



## **Successes and challenges.**

**Report I on international project management  
in the civil society sector of adult education**

**EDUCULT (ed.)**



**Erasmus+**

**Successes and challenges.****Report I on international project management in the civil society sector of adult education**

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This multilateral survey on successes and challenges of international project management in the civil society area of adult education has been developed as the first intellectual output in the framework of the two-year Erasmus plus development project, Sept 2018 – Aug 2020, entitled: First-time international project realisers support network.

The project is co-funded by the Erasmus+ programme of the European Union.



This publication reflects the views only of the authors, and neither the Polish National Agency of the Erasmus+ programme nor the European Commission can be held responsible for any use which may be made of the information contained therein.

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# Preface

International cooperation is part of the work of many lifelong learning organisations in the European civil society sector. Nevertheless, many are not yet involved in international partnerships or could not implement international cooperation successfully. However, international cooperation could help the organisations to initiate internal learning processes and innovate. This is the general idea of European cooperation programmes like Erasmus+. Some civil society organisations are using the possibilities of these programmes, but more are applying for funding without success or have never even tried. As everybody who has ever reached out for such financial support knows: these applications require time and personnel in order to be successful. Therefore, starting international projects is a challenge, but implementing them can even be a more daunting task. Project managers need support and specific skills if they are working internationally. In which way do the organisations' management departments support their international project managers? First-time international project managers especially need help as they are most often not prepared to work in an international environment.

The two-year Erasmus+ development project, from September 2018 – August 2020, entitled “**First-time international project realisers support network**” addresses exactly this issue. The project itself has been co-funded by the Erasmus+ programme of the European Union.

The partnership circle consists of five organisations from five EU member states working in the area of lifelong learning, culture, social work and civil society development. The partnership circle includes:

The coordinator:

**FAIE** – Foundation of Alternative Educational Initiatives (PL) – see [www.fundacjaie.eu](http://www.fundacjaie.eu)

The partners:

**COOSS** – Cooperativa Sociale COOSS MARCHE ONLUS scpa (IT) – see [www.cooss.it](http://www.cooss.it)

**Magyar Nepfoiskolai Tarsagag** (HU) – see <https://nepfoiskola.hu>

**Interfolk** – Institut for Civilsamfund (DK) – see [www.interfolk.dk](http://www.interfolk.dk)

**EDUCULT** – Denken und Handeln in Kultur und Bildung (AT) – see <http://educult.at>

The project addresses the relative low degree of international partnership cooperation and networking by the lifelong learning associations in the civil societies of the EU member states. The overall aim is to support increasing innovativeness of the adult education organisations, in terms of education methodology, outreach to adult learners and adult education organisations, by supporting them in undertaking new ways and areas to be active.

The work programme has three main phases with the following key activities and outputs:

1<sup>ST</sup> PHASE: DEFINING THE BASELINE, OCT 2018 – JUNE 2019 (9 MONTHS)

- Output 1: Complete national surveys and publish **Survey Summary Report I** about good practices and success stories at supporting international projects managers in the adult education civil society organisations cooperation, six languages PDF-edition.

- Output 2: Complete national surveys and publish **Survey Summary Report II** on key competences of international project managers in the adult education civil society organisations and needs for support for international cooperation, six languages PDF-edition.

#### 2<sup>ND</sup> PHASE: DEVELOPING & TESTING, JULY 2019 – MARCH 2020 (9 MONTHS)

- Output 3: Design, launch and update a **Support Portal** for the first-time international project realisers.
- Output 4: Develop a **Mentoring and E-mentoring System** for the first-time international project realisers.
- Output 5: Develop a **Training Course Curricula and Open Educational Resources** for the first-time international project realisers.
- T1-T2: **Two Transnational Pilot Courses** (short-term joint staff training events).

