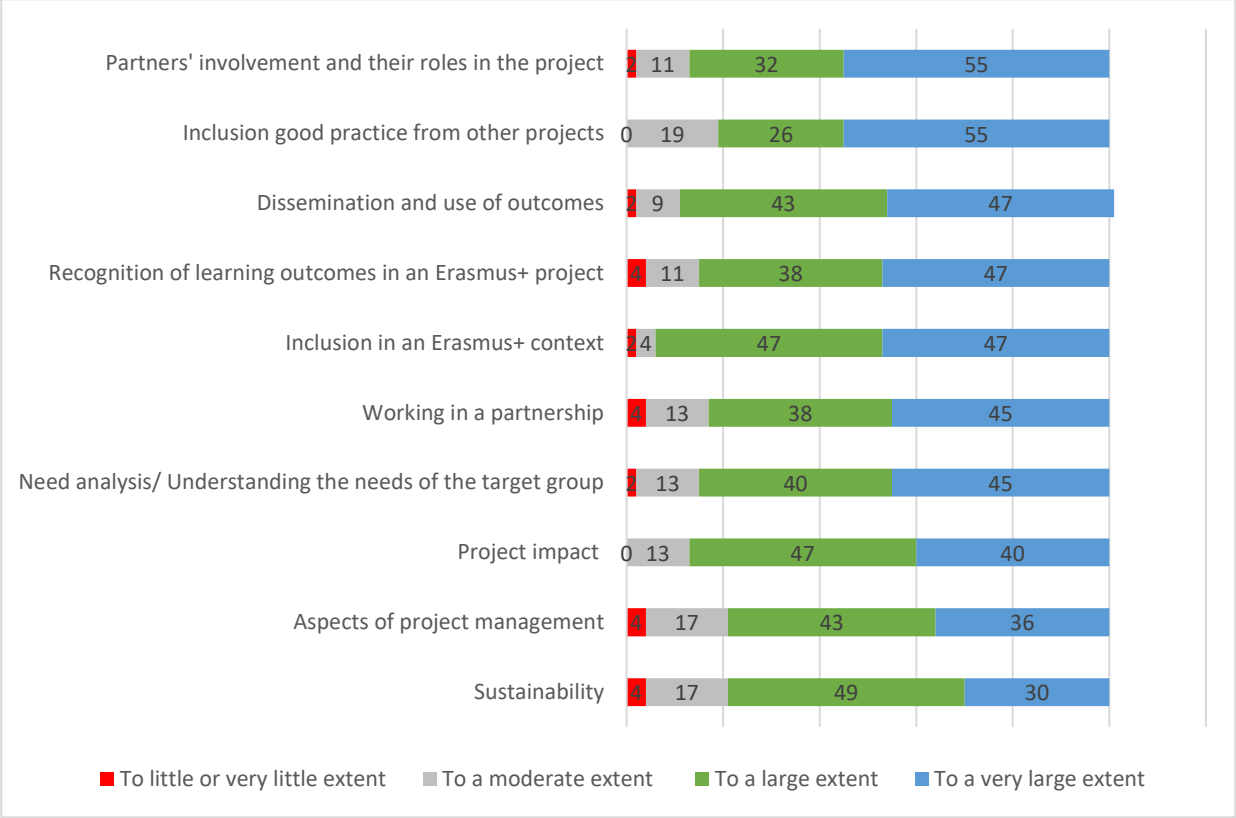
Q4. If you consider the training event you attended as a whole, on a scale of 1 to 5, where 1 means totally unsatisfied and 5 means totally satisfied, what score would you give it?



Q6. As far as you are concerned, after the workshop/event, to what extent you considered yourself informed, trained on the following topics?

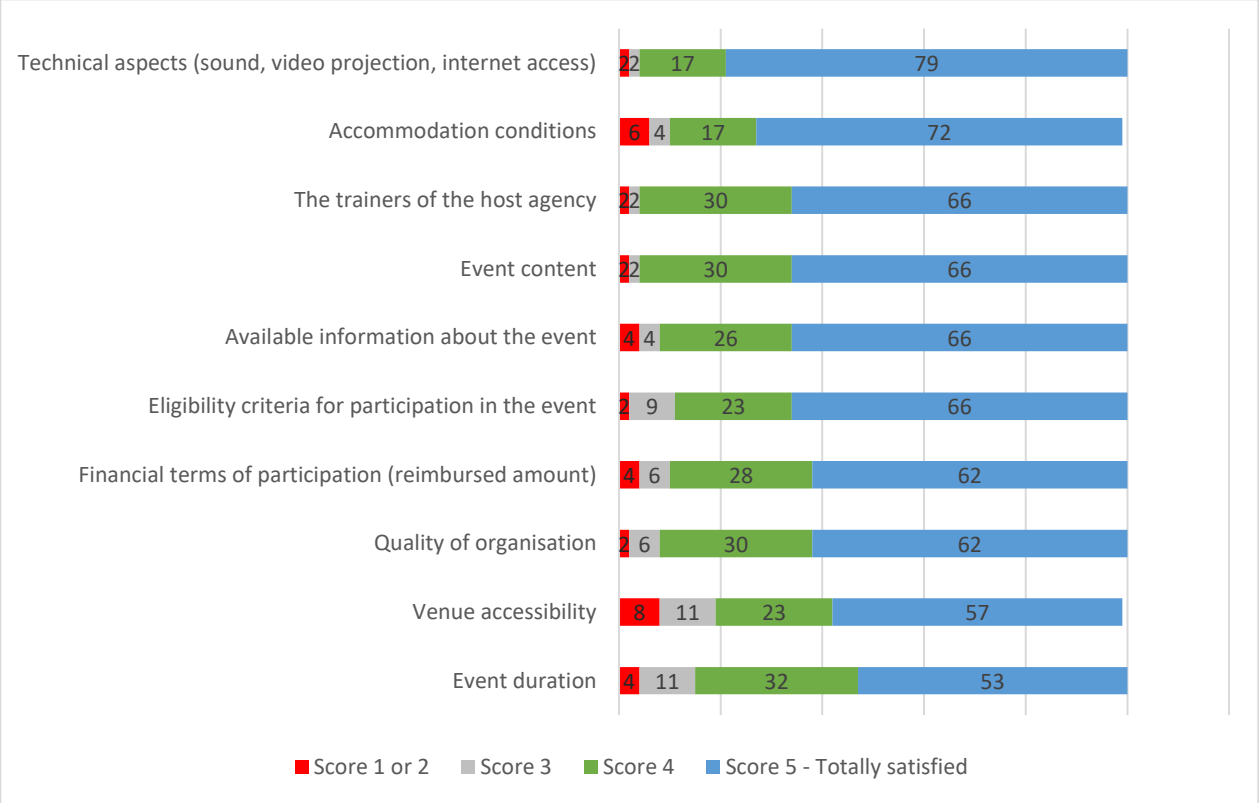


Q7. In your opinion, in the framework of the event you attended, to what extent the following topics have been sufficiently explained?

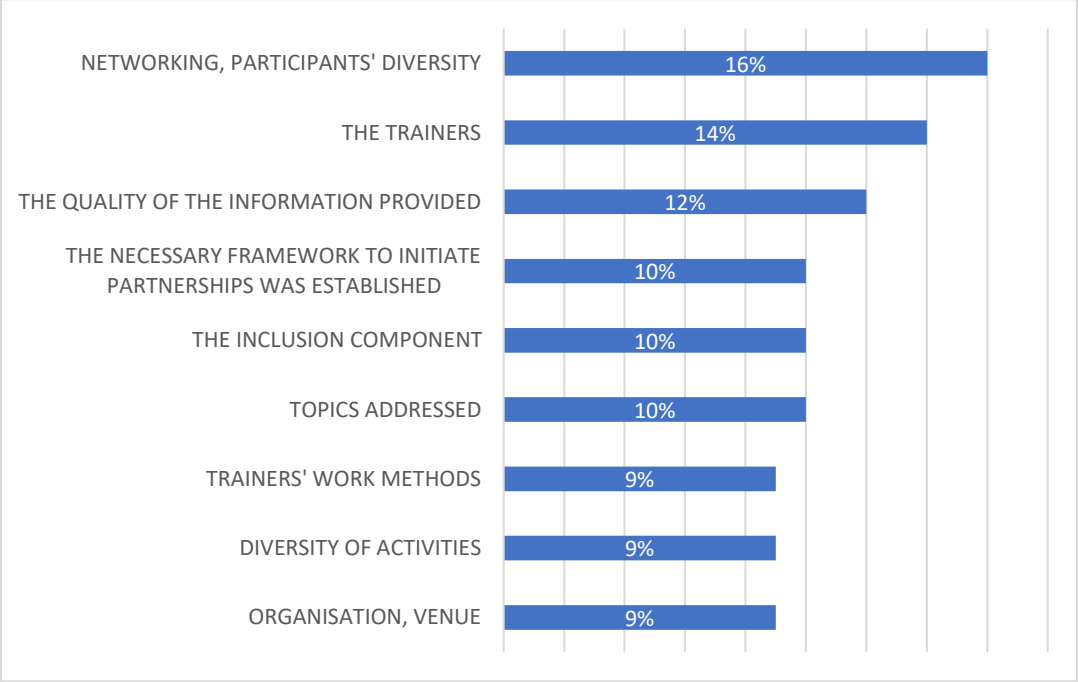


- Among the participants in international events, too, the majority said they are “satisfied” or “very satisfied” with all the aspects concerning the organisation of the event. The satisfaction scores are, however, slightly lower than for the other events. Therefore, among these participants, 8 % were unsatisfied with the accessibility of the venue, 6 % with the accommodation conditions, 4 % with the duration of the event, 4 % with the financial terms and also 4 % were unsatisfied with the available information about the event.
- To tone up the respondents’ perceptions, we also tried, in this questionnaire, to find out the strengths and the weaknesses of the events with two open questions. The following were mentioned as strengths: the diversity of participants and the opportunity for networking (16 %), the trainers (14 %), the quality of the information provided (12 %), the opportunity to establish partnerships (10 %) and the topics addressed at the event (10 %).
- Concerning the weaknesses of international events, 40 % of the respondents consider that **the time allocated to the event** was, considering the volume of the information provided, too short. The second criticised element about international events referred to **the selection of participants**, meaning it was not sufficiently rigorous so as to offer an opportunity to identify partnerships or to discuss with decision-makers from organisations in other countries.

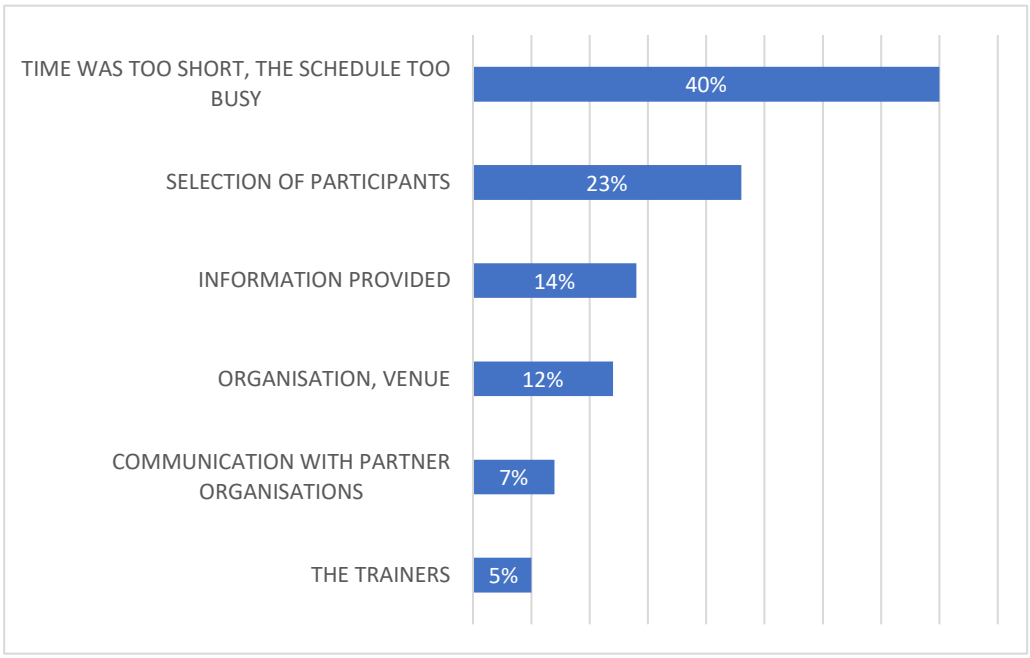
Q8. If you refer to the event you attended, on a scale of 1 to 5, where 1 means totally unsatisfied and 5 means totally satisfied, what score would you give for...



Q14. What do you think the strengths of the events were? (open question, cumulated answers)



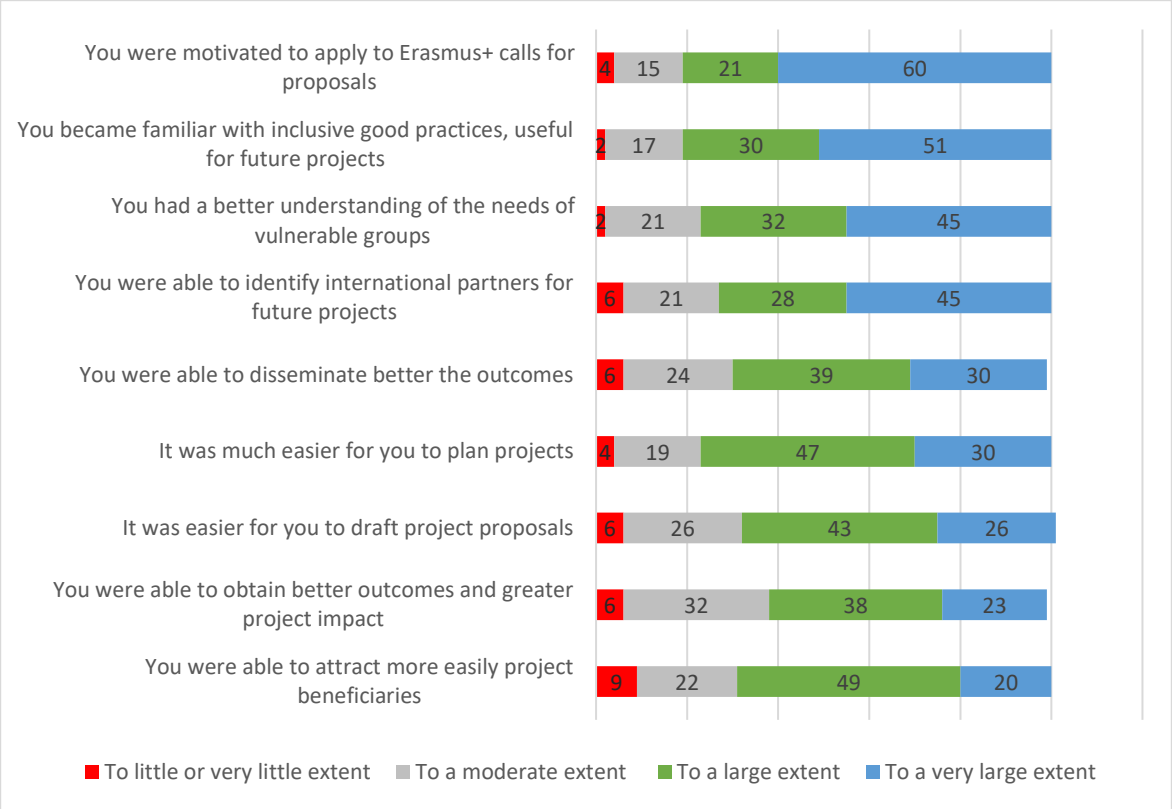
Q15. What do you think the weaknesses of the events were? (open question, cumulated answers)



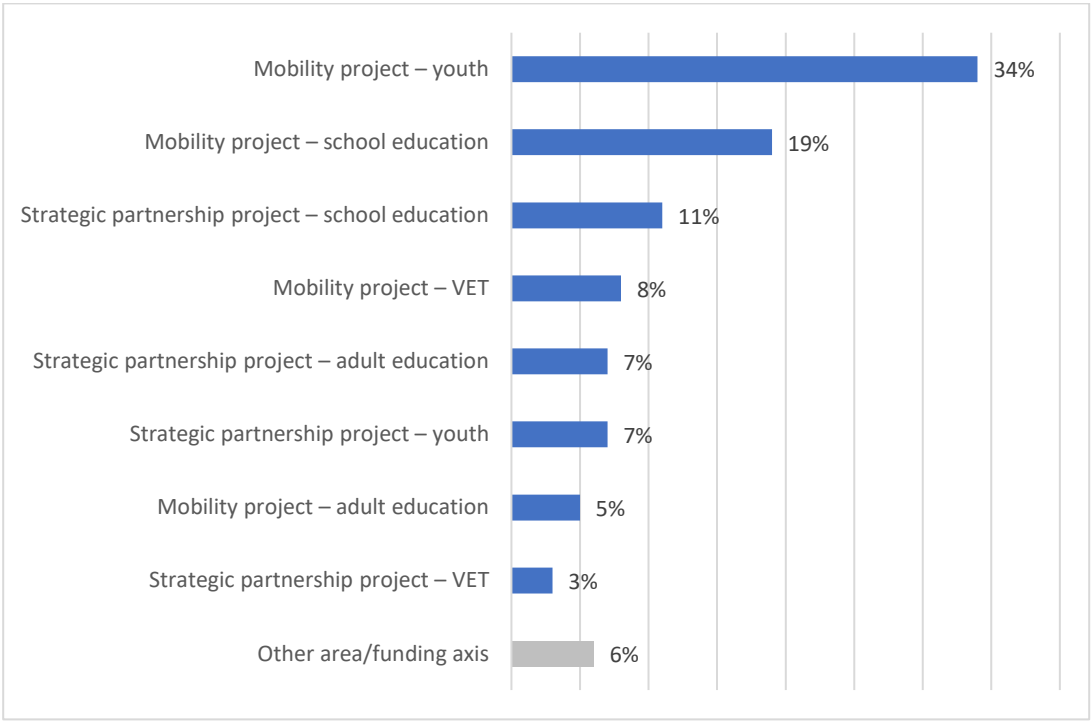
EFFICIENCY OF PARTICIPATION IN THE EVENTS

- As regards the impact of the participation, the benefits are notable also for the participants in international events; however, the scores are slightly lower than for the other two groups. The main benefit perceived by the respondents in this category was that it was easy to plan projects and also the motivation to apply to an Erasmus+ call for proposals and their familiarisation with inclusive practices.
- In of the total sample of respondents, about 25 % declared that, after the event, they did not apply to any Erasmus+ call for proposals.
- The reasons of those who did not submit an application are primarily linked to a difficulty to make up the necessary team to draft and implement the project (44 %), 31 % submitted other type of projects and a difficulty in completing the application for 19 %.

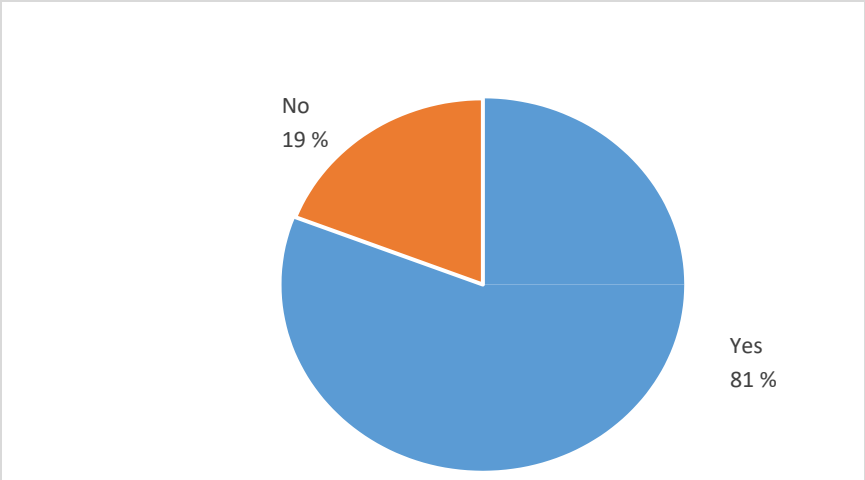
Q9. To what extent, in your case, after the event/events...?



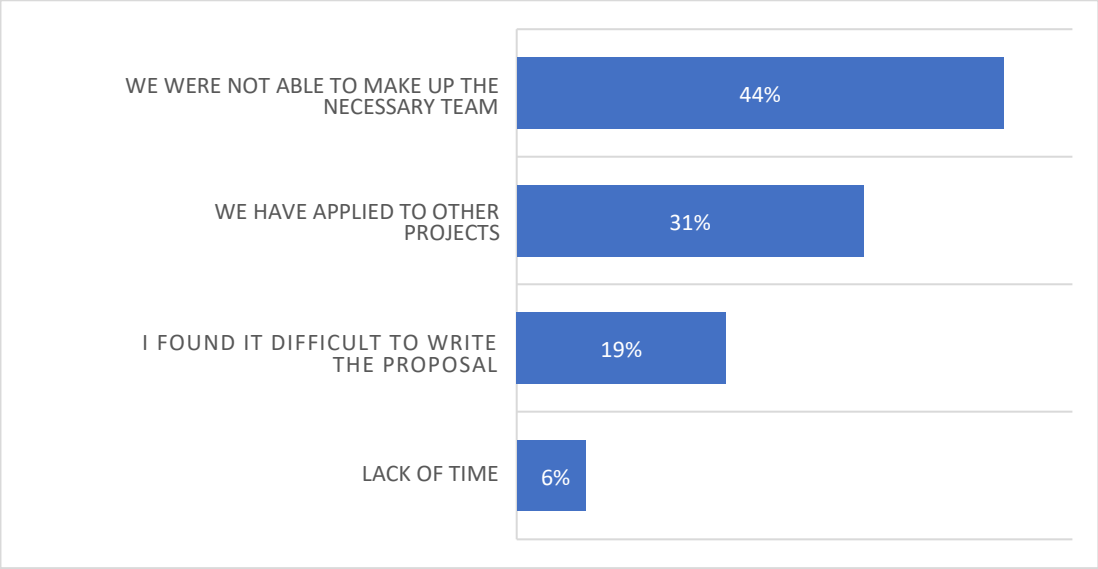
Q10. After the event, have you applied to any Erasmus+ call for proposals? *(multiple answer)*



Q12. If you had not participated in this event, would you have applied to any Erasmus+ call for proposals?



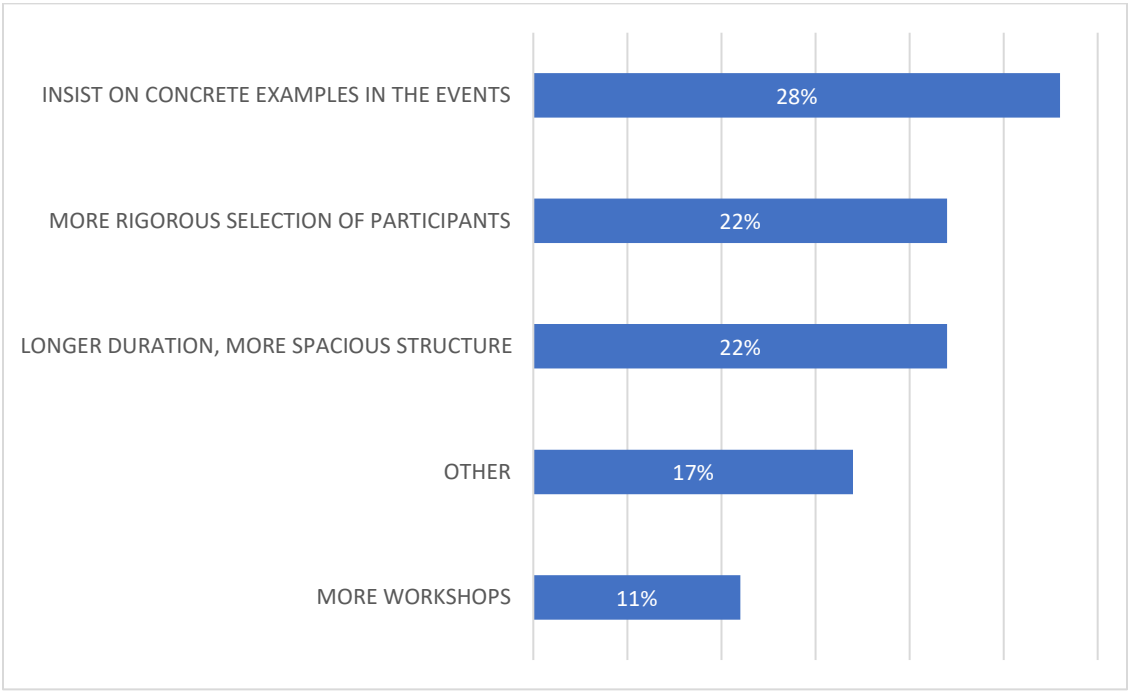
Q13. If you have not applied to any Erasmus+ call for proposals, why is that?



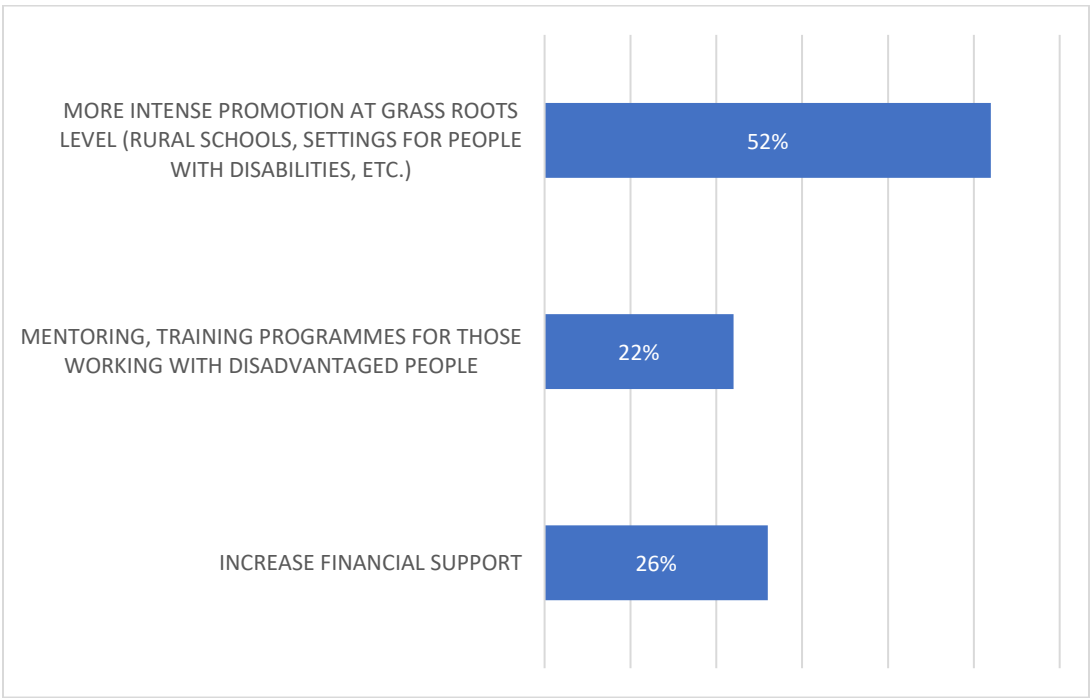
SUGGESTIONS FOR THE FUTURE

Concerning the suggestions for promoting these events in the future, there were relatively few and very homogenous recommendations. Therefore, a considerable share of the respondents either haven't got any suggestions or they think that the promotion arrangements used so far are appropriate, efficient and sufficient. The few recommendations referred to: more presence in the social media, online seminars, a dedicated promotion website, sending the calendars as newsletters**.** As regards the improvement of support measures, the suggestions insist on the practicality of the thematic content, a more rigorous selection of participants and a more spacious structure for the events in terms of schedule and volume of the information provided.

