



HIDDEN DIMENSIONS OF INCLUSION IN YOUTH SECTOR -

Summary Report on the Results of Research in Hungary and

Policy Recommendations

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Introduction

The Hidden Dimensions research was initiated based on the results of our previous Moonwalk research. The young people with disabilities (young people with complex support needs) who participated in the Moonwalk research believed that they were invisible to society; they were not in the public eye. One of the reasons given for this was the lack of accessibility to services. This is partly due to a lack of physical accessibility and partly due to a lack of attitude. Young people in the focus group discussions expressed that they have the most access to services that target people with disabilities, inclusive programmes are rarely available. Consequently, we wanted to investigate the accessibility of the youth sector for young people with disabilities and the perceptions of youth service providers on the inclusiveness of young people with disabilities. In order to understand the phenomenon we wanted to investigate, we narrowed down the scope of organisations to the Erasmus+ Youth grant winners. The period covered by the research was 2017-2020. Through a questionnaire, interviews and document analysis, 200 organisations were contacted. The questionnaire survey was based on 71 respondents, followed by 18 randomly selected participants in interviews and focus groups. For those organisations that agreed to be interviewed, we analysed their documents available online, in particular their public benefit reports and their communication on the Erasmus+ project portal, against the information provided in the interviews.

The detailed research reports are available on the project website: <u>https://egyutthato.eu/hidden</u>

Hypotheses

We tested three hypotheses:

1. It is assumed that youth workers are not prepared to involve young people with disabilities in E+ projects, as their everyday youth services are not accessible to young people with disabilities.

2. It is assumed that youth organisations do not have the resources to ensure accessibility and therefore young people with disabilities do not participate in their services.







3. It is assumed that the lack of experience and knowledge about young people with complex support needs has a negative impact on respondents' attitudes, which is related to the low participation of young people with disabilities in E+ projects.

1. Hypothesis

A significant proportion of the international youth work organisations that responded to our questionnaire did not have a daily or weekly youth service available locally at the time of filling in the questionnaire. Due to the inconsistency of respondents, there was limited opportunity to learn about local activities from the questionnaire. Therefore, the interview survey also focused on gaining a better understanding of the reasons for the inconsistent response. The individual and focus group interviews revealed that if there were local activities, even on a daily regular basis, they were not focused by youth age but by theme (e.g. environment, drama, sports). These organisations are not youth organisations, only their activities have a youth focus. Other organisations that consider themselves as youth organisations often do not provide classical youth services (Figure 1), because they only deal with international youth work or local services are available at a designated time but not on a daily basis.

As a classic service, we use the literature to (Coussée, 2008; Nagy, 2019; Taru et al., 2014) we have identified the activities listed in the following table:

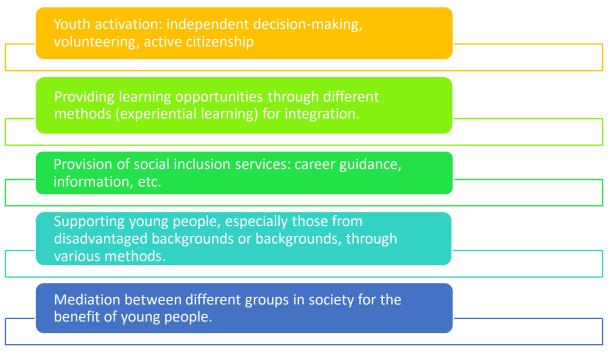


Figure 1 Classic youth services



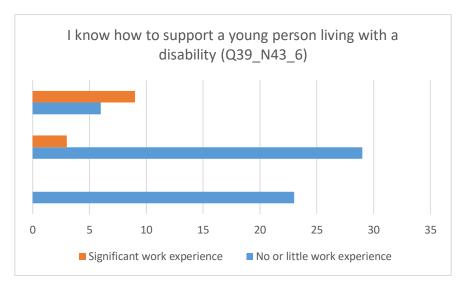




The classicity of the services in Figure 1 is that the first youth organisations in most European countries provided these services to local young people. According to the literature available at the time of the research design, as well as to historical research on youth work in the participating nations (Hungarian, Greek, Romanian), these are the basic services that were generally provided everywhere (Antoniou et al., 2018). Today, these would be the core activities of youth organisations that are available to young people every day, i.e. the main purpose and main activity of the organisation is to provide the services shown in Figure 1 to young people on a daily basis, both nationally and internationally.