#### 3<sup>RD</sup> PHASE: SUPPORT, VALORISATION & DISSEMINATION, APRIL – SEPT 2020 (6 MONTHS)

- Output 6: Establish and develop an **International Support Network**.
- ME1-ME4: **Four National Multiplier Events** in Ancona (IT), Budapest (HU), Copenhagen (DK), and Vienna (AT).
- M5: **One European Conference** in Krakow (PL).

This Multilateral Survey Report I is the first output in the work programme and represents – together with Report II about key competences and needs for support – the baseline analysis.

The **aim** of this report is to gain knowledge about successes and challenges as the basis for developing the support network and possible support services.

The **objectives** of the report are:

- To define the kinds and methods of support offered to international project managers in the field of lifelong learning in the five partner countries.
- To describe expectations of the international project managers concerning support they expect from their employing organisations to be able to successfully realise international cooperation.
- To outline challenges for the civil society sector in international cooperation projects.
- To specify the areas of information, knowledge, tools, and other support for international cooperation offered by national agencies of the cooperation programmes in the European Union.

The report includes a general analysis and presents the series of national surveys regarding successes and challenges in international project management. Hereby we provide surveys that can help to describe successful models of support and see which offers are more common or used more often. We clarify which challenges the project managers have to face and look for options to overcome them.

We hope this report on successes and challenges can provide new knowledge and give inspiration to other stakeholders in the European civil society sector of lifelong learning to strengthen their international projects and European cooperation activities.

June 2019,  
Aron Weigl

# 1. Introduction to the Methodology

By Aron Weigl and Tanja Nagel, EDUCULT, and Hans Jørgen Vodsgaard, Interfolk

The aim of this research was to present examples of good practice in international project management, identify successes and challenges and analyse the underlying causes. Qualitative, guideline-based expert interviews were conducted to compile the data, and a survey was conducted among project managers and organisation managers in the civil society sectors of all participating countries, i.e. Austria, Denmark, Hungary, Italy, and Poland.

This report presents the overall results of the survey as well as the analyses of the interviews and the country-specific survey results. At this juncture, we will first describe how the interview partners were selected and the survey sample.

## 1.1 Qualitative Interviews

Together with all project partners, a guideline for conducting the interviews was developed (see appendix). The questions within the interviews focused on necessary key competences in the field of civil society, international project cooperation and on needs compared to support offered in this context.

The statements of interviewees from different target groups were of interest, as it was assumed that different perspectives and needs would be expressed. The following four groups were therefore relevant in the selection of interviewees:

- A. Project managers (i.e. persons already working / who have already worked as international project managers in 3rd sector adult education organisations) experienced in internal project management (at least two international projects)
- B. Organisational leaders (i.e. lead staff, managers and management bodies members) experienced in internal project management (at least two international projects)
- C. Project managers inexperienced in international project management
- D. Organizational leaders inexperienced in international project management

A total of **66 interviews were conducted**, as can be seen from the analyses of the individual countries. This analysis also describes the areas from which the interviewees came and how they were selected in detail.

## 1.2 Sample Description

A total of **200 people participated in the online survey**. Since 79 of them did not meet the criteria (adult education, non-formal education, civil society organisation) or did not complete the questionnaire, 121 questionnaires were included in the final analysis, containing answers to the questions relevant here.

## I. General Features

Most of the respondents (29 people, representing 24.0% of the sample) work in Italy, followed by Denmark (26 people or 21.5%) and Poland (22 people or 18.2%) (see Fig. 1). 18 persons (14.9%) participated in Austria and in Hungary there were 16 people (13.2%) taking part in the survey. 10 persons work in other countries such as Latvia (4), Finland (2), the Netherlands (1), Norway (1), Portugal (1) and Romania (1).