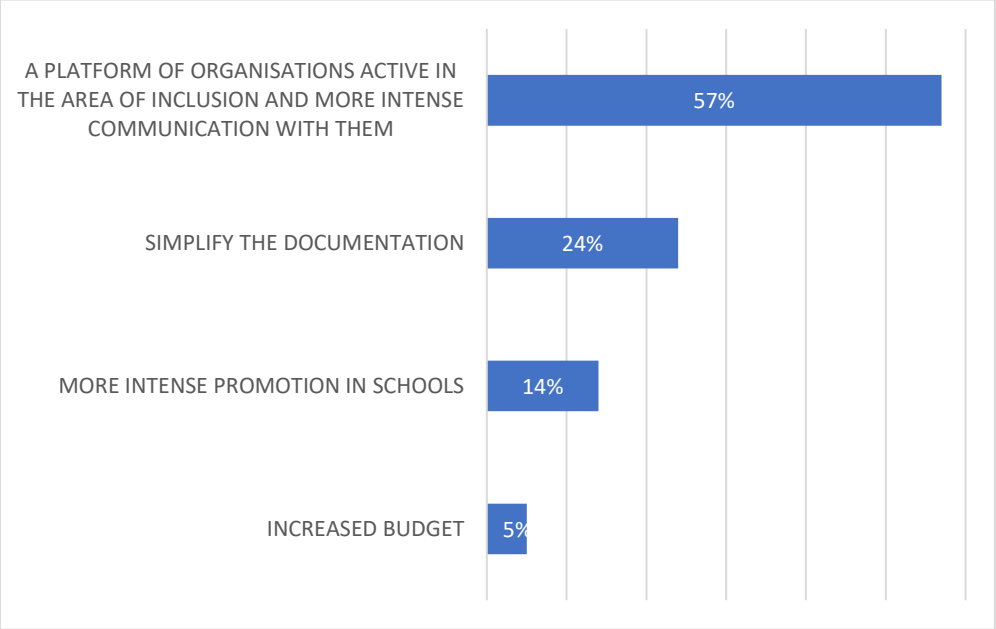
Q16_2. What are your suggestions for improving the training events/workshops in the future?



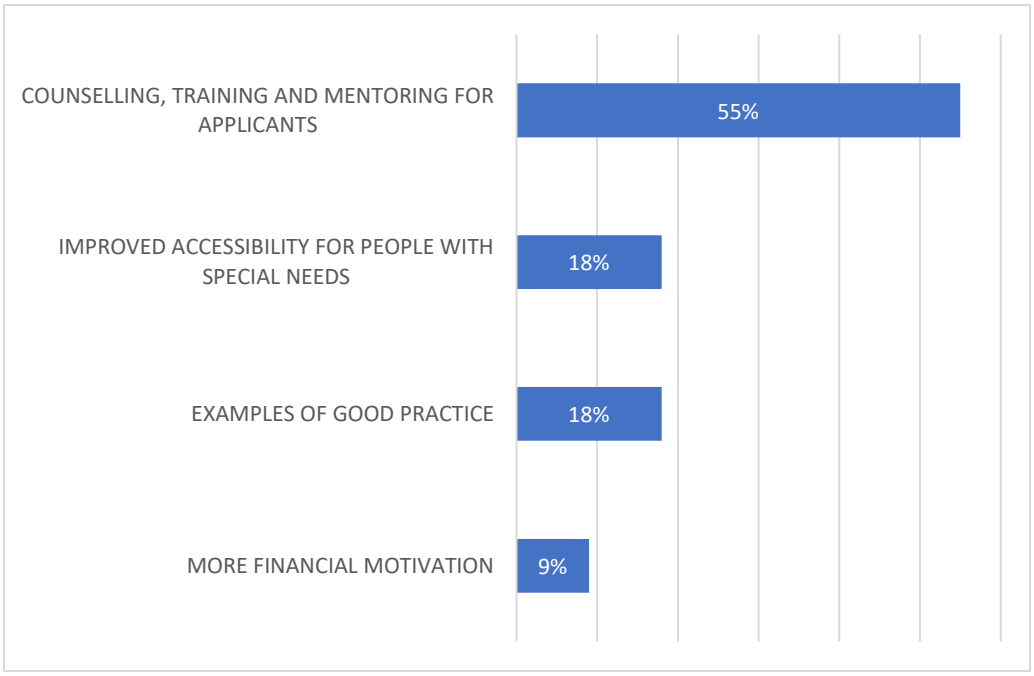
Q17_1. What are your suggestions for the future so as the Erasmus+ programmes ensure an increase in the number of people with fewer opportunities participating in the funded projects?



Q17_2. What are your suggestions for the future so as the Erasmus+ programmes ensure an increase in the number of inclusion projects receiving funding (and targeting people with fewer opportunities)?



Q17_3. What are your suggestions for the future so as the Erasmus+ programmes ensure an increase in the quality of inclusion projects?

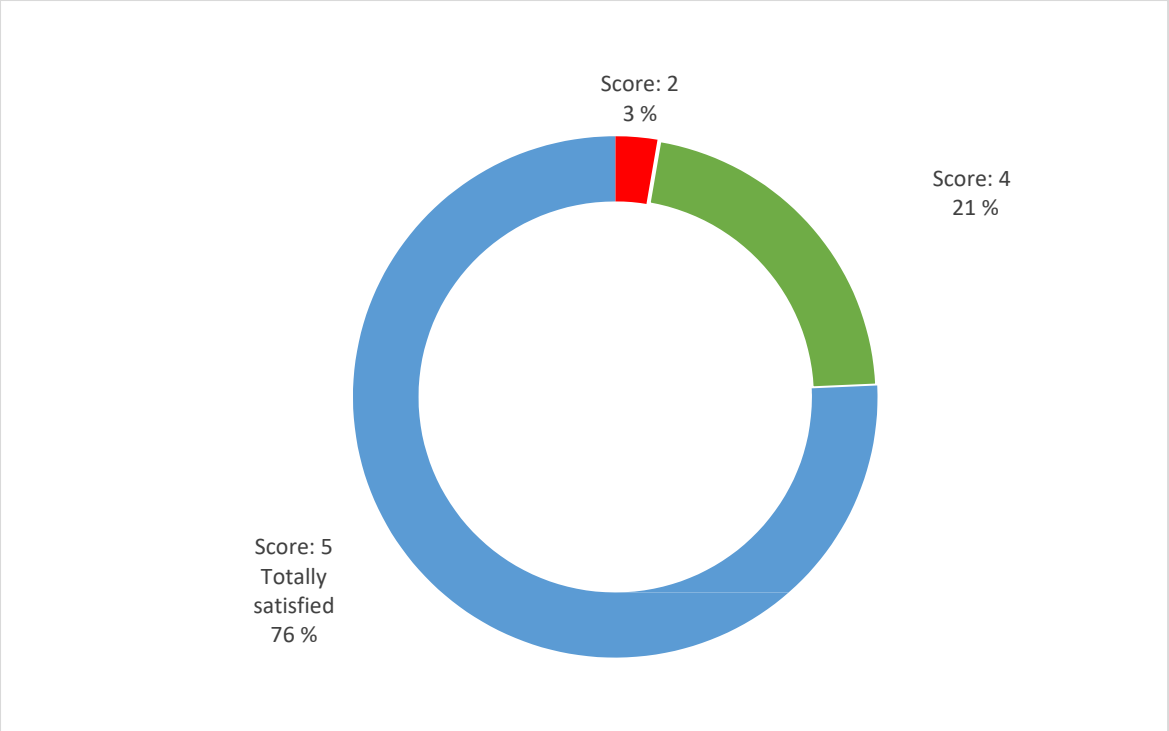


C. REPORT ON A QUANTITATIVE SURVEY OF PARTICIPANTS IN "TEACH FOR ROMANIA" EVENTS

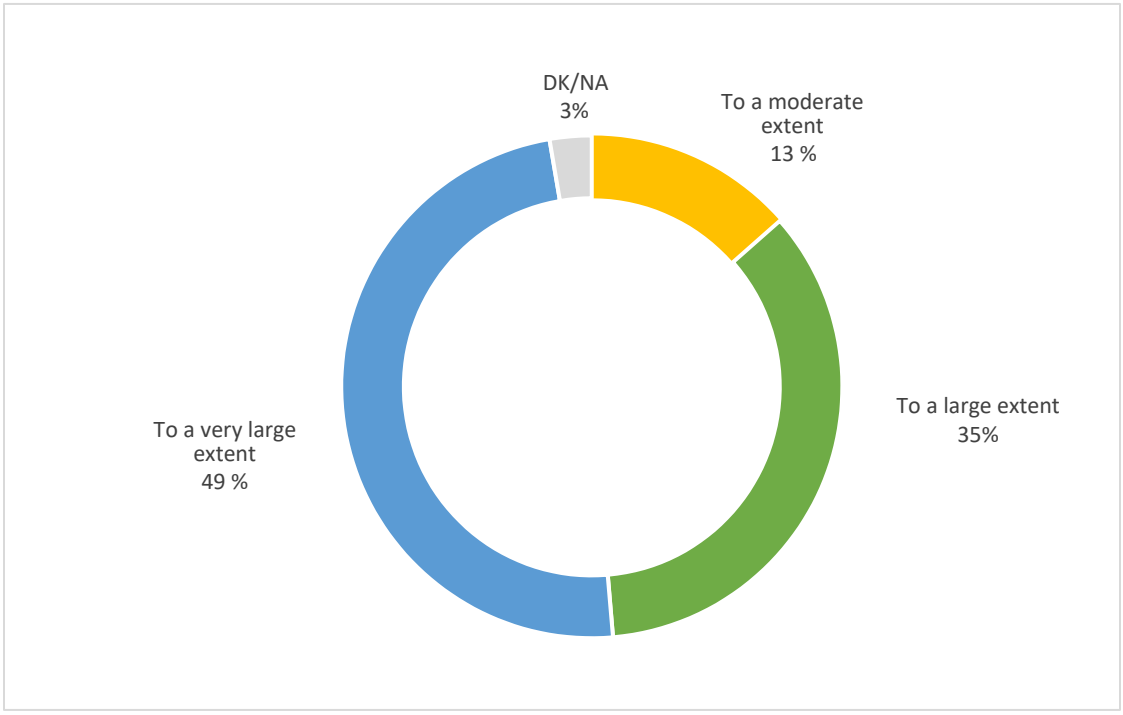
SATISFACTION WITH PARTICIPATION

- Similar to the perceptions of the participants in other training workshops, the level of satisfaction among the teachers from the Teach for Romania programme is very high: 97 % are "very satisfied" and "satisfied" with the event organised by the National Agency.
- One of the questions also concerned the relevance of the programme in relation to the needs of the institutions the participants came from: half of the sample consider that the Erasmus+ programme was appropriate "to a very large extent" for the needs of the vulnerable groups from their schools, and other 35 % think this is true "to a large extent". In other words, more than 80 % of the participants in this event think that Erasmus+ meets the needs of students from disadvantaged communities and of their teachers.
- The respondents also gave high scores for the usefulness of their participation in the event: 90 % considered that the training workshop contributed "to a large extent" and "to a very large extent" to a better understanding of the programme opportunities so as to connect them with the needs of their organisation. For 89 % of the participants, the workshop contributed "to a large extent" and "to a very large extent" to their familiarisation with the specificity of the Erasmus+ programme and of mobility projects. A percentage of 84 % of the respondents consider that the events contributed "to a very large extent" and "to a large extent" to skills related to setting out objectives, activities and project outcomes. The same high percentage of 84 % of the respondents deem that the event contributed to understanding how the objectives, activities and project outcomes correlate to create impact.
- We regard to the information they received, the respondents in this category consider that the best explained information referred to the *need analysis/understanding the target group* (89 %), *inclusion in an Erasmus+ context* (81 %), *dissemination and use of outcomes* (81 %). The aspects that received lower scores in terms of clarity of information were *working in a partnership* (68 %), *aspects related to project management* (70 %) and *recognition of learning outcomes in an Erasmus+ project* (73 %).

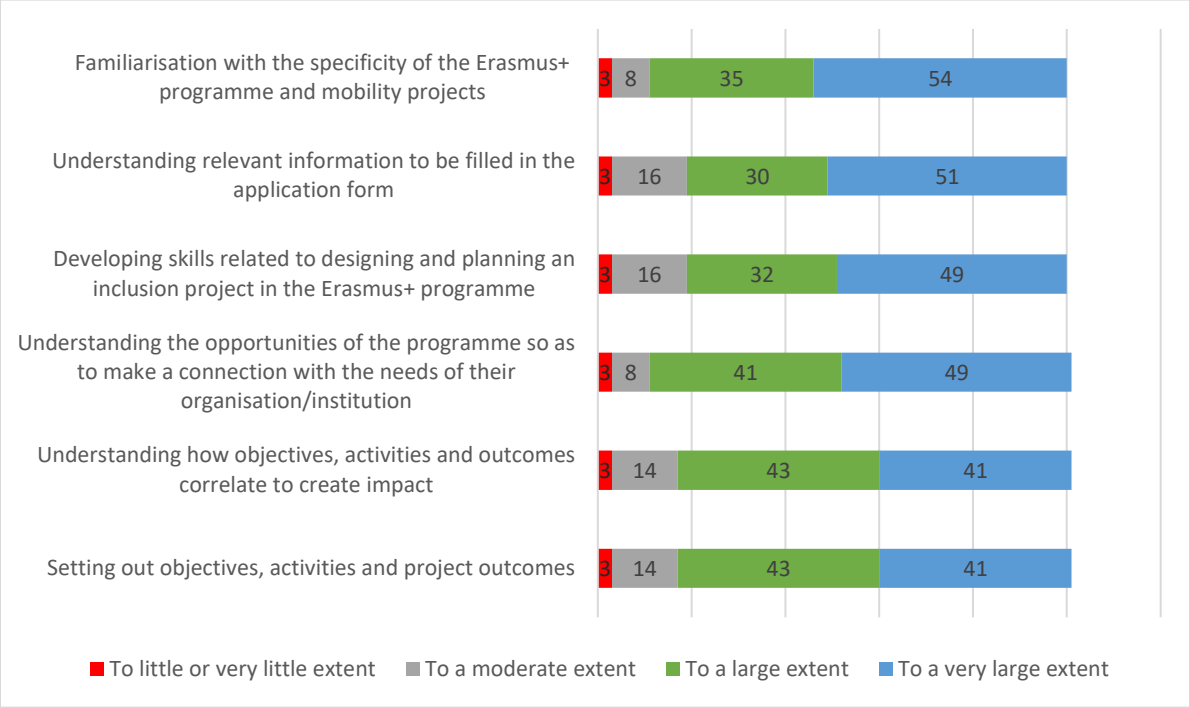
If you consider the training event you attended as a whole, on a scale of 1 to 5, where 1 means totally unsatisfied and 5 means totally satisfied, what score would you give it?



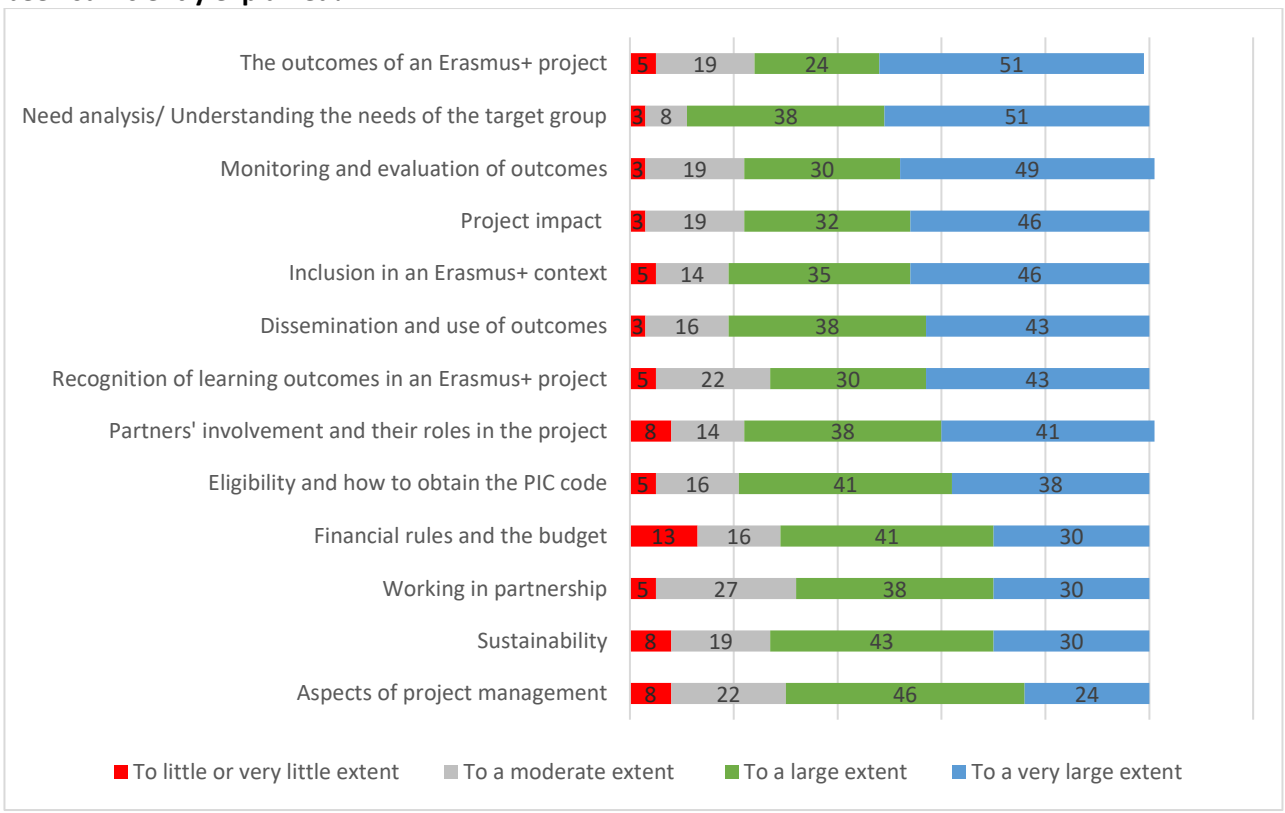
To what extent do you think the Erasmus+ programme was appropriate for the needs of vulnerable groups in the school where you work/worked?



As far as you are concerned, after the workshop/event, to what extent you considered yourself informed, trained on the following topics?

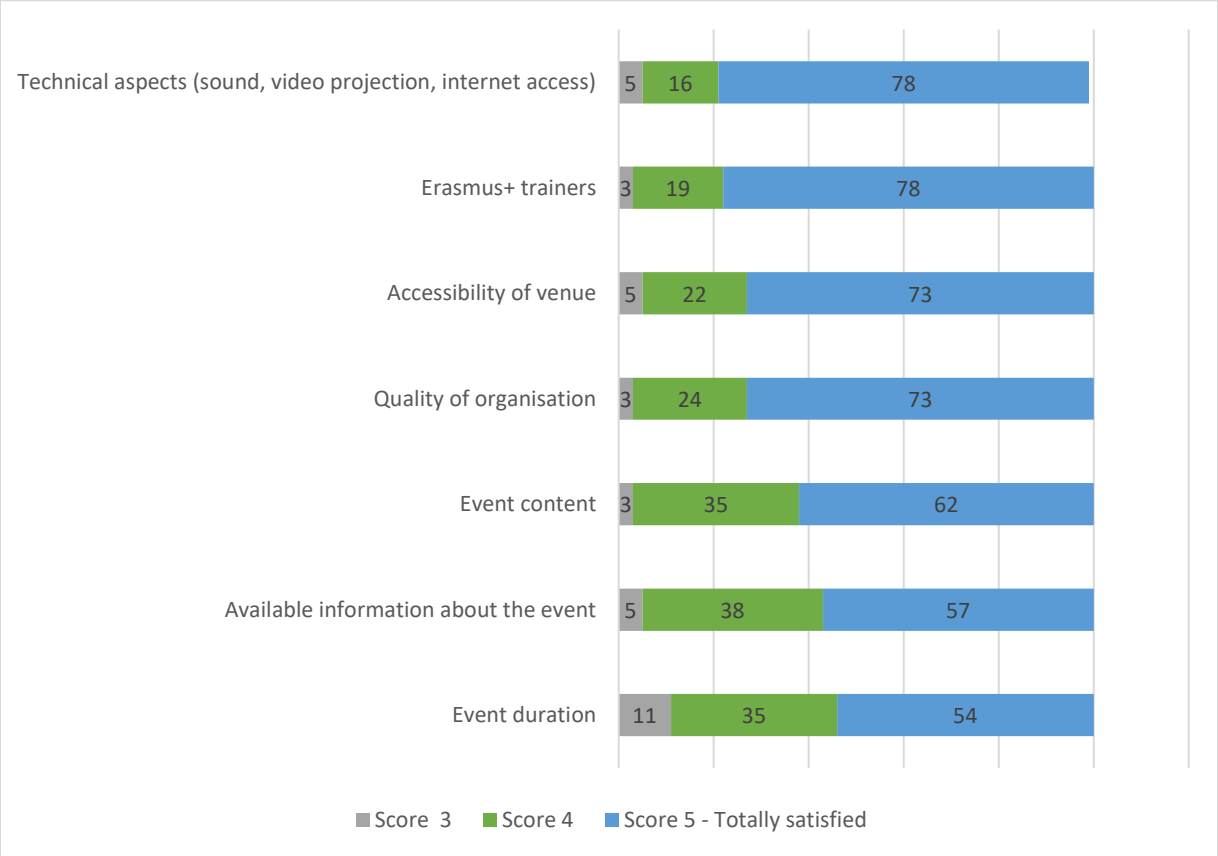


In your opinion, in the framework of the event you attended, to what extent the following topics have been sufficiently explained?

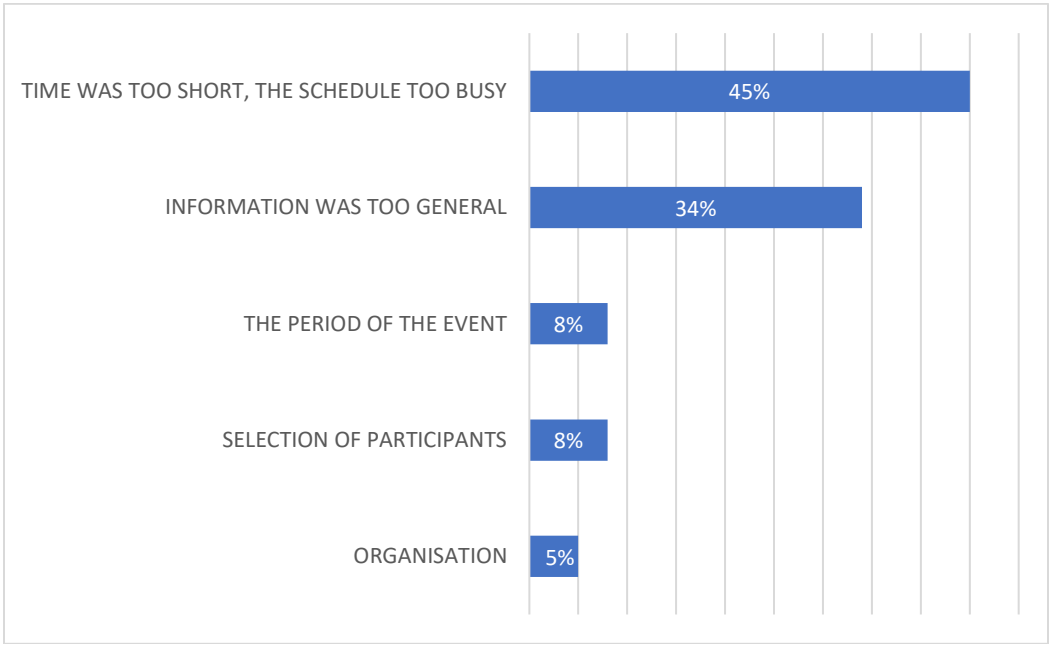


- The majority of participants said they were “satisfied” or “very satisfied” with all the aspects concerning the organisation of the event. The only element for which the level of satisfaction was slightly lower was *the duration of the event.*
- To tone up the respondents’ perceptions, in the questionnaire, we tried to find out the strengths and weaknesses of the events also with two open questions. About the strengths, **the information received (27 %), the concrete examples addressed (21 %)** and also **working with the application form (7%)** are the main elements related to the topics which were appreciated. For a quarter of the respondents, the trainers are the strength of the event.
- As regards the weaknesses of the events, 45 % of the respondents consider that **the time allocated to the events** was, considering the volume of the information provided, too short. Moreover, 34 % of the respondents mentioned that the information presented at the event they attended was “too general”.

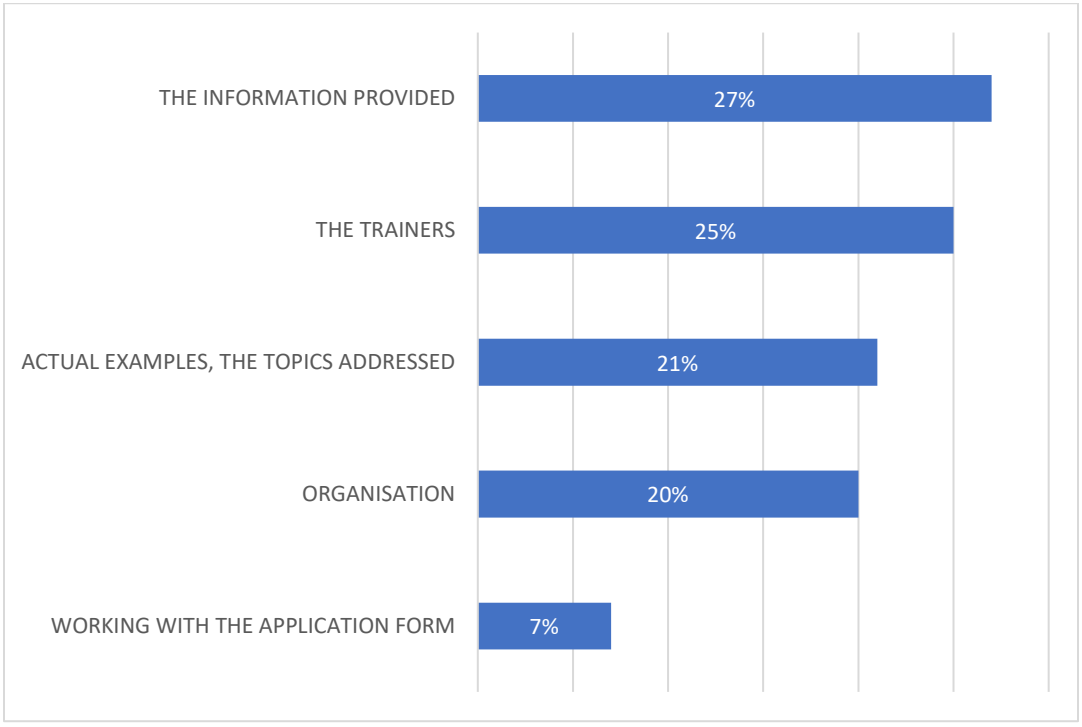
If you refer to the event you attended, on a scale of 1 to 5, where 1 means totally unsatisfied and 5 means totally satisfied, what score would you give for...



What were the weaknesses of the event?