Organisations that provide day-to-day youth services rarely come into contact with young people with disabilities. A total of 6 respondents indicated that their day-to-day classical youth services are accessible. Based on the data obtained, we found that the involvement of people with disabilities is also low due to a lack of communication, with only 13% highlighting that they also provide services for young people with disabilities. And communication is mainly determined by who and which young people are considered as target group.

Figure 2 shows that lack of work experience is associated with respondents feeling less or not at all able to engage young people with disabilities.



2. Figure 1 Relationship between work experience with people with disabilities and perception of competence (From top to bottom: absolutely,middle, not at all)

It was assumed that the degree of work experience with young people with disabilities is influenced by the accessibility of the institution, i.e. the lack of accessibility; however, the responses suggest that the lack of accessibility is not directly related to either lack of preparation or inexperience. In other words, *an accessible environment may facilitate the*

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involvement of young people with disabilities and the experience of youth workers, but there is no evidence that lack of accessibility is the reason why young people do not have access to services, which was confirmed by the interviews. Figure 3-4 shows that there is a higher likelihood of having work experience with youth with disabilities if a site is accessible, but there is not necessarily a correlation.

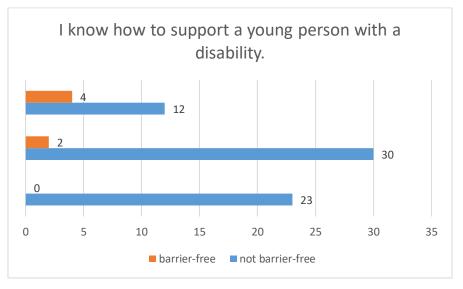


Figure 3 Perceptions of accessibility and competence in supporting young people with disabilities Top to bottom: agree, not sure, not agree

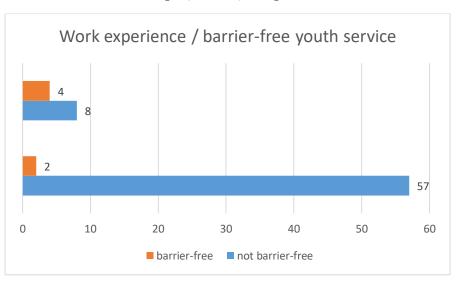


Figure 4 Relationship between work experience with young people with disabilities and accessibility. Top to bottom: significant experience, No or little experience

Interviews revealed that youth workers do not feel prepared to engage young people with disabilities, *mainly due to a lack of training and organisational capacity, which they do* not seek out opportunities to gain experience. Simply put, young people with complex support needs are not part of their target group and are *not the focus of their activities. The* majority of youth organisations interviewed do not







have youth offices or youth community spaces with permanent opening hours, but neither do those who are involved in local youth work have young people with complex support needs. The accessibility or lack of accessibility of the location, as suggested by the questionnaire, only indirectly influences their participation. According to the majority of respondents, young people with complex support needs are invisible to their organisation. Reaching young people is generally found to be difficult; participants have to be recruited for a programme, with some people referring to themselves as 'sugar daddies'. And finding and engaging young people with disabilities is, in their view, even more difficult due to their lack of visibility/condition, i.e. only possible through targeted outreach. Some youth service providers are reluctant to do so, citing lack of capacity, training, professional experience and accessible locations.

In other words, the hypothesis is reversed and partly true: The *international youth services of the E+ Youth applicant organisations are not accessible to young people with disabilities, because youth workers are not prepared and do not intend to involve young people with disabilities in local and international projects.*

Hypothesis 2

A high proportion (54.4%) of organisations responding to the questionnaire indicated that they do not receive any municipal/state support, which is likely to be associated with the uncertainty of sustaining the organisation. However, no link was found between the lack of normative, regular financial support and the accessibility of the building.

