

**LOCAL IMPACT OF THE
YOUTH IN ACTION PROGRAMME ACTION 3
IN
EURO MEDITERRANEAN COOPERATION**

Authored by Kristian Brakel

Abbreviations

EMYU	Euromed Youth Unit
EYP	Euromed Youth Program
MEDA	Southern Mediterranean Signatory Countries to the Barcelona Declaration
NA	National Agency
NFE	Non-formal education
NGO	Non-governmental organisation
PC	Program Country
TC	Third Country
UNICEF	United Nations Children's Fund
YiA	Youth in Action Program

0. Executive Summary

With the end of 2013 both the Youth in Action Program (YiA) as well as the Euromed Youth Program (EYP) will come to a close. While their particular impact for youth in the EU member states (PCs) as also in third countries (TCs) will be evaluated in detail this study discusses a specific form of impact the program could have had.

Concentrating especially on the cooperation with the countries of the Union for the Mediterranean under Action 3.1. – Youth in the World – this study evaluates the impact YiA had on the more local level. It tries to assess this in regard to three main topics:

- The development of youth policies,
- The development of organisations and their practise of youth work,
- And the development of local communities.

Are there positive side effects of YiA that would contribute to either of these three topics? If so, what impact exactly can be found? And if not, what might be the reason for that?

The study is based on the extensive study of existing publication on both YiA and EYP, as well as on 12 interviews conducted between January and March 2012 with some National Agencies in the Program Countries, some EMYUs in the MEDA region and some NGOs on both sides of the Mediterranean.

As for actors in the MEDA region both the YiA and the EYP are so closely linked, it was not always possible to distinguish effects of either program apart.

Obviously the 3 points mentioned above are areas that most actors active in the programs are concerned with. Especially for those countries where youth work and youth policies are still under development, but also in those countries where policies exist, but the funds to implement them properly are lacking, the programs make a difference for young people and also for their organisations. Often the programs are the only possibility to take the work with young people to an international level. In those countries where funds are available for such activities from regular government funding they are often restricted to bilateral measures. Especially the regional dimension in the YiA (i.e. European dimension) and in EYP (among Arab countries, but also with Israel) is unique. If and how this international dimension is linked to national priorities in youth work largely depends on the NAs and EMYUs and of course on the respective governments.

Related to this is the question in how far the program can have an impact on the local level. Wherever the programs hold a more prominent place in the national youth field, their chance to make a difference are bigger.

A major obstacle to measuring such impact is that it is not regularly monitored and documented. The regular program evaluations capture partly such successes. And the examples described in this study provide valuable proof as well. However the interview partners had to rely more on their individual memory as program officers rather than on an institutional memory. It was therefore often difficult to attribute major systematic developments in the youth field to the programs. Rather single cases could be tracked that nevertheless allow a good insight into the impact of the programs.

Most of the time effects on the abovementioned three points are not intentional. The work of the EMYUs and especially of the NAs is first and foremost directed towards administering the programs. It is therefore not surprising to find, that when asked about improvements in the youth work sector, most interviewees would name the enhanced capacity of NGOs and young people to deal with the structures of the programs. I.e. youth workers and young people are now better equipped to apply for and administer a YiA/EYP project according to the program's rules. There is an impact on the development of youth work and the methods applied therein, but again it is not first and foremost what interview partners connected with the programs when it came to capacity building.

Especially EMYUs seem to have modified their approaches in their countries. We witness that now more and more of them are investing in a trickle down effect to the local level. Some of them have made it their task to include especially youth in disadvantaged, often rural communities into the programs. They argue however that the limited funds available make it difficult to reach larger parts of the young population.

The impact on national legislation and the development of youth policies remains limited. While some EMYUs and NAs are consulted on question concerning such policies by their respective national governments, they are rarely seen as the key players in this field.

Impacts on the more institutional side of things seem to be more visible in the MENA region. In the Program Countries and especially in those that enjoy highly developed youth support structures the impact was rather seen in the field of abating stereotypes and combating negative perceptions of the Partner Countries.