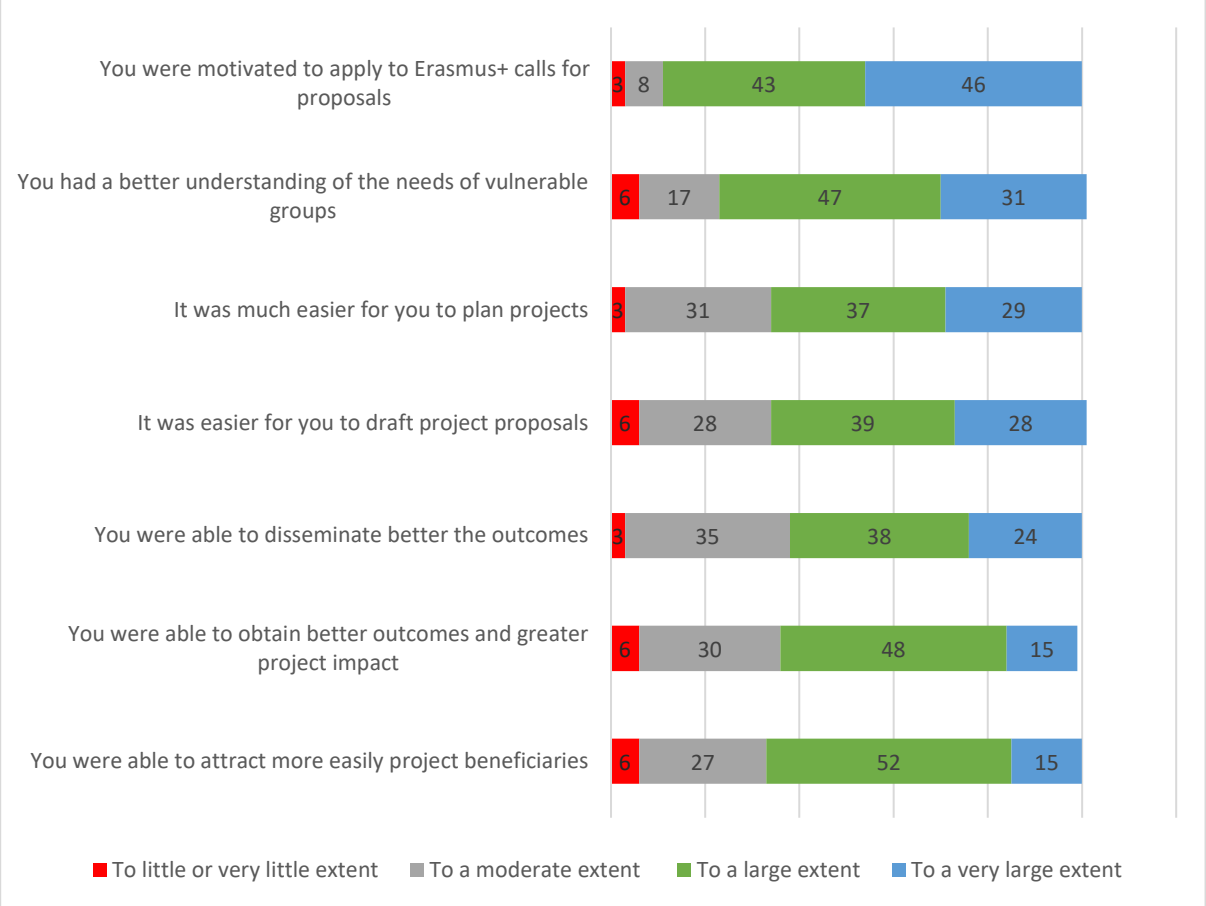
What were the strengths of the event?



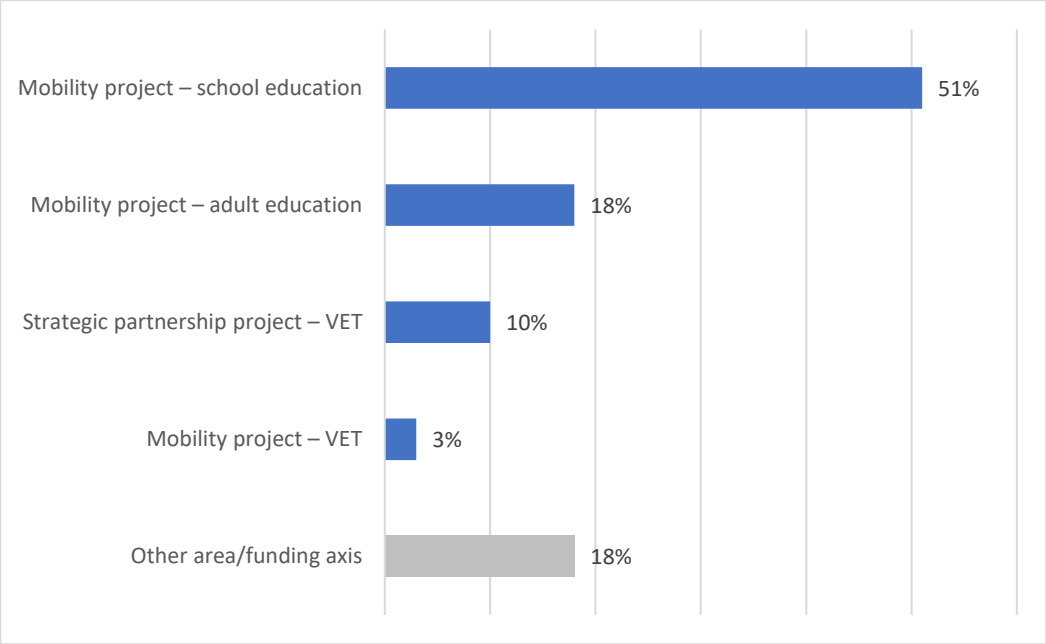
EFFICIENCY OF PARTICIPATION IN THE EVENTS

- Concerning the impact of the events, for participants in the Teach for Romania event, too, the primary benefit is attributed to the motivation to apply to future calls for proposals (89 % say that the event motivated them "to a very large extent" or "to a large extent" to apply to Erasmus+, and also to *a better understanding of the target groups* (90 %). The events contributed slightly less to *a better dissemination of outcomes* or to *drafting and planning projects easily*.
- In the total sample of respondents, approximately 29 % said that, after the event, they did not apply to any Erasmus+ call for proposals.
- For those who did not apply to any call for proposals, the reasons are mainly related to *a lack of time* (47 %), *a difficulty to make up a team to obtain and implement a project* (27 %) and *the involvement in other projects* (13 %).

To what extent, in your case, after the event/events...?



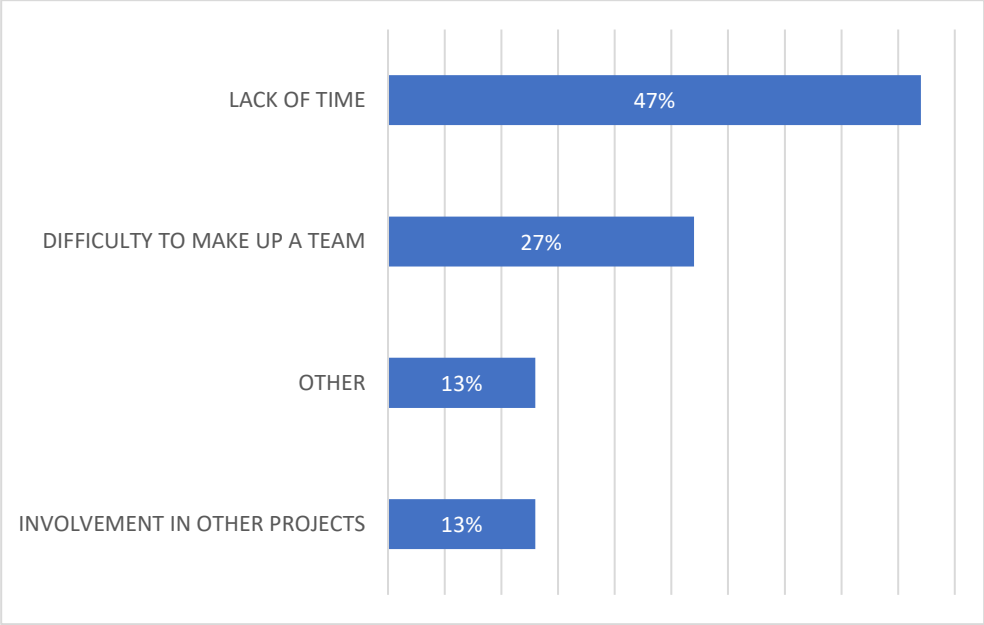
After the event, have you applied to any Erasmus+ call for proposals? *(multiple answer)*



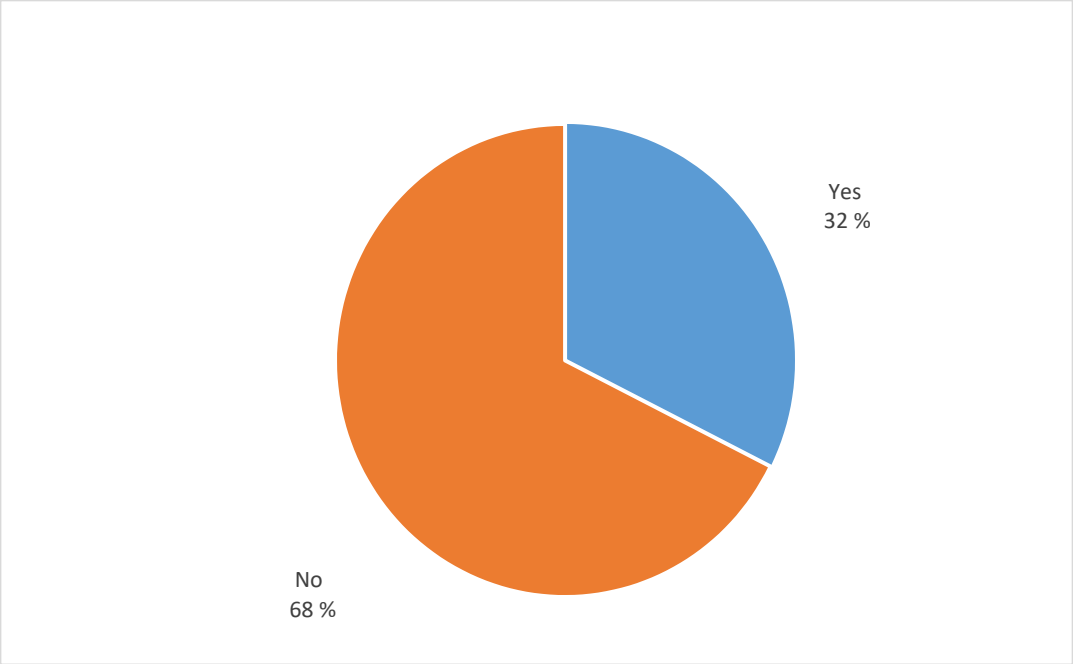
Have you received funding?

	Yes	No
Call for proposals: mobility projects – adult education	3	4
Call for proposals: mobility projects – school education	9	11
Call for proposals: mobility projects – VET	1	0
Call for proposals: mobility projects – adult education	0	0
Call for proposals: mobility projects – school education	0	4
Call for proposals: mobility projects – VET	0	0
A call for other area/funding axis	0	7

Reasons of those who did not submit an application

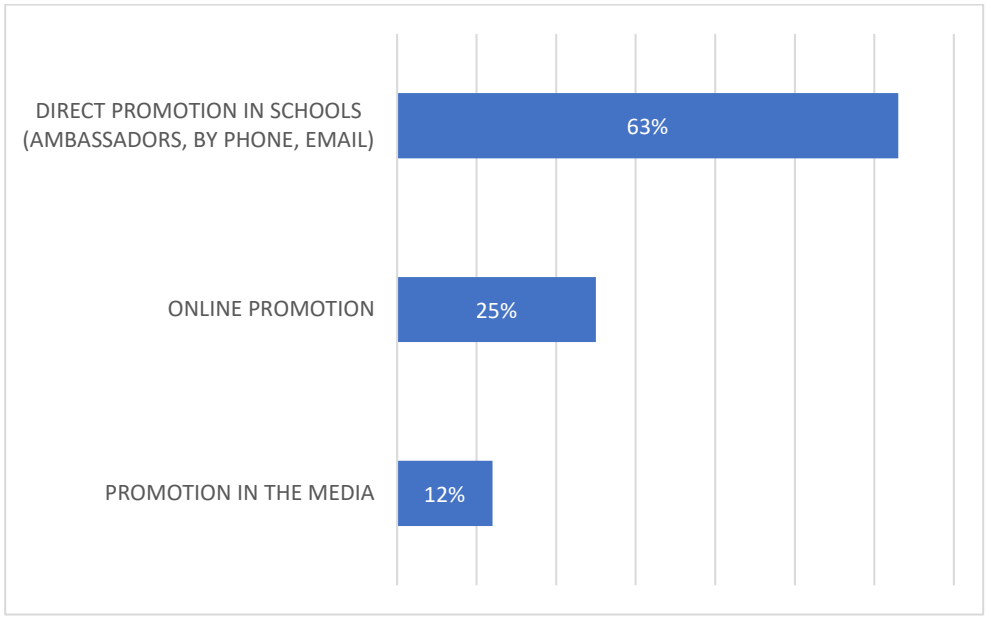


If you had not participated in this event, would you have applied to any Erasmus+ call for proposals?

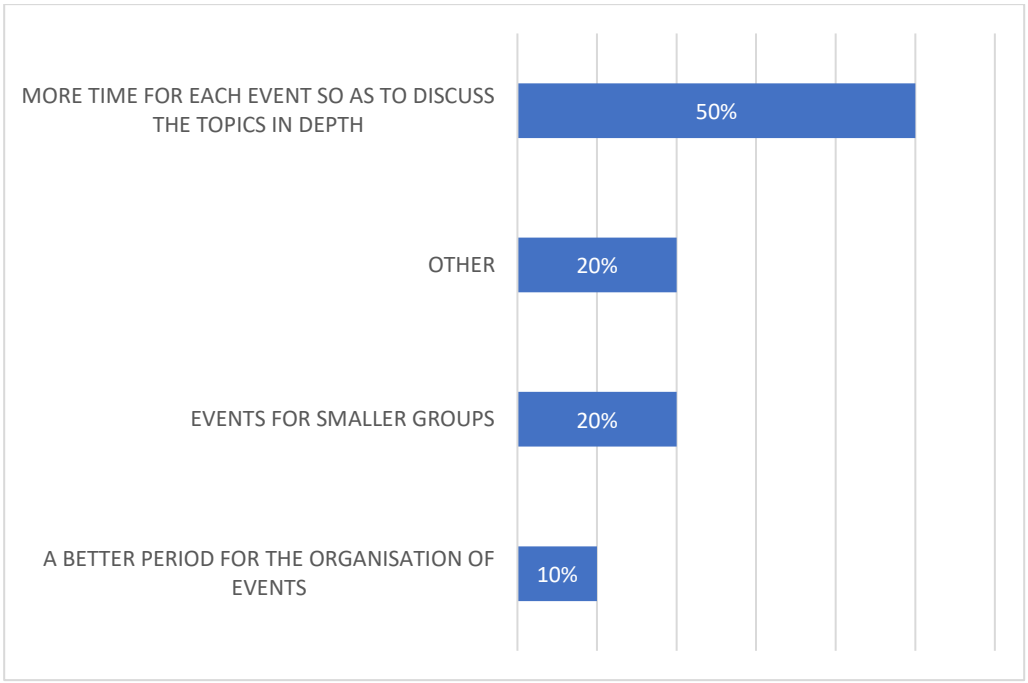


SUGGESTIONS FOR THE FUTURE

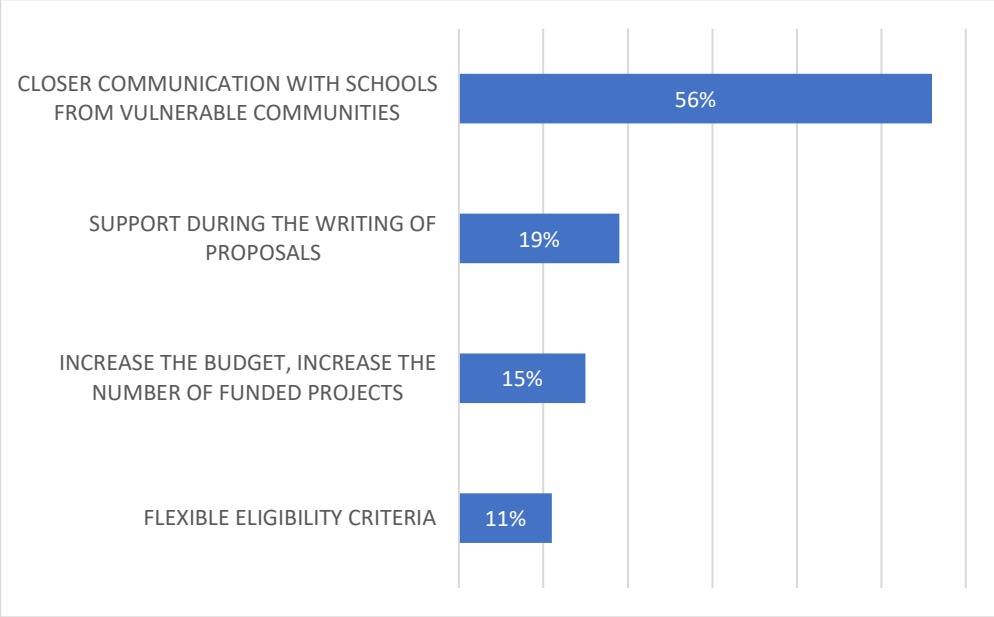
What suggestions for the future would you make concerning the promotion of training workshops/ events?



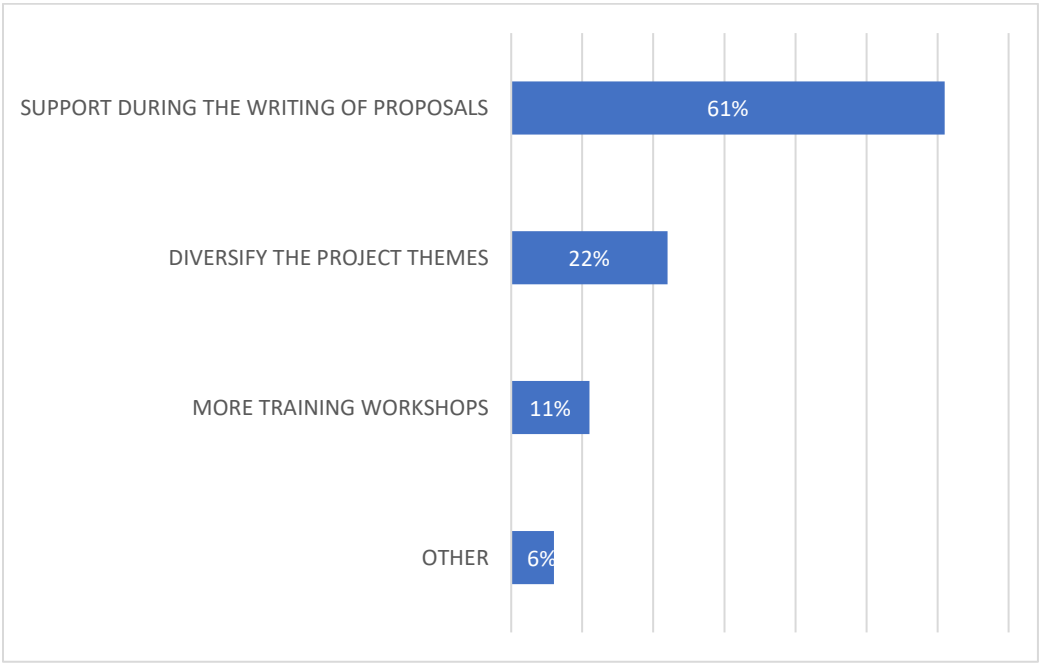
What are your suggestions for improving training events/workshops in the future?



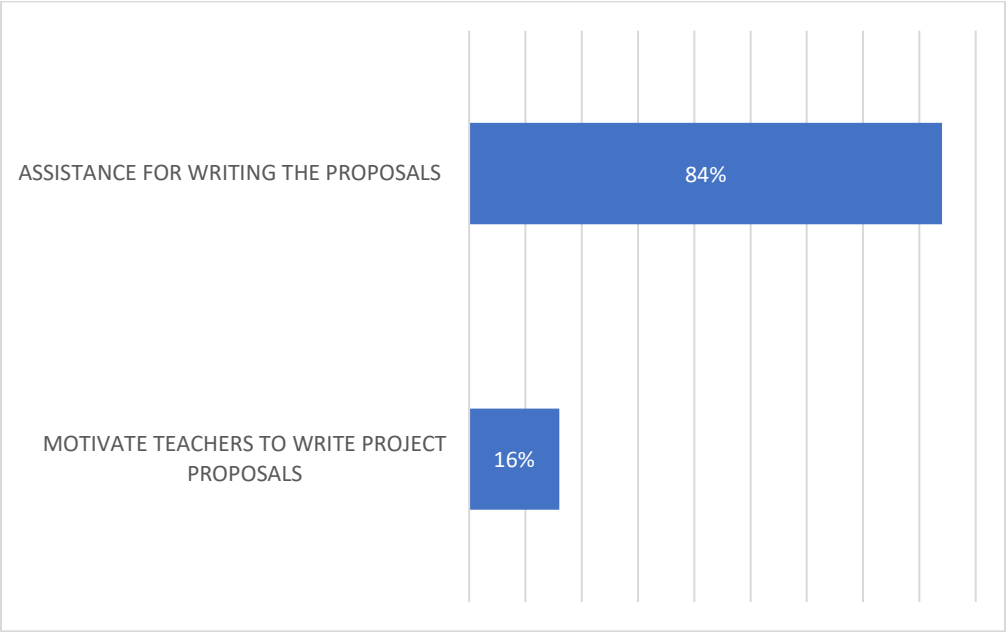
Q17_1. What are your suggestions for the future so as the Erasmus+ programmes ensure an increase in the number of people with fewer opportunities participating in the funded projects?



Q17_2. What are your suggestions for the future so as the Erasmus+ programmes ensure an increase in the number of inclusion projects receiving funding (and targeting people with fewer opportunities)?



Q17_3. What are your suggestions for the future so as the Erasmus+ programmes ensure an increase in the quality of inclusion projects?



D. A SYNTHESIS OF INTERVIEWS WITH THE PARTICIPANTS IN THE EVENTS

Strengths of the events

- **Trainers' attitude and competence in the framework of events**

We received a lot of clear and understandable information. They offered us coherent contents, with useful suggestions for planning and implementing projects. (a participant in an event on general topics)

I would like to underline the exceptional communication and socialising with the trainers from the event. The trainers were open and experienced, their attitude was very open, they always had concrete answers to participants' questions and they used very good work methods. (a participant in an event on general topics)

- **Clarity of the information provided and its usefulness for drafting applications to future calls for proposals**

I also attended a course in writing project proposals with Teach for Romania. We liked it very much and so we wrote our first proposal for an Erasmus+ project, which was not selected the first year, but we were successful the second year. The people from the National Agency are professional, prompt, they know how to provide support without exaggerating. Our cooperation with them was excellent. (a participant in Teach for Romania)

It was inciting, interesting, I got 70 points at the evaluation. The creative methods from the workshop were very useful but there were a lot of details about camps which we needed to pay attention to. Writing proposals under KA1 is different from other projects we knew about; there should be no contradictions in the application. We started from a need of our school and that really helped us. (a participant in Teach for Romania)

During the informal discussions at the event, we received very good information from the trainers about accessing projects. One of the trainers was from Ireland. On the first day, the emphasis was on the analysis of needs and on objectives. It was very interesting for me because the emphasis was not on defining smart objectives and we were told that in Ireland it is not how well a project proposal is written in technical terms that matters but how you show that you really want to do that project and there is an actual need. They are rather inclined to a personal approach, not necessarily by using statistics to exemplify or conducting analyses but rather through a direct observation of the target group and solutions to their problem. In Romania, if I write a project like that, I know for sure it won't be selected. (a participant in an international event)

The information from that workshop helped me understand, in very short time, what Erasmus+ means, what Erasmus+ intends to develop. I had no idea, I used to think Erasmus is only for schools but in the training course in Bucharest I gained an in-depth understanding and I found a way to write a project proposal. (a participant in events on inclusion in general)

- **The relation between ANPCDEFP and potential applicants**

I think this strategy of the National Agency to have a very direct relation with the applicants is quite appropriate. I appreciate them for their communication, openness, organisation. I also worked in the framework of the operational programme for the development of human resources and it wasn't a good experience; the difference is very big. With the NA, the attitude was warm, it is not just an institution with a secretariat number. For the implementation, the red tape is not tiresome; I know they struggled to have genuine projects. (a participant in Teach for Romania)

- **The information channels which were used – the social media, the website**

I believe anyone who intends to access this programme has all the necessary tools at hand. The activity of the National Agency is also pretty good in the social media, the website is well organised and I found the workshops for the programme promotion, which took place face to face, very useful. I think if the potential beneficiaries are really interested, they can find all the information they need. From my experience, every time I called the Agency, they answered me; it was more than enough, every time. (a participant in an international event)

Weaknesses of the events

- **Very short duration of training workshops**

The time to practise writing project proposals was too short. The duration of the event was too short. (a participant in events on inclusion in general)

I found the course sufficient for writing project proposals, very complex, although it was a lot of information in a short time. (a participant in Teach for Romania)

- **Selection of participants in the events on inclusion in general with regard to their experience in the programme**

The participants who have been selected had different backgrounds. Some of them were well trained in writing a grant application compared to other participants who were at the other end of the spectrum. (a participant in events on inclusion in general)

Some aspects concerning the writing of project proposals were not understood by all the participants in the course. (a participant in events on inclusion in general)

- **Selection/quality of participants attending international events; a difficulty to identify suitable partners**

I attended that workshop so I can see the experience of other organisations from other countries. The topics were good, the moderators outstanding. What I did not like was the selection of the target group of participants... not the one from Romania, the others... there were participants who had not heard of Erasmus before, so all the topics had to be addressed at a very basic level. What I wished for – meeting partners we could cooperate with – was not possible because the other participants were not active in this area; basically, they were really not interested in such an idea. We tried to contact them later, to see if anybody was interested, but nothing came out. (a participant in international events)

I, personally, after I attended the acquaintance workshop in Frankfurt, I returned a little bit disappointed, because the National Agency was very strict in selecting the organisations, while the other agencies allowed the participation of people who were not necessarily suitable; I couldn't find a partner. The problem is not related only to the National Agency in the country. It's no use for them to do their job properly if the others don't do the same. If I want to develop a project and I don't have a partner, there is nothing I can do. I found young people there who had been sent by organisations as a reward for their volunteer work; unfortunately, I did not find people with decision-making powers in their organisation to be able to develop partnerships. Maybe there are a lot of people in Romania who want to do projects but the issue of partnerships prevents them to do so. (a participant in international events*)*

The presentation and the trainers were very good, non-formal information, everything was very good about this, except for the participants. There were some participants from Greece there and to them Romania did not seem interesting... but there were not people I could keep in touch with, they were volunteers, university students, many of them did not know what the activity of the organisation they represented was. (a participant in international events*)*

- **The topics addressed at some events**

There was much emphasis on identifying needs, objectives and they did not address areas where I needed more information, namely the impact, the outcomes, long term project impact; how could we stop doing individual projects and combine everything in a series of multiple projects so as to have long-term impact... that's the problem with our projects, they are individual, they are nice… just that, shortly after they have finished, they lose

their strength. (a participant in international events*)*

Some aspects about writing project proposals were not understood by all the participants in the course. The trainers did not understand at all the specificity of special education for students with disabilities and this is why they could not be empathetic. (a participant in events on inclusion in general)

They should put more emphasis on the financial and accounting part. There should be special workshops for accountants, because the information in this area was more difficult to understand. (a participant in events on inclusion in general)

- **Low visibility of the programme among teachers**

The programme doesn't seem so visible to me, I found out about it from Teach for Romania, but until then, I hadn't heard much about it, although I had been working in education for a few years. Ever since I applied for it, the project has become visible in the school, too: for students and for other teachers. I don't know how much the parents know about the programme. In our case, the project is about teacher mobility but there were also students willing to participate. (a participant in Teach for Romania)

Suggestions for promoting the events, their content and their organisation in the future

- **More training workshops:** Representatives from all categories of groups requested more training events and workshops, in other words, to continue more often the types of support measures organised so far, with more homogenous groups of participants and with a more spacious schedule/lower volume of information.