No such link was found for residential programmes, but the responses show that even when resources are available, they do not look for a barrier-free location for their programmes. This is primarily because they assume that there is no exclusive use and affordable accessible venue. The amounts available in E+ tenders are no longer commensurate with market prices and accessible venues are much more expensive. While the costs of the programme would fund accessible accommodation and other accessibility features, there is not enough money for the organisers and the organisation to reward the extra effort. Organisations also have limited information about the extra costs that can be claimed, but on this basis they believe that the involvement and hassle involved is disproportionate to the reward; the energy investment is not financially worthwhile for them.







In the Erasmus+ Youth option, the extra cost of involvement is not called for, partly because they do not have enough information about what it is for and under what conditions, and partly because they do not have a vision of young people with complex support needs, so there is no guarantee that they will be involved if the project is successful. If no specific needs budget is foreseen, but a young person does apply, they will not be sent away without a reason, but they cannot guarantee them the necessary conditions. They will tell you what the options are and the young person with a disability will decide whether or not he or she can adapt to the offer.

Restructuring the budget can be problematic, as it is not possible to ask for additional funding for costs incurred ex post.

"Cost, it is, if we say, the extraordinary cost or the accompanying person, as a concept either in youth exchanges or in volunteer projects, so there is a possibility, you just have to find that person, so that if a foreigner comes, for us it is a big difficulty, for example, here in the county, to get a person in the area who speaks English." (29 years old, male)

"I think there is a separate line for extra costs. I'm not familiar with that, and I don't want to say anything stupid, because I don't see the numbers behind it, how much, but what you just said, that obviously assumes that there are people who can be involved in certain hours." (47, male)

- "What extra costs?"

- "Well, for example, let's say an equipment purchase or a loan, or let's say, providing a personal assistant, and okay, if you plan ahead, you know you have to plan ahead, you can do that. In hindsight, it can be said that any amount can be reallocated to that line from anywhere where money can be spent on it, but that... or that resources can be created for it, but experience shows that it is not always possible to reallocate any amount there, because the resources are tied up elsewhere for other purposes."(35year-old, male)

This is why local youth work is needed, so that young people with disabilities can at least be included locally, and then, as a second step, in international programmes.

For a youth exchange, the cost per person per night is 33 EUR per applicant in Hungary since 2007, plus an extra cost if you include a disabled or 'less able' young person in the programme. For thirty participants, of which one person with a disability, the amount of the grant is 9010







EUR for nine nights, which is 3.577.564 HUF¹. According to a well-known Hungarian accommodation search portal, the cheapest accommodation with at least disabled persons and assistance with dogs would expect to receive nearly 5 million forints if the youth exchange programme were to take place in November 2022. The website was looking for accommodation based on the following criteria: thirty adult places, accessible environment, full board. A total of three accommodation providers met these criteria.

Based on the search, we can only assume that the site is barrier-free, but this will only be revealed after the on-site survey and walk-through.

In any case, all of the accommodation offered by the portal would still have to be shared with strangers, and the training room is not provided for the programme. These places would not be available on the basis of the current funding, even if 10 or more young people with disabilities were to take part in this imaginary programme. Thus, to be able to involve young people with disabilities in, for example, a youth exchange, applicant organisations would need to have a sufficiently sound knowledge of affordable and appropriate venues and the needs of the young people they wish to involve. This, as these are not organisations specifically supporting people with disabilities, may not be expected.

If the European Union really wants to help the integration of young people with disabilities into youth programmes, it would be worthwhile to set the quotas for the programmes at market prices, given that most Hungarian organisations do not receive state support.

Based on the interviews and the document analysis, we believe that the majority of the organisations surveyed operate on a project basis, which defines their operations and schedules their time.

Their financial means do not allow them to provide, for example, a barrier-free environment, nor to employ, in the long term, professionals who support the inclusion of young people with disabilities. The projects provide short-term resources for a non-permanent team and can employ few or no workers. According to the public benefit reports and interviews analysed, the activities are carried out with few employees, often on a contract or contractor basis, or possibly on a voluntary basis.

¹ September 2022 exchange rate







The average age of the interviewees was relatively high (38.8 years), so the civil sector and youth work in particular may be ageing, and respondents cited the lack of competitive salaries as a reason for this. They are not able to employ young people from the labour market in the long term because young people with good skills and who speak languages go to work in the competitive sector for higher salaries. They are mainly trying to retain and train young people who have previously participated in a youth programme. They are thus expected to meet the requirements that they themselves, as professionals, expect: high quality performance, and to be open, flexible, independent, prepared, rule-following, able to work under pressure.