ABBREVIATIONS	2
0. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY	3
I. INTRODUCTION	6
I.1. Scope and aim of the study	6
I.2. Methodology and sources	6
I.3. Challenges to the study	9
II. THE YOUTH PROGRAM	10
II.1. Aim of the Program	10
II.2. Target Groups	10
II.3. Activities	11
III. THE IMPACT AND THE CHALLENGES OF THE YOUTH PROGRAM	11
III.1. General Observations	11
III.2. Impact on Youth Policies	12
III.3. Impact on Youth Work	13
III.4. Impact on Local Communities	16
IV. APPENDIX	19
IV.1. Bibliography	19
IV.2. List of Tables	19
IV.3. List of interviewees	19

I. Introduction

I.1. Scope and aim of the study

The Youth in Action Program (YiA) with its duration from 2009 to 2013 is nearing its end. Equally coming to a close is the Euromed Youth Program (EYP) in 2013. While both programs will undergo a complete evaluation to draw lessons learnt for a possible follow-up, this study concentrates on a more particular impact of the YiA.

This study explores the effects the YiA with Action 3. had both in the Program (PC), as well as in the Third countries (TC) covered under the EYP on a more local level. Tasked by SALTO Euromed the author studied the impact the Youth in Action Program had on three particular issues:

- The development of organisations and their practise of youth work,
- The development of communities,
- And the development of youth policies.

As far as the TCs are concerned, this study only covers the effects of the YiA i.e. not the EYP. Meaning that theoretically only impacts of outgoing activities that included participants from TCs are relevant for the study.

I.2. Methodology and sources

The study is based on the results of previous in-depth evaluations of both the three previous EU Youth Programs that started in the year 2000 and the three EYPs. The author also took into account project and training course related publications that provided information on the aforementioned research questions.

To complete the picture 10 phone and internet based interviews were held with representatives of National Agencies (NA) in the PCs, the Euromed Youth Units (EMYU) in the TCs and members of civil society organisations that had previously taken part in program activities. The latter were suggested to the author by the contracting agency as well as by some of the EMYUs and the NAs. The interviews followed a semi-structural pattern. The guiding questions are documented below. One further NA and one EMYU replied in writing to the questions.

Table 1: Research Framework

Section	Aim	Question	Source
Youth Policies	It is known what impact the YiA Program had on the development of youth policies in the partner country.	Did your country have a formulated and implemented youth policy before the start of the program?	Phone interviews with NCs, 3rd sourced records on youth policy (UNICEF, RCBS reports etc.)
		If so, which major changes did occur in the formulation or implementation of this policy that can be attributed to the program?	
		How did the political importance of youth policy change due to the program?	
		In how far did the program help raise the public interest in youth related issues?	
Youth Work	It is known what impact the YiA Program had on the development of youth work, youth workers and the institutions working (excl. those in the formal education system) with youth in the partner country.	Which changes in the quality of youth work did appear since the program started?	Survey among NGOs that participated, Phone interviews w/ NCs, former EuroMed/Youth evaluation reports
		How do you think, these are related to the program?	
		How many youth workers (define youth worker) benefitted from this program in your country? What other youth work related people benefitted from the program? How many of these workers are	NGOs: how would your programmes/work be different without YiA

		employed by government/NGOs? How are they distributed within the country? How large is the target group they reach and what target group is that?	
		Can you think of any new methods, strategies or approaches that were newly introduced into youth work in your country that stem from the program?	
		Can you think of any other youth related institutions which were affected by the program and how?	
Local Communities	It is known what impact YiA had on local communities where the actions took place or where the youth originate from	As a result of a project, do you know of any community initiative that was started?	NAs, NGOs
		As a result of a project do you know of any change in local policies (such as erecting a youth club etc.)? Which?	
		Have you heard of any youth or other group of people that benefitted from a project they were not participants in? In which way?	
Youth	It is known what impact the YiA Program had on	How many youth participated so far in all three programs?	Phone interviews with NCs, survey among NGOs, former

	youth in the partner country (esp. those who participated).	How many youth do you estimate have benefitted from the program indirectly? Can you specify how?	EuroMed evaluation reports What would you suggest to make programm better?
		Do you know of any major youth-led initiatives (political, cultural, social, etc.) that were initiated by former participants?	
		Do you know of any memorable quotes former participants of the program made about their experiences?	