- **Dissemination activities in schools reaching out to teachers**

A course on the school premises which also involves the school management: I wish trainers came to our schools to distribute the information to our colleagues, too, because we tried to disseminate it in the school after the seminar but some colleagues were reluctant. (a participant in Teach for Romania)

I would be interested in taking this programme to all the schools where I work and I also intend to apply for other projects in the future. However, it is clear that if I hadn't been a member of Teach for Romania, I wouldn't have found out about writing proposals for Erasmus + projects. (a participant in Teach for Romania)

- **Courses for school inspectorates in the counties**

They should organise again such courses free of charge, at the inspectorates in the counties, and invite for the event one person from each school or even two people from every school in the county. (a participant in Teach for Romania)

Promotion, on-site workshops in disadvantaged areas; briefings with representatives from different organisations and practical seminars would be more useful than mere marketing information sent as presentations. (a participant in Teach for Romania)

- **Update course after the pandemic**

It is necessary to have a course to update knowledge, because we had this break when we didn't know what was happening… whether it was possible to submit an application, what countries were open, etc. I haven't communicated with anybody after the course because we were told at that time, at the end, that we could not keep in touch with our trainers. (a participant in Teach for Romania)

- **Workshops underlining more the inclusion component and the harmonisation of this concept**

I do not necessarily associate Erasmus + with inclusion; it makes me think of international cooperation, whether between students or teachers. (a participant in Teach for Romania)

I associate the Agency with exchanges of experience, cultural exchanges with other education systems. (a participant in Teach for Romania)

The information was not very clear. In the manual, a young person living in a rural area is considered disadvantaged; the Agency doesn't consider them like that. In the area of youth workers and in training, it took me a lot of time to understand what inclusion means. I've found out that there are no workers with fewer opportunities in the youth area and I couldn't understand why it's that, because, actually, there are workers with fewer opportunities; inclusion was somehow approached in the topics but the topics were not clearly defined. It was a very broad approach. Inclusion is promoted under all calls for proposals. I saw that the Agency is inclined to provide support to organisations working with vulnerable groups. (a participant in international information events)

Dedicated workshops for inclusion, perhaps encouraging more local partnerships; this way, experienced organisations could support those without experience. (a participant in international events)

- **Meetings and direct presentations in the territory, in rural areas, in disadvantaged areas**

I think the Agency should conduct direct training activities and presentations. This way they can convince new organisations to apply. (a participant in events on inclusion in general)

- **More attention to international partnerships**

I think they should organise an international meeting, where we could meet credible organisations. Our problems are related to a lack of partners. (a participant in international events)

- **A longer duration for some seminars for practising the contents**

I met my objective in the course, I had something to pass on; it is an opportunity for schools. However, as a suggestion: I would have reserved one day and a half for the theoretical part and then I would have had a kind of mini exam where we could present projects, to see our chances for success; I would have liked something more practical. I know it's complicated to condense a lot of information, like in 2019, but I think we should have had one more day for the seminar. (a participant in Teach for Romania)

- **Translation of relevant websites into Romanian**

Suggestions for the future about increasing the number of people with fewer opportunities participating in the projects

- **Information activities in vulnerable communities**

The information designed to present the opportunities of the Erasmus+ programme must be taken where people with fewer opportunities live: in villages, in deprived communities, close to people with disabilities. The information should be given so as they can understand it. They need to gain their trust, theirs and their families'. Few NGOs succeed, with a lot of effort, to do that. I believe a slightly different approach is necessary. Go ahead the needs of these young people, speak their language. Act, support, provide funds for preparatory national projects, which familiarize them with the Erasmus opportunities, to help them learn a foreign language, to understand what volunteering is, what opportunities for study they may have with support from Erasmus+, projects to serve as a start point towards Erasmus+ projects. (a participant in international events)

To attract participants from the category of people with disabilities, I think targeted messages are very useful.

The number of people with disabilities involved in these activities is relatively low. (a participant in events on general topics)

- **More targeted communication with schools from vulnerable backgrounds, sessions dedicated exclusively to special education schools, contacting directly the organisations dealing with people with fewer opportunities**

More targeted communication, closer cooperation with schools, workshops for as many school teachers as possible. The workshops should take place on school premises and trainers should go to schools. (a participant in Teach for Romania)

A requirement that at least 50 % of the teachers selected for mobility should be teachers with challenges such as: beginner teacher, rural area, substitute teacher, etc., and for students, they should be with social issues, with lower achievement, not the best students... (a participant in Teach for Romania)

Better promotion in vulnerable areas. I don't know how much this is already done but closer communication with schools from vulnerable backgrounds, assistance and consultancy for those teachers who are interested in the matter, this would be appropriate. Plus, solid feedback. (a participant in Teach for Romania)

Ensuring access to information on as many channels as possible, a follow-up workshop, with support for drafting the applications. (a participant in Teach for Romania)

They should have courses/workshops for writing proposals for Erasmus projects in every county. (a participant in events on general topics)

There should be one session per year only for special education schools. Then, a possibility to make the amounts for people with special needs more flexible and to increase them after the approval of the grant, under clear conditions. (a participant in events on general topics)

- **Additional points in the evaluation for projects targeting many such people**

Include additional points in the evaluation of projects for activities with people with fewer opportunities. In the framework of workshops/events, promote/encourage the participation of people with fewer opportunities; include points in the evaluation of projects for involvement of this category in the implementation of projects. (a participant in Teach for Romania)

Allocate more funds for projects in which people with disabilities are the target group. (a participant in events on general topics)

- **Provide funding for more projects and increase the amounts allocated per project**

Provide larger amounts for the participation of people with special needs in projects and a budget for accompanying staff, and promote these benefits; they already exist but many avoid the responsibilities assigned in these projects... (a participant in Teach for Romania)

Increase the budget. Increase the number of accepted projects. Assistance during the writing of the project proposal. (a participant in Teach for Romania)

Increase financial support for these people and specific dedicated support (for example, reimbursement of domestic travel costs even for small distances). (a participant in international events)

- **Create partnerships and networks for the inclusion of vulnerable groups**

Our team has included in every project we implement people/young people with fewer opportunities. But it is true that the number of young people participating in these European projects should be raised. My suggestion is to enter partnerships initiated by the National Agency in Romania together with the Ministry of Education, where institutions working with people with fewer opportunities agree to join partnerships with youth NGOs working and implementing projects in the framework of Erasmus+. Our NGO encountered numerous hindrances and bureaucratic obstacles when we wanted to establish an open partnership with institutions dealing with

disadvantaged young people. (a participant in international events)

- **NGOs working at grassroots level** with people from vulnerable backgrounds/people with fewer opportunities should benefit from **counselling and mentoring for organisational development**

Suggestions for the future so as the Erasmus+ programmes ensure an increase in the number of inclusion projects receiving funding (and targeting people with fewer opportunities)

- **Ensure some sustainability of the training and information provided in the courses so as to provide for subsequent consultations for those who intend to write project proposals**

There should be a tutor who, after the courses/workshops have finished, to engage the team. Support during the writing of project proposals. Allocate an Erasmus+ trainer who supports and monitors the team writing the proposal. (a participant in events on general topics)

- **More intense promotion of the benefits produced by inclusion projects, addressing both potential beneficiaries and people from vulnerable groups, who might be attracted to these projects; disseminate examples of good practice to communities having the same specificity as those with successful projects**

Disseminate examples of good practice to communities with the same specificity as those with successful projects. A better (targeted) visibility of the programme among these target groups and clarify the benefits for such participants. Preferably, implement more projects with a lower budget but which allow the organisation of as many events as possible, with as many participants as possible. (a participant in international events)

Promote the benefits both for these people and for the schools with such projects. Set up a green line to help our colleagues who want to apply. (a participant from Teach 4 Romania)

Support for dissemination activities in communities where people with fewer opportunities are the majority. (a participant in events on general topics)

- **Give an advantage to inclusion projects**

The experts who evaluate the projects should be trained in the specificity of different disabilities and special educational needs. In the evaluation of projects submitted, there should be a selection criterion about the target group – people with fewer opportunities. (a participant from Teach 4 Romania)

A more thorough analysis of needs, focused on small communities and their specific problems. Recommend warmly that a share of the total number of projects should be inclusion projects, and for approval, take care that those standards are met. (a participant in events on general topics)

More permissive funding criteria. Improve relations with organisations working at grassroots level. (a participant in international events)

More projects and an opportunity to receive funding in a competition only for special education.

(a participant from Teach 4 Romania)

- **Organise potential applicants into categories, for example, a platform for NGOs**

Create a dedicated platform for NGOs that work with disadvantaged youth or youth with fewer opportunities and are interested in developing projects in the framework of Erasmus+. Both NGOs and institutions could sign up on this platform. Therefore, it is easier to get in contact and develop strategic partnerships for implementing

Erasmus+ projects in the period 2021-2027. (a participant in international events)

Limit the number of projects a school can do under Erasmus, offer Erasmus+ programmes per school clusters, per counties, provided that the schools are vulnerable. A list of disadvantaged schools would be necessary. (a participant in events on general topics)

- **Simplify the application forms**

Simplified applications – the current forms are laborious and discouraging. Simplify procedures. (a participant in international events)

- **More transparency concerning the evaluation process and the evaluation criteria**

Maybe more transparency about the evaluation, whether there are geographic criteria for accessing projects or whether new organisations are encouraged to access projects; there are several rules. (a participant in international events)

Suggestions for the future so as to improve the quality of inclusion projects

- **An activity concerning the analysis, feedback and improvement of rejected applications**

Improve the projects that did not receive funding in accordance with the answers received. Guidance activities after the project proposals have been written; the feedback provided. (a participant in international events)

Diversify the project themes. Feedback on the draft project, before submitting the application. (a participant in events on general topics)

- **Identify a mechanism to motivate teachers from schools in the target group to write project proposals**

Motivate the teachers who are members of the project and programme team to write such project proposals.

- **Make the inclusion topics more flexible**

Compliance with and consistency of requirements. For example, for school mobility projects, subsequent participation in eTwinning projects is required and this requirement is not met. (a participant from Teach 4 Romania)

It should be easier to find European partners in those projects where there are only children with SEN. (a participant from Teach 4 Romania)

Make topics flexible (relatively independent from national and European priorities and related to the priorities of people with fewer opportunities).

- **More frequent training events in the territory so as to ensure that the applicants understand the parameters generating quality in projects**

Access to a mentor/coach who can help small NGOs find good and experienced trainers, so as to conduct quality activities with the project beneficiaries. (a participant from Teach 4 Romania)

It would be useful to make up a team from ANPCDEFP to provide actual support to those NGOs that want to get involved in Erasmus projects, a team with experience in this type of projects. It would also be useful for members of ANPCDEFP to participate effectively and regularly in activities with young people from vulnerable groups. (a participant in events on general topics)

- **Intensify support during the drafting and submission of applications by promoting examples of success**

Training workshops, promoting examples of good practice. We always learn better from examples of success and are motivated by them. (a participant in events on general topics)

Make available a model project. Create support networks in the application submission phase. (a participant from Teach 4 Romania)

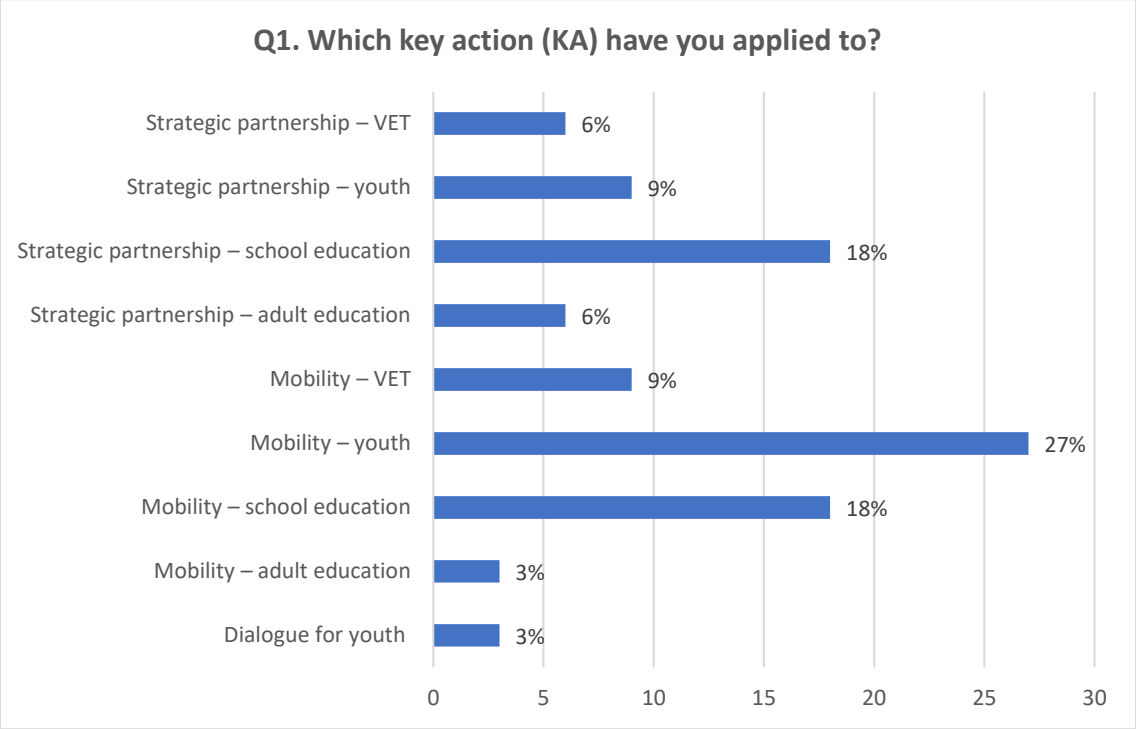
- **Increase accessibility (physical, financial, etc.) for people in the target group**

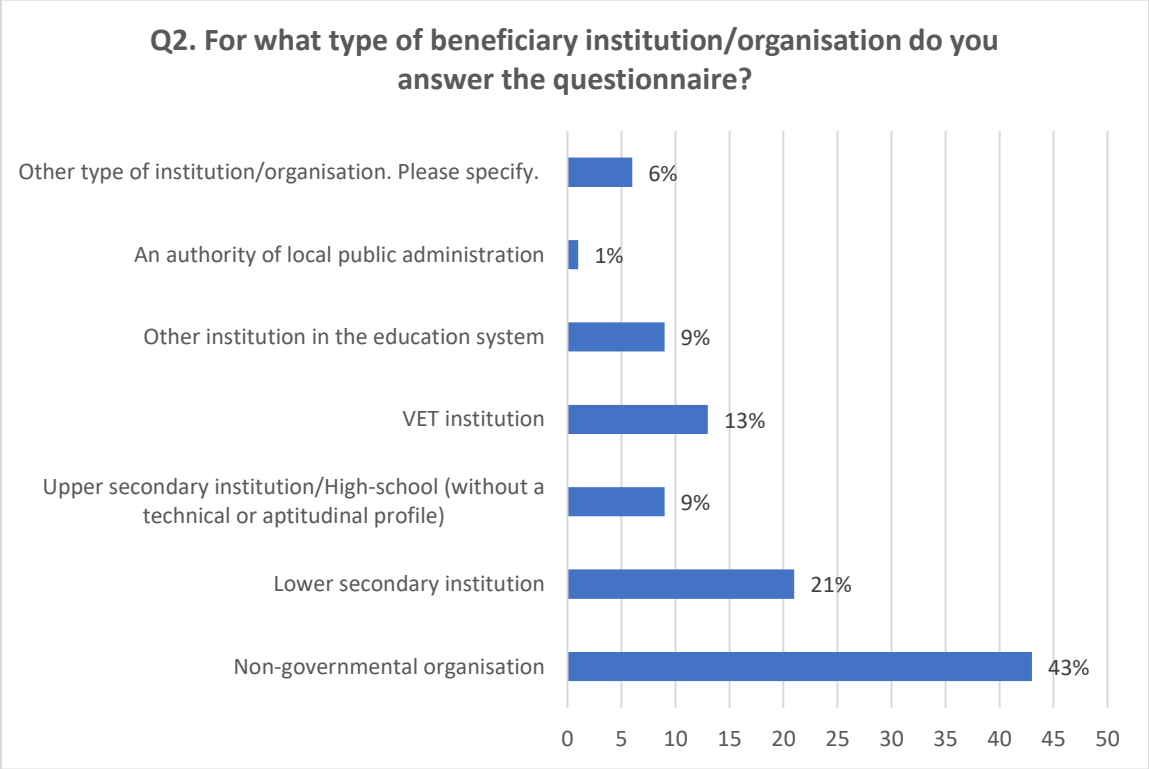
More training courses to present standards; more attention in selecting and preparing the participants; increase accessibility (physical, financial, etc.) for people in the target group.

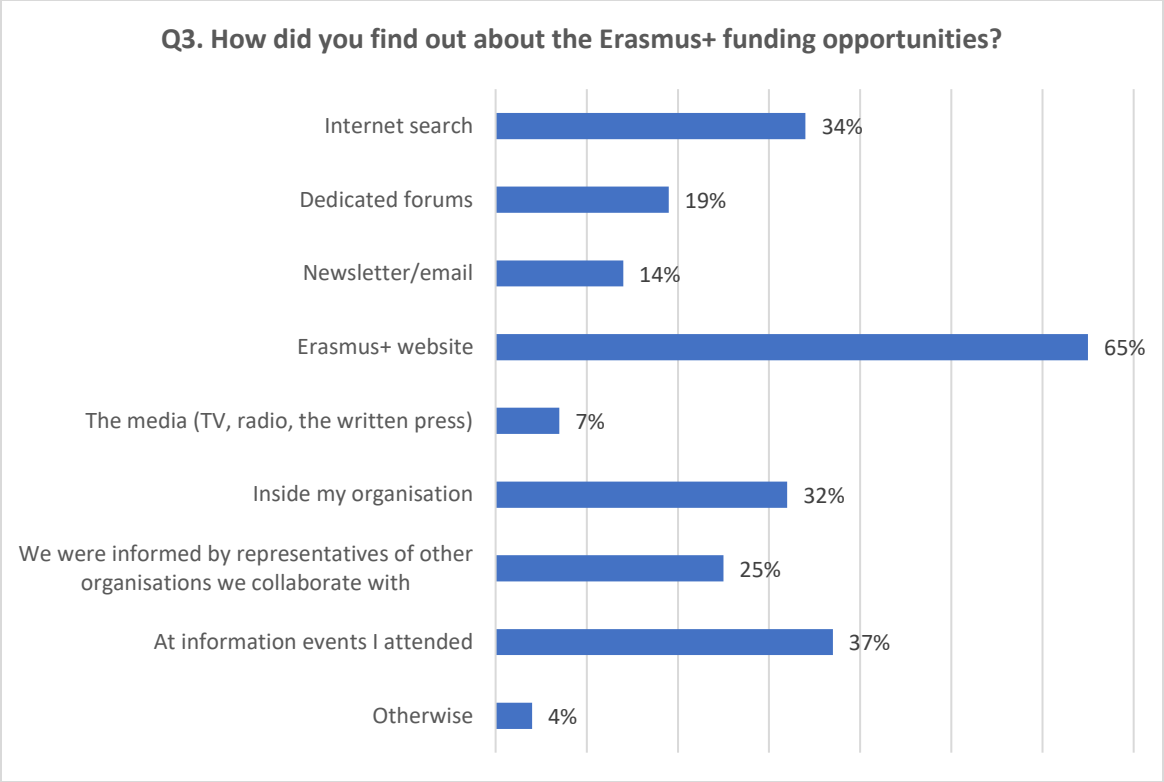
Accessibility for people with vision and hearing impairment. Enhance opportunities for special education schools. (a participant in events on general topics)

E. A QUANTITATIVE SURVEY OF APPLICANTS

CATEGORIES OF RESPONDENTS

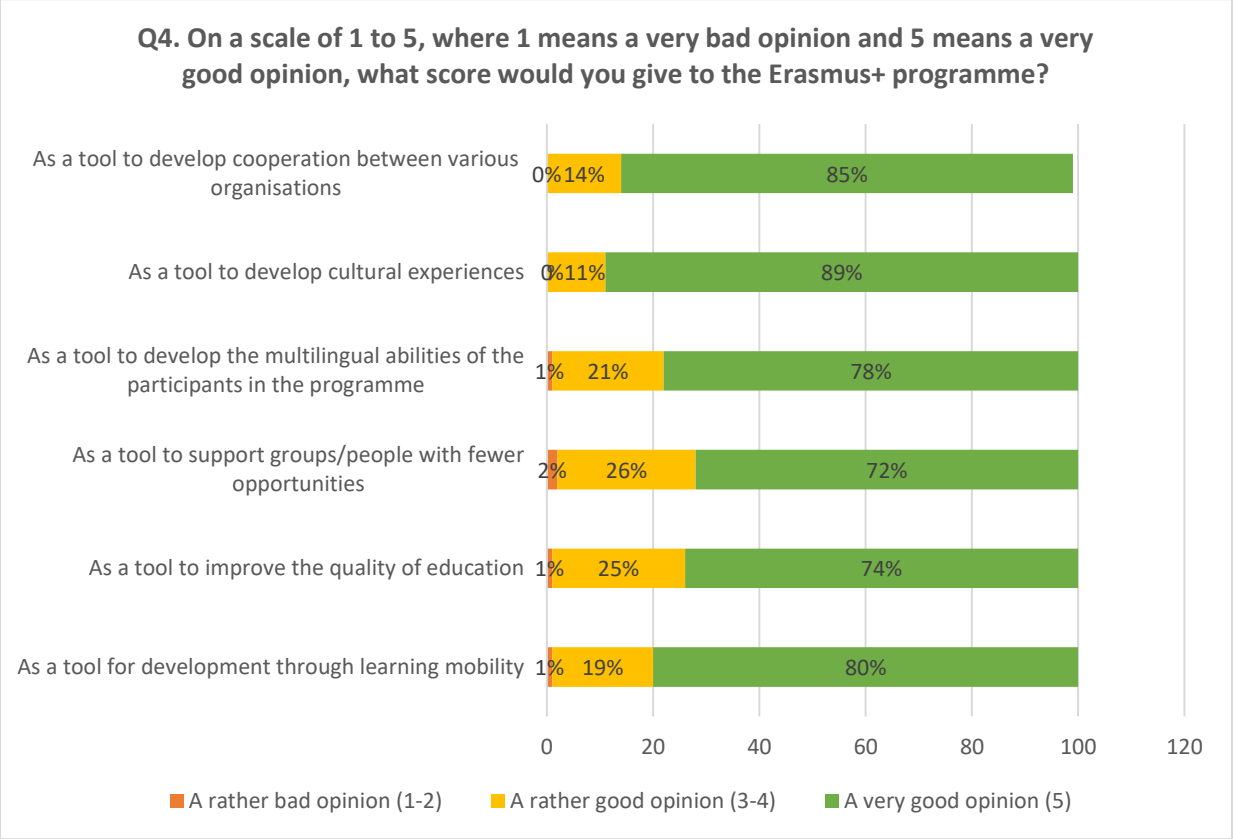




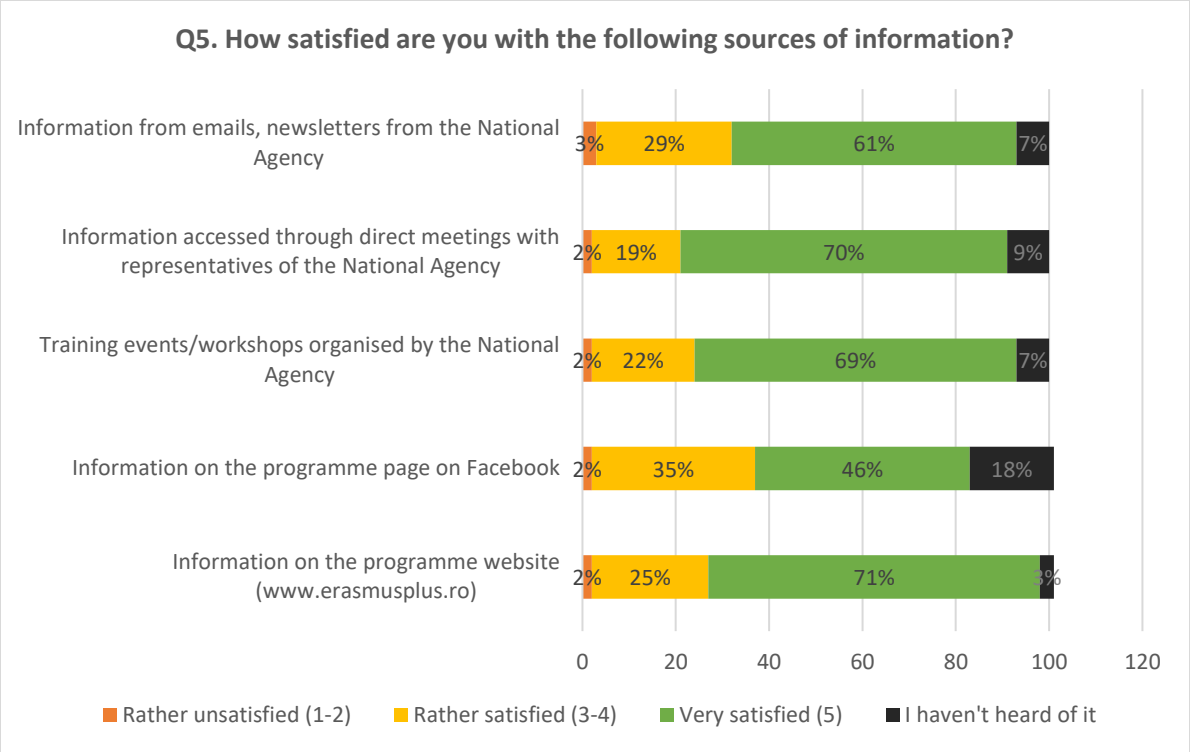


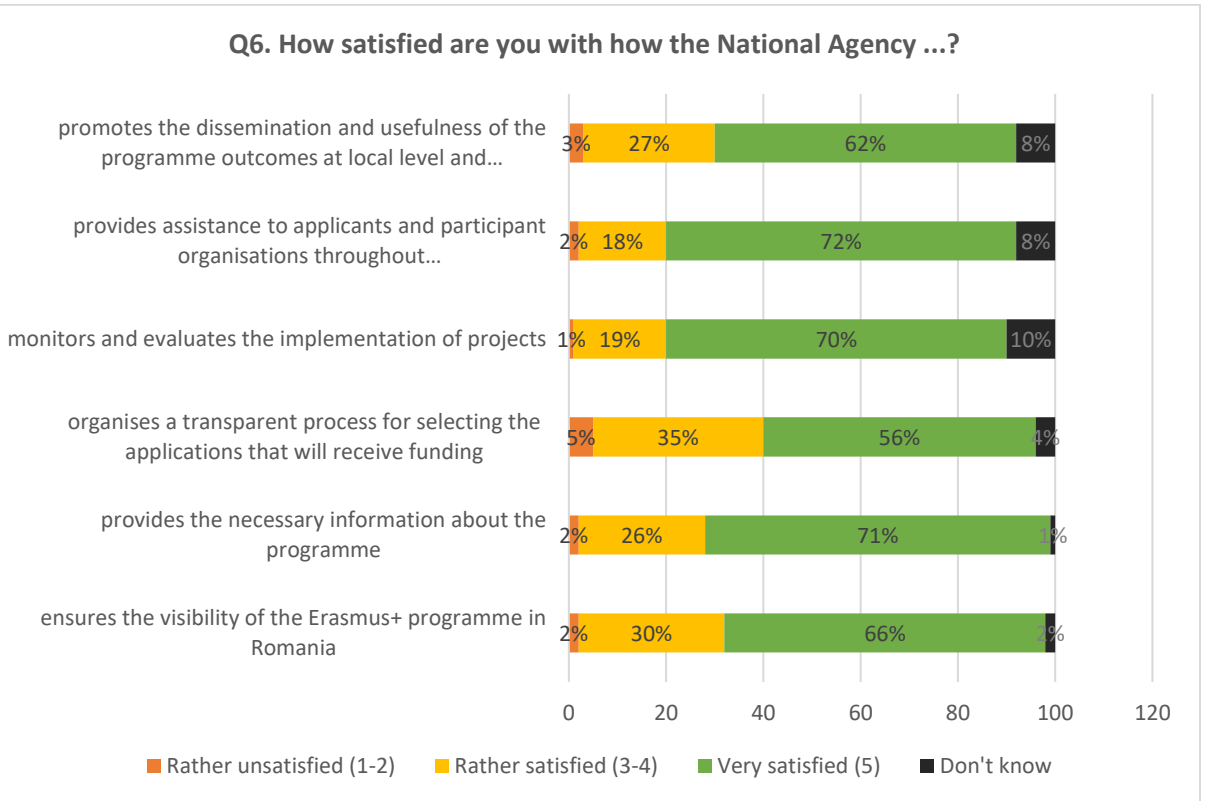
	Internet search	Dedicated forums	Newsletter, email	Erasmus+ website	The media	Inside my organisation	Rep. of other organisations	At other events
KA 1_1	36%	23%	15%	70%	8%	25%	22%	42%
KA 1_2	23%	17%	13%	50%	9%	36%	19%	45%
KA 1_3	32%	20%	24%	81%	10%	25%	33%	52%
KA 1_4	30%	14%	13%	56%	9%	35%	29%	30%
KA 2_1	42%	31%	17%	75%	5%	34%	17%	53%
KA 2_2	49%	13%	11%	60%	16%	22%	47%	27%
KA 2_3	30%	17%	9%	78%	0%	39%	26%	30%
KA 2_4	23%	19%	4%	54%	0%	35%	15%	15%
KA 3	43%	0%	14%	43%	0%	29%	14%	29%