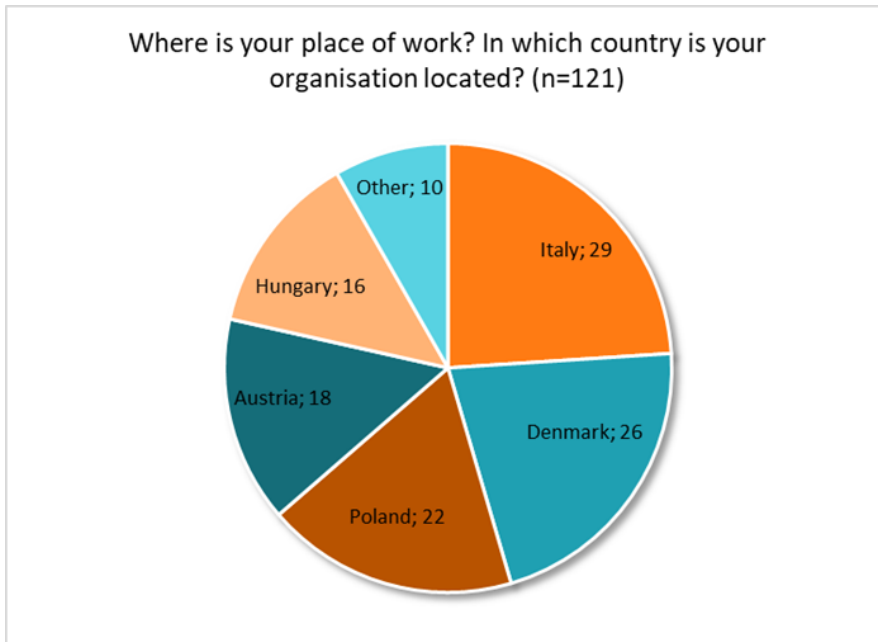


Fig. 1: Where is your place of work? In which country is your organisation located?

More than half of the sample is female (56.9%), while 40.4% of respondents are male. The rest chose “other” for gender. About half of the individuals in the sample are 50 years or older. Only 3.7% are between 20 and 29 years old. 13.8% are 70 years old or older (see Fig. 2).

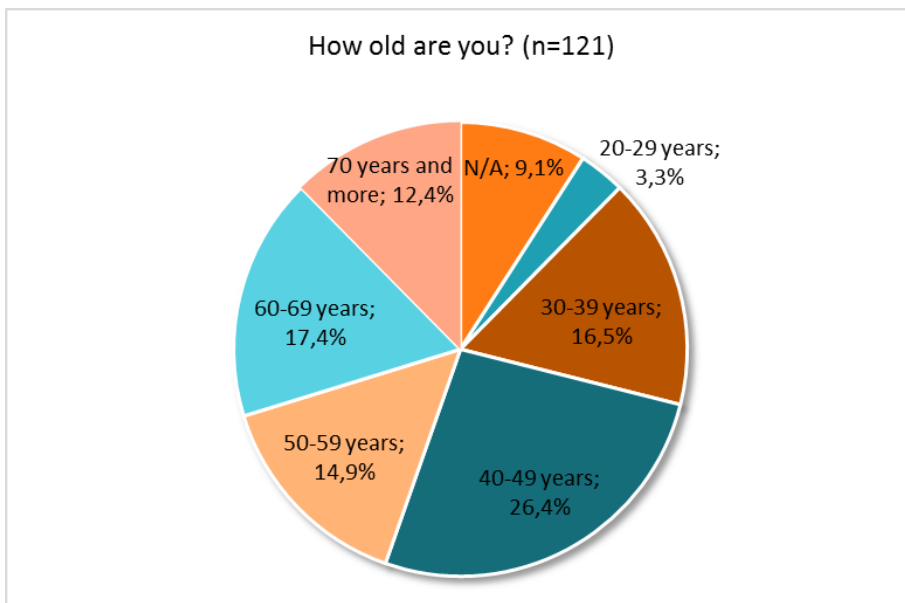
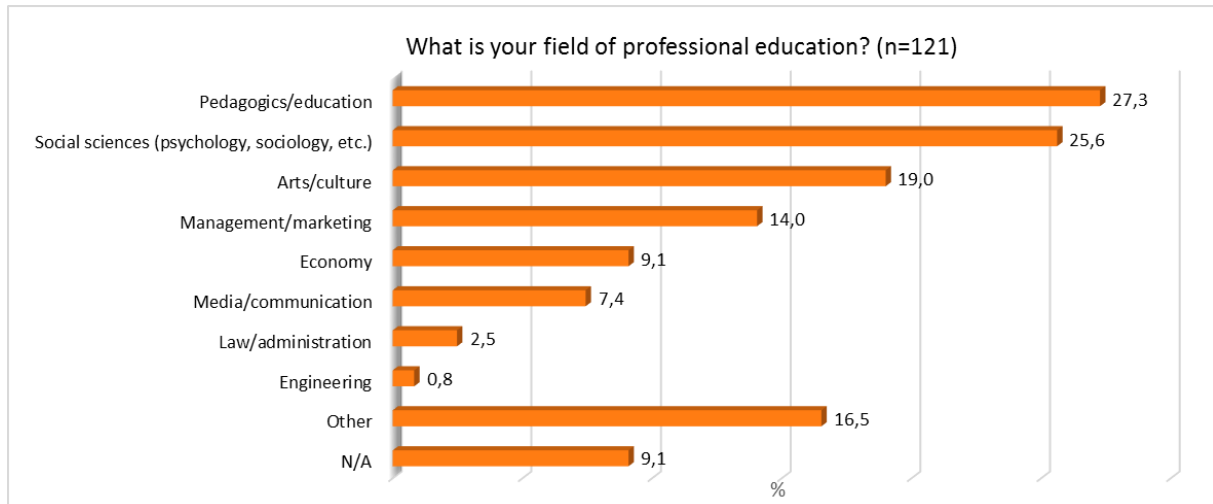