1.3. Challenges to the study

Data collection was mostly impeded by the fact that not all of the NAs and not all of the EMYUs could be interviewed. Some EMYUs were recently restructured and in countries undergoing political turmoil no actors from the civil society could be reached.

As the study solely concentrates on the impact of the YiA but not the EYP, it was sometimes not possible to fully separate effects the programs had in the TCs from one another. As in the mind of the actors in the TCs, where the EYP is the one, main point of reference, both programs are closely interlinked; isolating positive effects of just the one program was hard to do.

In the process of drafting this study information gained through the interviews was crosschecked with information available from existing evaluations and other reports. It has to be mentioned that these studies as well rely heavily on information from the NAs and the EMYUs. It is logical that those actors – such as the NAs or implementing NGOs – that are closer to the programs have a more positive attitude towards the results and effects. However during interviews actors were always asked to substantiate positive or negative opinions with concrete examples.

II. The Youth Program

II.1. Aim of the Program

More than 96 million young people between the age of 15 and 29 years live inside the EU today (Eurostat). To support the aspirations of these youth the European Commission with decision of both the Council of Ministers and the European Parliament adopted Decision No 1719/2006 /EC on 15 November 2006 (Decision of the Council of ministers). This decision provides for the establishment of the fourth Youth in Action Program for the period 2007 to 2013. YiA succeeds the previous YOUTH Program that was in place from 2000 till 2006.

Reflected in the YiA are the priorities of the Council's Whitebook on youth from 2001, setting the direction for political cooperation in the field of youth. The European parliament has endorsed these priorities in its decision of 14 May 2002 and the Council has presented a new youth strategy named „A Renewed Framework for European Cooperation in the youth field (2010-2018)" that was adopted on 27 November 2009. This is based on article 165 in the Treaty of Lisbon setting the goal of: "*encouraging the development of youth exchanges and of exchanges of socio-educational instructors, and encouraging the participation of young people in democratic life in Europe*" (Ibid.). To its eight fields of action:

- education and training
- employment and entrepreneurship
- health and well-being
- participation
- voluntary activities
- social inclusion
- youth and the world
- creativity and culture

the YiA is meant to contribute especially through enhancing the mobility of young people and helping them to learn and to participate across the EU.

II.2. Target Groups

YiA in general is open to young people between 13 and 30 years of age. Some of the measures are directed at those working professionally or as volunteers with young people. For them no age limit is applied. YiA is a program for the member states of the European Union, the so-called Partner Countries (PC). However cooperation with third countries (TC) is possible under action 3.

II.3. Activities

Action 3.1. especially focuses on the cooperation with regions that are part of the European Neighbourhood Policy. For this study we will concentrate on one of these regions, the southern Mediterranean, the so-called MEDA countries. These are the 6 Arab states bordering the Mediterranean Sea, minus Libya, plus Jordan, Palestine and Israel, all of which are signatories to the Barcelona Declaration. Activities possible under action 3.1. are youth exchanges and training and support measures, as well as the European Voluntary Service.

YiA is funded with a total of 885 million Euros for the complete period of 2007 to 2013.

For the MEDA TCs a separate program was developed that is as well in its fourth phase and coming to a close in 2013. This Euromed Youth Program (EYP) enables the TCs to run their own program measures supported by decentralised Euromed Youth Units (EMYUs) in each country. They are the counterparts of the National Agencies in the PCs that administer the program on a national level.

III. The Impact and the challenges of the Youth Program

III.1. General Observations

One point that became clear during the research process is that the YiA lacks a regular mechanism to document the impact on the research fields i.e. youth policies, youth work and local communities. When trying to document such successes, which without a doubt exist, program officers from NAs, EMYUs and civil society had to consult their personal archives or their memories. The picture that is presented below can therefore only give a small insight into the effects of the program.

As no baseline existed, it is not possible to compare individual effects for young people in the program before and after they participated. It is also difficult to estimate which of the described results might have occurred without the YiA being in place or in how far the effects might have been different.

While some of the effects observed are well in line with the established goals of the program, they are most of the time not primary goals of projects or at least only half intentional.