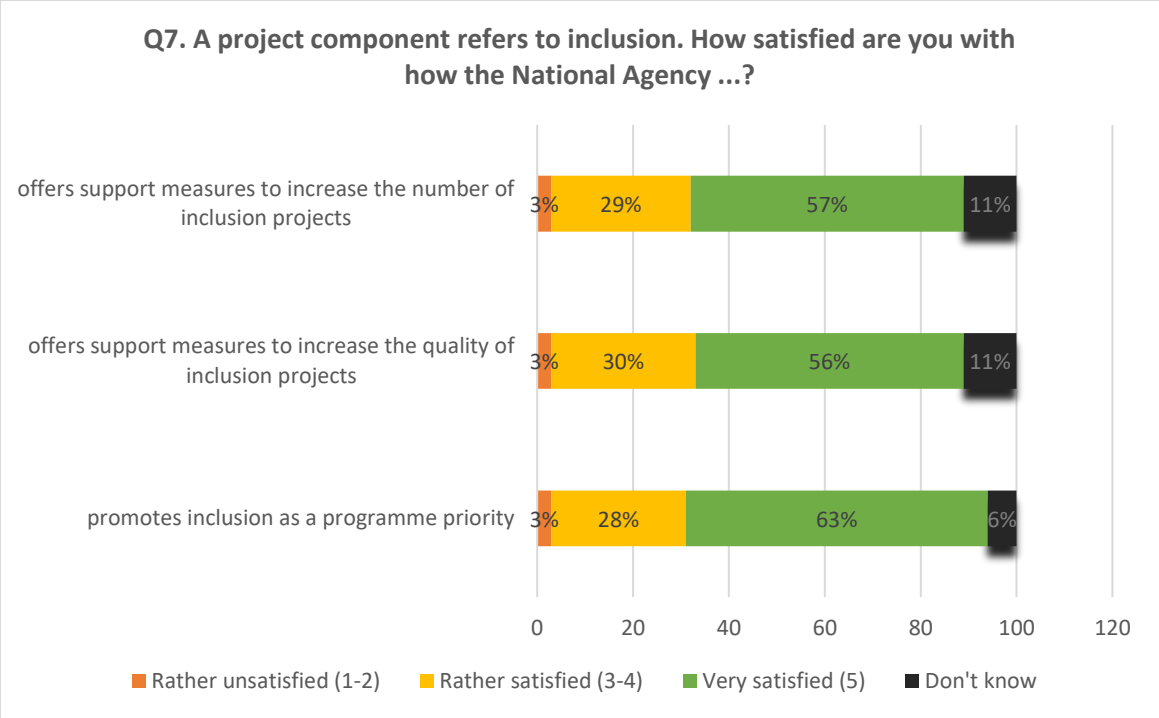
- The applicants get information mainly from the Erasmus+ website. Almost two thirds of the respondents indicate this source.
- Secondary sources of information:
    - Sources inside the organisation
    - Information events
    - Internet search
- The applicants under KA 2 and KA 3 get information more on the internet, while the applicants under KA 1 consider that the information events are more important sources.



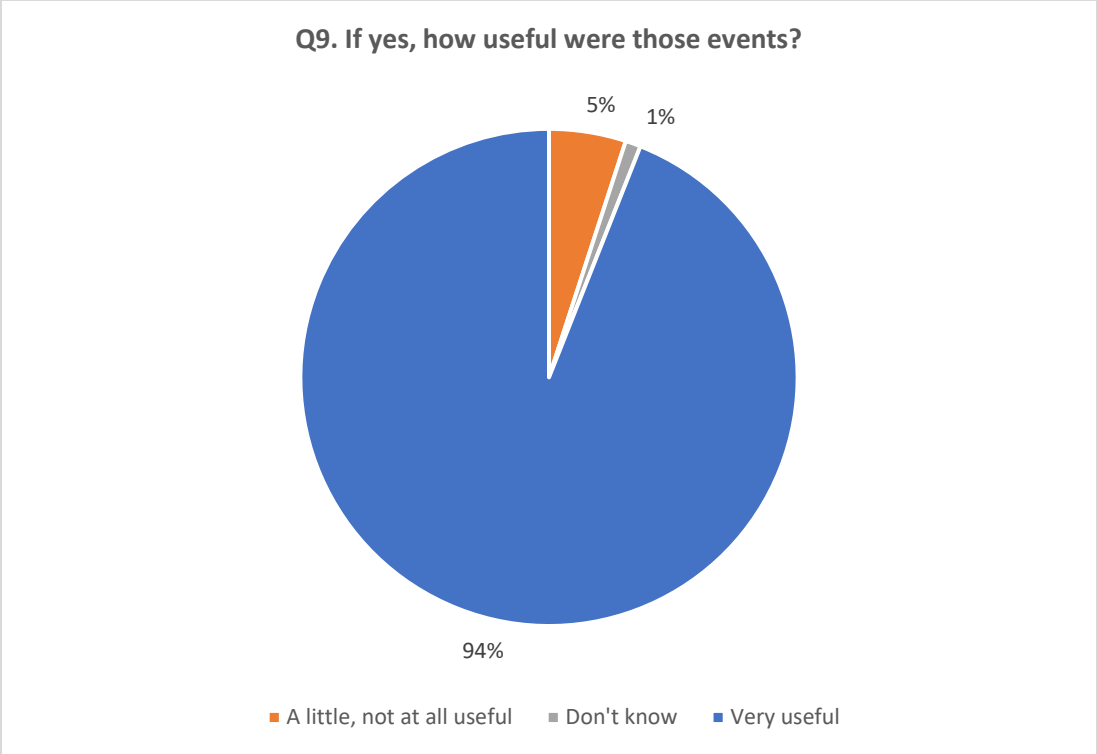
- The evaluation of the Erasmus+ programme is positive. Percentages between 72 % and 89 % of the respondents have a very good opinion about the programme and its functions.
- We can nevertheless rank those dimensions and we can see three categories of attributes:
  - The most appreciated roles: a binder of interorganisational cooperation (an average of 4.84) and for development of cultural experiences (4.87).
  - Moderately appreciated roles: development of multilingual abilities (4.72) and development through learning mobility (4.76).
  - Less appreciated roles: as a tool to improve the quality of education (4.66) and concerning the support of groups/people with fewer opportunities to get them involved in transnational activities or mobility (4.61)
- The applicants in the KA 3 group appreciate most the characteristics of the programme, while those in KA 2 are a little bit more critical in their evaluation.

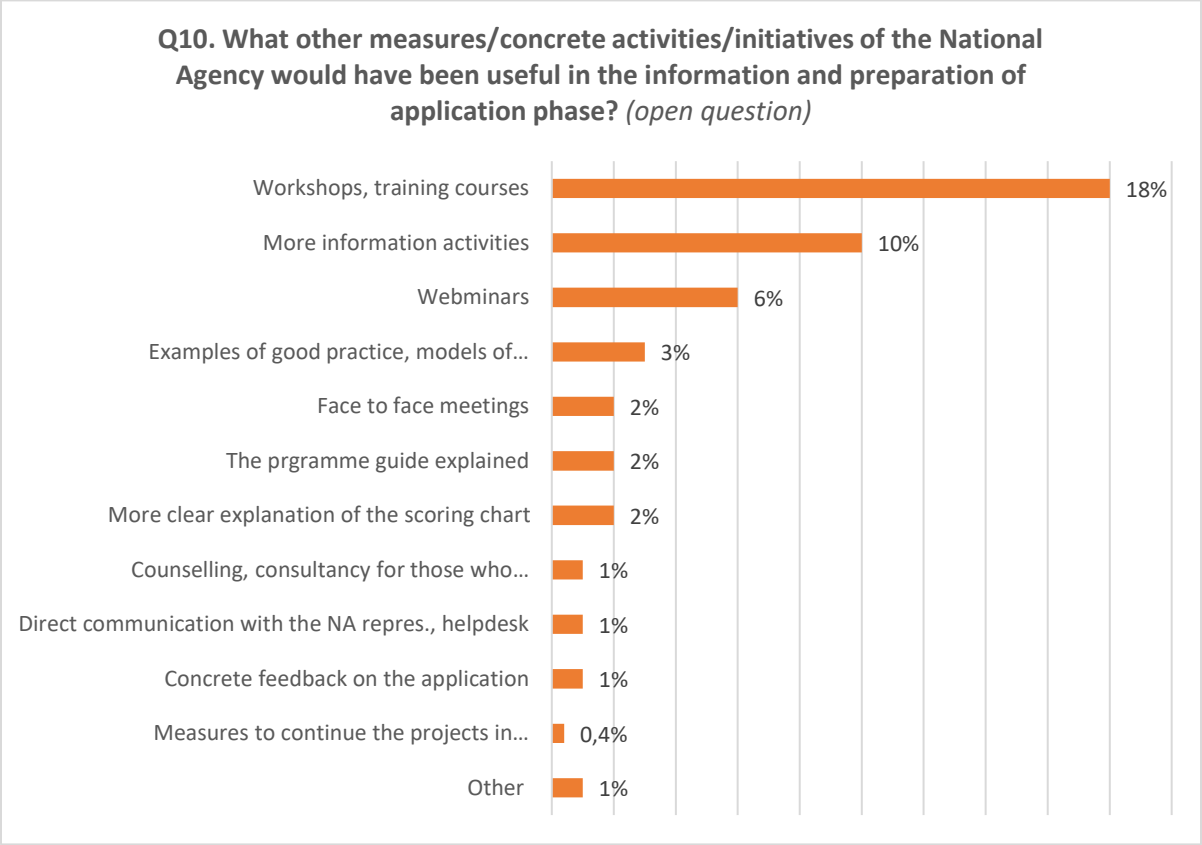

Q5. How satisfied are you with the following sources of information?
Information from emails, newsletters from the National Agency
3%
29%
61%
7%
Information accessed through direct meetings with representatives of the National Agency
2%
19%
70%
9%
Training events/workshops organised by the National Agency
2%
22%
69%
7%
Information on the programme page on Facebook
2%
35%
46%
18%
Information on the programme website (www.erasmusplus.ro)
2%
25%
71%
3%
0
20
40
60
80
100
120
Rather unsatisfied (1-2)
Rather satisfied (3-4)
Very satisfied (5)
I haven't heard of it


Q6. How satisfied are you with how the National Agency ...?
promotes the dissemination and usefulness of the programme outcomes at local level and...
3%
27%
62%
8%
provides assistance to applicants and participant organisations throughout...
2%
18%
72%
8%
monitors and evaluates the implementation of projects
1%
19%
70%
10%
organises a transparent process for selecting the applications that will receive funding
5%
35%
56%
4%
provides the necessary information about the programme
2%
26%
71%
1%
ensures the visibility of the Erasmus+ programme in Romania
2%
30%
66%
2%
0
20
40
60
80
100
120
Rather unsatisfied (1-2)
Rather satisfied (3-4)
Very satisfied (5)
Don't know


Q7. A project component refers to inclusion. How satisfied are you with how the National Agency ...?
offers support measures to increase the number of inclusion projects
3%
29%
57%
11%
offers support measures to increase the quality of inclusion projects
3%
30%
56%
11%
promotes inclusion as a programme priority
3%
28%
63%
6%
0
20
40
60
80
100
120
Rather unsatisfied (1-2)
Rather satisfied (3-4)
Very satisfied (5)
Don't know

Q8. Have you participated in events or workshops dedicated to inclusion or in events/workshops emphasising inclusion and organised by the National Agency?
Yes
36%
No
64%

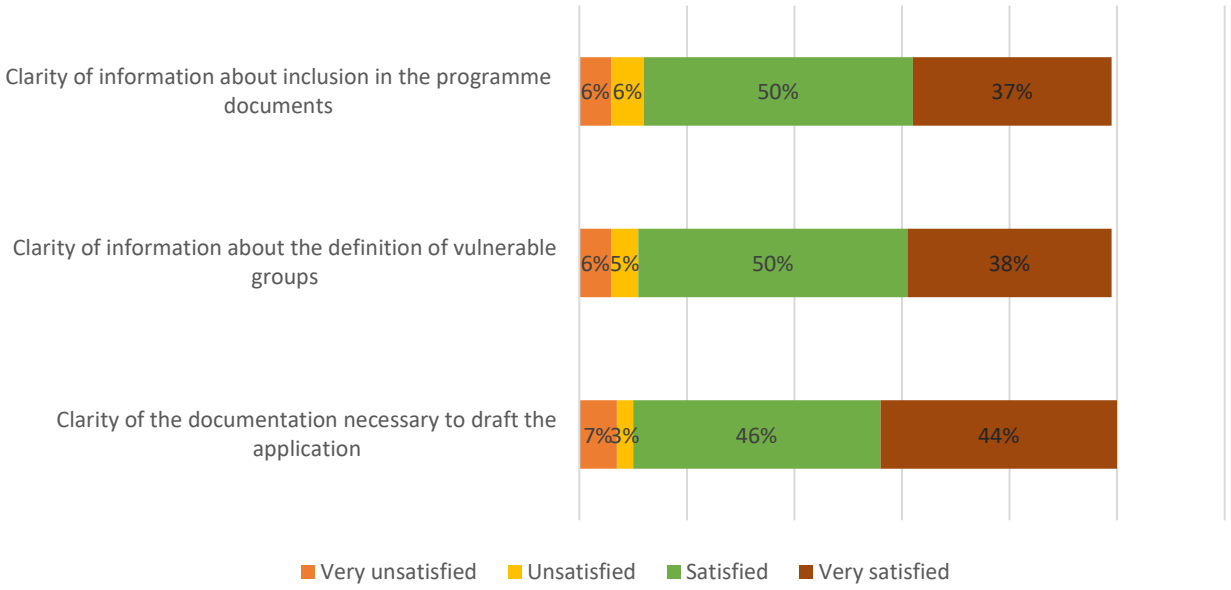

Q9. If yes, how useful were those events?
5%
1%
94%
A little, not at all useful
Don't know
Very useful


Q10. What other measures/concrete activities/initiatives of the National Agency would have been useful in the information and preparation of application phase? (open question)
Workshops, training courses 18%
More information activities 10%
Webminars 6%
Examples of good practice, models of… 3%
Face to face meetings 2%
The prgramme guide explained 2%
More clear explanation of the scoring chart 2%
Counselling, consultancy for those who… 1%
Direct communication with the NA repres., helpdesk 1%
Concrete feedback on the application 1%
Measures to continue the projects in… 0,4%
Other 1%

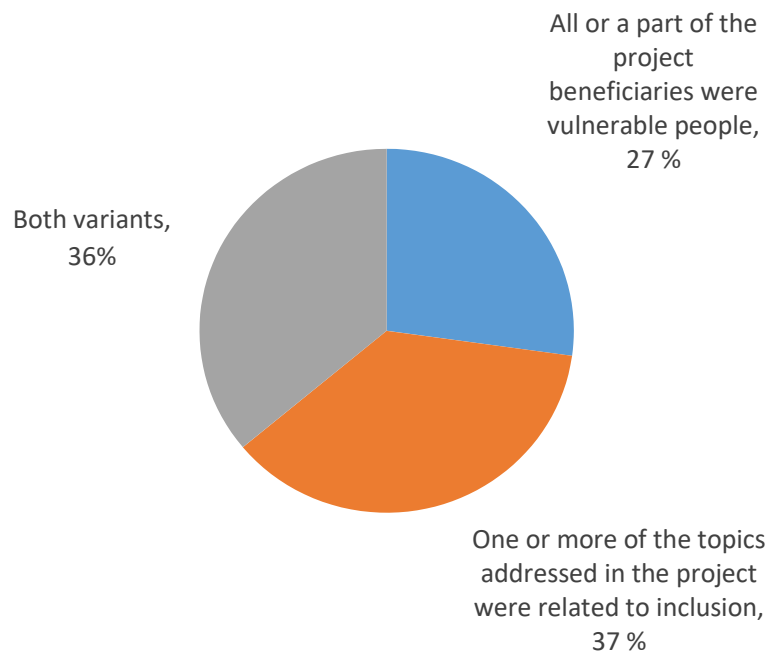
- The majority of respondents is satisfied with the information sources made available by the programme, except for the ones on the Facebook page. In this case, there is also a higher "no answer" rate and also a higher share of those who say they are rather satisfied.
- The information received from direct meetings, at training events or workshops and on the website is the most satisfying.
- About the actions conducted by the National Agency, a distinction can be made between:
  - the most satisfying: support for applicants (4.72 on average) and monitoring and evaluation of projects (4.71);
  - moderately satisfying: ensuring the visibility of the programme (4.56), providing information about the programme (4.61), dissemination of outcomes (4.53);
  - the least satisfying: organising a transparent process for selecting the applications (4.39).
- The correlation between the evaluation of the programme and the satisfaction with the actions undertaken is high (R Pearson=.609, sig.=.000), while the correlation between the evaluation of the programme and the satisfaction with the information activities is lower (R Pearson=.201, sig.=.000). The programme is evaluated more for what it does and less for what it conveys.
- About inclusion, the level of satisfaction does not vary a lot. The respondents are most satisfied with the promotion of inclusion as a priority of the programme (4.53) and also with the support provided for the quality (4.48) and the quantity of applications (4.47), the scores being tight.
- Slightly more than a third of the respondents participated in at least an event or a workshop dedicated to inclusion or in events/workshops emphasising inclusion issues and organised by the National Agency. Their high usefulness was acknowledged by 94 % of the respondents.
- The participants in such events are more satisfied, statistically significant, with the actions of the National Agency and with the promotion of inclusion and give a better evaluation of the programme compared to non-participants. Only about information activities, the differences are below the threshold of significance.
- The suggestions concerning very useful measures/concrete activities/initiatives include first of all the workshops (18 %), information activities (10 %) and webinars (6 %).

EVALUATION OF THE APPLICATION PROCESS WITH REGARD TO THE INCLUSION COMPONENT

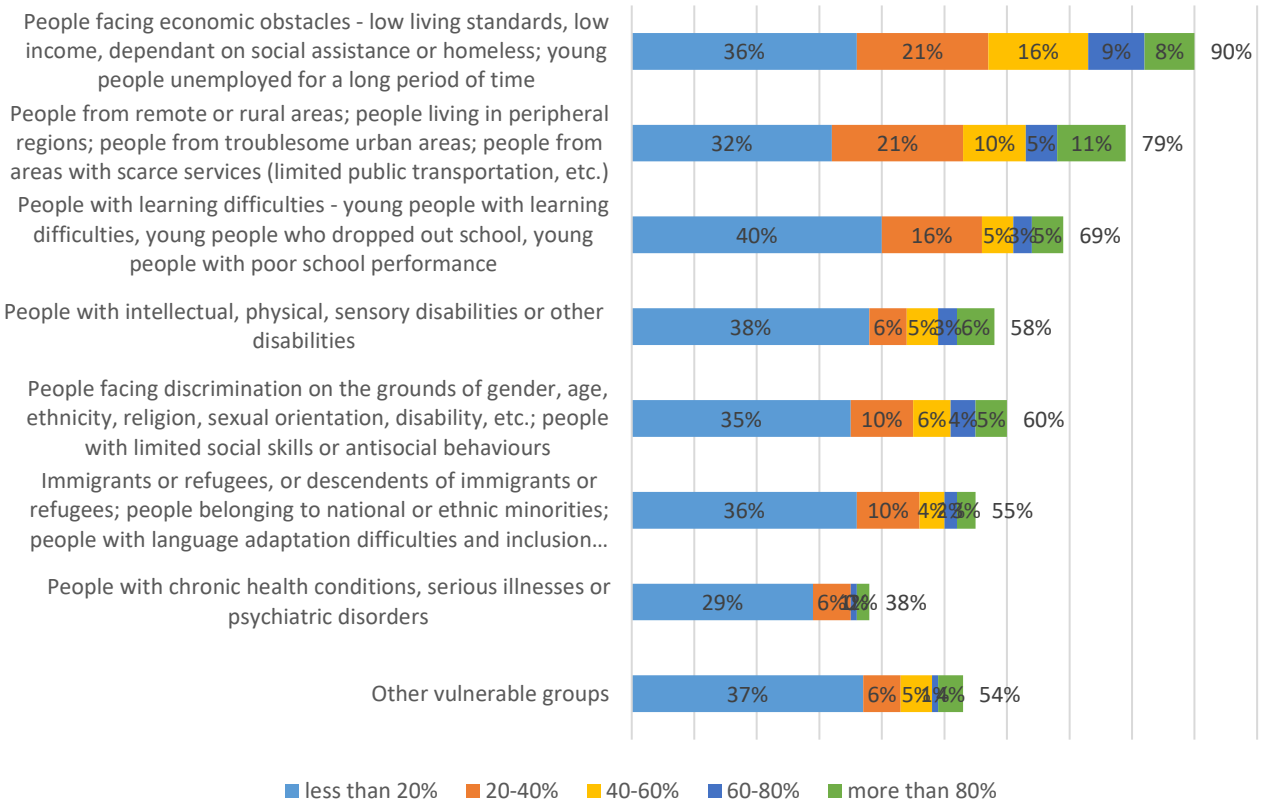
Q11. As regards the process of drafting the application, how satisfied were you with the following aspects?



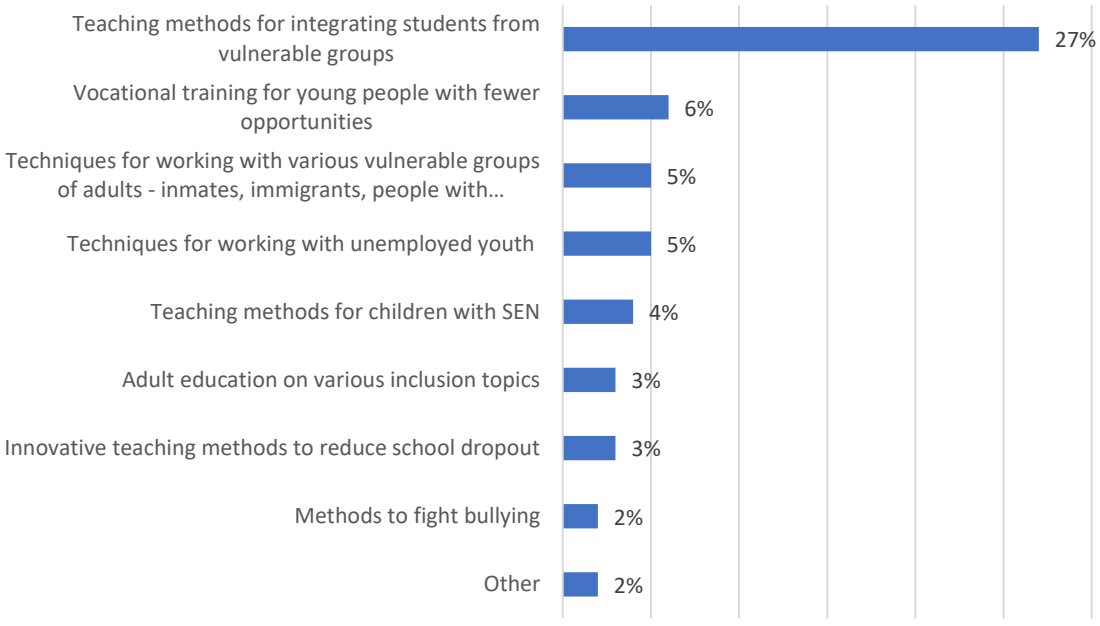
Q13. The inclusion component in your project meant that...?



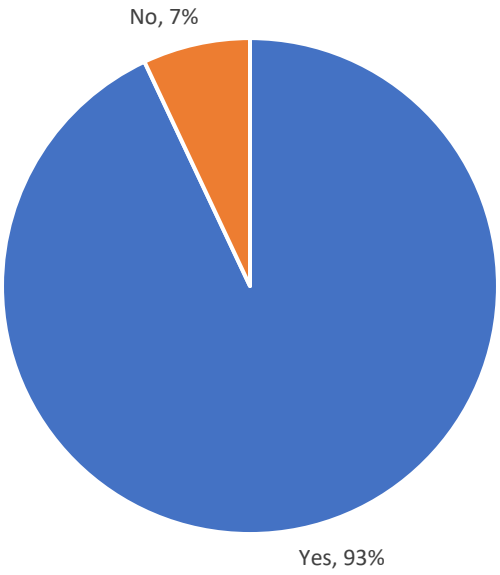
Q14. What percentage of your project beneficiaries werepeople from vulnerable groups? What type of vulnerable groups did you target?