Fig. 2: How old are you?

## II. Fields of Work

A quarter of the interviewees (27.3%) have an education in the field of pedagogy/education, 25.6% have a social science education and 19.0% have an education in the field of arts and culture.

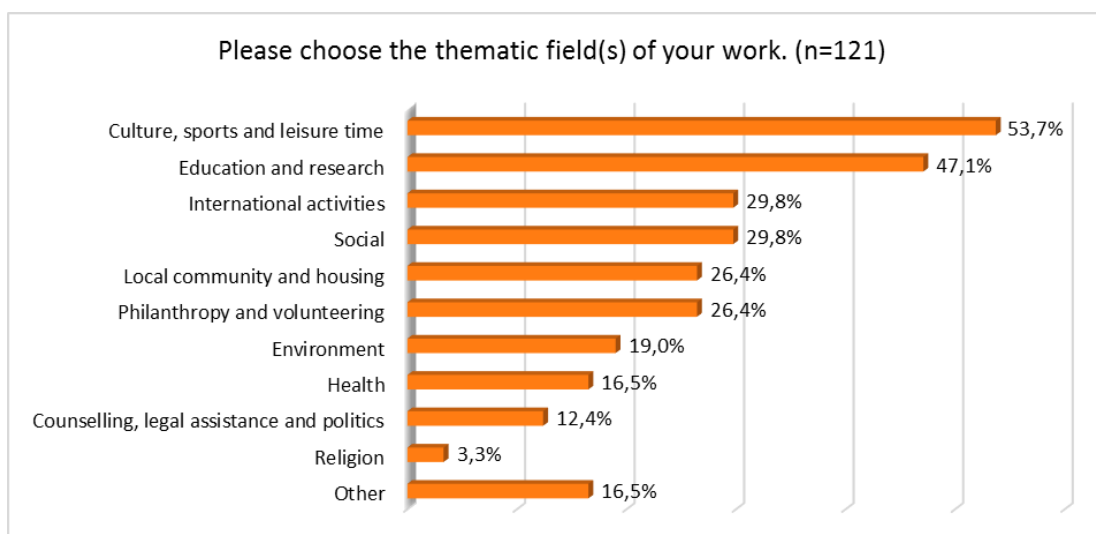


**Fig. 3: What is your field of professional education (multiple answers possible)?**

In addition to adult education, some respondents are also active in other fields: Youth education (35 people or 28.9%), vocational education and training (18 people or 14.9%), school education (15 people or 12.4%) and higher education (10 people or 8.3%).