When it comes to impact the one major difference that should be taken into account, is the fact that in some countries YiA is the only relevant support structure for international youth work. In countries – such as Israel, France or Germany – where various bilateral programs exist with European and American PCs, and in those

countries where the government is willing to fund youth support structures outside the YiA, the program is often only one among many players. This is especially relevant when it comes to the impact on the development of youth work.

III.2. Impact on Youth Policies

Consolidated and implemented youth policies in the MENA region remain an exception. While international actors such as UNICEF or the Swedish Cultural Institute (for Egypt) have undertaken efforts in the past to support MENA governments in this regard, the picture remains fragmented. Most of the TCs have such policies, but not all have allocated sufficient funding and a functioning bureaucracy to really implement the policies.

Most of the PCs have youth policies or at least strategies that fulfil a similar function. And all of them were in place before the start of the YiA. So it is probably fair to assume that the YiA as such was not causative to their creation. However it should be noted that in countries that did not have strongly developed youth work structures, the YiA might have helped to raise the general awareness for such policies through project activities. It certainly has raised the awareness of young people about these issues - an evaluation study found that 42% of all participants questioned reported to be more aware of such topics after they took part in a project (Interim Evaluation: 92). 53% of the young respondents believed that YiA contributed to improving young people's rights. And 52% believed that these projects helped their societies as such (Ibid.) 80% believe that they are now better equipped to engage themselves in political activities. And 40% actually reported to be active in political or social initiatives (Ibid.: 76). As no baseline exists it is not possible to measure the direct impact of YiA on this development. Some of the National Youth Councils interviewed in the same study believe that they now have a better understanding of youth policy development (Ibid.)

With the problems and challenges of young people coming more into the focus through the project activities, the need to address these challenges through adequate policies probably also became more obvious.

This assumption is reflected in quite some of the interviews with the NAs and EMYUs. Almost none of them stated that YiA (or the EMYUs and NAs respectively) was a main player in the field of national youth policies. But quite some stated that YiA works parallel to the national policy as there are quite some things that both fields have in common, such as the aims of fostering civic engagement or a participatory approach to youth work. Most NAs and EMYUs emphasized that both approaches, policy and YiA are streamlined, as priorities for the latter did reflect the priorities on the national level as well. However there are doubts that this applies for all of the countries especially the ones which are not affected by Europe-wide policy streamlining through the EU's structured dialogue. National Youth Councils and the national authorities alike agreed that the effect that YiA (and the NAs respectively) had on youth legislation in their

countries was limited as well (Interim Evaluation: 91). The NAs however believe that they at least have some influence in areas where the respective law concerns a core component of the YiA, such as volunteering or international youth work (Ibid.)

Most of the NAs and some of the EMYUs agreed that their role in youth policy development was more a consultative one. The major point were the NA's are consulted is of course the internationalisation of youth work. If and how often they were included in such consulting processes depended on the respective governments. One of the best examples is probably Portugal, where the parliament passed a decision to establish local youth councils. A step that was heavily promoted through different YiA projects that worked into a similar direction. A similar example comes from Lebanon, where the National Coordinator (predecessor of the EMYU) was part of the consulting committee that developed the youth policy.

While it does often not directly affect the formulation of youth policies, quite some youth organisations make sure to include local politicians into their projects whenever possible. Trying to create a sense of ownership for the program is often achieved through making local politicians part of the project activities. Not only does this help to raise the public profile of the program and the local organisation involved, it does also offer the possibility to direct politicians to problems young people face in their communities. Following such activities up, even after the projects have ended is a challenge, that not all participating organisations had the chance to explore yet. However it might help linking the policy to the local community level – an approach that might have direct positive results for young people and the youth organisations. A successful example of this comes from Latvia, where after meeting with local politicians youth from a remote area successfully lobbied the municipalities to build official meeting places/cultural centres for youth in their free time. The example spread, and a regular dialogue between young people and decision makers in the region was established.

III.3. Impact on Youth Work

When it comes to the impact YiA had on the development of youth work and organisations working in this field it is important to make a distinction between two sorts of countries: those that have strong youth work structures, including funds available for international cooperation and those where the YiA/EYP is the main, often the only funding opportunity for youth work, especially in the international sphere.