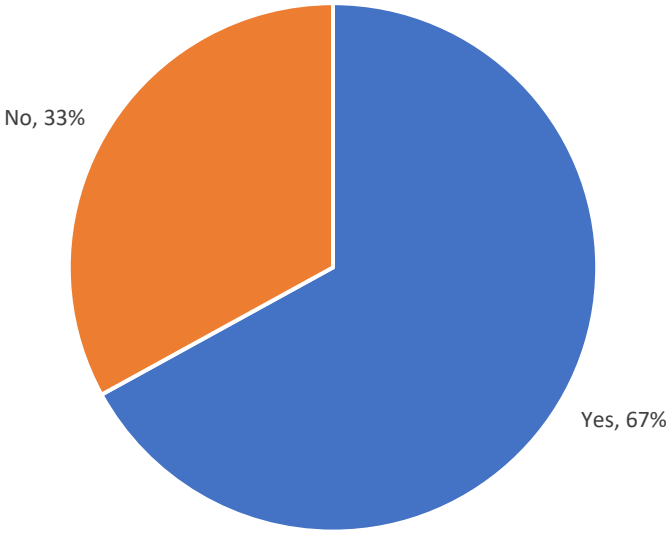
Q15. Please indicate the topic(s) related to inclusion in your project

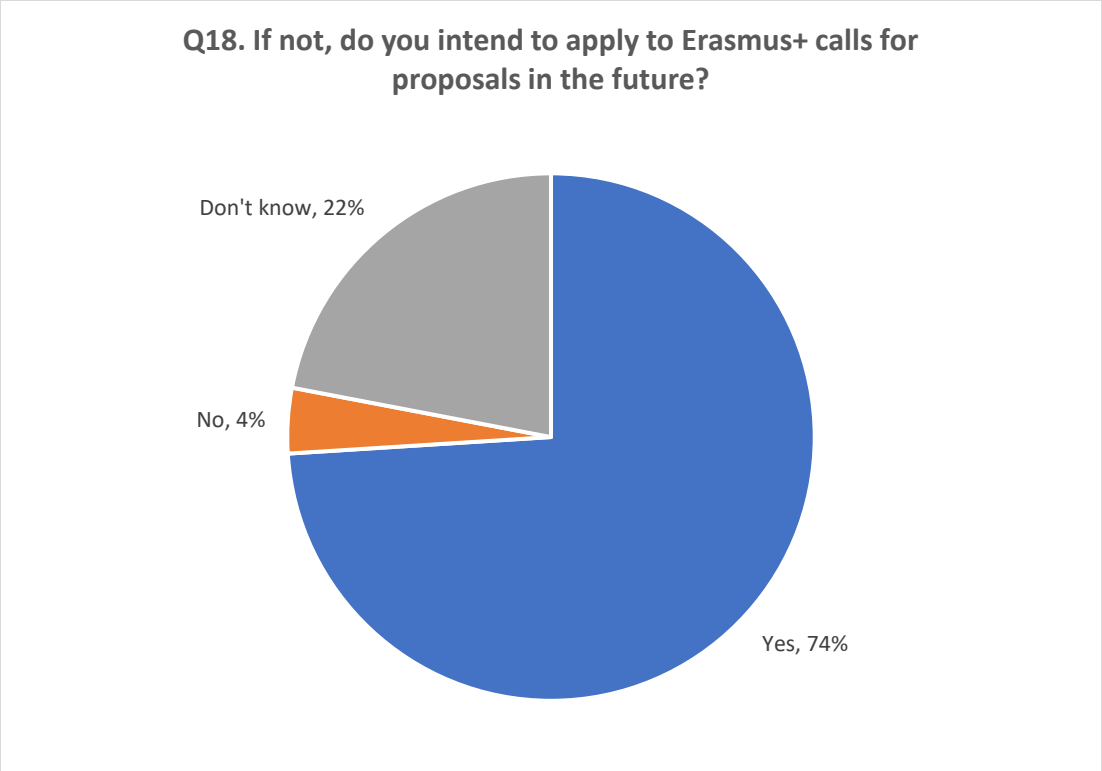


Q16. Have you used an analysis of the needs of the target group/your organisation to develop your project?



Q17. Has your project received funding?

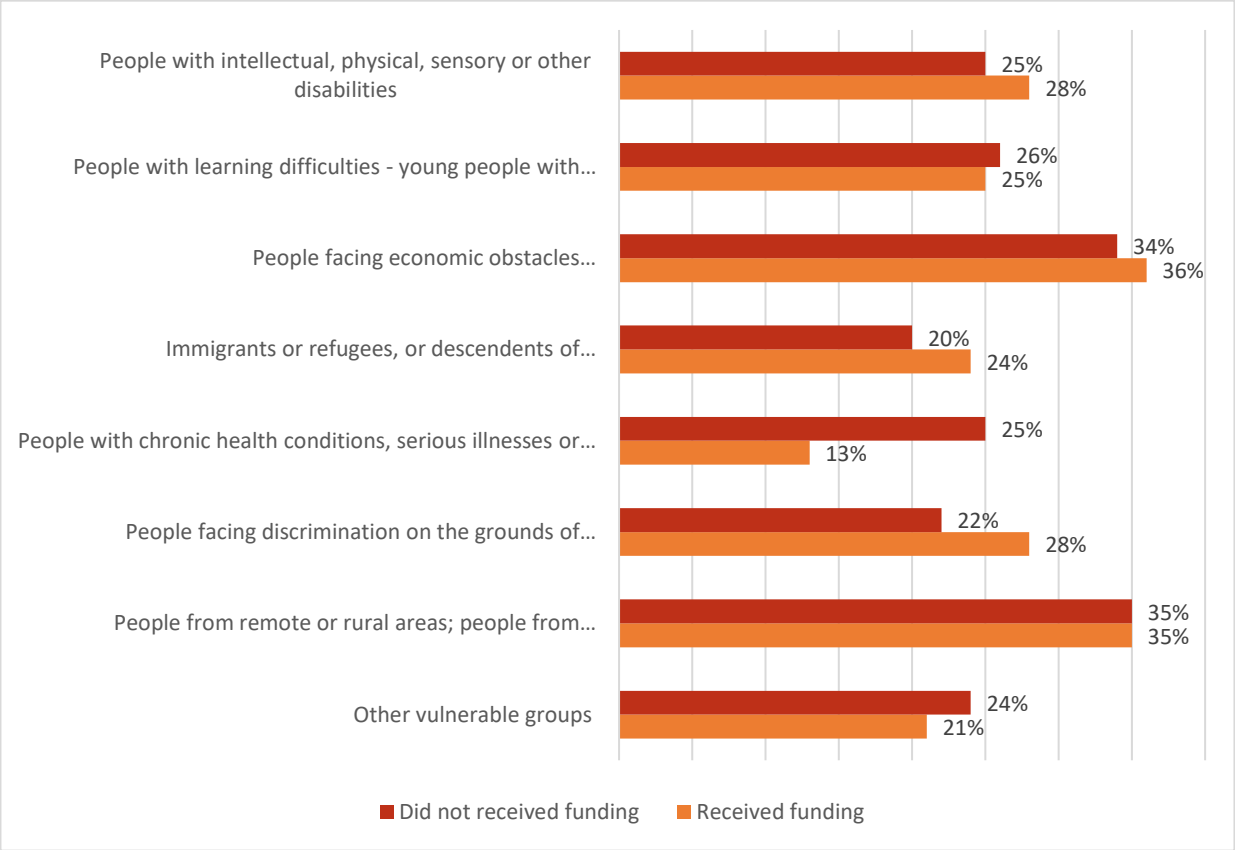




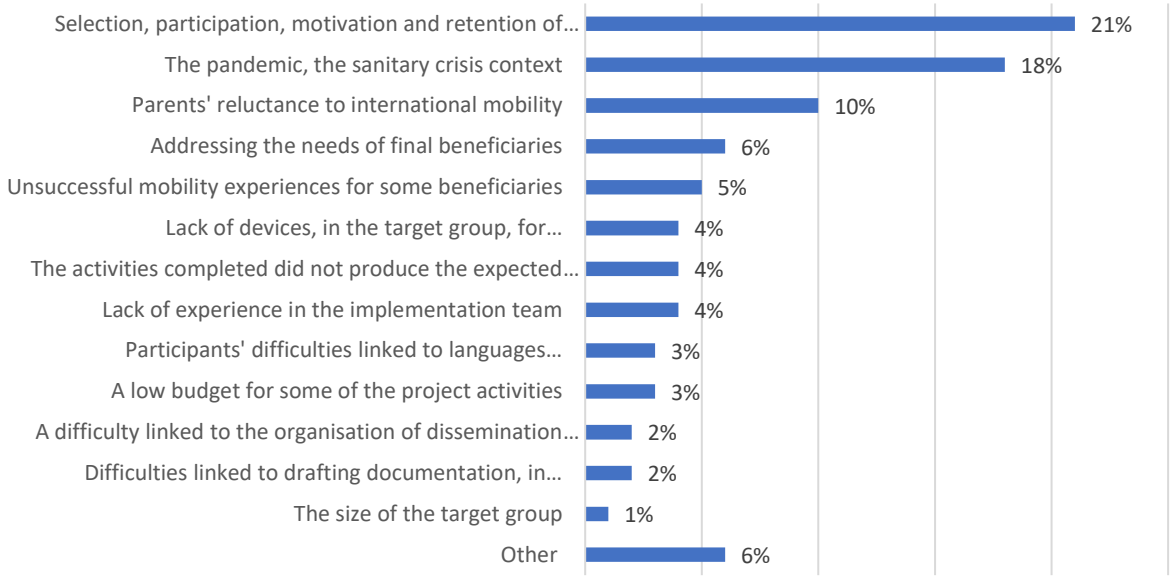
- The satisfaction associated with the information and the documentation at the time of drafting the application is high. More than 87 % of the applicants are content with the documentation or the information referring to the definition of vulnerable groups or inclusion. However, one can notice a small difference determined by a slightly less satisfaction with the aspects associated to inclusion.
- The segmentation of the population in relation to the specificity of the inclusion component indicates a relative balance: 27 % of the participants included vulnerable people among their beneficiaries, 37 % had topics related to inclusion and other 36 % had both components.
- The level of satisfaction with the application is slightly lower among those for whom the inclusion component only meant including topics on inclusion in their projects.
- The profile of the most frequent vulnerable groups is slightly more general and is rather concerned with the background conditions these people are facing:
  - poor people, with a low income, are present in 90 % of the projects;
  - isolated people or people living in the outskirts are present in 79 % of the projects;
  - people with learning difficulties or at risk of school dropout are present in 69 % of the projects.
- Except for people suffering from chronic diseases, the other vulnerable groups are present in proportions of over 50 % in the projects.
- More than a quarter (27 %) of the topics related to inclusion are about the teaching component for the integration of students from vulnerable groups. Vocational training and techniques for

working with some vulnerable groups also make up a higher proportion of topics included in the projects of this programme.

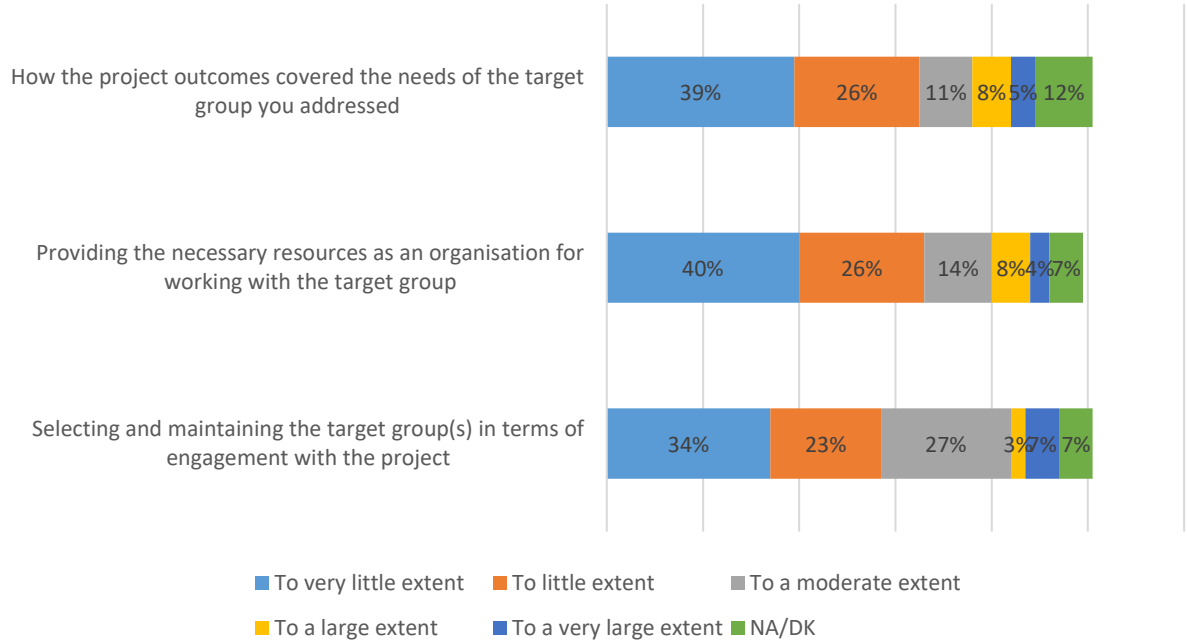
- 93 % of the applicants have conducted an analysis of the needs of the target groups of their organisations. The percentage of those who did not do so is double among the unsuccessful applicants (10 %) compared to the applicants who received funding (5 %).
- About two thirds of the applications received funding. Among the applicants who did not receive funding, about three quarters intend to apply to Erasmus+ calls for proposals in the future.
- Except for people with chronic health conditions, the average proportion of vulnerable groups in the applications which received funding is higher or relatively similar to that in unsuccessful applications.



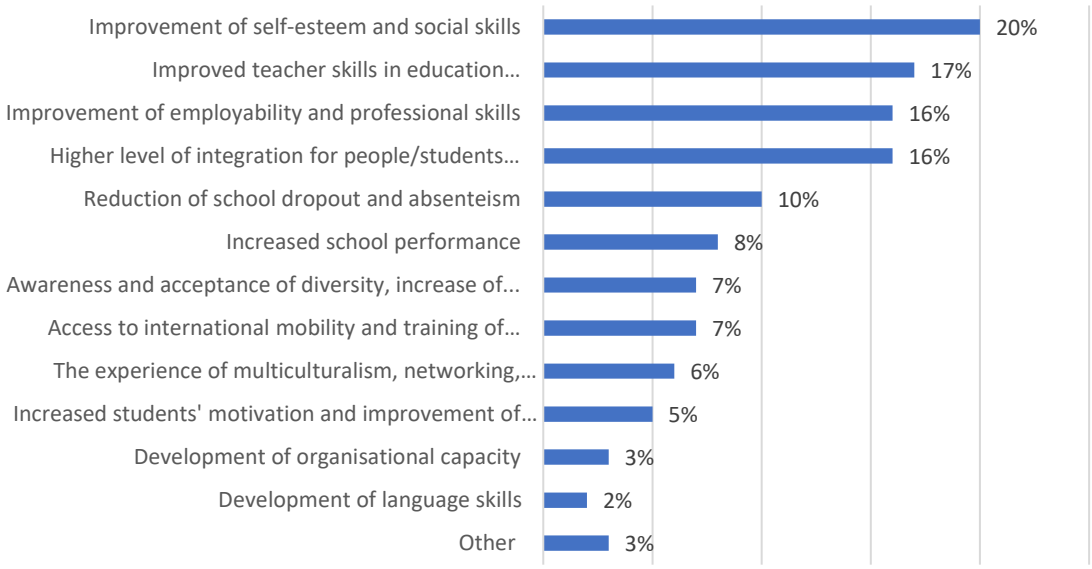
Q19. What challenges did you face in the implementation concerning the proposed inclusion indicators?



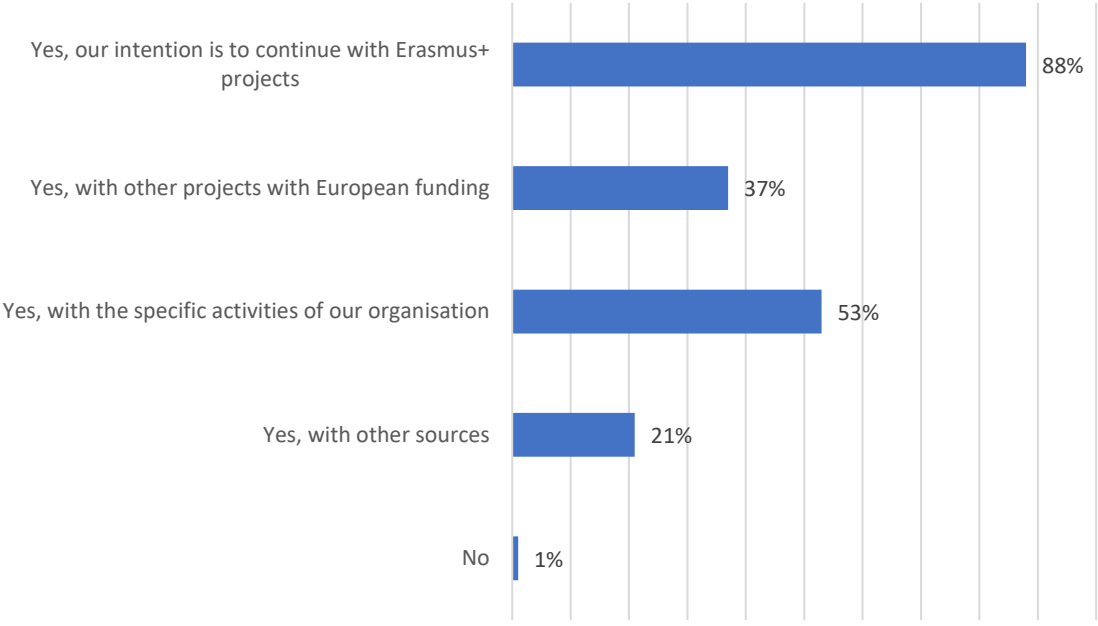
Q20. Throughout the implementation of the project, have you encountered any problems in connection with ...?



Q21. What are the main benefits related to social inclusion resulting from your project? (open question)



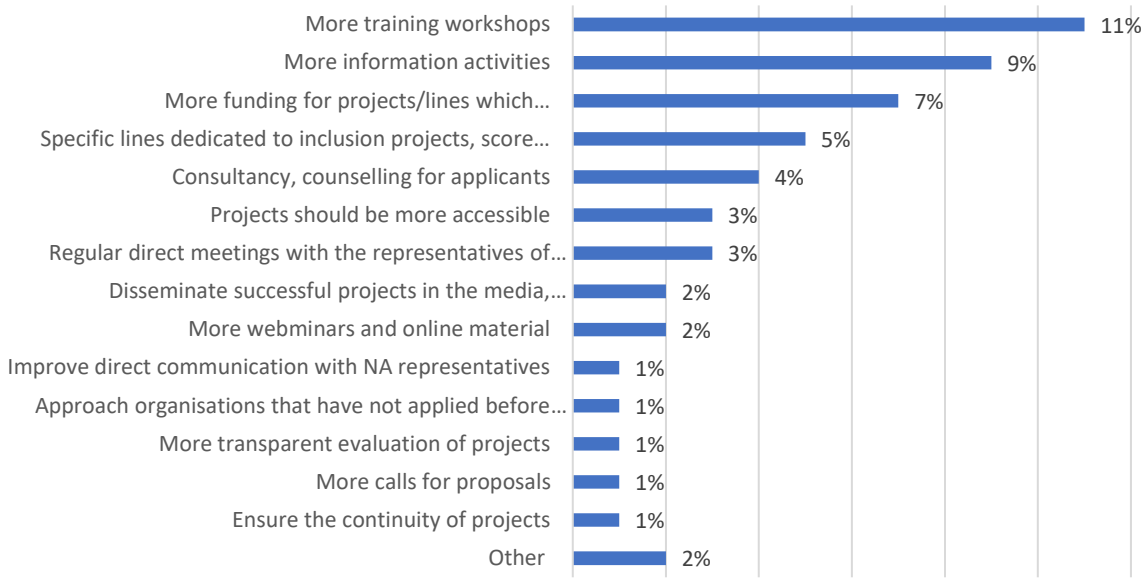
Q24. Will you continue in any way your activities with this/these vulnerable group/groups? (multiple answer)



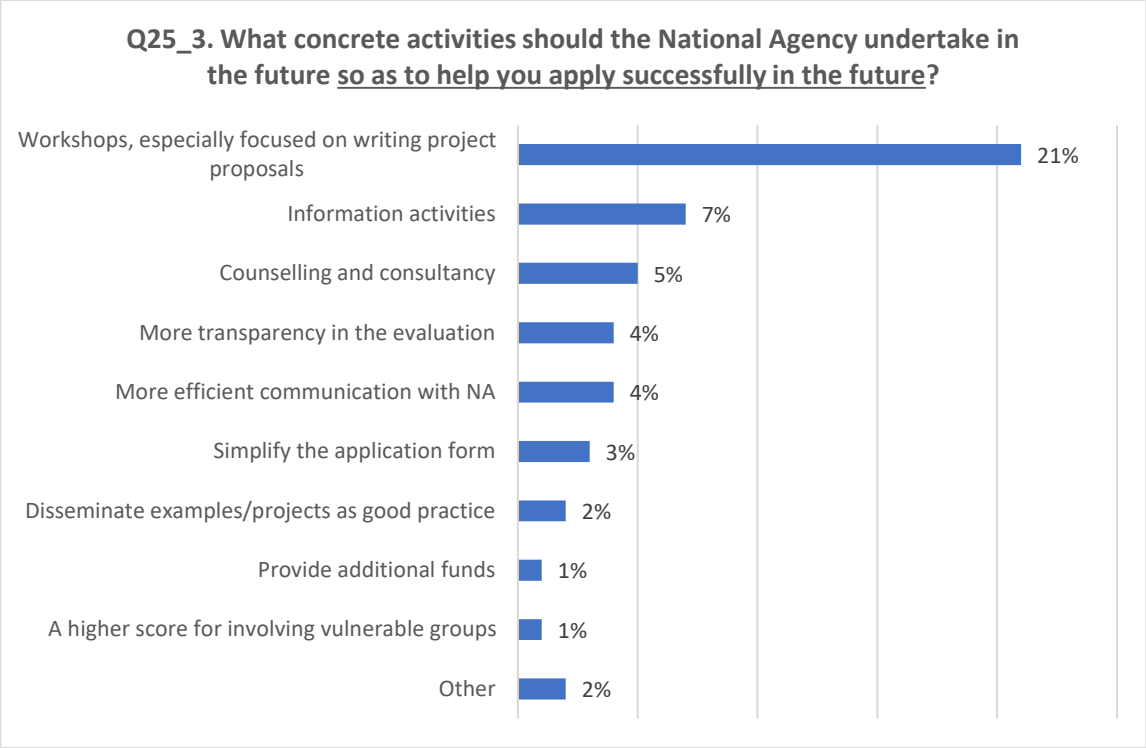
- What are the main benefits in the area of social inclusion? They relate primarily to the personal sphere of vulnerable groups (improvement of self-esteem, development of social skills) or the development of skills for working with vulnerable groups. Then, as a consequence, a higher level of social integration, increased school performance and a reduction of school dropout and increased opportunities for getting a job.
- The continuance of projects with vulnerable groups is quasi unanimous. Almost 90 % of the applicants declare that this continuity will (also) take place with the Erasmus+ programme.
- Those who do not wish to continue with Erasmus+ choose more to continue with activities that are specific to their organisation.
- The main challenges related to implementation and the achievement of the assumed inclusion indicators have been augmented by the pandemic context. Practically, the entire undertaking, from selection to retention in the project, was affected by a drastic fall in people's mobility and in non-mediated social interactions.
- Furthermore, the wide range of challenges that have been mentioned shows that careful monitoring of funded applications is needed so as to make it possible to distinguish both the causes of these challenges and the best solutions.
- About 10-12 % of the applicants encountered significant issues related to the provision of resources, how the outcomes responded to the needs of their target groups or their selection and retention in the programme. About the last aspect, 27 % of the applicants who received funding mentioned that these were average problems.

SUGGESTIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS FOR THE FUTURE

Q25_1. What concrete activities should the National Agency undertake in the future so as to support the organisations working with people with fewer opportunities?



Q25_2. What concrete activities should the National Agency undertake in the future so as to improve the quality of inclusion projects?



- The applicants' suggestions for the future plans of the National Agency are concerned with **concrete activities** (training workshops to support organisations working with people with fewer opportunities, workshops and courses to improve the quality of inclusion projects, workshops for drafting project proposals), doubled by **information campaigns**, using well-established channels (the programme website, information meetings), related to either the information necessary for application or examples of success and good practice.
- On the other hand, aspects concerning **the selection and implementation of projects** are suggested: ensuring more financial resources and lines dedicated to projects addressing inclusion, consultancy and support from the application phase to implementation.

CONCLUSIONS

- The applicants' behaviour for information purposes is diversified, looking especially for sources directly connected with the Erasmus+ programme and the National Agency. The other sources (the media, the social media) are rather conjunctural than systematic.
- The data in the study indicate that the interaction between the applicants and the National Agency is important for getting information and clarifying some aspects concerning the applications for funding or the implementation of projects. The information, whether accessed directly on the Erasmus+ website or from meetings with representatives of the Agency, is capitalised on by the applicants, so it needs to be permanently updated.
- The evaluation of the programme and the level of satisfaction with the actions undertaken, the information activities and the promotion of the inclusion component are high. However, the data shows a lower correlation between how respondents relate to information and other indicators.
- A regression analysis of the Erasmus+ evaluation in relation with all these indicators shows us the importance of a positive perception and evaluation of concrete actions and of the emphasis on the inclusion component compared to the satisfaction with the information activities.
- A relatively dissatisfaction still persists with regard to the transparency of the process for selecting the applications to be funded.
- Participation in the events of the National Agency is associated with a better evaluation of the programme. They facilitate communication, not only for information purposes and they raise the level of confidence among the participating actors.

Model Summary				
Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Standard error of the estimate
1	.642[a]	.412	.410	.73051286
a. Predictors: (Constant), level of satisfaction with the actions, level of satisfaction with information, level of satisfaction with inclusion				

Model		Unstandardized coefficients		Standardized coefficients	t	Sig.
		B	Std. error	Beta		
1	(Constant)	.089	.025		3.635	.000
	Level of satisfaction with the actions	**.434**	**.039**	**.461**	**11.220**	.000
	Level of satisfaction with information	.058	.034	.050	1.706	.088
	Level of satisfaction with inclusion	**.188**	**.038**	**.189**	**4.915**	.000
a. Dependent Variable: Evaluation of programme						

- An analysis of the needs of the target group is a procedure applied by almost all the respondents.
- With regard to the composition of the target groups in the applications that received funding and those that did not, except for people with chronic health conditions, the data does not indicate any statistically significant differences.
- The main challenges were about working with the target group (selection, motivation, retention) and less about providing resources. In this case, the pandemic was a major obstacle, which added to other obstacles concerning different fears related to international mobility.
- The applicants' suggestions fall into three areas:
  - continuance of concrete support measures conducted by the National Agency (workshops, courses, webinars), designed to help the applicants and the beneficiaries of grants;
  - information campaigns on the most popular channels, which should present examples of success or good practice; and
  - improving the selection process, including by privileging the inclusion component.