85.1% of respondents are active in non-formal and informal learning, 14.9% in non-formal, informal and formal learning. 95.9% work for a civil society organisation, 4.1% for a civil society and a public organisation.

More than half of the respondents (65 people or 53.7%) work in the fields of culture, sport and leisure, a further 47.1% in education and research. In each case 36 persons (29.8%) work in international activities or social affairs and 32 (26.4%) in community and housing or in philanthropy and voluntary work (see Fig. 4).



**Fig. 4: Please choose the thematic field(s) of your work (multiple answers possible).**



61 respondents (50.4%) work as project managers, 54 (44.6%) as director/manager or chairperson of the organisation and 40 (33.1%) as persons responsible for international cooperation (see Fig. 5). In addition, volunteers, financial managers and management assistants participated (10 people or 9.2%). Depending on their function in the organisation, different questions were asked in the questionnaire.



Fig. 5: In which function do you work in this field (multiple answers possible)?

### III. Experience with Project Proposals

71.1% of respondents have previously applied for funding to cooperate internationally in their fields of work. Of these, 83.7% were successful. 8.3% of all respondents had so far implemented one international project, 18.2% had implemented two to four international projects, about a third (33.1%) as many as five times or more (see Fig. 6). 87.5% of respondents have experience as project partners in international projects, 76.4% as coordinators.

This means that about half of the respondents (51.2%) can be classified as experienced according to the above definition, while about the other half (48.8%) are rather inexperienced with international projects.

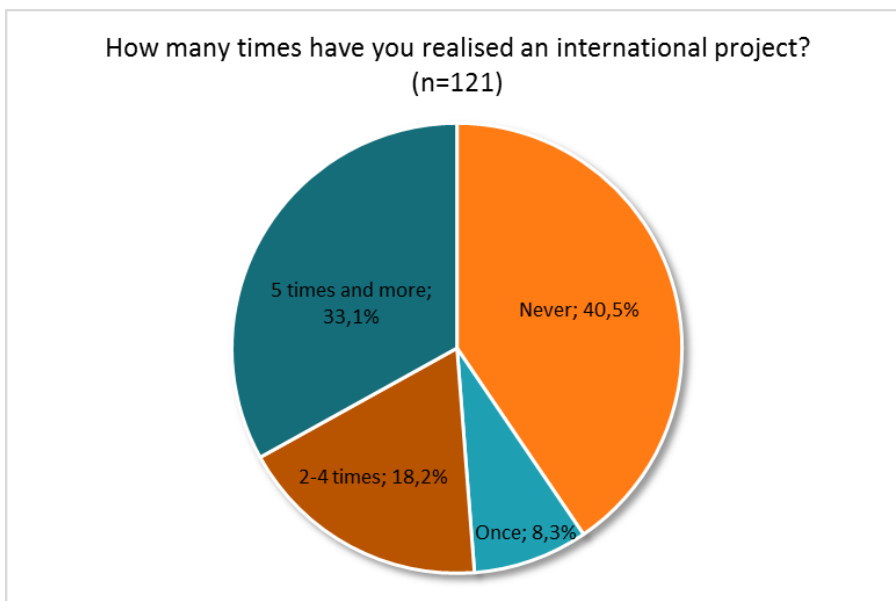
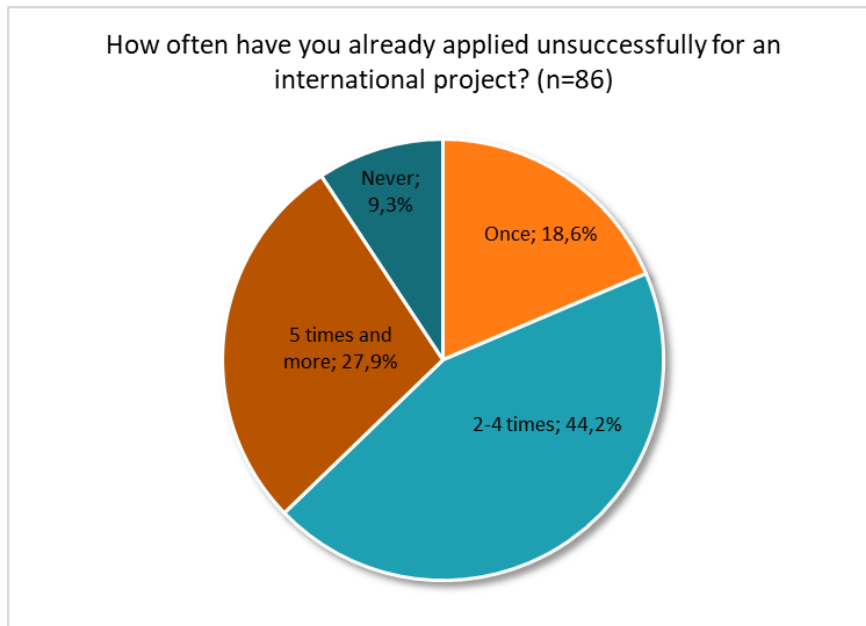