"The NGOs come to understand, that YiA is not the last, but the first step."

NA commenting on YiA's multiplying effects.

In countries where bilateral youth exchange programs exist or government grants for youth organisations are available from the national government the YiA's role in shaping youth work is often less crucial. An example for that among the PC is Israel, that has quite strong bilateral youth programs with countries like the US and Germany, but finds

it difficult due to political constraints to cooperate with some of the other TCs. However it has to be highlighted that even in countries with a good youth work infrastructure a professional education for youth workers is the exception rather than the norm. In a lot of countries there is no vocational or university education available to train youth workers following set standards. Often, interview partners reported that youth workers are volunteers who hold other jobs and only do youth work in their free time. In other countries those working with youth come from professions like teachers and then transition into the non-formal education system. In quite some of the TCs being a teacher or a social worker does not carry much professional status. This is the reason why highly qualified university graduates who work in youth NGOs are often not those who studied a relevant subject in university. All this results in a gap when it comes to methods of non-formal education (NFE).

The most important contribution that YiA has made to this field was to raise the issue of NFE on the agenda in the PCs and TCs. While some countries, especially on the EU side already have some experience with non-formal learning, quite some of the interview

“We went blind by the mesmerising atmosphere, but we found a way through the forest. We had to cope with different obstacles: monsters, dragons, spider nets. But the most important obstacle was trust.”

Participants from a youth exchange on innovative training methods.

partners report a change in perceptions when it comes to the topic. It can be suspected that YiA through the size of its financial contribution alone has helped this change. 49% of youth workers questioned in the Interim Evaluation definitely agreed and another 44% somewhat agreed that participating in YiA has helped them to include NFE in their approaches to education

(Interim Evaluation: 86).

The importance of NFE is now more accepted, and often better frameworks exist to document and recognize the qualifications, which grow from NFE. It can be assumed that in countries that struggle to reform the formal education system so it can deliver the needed quality and quantity in school, vocational and university education; NFE is often more neglected than embraced. If this assumption holds true, the success that YiA has generated in the field of formal recognition of NFE is even more remarkable. Even while YiA evaluations still see room for improvement (SOURCE) when it comes to tools like the Youth Pass the contribution that it can make to formal NFE recognition should not be underestimated.

Some of the persons interviewed remarked that it is hard to trace the impact that YiA had on the development of youth work in their countries, as quite some actors are active in the field of youth work capacity building. In most of the TCs, which receive development assistance, actors such as UNICEF, Save the Children or other international NGOs and governmental agencies are active in this field. In some countries like Palestine, with a high presence of such donor organisations, the project grants from YiA are quite small compared to other grants the NGOs can get from external actors. This often reduces the interest of bigger NGOs to apply for such grants. This is the case, even

while the Palestinian government(s) itself/themselves do(es) not command sufficient funds for a well equipped youth work. Such YiA grants are therefore often more interesting for new and smaller – and ideally youth-led organisations – who then use this money as a seed for further project activities.

When it comes to the quality of youth work, it is equally hard to trace an impact as such. However in the interim evaluation 85% of youth workers interviewed agreed that they are now, after taking part in YiA, better equipped to assure the quality of a youth project.

However one thing that almost all NAs and EMYUs agreed upon during their interviews was the impact on heightened capacity among beneficiary organisations when it comes to administering projects. This first and foremost applies to understanding and mastering the regulations of YiA itself. But it can be assumed that these advanced project management skills also have a positive effect for these organisations in regard to all other sorts of projects. One NA remarked that the awareness among NGOs that projects required proper planning and a developed time management were positive side effects. In the interim evaluation 42% of respondents confirmed this view (Interim Evaluation: 80).

There is enough evidence to report that YiA activities encouraged young people both in PCs and TCs to found their own organisations, which often concentrate on international youth work. It could not be traced how successful these organisations have become in the long run, but quite some exist for several years and some with time extend their focus beyond YiA activities.