F. A SYNTHESIS OF INTERVIEWS WITH APPLICANTS AND NATIONAL EXPERTS

Strengths of the programme and of the support measures implemented by the National Agency

- **A flexibility of operations within the programme compared to other grant programmes**

In my view, the focus of Erasmus programmes was well directed at vulnerable groups, at least for us with our partnership. There is also some flexibility in operations with the Erasmus programmes, a flexibility we don't see in other kind of programmes. Many times, because of this lack of flexibility, the programme does not reach out to those who need it most. First, at least in our case, they made a kind of inventory of initiatives and when they saw a relevant initiative, in terms of inclusion, they wanted to develop it further. And this has led to a partnership; it was not that kind of programme where they say I am the donor and you have to do this and that… It was rather the creation of a partnership and here we pooled our resources and we also devised together the types of interventions which could reach out to the most vulnerable. (NGO expert)

Now, for us, who know about them, they are visible. For new organisations, who have never dealt with Erasmus before, they are not visible, because, as I said, we have created a network and all the organisations we approached and we started to develop Erasmus projects. Erasmus is one of the easiest grants you can approach. So, for most organisations we work with… new organisations cooperating with us, we begin by encouraging them to send applications for Erasmus projects, if they had no other projects before, because it is easier to handle and it's a good start. And then… I'm telling you, at grassroots level, inside communities, people don't know about it. For those who don't have the habit of searching different groups, to look for information, they aren't aware of it. But it's like with the other programmes. So, not only Erasmus is unknown, none is known at grassroots level. Erasmus, if you think of it logically, is much more known than other programmes, compared with other programmes we work with. For example, Europe for Citizens is much less known than Erasmus, or the Norwegian Funds. (applicant)

Advantages, in terms of project management… the advantage of Erasmus is that it is easy to manage, it doesn't require financial reporting and a lot of red tape. On the other hand, the disadvantage with Erasmus is that you can't pay people as far as exchanges are concerned. Only for the training part, you may pay the facilitator but you cannot pay the team working on those projects. So, these are the biggest minuses, let's say, with Erasmus. For the rest, it's a very flexible programme, with people you can easily talk to, the team from the National Agency, they are very open, we have a very good relation with them. They already have an idea of the organisations we work with in this area and, when there is a problem, they call us directly so that we contact them, send documents or whatever… they don't call them. (applicant)

I haven't identified anything extra… maybe some ease in the bureaucratic and financial operation. Yes, if I look at it this way, this is the extra it brings in, it's much easier to operate compared to others, especially on European plans. And this is in a context where most schools, especially the disadvantaged ones, have a low capacity and they avoid excessive red tape. They don't have the capacity to handle it. Then Erasmus+ may be an easier tool which schools can use to generate the necessary resources: human, financial, for improving performance. (NGO expert)

- **Communication with the National Agency; promptness in providing information**

The National Agency has always been a dialogue partner, because, every time, we could have a dialogue, say what problems we deal with and find together solutions to any possible challenges, and also – and I heard this from other colleagues working in education, too – the management of funds is much more flexible with Erasmus+ than with the European funds, which is doubled by the Romanian red tape. So, Erasmus+ is more

accessible… with the other funds, many get entangled in procedures, paperwork or even give up applying because the procedures are very complicated and laborious. (NGO expert)

I appreciate communication, the manner in which they approach us, the way they answer. We had a project, we were caught by the pandemic in Portugal. We returned a day earlier. But you don't know how many times they called us to be sure. So, everything lasted for 4-5 days over there, and they checked with us every day. This is an actual example. And with the projects they always guide you, whether you know what to do or not. So, if you call, they tell you what to do, if there is anything you don't know. (applicant)

The relation in a partnership, which is important, is motivating. Their promptness in providing information or any possible solutions to challenges that may arise in the course of programme implementation is pretty high. Compared to other national agencies, there is a clear difference, because we also work with agencies from other countries and I think that, with our agency, the clarification is better and there are also simple things, such as models for some certificates, documents you have to draw up, so, they are available, there is not much doubt left. Or when a particular situation which is atypical is analysed, it seems to me there is much openness, without going beyond the rules. So, there is openness, a possibility for re-organisation, re-opening and so on. (applicant)

From my experience, I liked the mood there very much, at the National Agency, and the people, too… so much that I'd like to be there, with them. So, I don't know if that says it all, but for all my interactions with the colleagues from the Agency, for consultancy, about the projects, everything was all right. Every time I called, somebody answered me, every time I raised an issue, a solution was found. I had some problems during the projects and there was a solution for each one. And from all my discussions and interactions with them, there is one conclusion. They are very competent. It's an institution working based on competence, this is how it looked to me. (applicant)

- **High accesibility within the programme**

Pretty good accessibility, as far as we accessed it. We accessed especially programmes involving mobility, programmes involving training, involving exchanges of experiences. Clarity and accessibility… I mean both for information and projects. At least, for our target group, probably there is a target, beyond the project activity, which probably played a role. But probably it is also the openness to the target group, which was one of the factors leading to the possibility for us to implement the project. (applicant)

There are advantages in an Erasmus+ project, compared to previous programmes, especially that people may be paid for their intellectual outputs. With the previous ones, which are no longer in place, they couldn't be paid. Those activities were strictly activities based on volunteering. And that was also a time of maximum enthusiasm and people could be motivated strictly by mobility, by the activity itself, by its outcomes. Now, probably it wouldn't even be possible to mobilise the people if there weren't a financial reward. (applicant)

- High programme visibility

Among the general population, I think there is visibility concerning the access to funds for needs, with initiative and search for information from those who want this. I think the National Agency makes significant efforts related to visibility. (NGO expert)

From my point of view, communication is ongoing and transparent, including for the website, the way it is structured. You've got there all the information, from calls for proposals, support documents and so on, and also on the groups, for example, the group of coordinators, coordinators of Erasmus+ programmes and inside the network. It seems transparent to me, with all the necessary information. (NGO expert)

- **The programme offering the largest openness to Europe**

First of all, the programme offers the largest openness to Europe. So, the fact that teachers have an opportunity to travel to other country and see exactly how their peers work, and in what conditions and that they can share their own experience and connect… how to say… it's more than going to a course, they make friendships for a long time. You make friendships which later on help you exchange experiences again… you see your colleague going to a conference whatsoever, you see what it is about and you go there, too. So, this is the most important advantage, you become a part of a European community. That means a lot for teachers. Then, you can, little by little, open doors also here. I admit, you can't bring about change overnight; I admit, people still tend to follow their old habits but when you get to implementation and they see it's easier to do that, more interesting for children, if children learned something easier and they use it, then they go about it, too, and their colleagues… "Look, I want that, too, because I liked it, how did you do?" I mean, it's not enough, you went somewhere, you came back, you undertake some dissemination and tomorrow everybody is going to make an application. (applicant)

For teachers participating in an exchange of experience, they see other models and their horizon practically opens and they see things can be different from the classic models they are used to in the classroom in Romania. And they brought back from non-formal learning methods to methods for restructuring classes so as to take children also out of the school setting for a learning process. I mean, they didn't take learning only to the classroom, instead, they devised… I don't know, they created exchanges of experience or traineeships in high-school or middle school. There are all sorts of undertakings in the communities or besides, so they can support them, show them that it is important to finish school and that they can go to a vocational school and what the benefits are. Otherwise, if we talk about young people from rural areas having an exchange of experience, it's a boost of confidence for them, maybe it's their only opportunity to go outside their community. For many of them, if not for the most of them, maybe it's the only time when they go not only to another country but outside their community, too. (NGO expert)

- **Very useful support measures**

I have also participated in dissemination conferences organised by the National Agency, which are extraordinary. From all points of view. From the actual organisation to the venue, everything. It was useful, as examples of good practice, to see what ideas the others have. Because, after all, you can look at a list of winning titles but you cannot figure it out based on a title. These examples of good practices are very useful. How people devised a project, what did they think to do, what activities they did. They are very useful, because this helps enhance the implementation capacity. It is not that you copy them but maybe you adjust them, maybe new ideas can be derived from them. I find these examples for the dissemination of good practices extraordinarily useful. That really helped. (applicant)

I attended a course organised by the National Agency for writing grant applications. Those are the most useful. That one helped me most. It was a course for writing an application for a strategic partnership. It was a real success because, after that, all the applications were successful. (applicant)

I participated in contracting meetings and in seminars which they disseminated on the inclusion issue, visibility and other things. They are also very good means to promote inclusion, because people from various fields participate in those meetings and they've got their visions. This way, we can see each other and we also had the possibility to bring promotional material for our projects, so I think this is a good thing. Other useful activities, I think, there were the conferences about capitalisation. I have also participated in an interview on the radio, which was organised by the Agency. (applicant)

I have participated in other webinars, too. And yes, there were the conferences organised by the National Agency, for dissemination, I learned a lot from there, too. Very useful. This is how I made it. Because I wouldn't have made it if there hadn't been that support. I have felt supported permanently in everything the Agency does. Permanently. Anytime there is something not clear to me, I can make a call, and all those ladies, your colleagues, if the lady responsible for the project is not there, other people answer the call and they kindly and with patience explain it to me. I have always found sympathy at the National Agency. (applicant)

From the feedback of the teachers we work with and who attended the course, it was a valuable learning experience for them, it helped that they were actually there and that it was practical. They left [the course] with their writing, with a draft of the application somehow. Even if there were only ideas in every field, they knew where they were heading to, they had the tools to help them finish. I really think that it helped, at least for us, the fact that it was not limited to a participant per school, there were two, a teacher or a primary school teacher supported by Teach in our programme, who also took another person from their school, usually the head teacher… that was the rule. And it helped enormously. It helped enormously, including for how we can reach out to those from disadvantaged backgrounds; the head teacher, finding out about it, saw the importance of such a programme and continues to support it. And they understood the inclusive mechanism. That it is not only about writing 3 words, we get the money and we do whatever we want with it. (NGO expert)

Areas where the National Agency should, through its support measures, make improvements

- **Visibility of some key actions**

I think that the area of youth is very visible, the most visible in my opinion. The area of youth is there. I don't think it's always understandable for VET or for schoolers what opportunities are there. I don't think it is visible for someone not inspired to look into a guide, indeed. And to understand that it is not tedious, that it is rather an opportunity… I don't think that. That sometimes the language is not adapted to rather disadvantaged backgrounds or to the rural area, who sometimes don't have access or are not used to this kind of language specific to an implementation guide. (NGO expert)

- **Transparency of evaluation**

There were also projects in these 10 years where we had a good score and, even if we developed the project, subsequently we lost more points. If the same project is submitted again, it should be re-evaluated by the same evaluator, because if someone else evaluates it, they might have other ideas about the project. So, somehow, someone evaluated our application and we re-submit it, they already kind of know the project and maybe they will focus on what has been improved. Of course, it is very subjective. It happened twice that we re-submitted, we further developed it and we still lost points. The score should be somehow much clearer. We should know much more precisely how we get those points. OK, I understand that there are 3 dimensions of scoring but it is not so clear how, on what basis. We may get 30 points for one part, but we don't know exactly. They evaluate with 2 points the description of the partnership; 3 points are given for the inclusion of youth and so on. This is something we don't know because it is not set in the guide but there could be somehow an unwritten rule at the level of the National Agency, and the organisations should be aware of it. Because they could insist on those things which evaluators give points for. (a rejected applicant)

The National Agency does its job properly, meaning that it promotes inclusion and so on. I have also seen minuses lately, in the last 2-3 years, I can give you an actual example. We submitted the same project, the same

year, just that it wasn't deadline 1, it was deadline 1 and deadline 2, without changing anything in that project… and the scores for the approval of a project were pretty much the same; it was about 65 at the last project. For the first deadline, the same year, the conditions for approval were about the same. The same year, on the first deadline, our project got 63 points, on deadline 2, the same project with young Roma, got 70 points, without changing one single word. We wanted to check that. (applicant)

- **The fear of potential applicants/representatives of institutions to apply, their fear of not knowing how to properly handle the funds they receive, especially in the financial area; the need for support in project financial management**

I've got a problem with the financial part, because my accountant, when she hears that I've got an Erasmus project, she says she doesn't want to hear of Erasmus anymore, because she doesn't know exactly. A training for my accountant would be appropriate. That is… how can I say… there are a lot of issues and they call me and ask me, "How do I record that?" And I say, "Wait a minute, I'll let you talk to my accountant." And the poor woman says, "What if I am wrong and I teach them something wrong?" We had inspections before, we even had inspections for the financial part. Everything was all right. But she wants to see it in black and white, "I need that" and "I need that". (applicant)

It's the accounting part. I had some issues with my accountant at the beginning, especially when we had a lot of money for the part of management and she didn't know how to pay it. More information activities for accountants. The project coordinator is also important but there is strict accounting stuff. I know we were in a deadlock once, we tried to find solutions somewhere; how can an accountant handle this kind of big projects, strategic partnership projects, where you give money to your partners; you must keep a record of everything. Accountants need dedicated training. Absolutely. Moreover, I know there was a problem, we asked our colleagues, we searched the Erasmus groups, those documents which are necessary to a project coordinator. The project coordinator does not always know everything. We are basically teachers. (applicant)

A lot of organisations write in their projects that they bring in disadvantaged groups and they participate only in writing. We have a partnership just now, where this is exactly what we are going to do, some research to demonstrate that actually only 10 % at most, in an extremely happy case 10 %, are people from disadvantaged groups, people with disabilities, Roma youth, who actually participate in the programme, even if the figures are much higher. Because the only way to demonstrate it is that text, which if you don't describe it nicely, it is not considered a disadvantaged group, which seems extremely dumb to me, because we, if we work with Roma people, just because we did not present the disadvantaged group the way the evaluator would have liked it, they said we were not working with a disadvantaged group. However, other organisation, which I know for sure they don't work with disadvantaged groups and I know exactly their profile, just because they had a nice presentation... But I'm sure that if one goes right there to check they won't find those young people from that community coming there; and they were considered as working with disadvantaged people. This inclusion thing is quite relative, at least in the Erasmus programme. Yes, everything is very nice in writing and everybody promotes inclusion. In fact, when you really go there in the middle of a community and pick up a young person to take them to an Erasmus project, you'll see that those young people who would really need it can't participate. We, for example, we had exchanges of youth where everything was discussed in Romani. (applicant)

Maybe there should be more support related to budget. So, not about drafting the budget in the application, some information about how... There is a guide, I read it. They've got guides for absolutely any problem. But, look, we've got now a WhatsApp group for those who coordinate Erasmus projects and there are a lot of questions. And you know what else? So, like a red line, there is no accordance between the school's accounting, the institution's accounting and how we can coordinate the money in Erasmus. So, most talking was about how

you pay salaries. The accountants in educational institutions show some terrific reluctance to this possibility of paying the human resources or the manager or whoever is in the project. Maybe it could be possible to make this legislative framework a little bit more compatible. I understood that it is very difficult to do this for institutions and they give up. It's a school; it's got an account managed by the mayor's office. And something is lost there between the project, the school and the mayor's office. The chain breaks. There is no relation. I worked in several schools in Erasmus projects and there are many accountants who don't know what it is about and the project manager, so the one dealing with the implementation, has to take care of this, too, to tell the accountant, to give them documents and teach them. Maybe the Agency could do something for school accountants, some training, I don't know, special guides for them. Because our language… I'm a teacher, a primary school teacher… I don't have any knowledge of accounting. (applicant)

Schools are not used to develop such a project, to undertake the whole process from top to bottom. From development, finding partners, developing a partnership, applying for the project. Then, if it is approved, they have to do the qualitative management of the process. These reluctances come from a lack of experience, on one hand. It is because they are overwhelmed by everything they have to do in school, from reports, participating in various committees, there is a lot of red tape for teachers. And secondly, they are not aware of the added value which a context involving an exchange of experience and working with other schools or organisations from other countries on school matters can bring in. I think they are not used at looking at other models of good practice from other countries and adapt what suits their context. (NGO expert)

- **A difficulty in selecting and maintaining the target group: children, parents, young people from vulnerable backgrounds**

Yes, including in that project, the challenges were concerned especially with how to relate to and actively engage the target groups. Because the specificity of our projects – the project we are talking about and another project we are implementing now – one specific characteristic of these projects is the beneficiaries' active engagement. So, there are projects and outputs made through beneficiaries' active involvement. And hence, yes, there are challenges. (applicant)

Right now, we are having discussions with a compartment and they raised the issue of participation grants. There are the training activities, which other times we used to justify somehow; people need to get permission from work to leave for a week. Many times, it's good to have a vulnerable group because you can get additional points. The only change you have to make is to write some beautiful stories in your reports and tick boxes. Because nobody went to ask those groups where they came from, from what community or how did they get involved. So, it is extremely easy to demonstrate that you had a vulnerable group in the project, even if you had none. And… I don't know… I'm not the one who should consider it and offer solutions but I think it would be interesting to think a little bit of it or take this aspect into account. Because, as seen by an organisation working with vulnerable groups, I think that if the data which the European Commission put forward saying that Erasmus+ is the most inclusive programme, is false, completely false. Indeed. Even for us, it happened in our projects that instead of 10 Roma young people we only had 7, because this is how it was. Because it was written in the project, we ticked two more, because nobody can demonstrate they are Roma or non-Roma. Yes, in other situations, they haven't got any. And we sent participants in other projects, to other countries, and they got upset with us because we sent Roma people who didn't speak English. "It was a project with Roma youths, this is what you asked for, then this is what I sent to you." "Well, this is not good, send others next time." "Well, I'm sorry, I won't enter a partnership with you next time. Because, if you don't adjust your activities to the youth… well, we haven't got others." (applicant)

They criticised me for sending those youths. Or children from child care centres. We work with children from

*child care centres in our county. They told me, "Man, don't send any other children from those centres because they are naughty, they whatever." "Man, well… your project is about these youths." "Well… yes… but give me some who can speak English." "Well, there aren't any who can speak English***."** (applicant)

They should try to introduce some courses, at least to familiarise them with the notion of a project, a European project, an Erasmus project, so they are not scared of it. They get scared and they don't even want to come and work. We are trying, with the project our head teacher has done here for about 2 months, to find people. Well, now it's also the pandemic. Let's say it's that, too. They are afraid to go. Indeed, if we make a mistake, we have to pay. I told them there is no way we can make mistakes, because there is a transparent platform, which generates costs and expenses and there's no way. We only take what's there. I tried to explain so that they understand me. Nobody has money in their pockets, money goes to the bank. There are bank statements. And I told them how I did with the other projects. It is not that the head teacher or the project manager carry the money with them and they distribute it. It all starts with the money. That could be a possibility. Another one is that maybe they are afraid of speaking English, another big fear. And they have fear because of English, because they can't speak it. That's all right, because we've got 6 months to learn to speak it at an intermediate level. And the fear of a foreign language. The training courses under K1 are in English. People from rural areas can't speak English. You should know that this is also a big problem, the language barrier. It scares them. Money. The language barrier. When they hear European, they get scared. Maybe they should take the image of the programme and explain it at a simpler level. They should take this into account, people's fears. (applicant)

Instead, it seems to me that a challenge is – and there has been some work here – how they cover their costs, because if we have this variant where they cover their costs and then they are reimbursed, most of them can't afford it at all. Ad then, the costs should be covered from the very beginning, fully. Yes. They should be covered fully from the start because we are talking about young people whose parents are either housekeepers, or they are single parents struggling with 3-4-5-6 children. They can barely afford to live day by day, not anything else. (applicant)

- **Preparing those who are unexperienced, those who have not applied to calls for proposals before; relatively low accessibility for those without experience in writing project proposals**

So, yes, they want openness but this openness is extremely relative. Because if 5 years ago, 7 years ago or 10 years ago, in this programme, a group of young people really could do something and have their project approved, with the exchanges for youth, at present, if you aren't a professional writer of project proposals, which understands the language and does everything by the book, you've got no chance to have a project approved under Erasmus. So, that disadvantaged group, who has no access to information and can't really write a good application, won't be approved. (applicant)

They do those training events, information sessions and everything. The problem is that even if you participate in that training, you don't become a genius in two days, you don't become a project writer who can write a very good project proposal. So, this is clear. In two days, you learn about methodology, you learn about eligibility, you learn other stuff… but to create effectively a smart objective, as they require now... We were recommended in the evaluations to make the objectives smart. Half of the project proposals are written by people who haven't written a proposal before, who are not accustomed to writing. And I had a discussion at a certain point with someone from the agency who confirmed to me, "Indeed, if you have many projects rejected, your rating drops and whatever." "Madam, I sincerely take that risk." If I don't offer that possibility, that opportunity to a young man who writes a project proposal which is rejected, and then we write it together and they can see, they can understand the whole process. I can tell them, "Look, it's not right what you've written here, and here you did that", they won't learn. They get explanations in two days, but they can't stay with these young people and explain to them what was wrong and what was right in every chapter of the proposal. We do that with them. And then, I take the risk of having my project proposal rejected, so I can have a 30-40 % rate of approval,

because every time there are proposals written by 7-10 people who are learning to write project proposals now, just for offering them this opportunity. (applicant)

However, it seems to me that access is a little bit limited for those who don't know someone or don't have any experience with projects. I think that when you apply for the first time, you have few chances to be successful. I know from other colleagues who got feedback about the score. So, to write a project proposal which can be approved, I think you need experience. (applicant)

The information on inclusion is very clear. But the way it is explained, I don't know whether that information reaches out to everybody like it did for me. So, for someone acquainted with this language, we know it, we use it, I have been using it for 15 years. Imagine a person who now reads it or sees it for the first time, I think there should be someone analysing the text for them so they can understand what it is all about. (applicant)

For us, after a period of great enthusiasm, there was a period when we stopped and we preferred not to be project leaders, so we can learn how to handle such a project from several points of view. It would be useful to have a discussion about how a new organisation could attract another Romanian partner which is experienced and get involved together: better quality for projects and less learning time. (applicant)

- **Support for the dissemination of the outcomes of some projects**

I think it would be helpful if the National Agency participated in multiplication events. This has just come to me. When you've got a difficult project, where you try to involve people who are very busy in their fields, it's important to bring in someone who can take out 2-3 hours from the time dedicated to their activity and participate. And I'm thinking, I've got this idea from a project we had – inclusion in the labour market. This was our most difficult project because we faced many obstacles.

- **Support for those potential applicants from schools who aren't encouraged either by the school management or by representatives of inspectorates**

I know that this kind of application is conceived by Brussels but I tell you honestly, for a teacher from a rural area who has been teaching for 30 years and they work like that, they don't even understand those titles, the sections they have to do. The gap is very wide. If, in our previous strategic partnership projects, we had visits to our partners' countries, to schools from rural areas, now I can make a comparison. There is a big difference from rural [schools] in Turkey, for example, where there were children who had no footwear, they were in bare feet, but other perception of the European dimension of education. We have this fear… I don't know. There is a big difference. (applicant)

If they could do something with the ministry… some agreements. The majority in Erasmus+ are teachers, most are school institutions. I know there are some agreements between the National Agency and the ministry, maybe they should find something there. Because I'm hearing them complaining that we don't access European funds, because everybody is talking about this. I guess they should do something eventually. Do you know what we are like? When we go to the inspectorate to file our applications for participating in mobility, it's a file. Do you know how they look at us? The inspectors? I want to confess this. I assume it. There is the inspector for European projects, who is there, but it happened that we dealt with the inspector who's responsible for our school. Who has nothing to do with it. And they said, "Are you leaving again? Are you dropping the school again?" (applicant)

- **Difficult cooperation/partnership with organisations from western, central and northern countries**

About the Europass certificates, maybe they should simplify a little bit the procedure for credit recognition. Because we tried twice and we didn't succeed. It gets somehow stuck and someone didn't want to recognise our certificates. (applicant)

We had begun to develop some cooperation with an organisation from Norway, whose chairman was from Costa Rica. When we talked about a joint project, they told us, "We don't go further than Denmark, Lithuania, Estonia, Latvia; you need an organisation from these countries to promote you. We had an interaction with an organisation from Luxembourg to support young women in the field of IT and we tried to do a project with them. We were not successful at our first application, and when we asked for their assent to develop a second project based on the feedback we got from them, they said that we were not a reliable company and they discontinued the collaboration. It's difficult to see whether their argument is real. Or with an organisation from Sweden, everything was OK until they had to send participants to us; they withdrew at that point. (applicant)

- **More support for the identification of reliable international, and also national, partners**

As concerns the Romanian part, we had partners who were really interested in the event. Unfortunately, the international partners were there just as passers-by or visitors. The Romanian trainers had an important contribution. I'd like a stronger link after the events between the organisations that got involved in the events, the team of trainers and how we could have an update after the event. There should be more events with such an impact, which pursue some feedback over a longer period. And a database with reliable partners and not so reliable partners. (applicant)

I see somehow, about mobility, the national agencies should be more rigorous. In 10 years, I think we had only a case when young people went to Germany, I think, and they didn't get their money for training back. Just like that, they were saying that they needed to get the money I don't know how and so on. It was the only case. But with mobility x, the youth was sure that both the sending organisation and the host organisation were accredited, monitored and there was much more certainty. I saw a problem here, with mobility. (applicant)

It would be interesting, for NGOs, some support in connection with the banks, which should help us access such a line for grants. It would be also useful to have a list of organisations that generated problems at a certain point. The National Agency would have a tool to control somehow the history of every partner. It's difficult that one month, one month and a half before starting the project you have to look for another partner. (applicant)

Recommendations for support measures in the future and for the future inclusion strategy

1. **<u>Recommendations concerning the areas which should be considered for inclusion projects</u>**

- Continue the intervention in school education related to socio-emotional skills

The emphasis was put many times, I'm referring to education in general, on cognitive skills, but all this part related to socio-emotional skills in which we invested together with Erasmus in recent years is important because it is here that all ties related to resilience, self-esteem, motivation to go on, to hold on when you encounter difficulties are created. One recommendation would be to continue to invest in this area, in socio-emotional skills. (NGO expert)

- Extend the Role Models project to other types of vulnerability

We had with Erasmus this part related to models of success and I think it should be continued and extended for all types of vulnerability. We tried to do this, because we started from the vulnerability of Roma children, then we extended it, but there are still things to do, for children with disabilities, for children from poor families, for children from rural areas, because, you know, there is a big difference concerning the early school leaving rate between the two types of residential settlements. (NGO expert)

- The importance of the analysis of needs and of outlining the inclusion initiative together with the

beneficiaries

Maybe they should insist more on the importance of a partnership, insist more on the importance the analysis of needs and of outlining the initiative together with the beneficiaries. It's not me who should say what you need, because it's also about how they are involved… as we were saying in our discussion earlier. If I hadn't been involved in the drafting of the proposal, maybe when you come and offer it, it might not be in my interest. (NGO expert)

- A possible support mechanism for vulnerable schools related to the development of organisational and educational culture

I wish very much we had a specific mechanism to support schools with regard to the educational culture they promote. In other words, performing this system, how programmes are done based on operational plans and institutional development plans and operational plans at school level. It is clear that they should consider the area of management, but class management and school management. (NGO expert)

- Encouraging partnerships between schools and NGOs

I would focus on partnerships between schools, the civil society and so on; at the moment, Erasmus is raised especially in the area of governmental organisations. (NGO expert)

2. <u>Recommendations concerning the target groups: support measures are necessary to help gain their trust</u>

- Communication activities dedicated to the final target group (preferably offline, too, because there are many who don't have access to online information), conducted in partnership with credible organisations, known to disadvantaged communities

And I think another challenge, in this context, is how the information gets to them, because there are such opportunities, because much communication is online, and most of them are not in those contexts. I mean, let's say that they have a phone and they have access to the internet, if they have, because there are communities that don't have any access to the internet. But they are not subscribers on Facebook, on all kinds of communication channels where they could find such information. They don't know there are opportunities and so on. Many of them don't find about it. Secondly, there is also parents' mentality and their fear, which to me seems very natural as a matter of fact, "What if you become a victim of human trafficking or who knows what happens", "What do you mean all costs are covered? It's sure something it's going to happen to you". Because they do not know. They haven't been abroad and the information they've got about other countries, the information reaching to them is about trafficked girls or others alike. If [the project] comes from organisations in rural areas, if the organisation concerned has been there for a while, it is validated by the parents and parents have trust. If it comes from the school, there is some trust in the teacher doing this. On the other hand, there are also students or communities that don't have an organisation to take this information to them and they also don't have schools that are closed to this context. And then, in my view, there are many young people who lose these opportunities, because they are not aware of them. Personally, I think a closer cooperation with the poles of power from these vulnerable communities would be helpful, maybe with the school or maybe with the mayor's office or a pole of power validated by the community, an institution in principle, so as to have also offline campaigns. Or flyers, I don't know if they still work, but there are communities where flyers still work. It doesn't work online. There should be short information sessions, once in a while, for the young people in the community. (NGO expert)

- Additional support measures for people from disadvantaged groups

- Extend the categories of target groups

However, now all research says that if we invest coherently from the beginning, inclusion and all this are much easier to achieve, but if we consider students only at a later stage or mainly at a later stage, we are only dealing with the tip of the iceberg. So, I'd like to see it in early childhood education and care. I truly hope that Erasmus will encourage all 3 partners in the education systems, namely: the school, the parents and the students. It looks like parents have been forgotten and that's not ok, because the pandemic showed us how important parents are. We knew that before, but we didn't see it, but look, the pandemic brought this issue to light. (NGO expert)

3. **Recommendations on the accessibility of these types of projects**

- Privilege the inclusion component in the evaluation process: a higher score for inclusive activities or even establish an axis dedicated to these types of projects

There should be a kind of evaluation at the end or some score given after the project has been completed depending on the attainment of indicators and how they reached out to the most vulnerable groups and… somehow keep a record of it and if further intervention is needed there, it should be some kind of priority, an advantage, a criterion generating extra points. (applicant)

If there were something additional perhaps, a programme or a sub-programme specific to inclusion, which follows this direction. Projects should be strictly on this theme. (NGO expert)