Fig. 6: How many times have you realised an international project?

90.7% of respondents who had already applied for funding for international cooperation also have experience with unsuccessful applications. 18.6% had applied once, 44.2% applied two to four times and 27.9% even five times or more without success for international projects (see Fig. 2).

76.9 % (n=78) cited low evaluation scores as the reason for their rejected applications. Applications from 46.2% of respondents were assessed positively, but placed on the substitute list. In the end, the budget was too low to support their projects. For 1.3% of the respondents, the reason was the withdrawal of the applicant organisation. 8.3% gave other reasons for their lack of success (see country reports).



**Fig. 7: How often have you already applied unsuccessfully for an international project?**

Of the 35 respondents who had never applied for funding for international cooperation projects, 30 (85.7%) were interested in international cooperation.

Depending on the function (see Fig. 5), the respondents were asked different questions. In the following, the topics of motivation and support are therefore considered on two different levels: The first section deals with the viewpoint of the project managers carrying out the projects, the second with that of the management level and those responsible for international cooperation.

## 2. Presentations of Good Practice

### 2.1 Cross-national Results of the Online Survey

By Aron Weigl and Tanja Nagel, EDUCULT

#### I. Motivation and Support from the Perspective of the Project Managers

Fig. 8 shows what motivates the interviewed project managers to carry out international projects. Aspects such as mutual learning, networking and international exchange are particularly important. But the possibility of acquiring additional funding is also a motivating factor for almost everyone (at least to a certain extent).