When it comes to the development of youth work methods, the biggest impact is probably in youth participation. As YiA requires since a few years that young people themselves are involved in all stages of the project – i.e. not only in the implementation, but also in the planning and evaluation phase – awareness of putting the target group in the centre of the projects has spread. Organisations remark that it is not always easy to realize this goal, and not always do young people have an equal say in project decisions. But the awareness that young people have a right to participate in decision making processes at least in the projects has significantly risen, all interview partners reported. This is especially remarkable in those countries, which have overwhelmingly gerontocratic structures.

“Taking part in the project has changed the way I look at the world.”

Tunisian participant in a training course, who became a youth trainer afterwards.

Interview partners could not agree what impact YiA had on the development of new methods in youth work beyond the participatory element. In some of the countries NAs, EMYUs and NGOs reported that they use more interactive methods today than a few years ago. Methods that participants experience abroad or in SALTO courses are often taken back to their own organisations.

III.4. Impact on Local Communities

One major issue that has been highlighted by previous evaluations (Interim Evaluation: 88-89) as well as by some of the actors interviewed is the challenge to make the program more inclusive in regard to the target groups. Including participants with fewer opportunities is a stated aim of both programs.

Evaluation reports note the fact that progress has been made in this regard in the last years, however it still remains an issue. This especially applies to the EVS (30% of the projects included participants with lesser opportunities), to a much lesser extent to youth exchanges (82%) (Ibid.). This is especially true for some of the TCs (Evaluation of TC Cooperation: 32). 30% of Action 3 projects include youth with lesser opportunities (Ibid.)

It can be assumed that the reason for that is threefold and that all 3 points are interconnected: In most of the TCs economic disparities exist and reach a much higher level than in most of the PCs. Connected to the socio-economic gap is also the language problem and the third reason is a much deeper urban-rural divide than in most of the PCs, where these problems exist as well.

„What you taught me here, has changed my life.“

Italian EVS volunteer after staying 10 months in Poland, addressing the trainer from his sending organisation who prepared him.

Also political reasons might add to these problems. A striking example for this is Tunisia. After the uprisings of 2010/11 overthrew the old political order, the democratisation process also started to affect the local EMYU. It is the belief of the EMYU

that the program was used by the previous regime as one of many tools to stabilize its reign. In the interview the new EMYU stated that access to the program was often not granted on the base of merit, but depending on political loyalties or personal connections. While it is hard to verify this, it should not come as a surprise that autocratic regimes often view young people as a potential for turmoil that has to be contained (possibly also through incentives) rather than as a group that should be encouraged to become more active. Given the existing economic disparities listed above the chances are, that those who had the necessary socio-economic background that would make it easier for them to participate in YiA hailed from existing elites anyway.

However, even if such factors as listed above would not exist, the problem would remain that by the nature of the YiA and even more that of the EYP, the number of direct beneficiaries will always remain limited (esp. in comparison to the large percentage of young people in the overall population in some countries). The added impact that YiA can have on local communities from where the participants originate or where the projects take place is therefore quite interesting.

Almost all interview partners highlighted the impact on the local level as the one point easiest to prove compared to the two other factors, influence on youth work and

influence on youth policies. For the PCs YiA includes a variety of actions that aim directly at the local level (such as Youth Democracy Projects). While these are not available in the TCs, quite some NGOs and EMYUs have now started to make the willingness to become active locally after the end of a project a necessary prerequisite for participation. This especially applies to participants who join support measures. The need to share the knowledge gained with other people in their own NGOs at least helps to multiply the knowledge.

EMYUs such as the one in Jordan have started to target young people and NGOs in local communities much stronger as before. And interview partners state that it is often in these rural communities that the impact is the strongest. Youth there who are often faced with much less opportunities and free time activities often embrace the chances offered by YiA.

One aspect to measure such local interest is of course the prominence youth issues receive in the media and the public interest in general. The media work in which EMYUs and NAs invest the most are the public announcements of grants and tenders available through the project. While all interview partners found it hard to judge, if YiA as such had helped to create a bigger public and political interest in the challenges facing young people in general, they all noted that media would regularly cover particular project activities.

"It was not something that you can have by paying, it was a unique and fascinating learning opportunity."

Participant after a training course.