- The existence of a grant scheme for the most vulnerable schools and the creation of mechanisms to support those schools, to provide technical assistance

Schools are very heterogenous; there are schools that do better and there are very disadvantaged schools. In very disadvantaged schools, there is usually a low capacity to apply for projects, because people did not apply before, they don't know how it is, they are afraid, even if someone comes and tells them, so they need a technical assistance component to support them or a scheme of non-competitive grants, which should be directed at the most vulnerable schools with the lowest capacity for doing such programmes and this should be doubled by the technical assistance part so that they can learn. (NGO expert)

There should be a programme dealing exactly with this, with technical assistance for schools and teach the schools. Besides, there should be also a reiteration of the programme and I'm going to tell you why, because the studies that we have conducted showed that the most vulnerable schools also have the highest teacher mobility. In such schools, people go there and wait for the first opportunity to go to another school, so it should be repeated if there are no other measures to encourage the staff to stay in those schools. (applicant)

A support programme related to this part of technical assistance, teaching schools how to write project proposals, how to apply, how to handle such a project, because it is not sufficient… I mean a micro grant scheme was given to schools and I saw many times they do take, maybe with guidance at a certain point, this step to apply. (NGO expert)

It's not easy because they work simultaneously in villages, children don't have qualified teachers, it's very sad what happens. I mean, nobody wants to work in a rural area. And if there is a teacher, he or she is overwhelmed, because they've got a lot of things to do. Now I work with three simultaneous classes and some children don't even have textbooks. So, schools in rural areas are forgotten. What could the National Agency do? Working groups for training these people. There are still… so, out of 10 people who work, two are qualified, or three, or five, let's say. And these five people really could do something. I found it difficult to explain the notion of project to them. Moreover, when they hear that it is associated with the notion of European, there is some fear. People

have fear. They think, "Oh, dear, who knows what might happen". And I have explained to them the flexibility of thinking at Agency level, their impartiality, that you are always with us and you support us, you advise us. The head teacher was afraid, too. When she saw it, she thought we were doing some practice for writing the application. And when [the project] was approved, she said, "Oh, God, I don't know what to do". And I told her to take it easy, everything was going to be all right. Little by little, they gain confidence. So, people in rural areas not only that they are unfamiliar with the notion but it also frightens them. That's normal, we are frightened by the unknown, that's true. (NGO expert)

They are here, we are not reinventing the wheel; special mechanisms are created. For example, with schools with a particular profile and with schools for a higher top, also offering a fair tool for schools with a low capacity, for example, technical assistance more often. I mean what we do in the schools where we work is to support them in the implementation process, because if we didn't support them, they would get stuck for good, because they don't have the required capacity. It's too difficult with the budget part. Of course, there is a big argument between accountants and those who wrote the project proposal. If they have always worked in a particular manner, project management entails adjusting your work methods, which, for example, accountants are not willing to do because they don't know, they are afraid. Then we bring in the technical assistance component, we actually accompany schools in the implementation process. (NGO expert)

You create a mechanism, for the small ones, not only for technical assistance, it should also be for accompanying them during the implementation. It's useless if I wrote their proposal and they've got their project approved, because afterwards they "die out" holding their project, with its mechanisms, with everything. The areas in which we identified their needs are the financial area and the teaching area; they know what to do in general, but there you need to challenge them, to show them. And when you show them what a similar school, facing the same problems, has done and where they are now and the head teacher of that school comes and tells them what it is about; teachers come and say, "Look, what we have adapted" and "Look, how we have done", they understand much better than if I had told them, because I'm not credible; school is credible. (NGO expert)

You cannot ask all schools to play in the same "league" from the start. You have to create specific funding mechanisms for those institutions with a lower capacity. Then you help them in the long term. You give them a hook to hang on and then you start pooling them. (NGO expert)

- More flexibility in the implementation of inclusion projects, because every vulnerable group has its specificity

What I see as very important, it's very important to have… I don't know… a clear discussion at Agency level with the implementers or the people implementing [the project], so they don't put inclusion projects into templates. Because there is no template for you to say, "Look this is the standard, this is how you should do with this group". Even with the same group, at two different moments, you work differently. (applicant)

So, there are no templates for inclusion. We did and we have approved projects for people with disabilities, because we have co-workers who are people with disabilities. And we needed about two years to understand ourselves how to work with people with disabilities. We are a part in the projects involving people with disabilities. We have partnerships with colleagues from Hungary and we are learning from them and so on. We are always asking them, "What do you think would be better? Proceed like this or like that?" And this is something very relative, because if in the same project you have a person with hearing impairment and another one with vision impairment, you have to think thoroughly what activity to do to be OK for everyone. So, it depends on organisations. And in my opinion, the Agency should underline more the experience of those organisations in working with disadvantaged groups or what does that organisation to deserve such a project,

because if I simply write that, yes, in my project half of the participants have fewer opportunities and who knows where they come from, when I hadn't had any project in this area before… (applicant)

4. <u>Recommendations on future information activities and the promotion of the programme and its subcomponents and the promotion of project outcomes</u>

- Intensify the programme information and promotion arrangements

They should continue the information sessions detailing separately any type of intervention, because Erasmus has several types of programmes, and the information should get to beneficiaries in various forms. I mean, it doesn't matter if there are face to face sessions or online sessions now that the pandemic forced us to go that direction, too, or information displayed also in the social media or on the website, but somehow, they should use as many channels as possible because we, as people, are different. (applicant)

Much more advertising, if the Agency wants much more organisations to participate, not only those from the education sector. For example, we find out about the meetings from the school inspectorates. Maybe other organisations don't have access to such things. Maybe even the television, they should advertise on TV, because television has the greatest impact. (applicant)

I think that the Agency should consider the website. The website is quite followed and you find the information after a lot of searching on the website. I think they should work a little bit on that. (applicant)

I think that now, when everything changes and we don't know exactly what, any measure the Agency can take, webinars, online meetings, online training, information activities and so on, everything is appropriate. Because, eventually, there are many questions about the future programme. And it should be done this year, because we already know for the next year, we have one year of experience with the programme, but right now we don't know how many deadlines we have this year, the guide has not been released yet, but the programme should be implemented as from this year. There are many questions. And, of course, locally, if the pandemic situation allows it, it's much better to have something locally. (applicant)

- Information measures to make sure that messages reach out to as many teachers in schools and don't get blocked with the management

It shouldn't be sent only to head teachers. I saw situations and, depending on the head teacher, the school may be more open or not, the head teacher might think it's a nonsense or they may think they are too busy, that they have other priorities. However, maybe there are teachers in the school who would like to apply to that programme. (NGO expert)

So, how should they find communication channels? I don't know, through teacher associations, using other types of communication, not necessarily institutional; they proved they are not always the most efficient, so that the message gets also to teachers; maybe Erasmus has a database with the teachers who participated in their programmes and they could send them the information automatically and ask them to distribute the messages to their peers who had not an occasion to participate in Erasmus before and this way the information gets to them. (applicant)

I think it is very visible, but they could do something more; it is visible everywhere but there is some lack of communication, do you know where? With the head teacher, it breaks there somehow. So, the Agency communicates very well with the inspectorate and communicates generally with everybody. But maybe there are teachers who were not there, who did not hear about it. A young teacher who comes now and doesn't know about it. Or even teachers who came before but were not involved. So, communication breaks somewhere between the head teacher and the other teachers. It breaks there. I don't know, maybe if electronic material

were sent to schools. (applicant)

- Disseminate successful projects more

Everything seems OK to me. We are bound by contract to carry out promotion and dissemination activities. The Agency has a magazine. I don't know, maybe on the website, it could be a section there where they could disseminate projects as good practice. Although there is that platform where everybody put their final outputs, but it could be right on the website, when you open it. Because those who do not know or who visit it for the first time do not know to access that link where we put our final outputs and everything nice that we have accomplished. Maybe directly on the website, a photo gallery, although it takes a lot of space. The best projects. So that a person who opens that page for the first time can see it. For the new ones, I can see they are afraid. Come on, go ahead, look, we had a project approved and it's a pity not to go. (applicant)

- Translate all material into Romanian

There was no information I could not get, that's true. There are some limits imposed by the regulation of the programme, but they are not imposed by the National Agency. Maybe to attract, it depends on the type of organisation. There are organisations which might implement such projects but don't have immediately closed people who, for example, can speak English. It could be a facility for some organisations, it might be an advantage to access the information in Romanian, to be able to access and apply in Romanian. For some categories of organisations, it's possible that they find it difficult to fill in an application form. Maybe some facility in this respect could be useful for a particular type of organisations, like the organisation of deaf people. Such an association may have one or two employees who are not necessarily competent in English. But it is possible, with more accessibility and making it easier to access funding opportunities, to involve them, too, and other organisations alike. (applicant)

- Adjust the language to the categories of target groups

The language should be adjusted depending on the low opportunity… let's say. So, they should change a little bit their discourse. Indeed, for example, if we talk about inclusion, people with disabilities, some of them depending on their disability, don't have access to this opportunity. If I have vision or hearing impairment, I can give up both the idea of training and of getting information of this kind. It could be helpful, for example, to form the website for people with disabilities… I don't know. Record the articles, which are there, audio recording and upload the audio variant, too. It only takes someone to read them, so they are made accessible for people with vision impairment in this case. (NGO expert)

Maybe they should say more clearly how the opportunities fit people with fewer opportunities. Maybe they should mention or underline more the benefits for people with fewer opportunities, whether it is about disability… I don't know… socio-economic status, education and so on. But I think they should state clearer what the benefits are, clearer, including examples of good practice. Examples of outcomes. Look, he is Gigel from village x, he almost dropped out school, but he was involved in a volunteering project or in an exchange of experience and he managed to do that or his mentality changed like that. (NGO expert)

5. <u>Recommendations concerning the training activities for potential applicants</u>

- Invest in initial and in-service teacher training

What I would underline, it's again this part related to the quality of education, which has many facets and here, it's the investment in in-service training made by Erasmus, possibly coupled with the initial training part. Teacher training. (applicant)

- Continue the support measures taken so far

Without those meetings where they explained to us step by step what the programme means and how it works, people stay away from these things because it is difficult, it's difficult to have a look at the application and see a lot of pages to be filled in. And nobody gets started. So, those meetings. (applicant)

But now the new programme is due to be launched and we don't know anything about it. But if there aren't such meetings, a lot of information activities available, so if you missed one, at least you can participate in another, yes, it is difficult. Because it's hard to set out just like that. There are many steps, there is a lot of information. You don't know exactly what to put in there, what to write. I speak from my point of view, because I also had applications which were successful and applications which weren't approved. And I was very disappointed, because you work a lot for it. And you do it from your heart. And it's still not clear from that letter where they tell you what you did wrong. That's the feeling. You still don't understand what you did wrong. Maybe this writing component, the grant application should be a little bit elaborated, this should happen more often, it should be an opportunity for as many as possible to participate. (applicant)

I think the main role of the Agency is to promote and to raise people's awareness of the programme. I mean, it's true that programmes took a lot of time and energy. You need to prepare piles of binders. There are still the structural funds which are exhausting due to the huge number of documents you need to submit. We are one of those organisations that do not apply because of this. If the representatives of the Agency organised meetings in the territory and people would understand that here things are completely different and you don't need to waste a forest just to report, people would be more open to the programme. (applicant)

It is surely a useful programme. Instead, what we noticed, if you don't have the support of the school management, it's difficult to write them, to implement them. That's why it was very good, it was some added value that we had the teachers we support at the courses organised by the Agency for Teach for Romania and they work in the formal education system, plus head teachers or a colleague with decision-making power from the school, so that, the moment they went back to their communities, they already had the programme outlined with their head teacher and so there was support and things were different. When head teachers were not present, or a colleague in a decision-making position, it was more difficult. On one hand, they were alone and had no confidence, and on the other hand, there was no support. (NGO expert)

- Concentrate courses also on aspects of impact and the measurement of intervention effects. Provide tools for the evaluation of project outcomes

I don't know exactly how quality is measured in the other projects, but for us, this was quite difficult because we had to think of the tools we needed to develop in the project, of how to measure the satisfaction of our partners and beneficiaries. Maybe if they made available a set of tools to measure quality, they would make it a little easier for us and people would understand that this quantitative evaluation may be conducted inside. We don't need to hire consultancy firms, which we don't afford to pay, because it is well known that the money for project management is scarce and the evaluation may be done inside the project. Maybe it would be useful! (applicant)

Insist more on aspects of impact and how we measure the effects and the impact. Because if they had a clearer mechanism to measure the effects and the impact, they would see the results and that would be another motivation to continue. And I think it could be important, for online courses, that we made a change and brought this practice component, we meet now and we meet again in one week with feedback. And also, if we go back to things offline… moreover, maybe the training should be broken, organised a little bit differently. So that during the first part of the training there is some time for participants to work on an output, on their project

and then bring it back more defined, so they can get feedback from their colleagues, too and maybe from the trainers, a combo. We have tried this variant, where they come with a pretty clear idea, at the course, because they were requested to do so in the application form. It doesn't work. I think it really works if they take the course. They come with an idea, they begin to be motivated, they understand the structure, they understand how the project should begin. We have an interval when they really write, develop something and we meet subsequently with feedback and what else is necessary. (NGO expert)

- Make communication efficient by focusing on clear profiles of potential beneficiaries: customise information and support measures depending on beneficiaries' experience with Erasmus+ projects

The National Agency should be more punctual. They should create a database with the organisations that made it and those that didn't, focusing on the latter. I communicated very well with people from the department, but they could focus more on unsuccessful organisations, which already know what the Erasmus+ programme means. (applicant)

So, I think it shouldn't be just a group of NGOs, let's call it elitist, which is able to get to the funds of the National Agency or to Erasmus+ funds… and I think they all should. And I think there were some years when precisely the organisations that hadn't received a grant had an advantage. I think that the first Erasmus+ project of an organisation which did not receive a grant before should get an advantage of a few points. I don't know how many. This little advantage could motivate them and it could even help them get some experience. I think that if an organisation had a first experience, it will surely continue with a second one and a third one and so on. (applicant)

We also try to do that with our teachers; it helps if training is differentiated, primary school, middle school, sometimes. Rural and urban, alternatively. It's an important method and have an exchange of experience… just that the reality in urban areas and the types of projects schools can do with a super budget, good schools, are completely different from those in rural areas, where school dropout is high or absenteeism is high and they might need some completely different types of projects, and sometimes it's frustrating for them to see, "Look, normally, you are in the urban and you can do x, y, z, and I'm in the rural, I can't do that". And that affects their motivation, too. And that's also valid for primary school/middle school. Because the needs of teachers in primary education are different from the training needs and other things for middle school teachers. And their openness and their access to children, too. A primary school teacher stays all the time with those children, a middle school teacher doesn't stay all the time with the same group of children, they've only got one class per week. (NGO expert)

- Training activities for the trainers' network

Include for the trainers' network, they should include a training activity, inclusion staff, diversity, human rights, so as to make sure that we are all in line with regard to concepts, values. Because we are only few specialised in this area. There is this perception that everybody knows or that we all have the same values. I think it's necessary to have this training; it should be compulsory for the members of the network, so that we are in line. I don't know if this is necessarily linked to a strategy, but it's something to improve, how courses are organised. I mean, they should be organised observing the same values we demand from our participants. If we want it to be accessible, let's get organised to make it accessible and not just tell them that it should be accessible. Indeed. Focus groups and I think… regularly, once or twice a year, or maybe not a focus group with the purpose of a focus group, maybe meetings to ask for managers' opinions. And even the opinions of final beneficiaries in the project. (NGO expert)

G. FINDINGS ON SUPPORT MEASURES AND INCLUSION INDICATORS

The objectives set for the inclusion component

The Inclusion Strategy launched in 2016 reiterated the ANPCDEFP's vision to transform Romania through learning and its commitment to support the mission of the Erasmus+ programme, which is to change lives and open minds. The same document underlined the importance of how the management of the Erasmus+ programme at national level should appropriately respond to the European priorities and contribute to achieving the European goals underlying the programme, among which inclusion is a priority area for action.

Taking into consideration all of the above, ANPCDEFP has proposed an inclusion strategy, as an integral part of the European one, and its goal is the management of the Erasmus+ programme as an inclusion tool.

The inclusion objectives, derived from that goal, were the following:

- to increase the number of inclusion projects (see both perspectives) funded in the Erasmus+ programme;
- to improve the quality of inclusion projects funded in the Erasmus+ programme;
- to increase the number of participants with fewer opportunities in projects funded in the Erasmus+ programme;
- to develop support tools relevant to inclusion for applicants and beneficiaries of the Erasmus+ programme; and
- to promote the Erasmus+ programme as a tool for the inclusion of people with fewer opportunities.

At the same time, the strategic document mentions that how the Erasmus+ programme may privilege inclusion has certain limits and it is not a solution in itself.

The programme has a limited capacity to contribute to social inclusion and only some inclusion situations are covered in the programme. The Erasmus+ programme may not respond to all needs for inclusion but it may provide answers to punctual situations. The programme does not replace national or European public policies, it only aligns itself to such policies at national and European levels. It is very important, for this reason, that the information about the learning opportunities offered by the programme reaches to disadvantaged groups, and their participation should be consistently encouraged. We believe that a strategic approach to inclusion by 2020 is essential for having impact and being able to talk of a real contribution of the Erasmus+ programme to social inclusion. To that end, we are determined to coordinate our efforts so as to be able to contribute to the European objectives while taking into account the national, regional and local particularities. (Inclusion Strategy, 2016, ANPCDEFP)

Achievement level of support measures

In the period 2017-2020, according to the Strategy launched in 2016, a range of support measures were taken to meet the needs of organisations and institutions working with people from disadvantaged areas, rural areas, Roma communities or organisations concerned with people with special needs. As a result, the majority of the targets proposed in this period in the area of inclusion were met and, in most cases, exceeded. Below, there is a summary of the support activities conducted by the National Agency to encourage projects/initiatives promoting inclusion.

Throughout **2017**[2], the National Agency...

- organised thematic briefings and project drafting workshops for organisations from rural areas (for example, more than 100 teachers from rural schools were trained in project management under Erasmus+ KA1 and KA2);
- organised a training course for teachers from Teach for Romania;
- selected and supported the participation of more than 50 youth workers, teachers and representatives of public institutions in specific events organised in Europe, with the main focus on inclusion;
- organised together with Salto Inclusion a transnational cooperation activity, "Under the same roof", with support from Roma youth organisations and an intersectoral approach in this context; as a result, in January 2018, a video tutorial was completed about intersectoral work on inclusion, with many sessions of questions and answers, good practices and specific resources;
- initiated a section dedicated to inclusion in the monthly newsletter *InfoAltfel*, so as to promote specific aspects and practices, tools and materials of Erasmus+ projects dealing with inclusion and equity;
- cooperated formally and informally and initiated partnerships with different national entities dealing with inclusion (Teach for Romania, UNICEF Romania, Ministry of Youth and Sports) and promoted a synergy with other national, European and international programmes aiming to support inclusion (EEA, ESF grants).

Throughout **2018**[3], the National Agency ....

- organised thematic briefings and project drafting workshops for organisations from rural areas working with young people with special needs or representing special education (more than 100 people were trained in courses dedicated to inclusion);
- organised a training course for teachers from Teach for Romania;
- selected and supported the participation of more than 35 youth workers, teachers and representatives of public institutions in specific events organised in Europe, with the main focus on inclusion;
- organised the international training event Inclusion Plus, dedicated to promoting Erasmus+ as an inclusion tool with a focus on rural areas (35 participants from 8 countries);
- joined the support group for inclusion and diversity at European level, and one representative of the National Agency was included in the working group for the new strategy on inclusion and diversity (for youth and E&T), coordinated by EC and Salto Inclusion and Diversity;
- continued to include thematic briefings in every event organised by NA, irrespective of its purpose;
- implemented in partnership the Role Models project (where NA has UNICEF Romania as partner), which aims to promote the European common values of diversity, tolerance, non-discrimination

[2] Annual Report, 2017.
[3] Annual Report, 2018.

and social inclusion by establishing a network of models which act in schools and communities. The project is intended to provide positive aspirations for vulnerable children in high-schools from the counties Constanța and Bacău, presenting success stories selected from young people and adults from vulnerable backgrounds who were successful in their professional lives through education. The project was planned to last by the end of 2020 and is addressed to Roma children, children with disabilities, children from rural areas, children from families affected by poverty and institutionalised children. In this context, various stakeholders were involved in the project in 2018: 4 organisations of local university students, the National Council of University Students, 61 middle schools and 14 high-schools, more than 270 teachers from the counties Constanța and Bacău and 300 university students.

Throughout **2019**[4], the National Agency…

- organised thematic briefings and project drafting workshops for organisations from rural areas working with young people with disabilities (approximately 50 people were trained in the courses dedicated to inclusion);
- organised a training course for teachers from Teach for Romania;
- selected and supported the participation of 38 youth workers, teachers and representatives of public institutions in specific events organised in Europe, with the main focus on inclusion;
- organised the international training event Inclusion & Diversity Taster (26 participants from 17 countries) and also a study visit, Models for Inclusion. Special education – a project-based pedagogy (15 participants from 8 countries);
- continued to include information elements on inclusion in every event organised by NA (like ACCES, preparatory courses for writing project applications or in various programme presentations);
- emphasised how non-formal learning methods may be used in inclusion contexts (during the international event CONNECTOR);
- participated in thematic events, like the summit of Roma NGOs, where the opportunities provided by ESC were presented to the participants in the event;
- developed content where inclusion is an important aspect (for example, the Solidarity Kit);
- continued to cooperate with relevant organisations, like Teach for Romania (which supports young teachers in rural schools) and other NGOs that are active in the inclusion area.

Ever since 2015, the Romanian National Agency has been a member of the European Strategic Partnership for Inclusion. As such, it has an opportunity to design and implement a common strategy with other national agencies.

To ensure the impact of these measures, NA worked in partnerships both with its networks of collaborators and with relevant organisations for social inclusion, such as UNICEF, Teach for Romania, Agenția Împreună and the General Departments for Social Assistance and Child Protection. Moreover, NA has consistently promoted inclusion as an Erasmus+ priority on all its communication channels and at the events it organised.

[4] Annual Report, 2019.

The measures set out above respond to the objectives assumed by NA and have been examined throughout this study. The previous chapters present data on their impact and also suggestions for additional or adjusted measures, which could support even more the applicants and the beneficiaries.

Achievement level of inclusion indicators

With regard to an evaluation of the achievement of indicators set by NA, we present here below a situation extracted from the annual implementation reports concerning the targets assumed and the level of achievement.

- As concerns the objective of encouraging disadvantaged people and people with special needs to participate in the programme (*Education and Training/Youth)*, the assumed targets and their level of achievement are presented in Table 1. For 2017, all operational targets have been reached, except for *I.3.6.1 - The share of students with special needs in the KA1 mobility projects – youth.* According to the analysis conducted by the National Agency[5], the main difficulties concerning this target group are related to a poor development of infrastructure at national level (accommodation and transportation), an aspect representing the main impediment to quality projects involving young people with special needs. The measure taken the next year consisted in intensifying information and preparation activities for organisations working with these young people; the level of achievement for this indicator increased year by year and the target was even exceeded in 2020.
- With some exceptions, the indicators for the Youth component were met and exceeded year by year (Table 2). The highest levels of achievement are related to the share of projects on topics related to the inclusion of disadvantaged people among the three key actions.
- As seen in Table 3, referring to the period 2017-2020, all the indicators related to the additional inclusion objectives set by the National Agency have been exceeded (the only exception is I.3.9.2 in 2017, which is very closed to the intended level). Therefore, the targeted share of participants from rural areas in KA 1 mobility projects was exceeded every year, even in those years when the targets were higher (2019 and 2020). The share of projects submitted every year under KA2 by organisations from rural areas was also at a satisfactory level. The targets have been continuously exceeded, every year, even when the assumed targets were raised, also for **admitted** projects under KA2, submitted by organisations from rural areas, which included disadvantaged people or people with special needs and addressed inclusion topics.

[5] Annual Report, 2017.

Encouraging disadvantaged people and people with special needs to participate in the programme[6]

Table 1. Education and Training/Youth

Indicator ID	Indicators	AP 2017 indicators	Achieved in 2017	AP 2018 indicators	Achieved in 2018	AP 2019 indicators	Achieved in 2019	AP 2020 indicators	Achieved in 2020
I.3.6.1	*Share of university students with special needs in KA1 mobility projects a. HE*	*0.11 %*	*0.105 %*	*0.11 %*	*0.109 %*	*0.12 %*	*0.04 %*	*0.13 %*	*0.005 %*
I.3.6.1	*Share of school students with special needs in KA1 mobility projects b. VET*	*3.2 %*	*3.4 %*	*3 %*	*4.25 %*	*3.3 %*	*3.1 %*	*3.5 %*	*3.583 %*
I.3.6.1	*Share of young people with special needs in KA1 mobility projects c. Youth*	*1.8 %*	*0.5 %*	*2 %*	*1.71 %*	*2.2 %*	*1.89 %*	*2.5 %*	*2.77 %*

Table 2. Youth

Indicator ID	Indicators	AP 2017 indicators	Achieved in 2017	AP 2018 indicators	Achieved in 2018	AP 2019 indicators	Achieved in 2019	AP 2020 indicators	Achieved in 2020
I.3.6.2	*Share of disadvantaged young people in: a.KA1 (mobility projects)*	*35 %*	*45 %*	37 %	*43.12 %*	*39 %*	*51.81 %*	*40 %*	*51.66 %*
I.3.6.2	*Share of disadvantaged young people in: b.KA3 (meetings with decision-makers)*	*14 %*	*17.40 %*	20 %	*35.64 %*	*25 %*	*20 %*	*30 %*	*48.82 %*
I.3.6.3	*Share of projects on topics related to the inclusion of disadvantaged people in: a. KA1 (mobility projects)*	*40 %*	*48.4 %*	42 %	*44.79 %*	*44 %*	*56.99 %*	*45 %*	*56 %*

[6] The indicators and their levels of achievement are extracted from the 2017, 2018, 2019 and 2020 Annual Plans.

I.3.6.3	*Share of projects on topics related to the inclusion of disadvantaged people in: b. KA2 (strategic partnership)*	*35 %*	*42.86 %*	*36 %*	*41.18 %*	*38 %*	*61.11 %*	*42 %*	*43.75 %*
I.3.6.3	*Share of projects on topics related to the inclusion of disadvantaged people in: c. KA3 (meetings with decision-makers)*	*20 %*	*80 %*	*22 %*	*57.14 %*	*35 %*	*46.15 %*	*40 %*	*50 %*

Table 3. Additional inclusion operational objectives of the National Agency

Indicator ID	Indicators	AP 2017 indicators	Achieved in 2017	AP 2018 indicators	Achieved in 2018	AP 2019 indicators	Achieved in 2019	AP 2020 indicators	Achieved in 2020
I.3.9.1	*Share of participants from rural areas in KA 1 mobility projects (SE, AE, VET)*	*12 %*	*23 %*	*15 %*	*25.89 %*	*20 %*	*26.12 %*	*22 %*	*28.7 %*
I.3.9.2	*Share of projects submitted under KA2 by organisations from rural areas*	*9 %*	*8.80 %*	*10 %*	*13.83 %*	*12 %*	*19.30 %*	*15 %*	*18.69 %*
I.3.9.3	*Share of projects of organisations from rural areas admitted under KA2*	*9 %*	*15.70 %*	*10 %*	*14.78 %*	*10 %*	*25.8 %*	*15 %*	*17.7 %*
I.3.9.4	*Share of projects admitted under KA2 which include disadvantaged people or people with special needs*	*5 %*	*22.74 %*	*30 %*	*63 %*	*35 %*	*67.62 %*	*45 %*	*65.97 %*
I.3.9.5	*Share of projects admitted under KA2 addressing inclusion topics*	*15 %*	*57.65 %*	*30 %*	*54.05 %*	*35 %*	*34.53 %*	*40 %*	*55.2 %*