The problem of supply, the shortage of professionals, which is becoming more and more common away from Budapest, and the unpredictable maintenance, are all negative for inclusion. Local youth work can only be maintained by organisations with a municipal contract.

Based on this, our hypothesis that *youth organisations lack the resources to ensure accessibility and therefore young people with disabilities do not participate in their services* is justified, with the proviso that the lack of resources - material and human - indirectly affects inclusion negatively. Indirectly, because they reinforce the internal resistance that would otherwise be present.

3. Hypothesis

In the questionnaire survey, a number of respondents were dismissive of disabled people beyond a certain point (cohabitation, marriage, raising a disabled child). In the sample, those who are rejecting perceive the proximity of young people with disabilities as unpleasant and more often consider that a young person with disabilities needs a specialised professional because of their different social needs and because the young person concerned is more able to develop in a group of disabled people.

Given the sample size of the questionnaire, and the small number of people with professional experience of working with people with disabilities, it is a conservative assumption that knowledge and professional experience do not significantly influence deep-seated biases.

It seems that those who could envisage even a spousal relationship with a person with a disability consider themselves open regardless of whether they have personal involvement or work experience with a person with a disability.







Our questionnaire also tried to measure knowledge about disability, which showed that respondents' knowledge in special education, disability studies and other disability-related areas is lacking. They are often stuck in the dimension of normality and intactness, i.e. the knowledge acquired about disabilities may be excellent in a medical sense, but insufficient in a philosophical sense.

The questions in the questionnaire did not fully measure respondents' views, respondents often tended to give conformist answers, and therefore the interviews provided more support for the hypothesis.

The majority of interviewees also felt that they had little knowledge or experience of engaging young people with complex support needs. Basically, they think that engaging young people with disabilities is capacity intensive because they need ongoing care and support, which requires the constant presence of an expert. Disability is therefore seen as a barrier to independent participation. In the absence of personal experience, they rely mainly on the opinions of acquaintances who have experience, for example, as parents. From them they see and hear that raising a disabled child is a burden and a sacrifice. The fact that these difficulties are often not due to the child's condition but to a weak and absent care system and/or a lack of social solidarity is not said. They do not get information from experienced experts and, as the questionnaire survey shows, they are not seen as key players in inclusion, which is a kind of *top-down integration* (Rapos et al., 2011, p. 34,43). This form of exclusion does not build on the principle of 'nothing about us, without us', but it does have a strong idea of how, along what values, the target group should be integrated.

Disabled people are not conceived as heterogeneous groups with heterogeneous abilities and needs.

Inclusion is also hampered by a mediatised approach - focusing on the deficits of young people with disabilities, promoting segregated specialist support, not building on the experiences of those affected (Goodley, 2019, p. 6).

The third hypothesis is considered to be supported by the interviews and therefore true: The *lack of experience and knowledge about young people with complex support needs has a negative impact on the attitude of respondents, which is related to the low participation of young people with disabilities in E+ projects.*







Barriers to inclusiveness in international youth programmes

The lack of inclusion of young people with disabilities in youth programmes can only be understood as a complex phenomenon. In essence, it is influenced by eight interrelated causes:

- 1. financial difficulties and lack of capacity
- 2. high requirements for the young people involved (e.g. *English language skills*, prior knowledge, openness, *autonomy*, etc.)
- structural problems and a lack of precise knowledge of the opportunities arising from the Erasmus+ Youth programme
- 4. lack of commitment to inclusion
- 5. lack of accessibility
- 6. lack of training, knowledge about special educational needs and disabilities
- 7. negative attitudes, beliefs
- 8. lack of visibility of young people with complex support needs

Together, these result in a heterogeneous group of young people with complex support needs, which most of the interviewees basically assume to have capacity needs that their organisation cannot meet. Furthermore, the results of the research suggest that the youth organisations interviewed do not see their role and place in the social inclusion of people with disabilities.

Policy suggestions questionnaire results

Based on the results of the research, we created another questionnaire with suggestions for inclusion and asked our expert audience at the dissemination event which one they would most support.