The public interest (for example through local media) often develops much stronger during the runtime of a project in a rural area compared to those in more urban communities where news about a project would have to compete with other national news. In small communities not only become the communities' inhabitants much faster aware of projects, but also local politicians are often easier to approach than national political personalities.

But even, when the project planning did not include the aim to have a local impact, there can always be non-intentional effects. One is for sure – and again this applies stronger in more remote and smaller locations – the intercultural factor. A French NGO, located in a rural area, highlighted their exchanges with partners from the southern Mediterranean. They said that just the fact that people in this village had the chance to meet people from Arab countries for the first time in person had an impact on their attitude. An Israeli NGO interviewed highlighted a similar effect when it came to a project cooperation that involved both the Palestinian '48 minority in Israel and youth from the Jewish majority population. While in the latter case these groups theoretically have the possibility to meet on a regular basis, as they live in the same country and often not far apart, the project activities brought them together. For Israeli youth work YiA holds another important dimension; the possibility to meet youth from the region, that is normally

blocked in bilateral programs, but a necessary condition under YiA. This again points to the finding, that for countries with a more developed youth work infrastructure (and better socio-economic indicators) the intercultural aspect is the most important impact, while for other countries that lack these conditions, other effects such as raising employability stand in the centre of interest.

So far the YiA, esp. under Action 3 aims mostly on the individual. Young participants have the chance to broaden their horizons or their skills, raising their chances to

“The most interesting part was that we encouraged ourselves to tell our stories in English.”

Participant in a youth exchange on story telling.

employment. Better language skills are the most prominent example. Especially those who take part in an EVS often base their decisions on what university studies to take or which vocational training to pursue on the experiences they made during their EVS. It is

therefore not surprisingly, that interview partners firstly think of such positive effects for the individuals when asked for sustainable impact. Nearly 60% of participants in YiA projects agreed and 21% strongly agree that their participation has also helped their chances to get employed (Interim Evaluation: 81 et seqq.) and 40% stated that the participation actually helped them to get into their job (Ibid.).

Other effects named often concentrate directly on YiA. For example quite some former participants become active as trainers after participating in program activities for some time.

The other sort of non-intentional effect emerges when participants themselves decide to get active after a project. The most often cited activity in these cases is the founding of their own organisation that then pursues further activities in the YiA/EYP. 79% of respondents in an evaluation study reported that they since the end of their involvement in YiA they have taken part in another international or European initiative (Interim Evaluation: 92). But other more local examples exist as well. The Maltese NA for example cited a project that worked with juveniles. After the project activities had concluded – during which young people had complained about the quality of the prison food - the youth from this penitentiary raised money from the local community to build their own kitchen in the prison, trained in food preparation and are now cooking for themselves. With the learned cooking skills they are also able to market some of their cooked products to external customers in the community.

This is just one of many examples. Often young people use YiA grants to kickstart a project and after initial success repeat similar activities even without YiA funding. In the evaluation 73% of the participants questioned said that they would like to start their own enterprise or youth project in the future (Interim Evaluation: 79). But it should be highlighted that local impact has not been the main focus of YiA. Linking local engagement and change in an even stronger way with international activities is a challenge for the next years.

IV. Appendix

IV.1. Bibliography

Eurostat:

[http://epp.eurostat.ec.europa.eu/statistics_explained/index.php/Youth in Europe#Main statistical findings](http://epp.eurostat.ec.europa.eu/statistics_explained/index.php/Youth_in_Europe#Main_statistical_findings), Accessed: 30/05/2012.

Decision of the Council of Ministers:

http://ec.europa.eu/youth/policy/legal-basis_en.htm. Accessed: 30/05/2012.

IV.2. List of Tables

Table 1: Research Framework _____ 7

IV.3. List of interviewees

Interview partners (in chronological order)
Maltese NA
Portugese NA
Polish NA
Latvian NA
French NGO Association AVRIL
Italian NGO
Palestinian EMYU
Jordanian NGO Volunteer Institute for Leadership Excellence (ILE)
Israeli EMYU
Israeli NGO Minorities of Israel

Additional partners who answered in writing to the interview questions
Turkish NA
Tunisian EMYU