At the conference, 38 of our questionnaires on policy proposals were returned and completed. 75% of the respondents were women (24), aged over 40 (47.3%, 18). *Nine people identified themselves as a person with a disability* and 13 people (34.2%) identified themselves as having a close relative with a disability. Both numbers seem low, however, if we look at the Hidden Dimensions (HD) research questionnaire survey for youth organisations, which had no selfreported respondents with a disability and few with a close relative with a disability, we can







conclude that the conference was well attended in this respect, so we are talking about an inclusive event.

In our short questionnaire, based on the Hidden Dimensions survey, we asked conference participants:

- Which of these options do you think would best promote the inclusion of young people with disabilities in Erasmus+ youth programmes?
- 1. Higher head quotas and extra costs for young people with disabilities

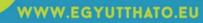
This response was the most popular 63.2%, with 24 people thinking that it would increase access to youth programmes for young people with disabilities. Erasmus+ youth programmes have already offered applicants the possibility to apply for extra costs, despite this low takeup, which is confirmed by the HD research questionnaire and interviews. At the same time, it is also clear from the interviews that it is not clear to applicants that they can claim extra costs and what exactly they can claim them for. However, it would be a mistake to think that extra costs are a motivating force for everyone, on the contrary. The HD research interviewees put inclusion on an imaginary scale; on one side of the scale are the costs and on the other the capacity needs to include young people with disabilities, and the latter is so heavy in their minds that the costs on the other side cannot compensate for it.

2. Mandatory percentage representation quota for at least 20 young people involved

This was the most unpopular response option, with a total of 6 people ticking it - so the majority of respondents would be against it - even though quotas are usually used to ensure or enforce minority representation. An example of this in Hungary is the provision of women's participation in technical/engineering faculties in higher education in the 1950s, when a quota of 20-30% was set by decree to achieve the same proportion as was set in other higher education fields at the time (Polyák, 2016). Many other examples could be cited here, all of which aimed to change the social position of some disadvantaged group.

3. Accessibility tenders for NGOs

Again, only 12 (31.6%) thought this was necessary. The HD survey showed that, in addition to the lack of information on accessibility solutions, there is also a lack of resources to spend, i.e.







youth NGOs do not have the resources to make their youth offices, community spaces or campsites accessible, if they have any at all.

4. Participation of Erasmus+ winning applicant organisations in mandatory inclusion training

Almost half of respondents (16, 42%) thought that compulsory training would support inclusion.

The cross tabulation analysis showed for each response that a majority of disabled respondents, 7 out of 9, would support higher inclusion costs for disabled participants, and similarly a majority, 7, would reject mandatory quotas as a guarantee of representation. There is a 50/50 split between support and opposition to resources for accessibility. Mandatory inclusive training is supported by a majority (6 out of 9 against).

Similar views were expressed by those who have a *disabled relative*, with 10 out of 13 in favour of a higher subsidy for applicants with a disabled young person and 10 out of 13 against a mandatory quota. 8 out of 13 do not consider accessibility-related tenders for NGOs and mandatory inclusion training to be important.

Overall, respondents were sympathetic to only one of our proposed answers, and that is to provide higher costs, which is already a given in the tender system, but ineffective. More information and further increases in extra costs would be needed to bring integration more into focus.

In the HD research, NGO representatives and/or youth workers interviewed could not clearly define who the disabled persons were, they mostly thought of severe disabilities, for example pupils with special educational needs were not included in the group. This result and the previous question suggest that it would be worthwhile to obtain reliable data on the accessibility of youth programmes for young people with disabilities. Especially if an applicant wants to claim higher costs. The previous special need or current category of youth with fewer opportunities is broad and relative. It relativises disability, which is not only less opportunity but a serious handicap in terms of equal access and participation in all the benefits of society, even if it is not a visible disability. 70% of disabilities are invisible (Kosek, 2021).







- How do you think reliable data on the number of young people with disabilities involved in Erasmus+ youth programmes could be obtained?
- 1. They should be a separate category when reporting on tenders

The majority of respondents (23, 60%) agreed with this, and accordingly consistently rejected the following statement.

2. it is sufficient to be included in the group of young people with fewer opportunities in the application form

84.2% (32 people) thought that it was not enough to be included in the group of young people with fewer opportunities.

 organisations promising inclusion should be monitored by personal visits during project implementation

The majority (25, 65%) reject the idea of a personal visit to check the inclusiveness of projects and do not think that, in addition to the individual reports of organisations, it is necessary to present some kind of documentary evidence of disability - in medical terms - when reporting.

4. a medical certificate or pedagogical opinion from a specialist for young people with disabilities should be sent to the National Office at the time of reporting.

84.2% (32 people) think that no such certification is needed.

Similar measures influence the employment of people with disabilities in a positive direction, so that a quota, expert opinion and the degree of integration in schools can be obtained from the papers of the pedagogical service to obtain credible statistics in policy.

The majority of our respondents with disabilities (6 out of 9) thought that young people with disabilities should have a separate category on forms and reports, and *all of our respondents with disabilities (9) thought that it was not enough to include disabled people in the group of young people with fewer opportunities.* At the same time, the majority of respondents do not agree that there should be more serious monitoring of E+ youth implementers, and do not support either the submission of a specialist report or more frequent personal monitoring of project implementation.







The majority of relatives (7 out of 13) think that people with disabilities should not be a separate category when applying, but the majority (10 out of 13) do not support their inclusion in the less able group. The majority (10 out of 13) do not support the need for a certificate of disability at the time of or after inclusion in a project, but are more inclined to believe that projects should be verified by a personal visit during implementation (8 out of 13).

- How often do you think that a mandatory, inclusive training course should be attended by the winning organisations?
 - 1. annually
 - 2. every three years
 - 3. every five years
 - 4. there is no need for such training

There were 34 valid responses to the question, of which 1 person who indicated that there was no need for mandatory inclusion training was not a person with a disability but had a disabled relative. *All of the disabled persons (9 persons) said that such mandatory training should be provided annually by E+ applicant organisations.* The majority of respondents (8 out of 13) who have a close relative with a disability also agree with this. 4 of them think that a mandatory training every three years would be sufficient. None of the respondents indicated that there should be such mandatory training every 5 years. Also among those who are not affected by any form of disability, a majority of 8 out of 15 thought that there should be such training every 3 years.

- Which of the following do you think should be the content of an inclusive training course?
 - 1. methods of facilitative contact
 - 2. special educational needs, types of disabilities
 - 3. knowledge of disability science, sociology of special education
 - 4. knowledge of accessible environments e.g. personal assistance, sign language interpreter, physical accessibility, easy-to-understand communication, etc.
 - 5. knowledge of accessible non-formal pedagogical methods
 - 6. legal knowledge







Respondents were given the option to tick more than one answer to this question, so again the results are presented by popularity and degree of disability. The following table shows that the most popular among respondents was disability science, special education sociology.

Content of inclusion training		Frequency	Percent
Valid	methods of facilitative contact	9	23,7
	special educational needs, types of disabilities	8	21,1
	knowledge of disability science, sociology of special education	12	31,6
	knowledge of barrier-free environment	2	5,3
	knowledge of accessible non-formal pedagogical methods	1	2,6
	legal knowledge	6	15,8
	Total	38	100,0

1What should be the content of an inclusive training course?

The popularity of the answers was not influenced by the distance of someone from the disability - affected, relative, neither.

Summary and proposals

Based on the views of the respondents to the conference questionnaire, and in particular of the disabled people interviewed, the following suggestions are made:

- There is a need to ensure higher costs in international youth programmes, in order to make E+ applicant organisations think inclusively.
- Every year, every three years, organisations that are successful or regularly apply should attend a compulsory inclusion training. This should be at least three days long to ensure that the necessary skills are acquired. Which we consider justified because, for example, the theoretical part of the mandatory training in support services is usually 1.5 or 2 weeks for personal assistants working in support services, who in most cases have more than 1 year of practical experience in providing personal







assistance/support to persons with disabilities as a therapeutic worker. This theoretical training provides a philosophy of self-advocacy and a basic knowledge of social work, disability studies and special needs education, so that people with a wide range of qualifications and experience have some common knowledge and, above all, an inclusive approach to people with disabilities.

Based on the results, it would be appropriate for applicants to learn about the historical background and philosophical approaches to youth work and disability studies, as well as the sociological data on the sociology of special education for people with disabilities, so that they can consider whether or not to include young people with disabilities.







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