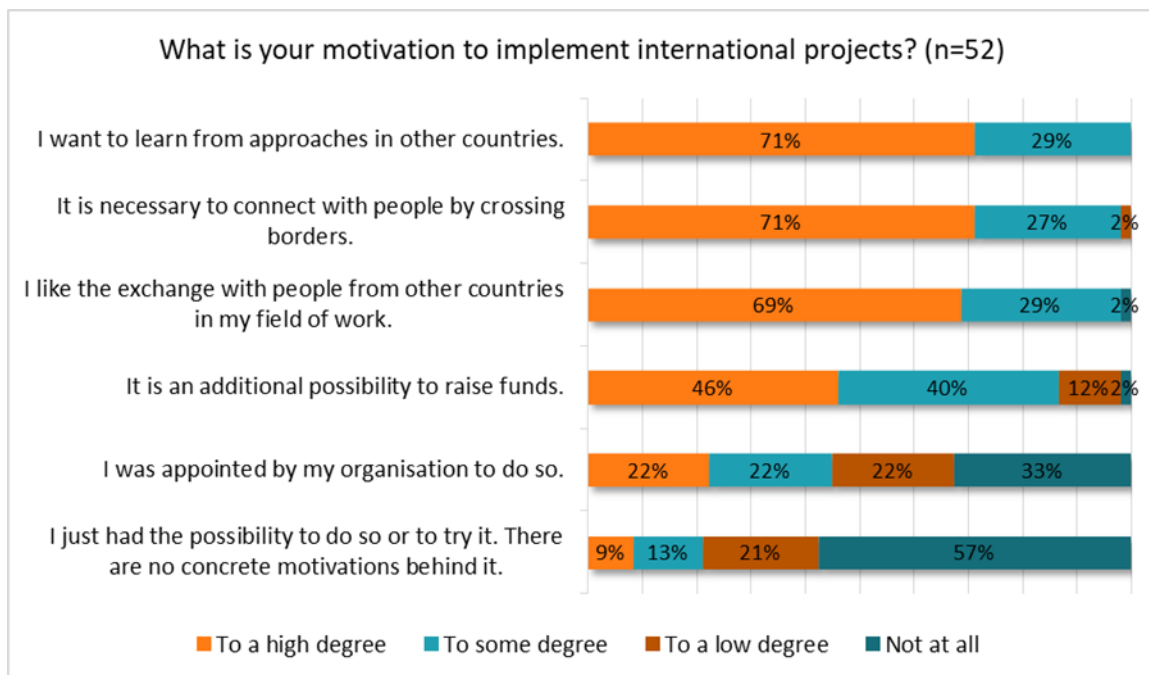
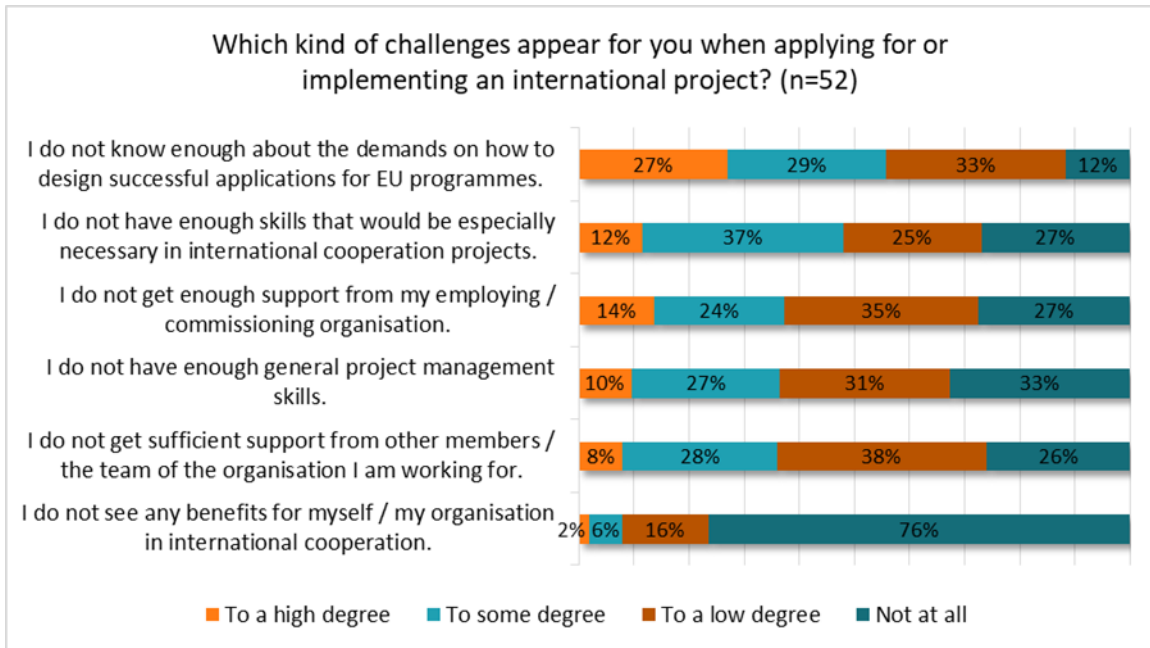


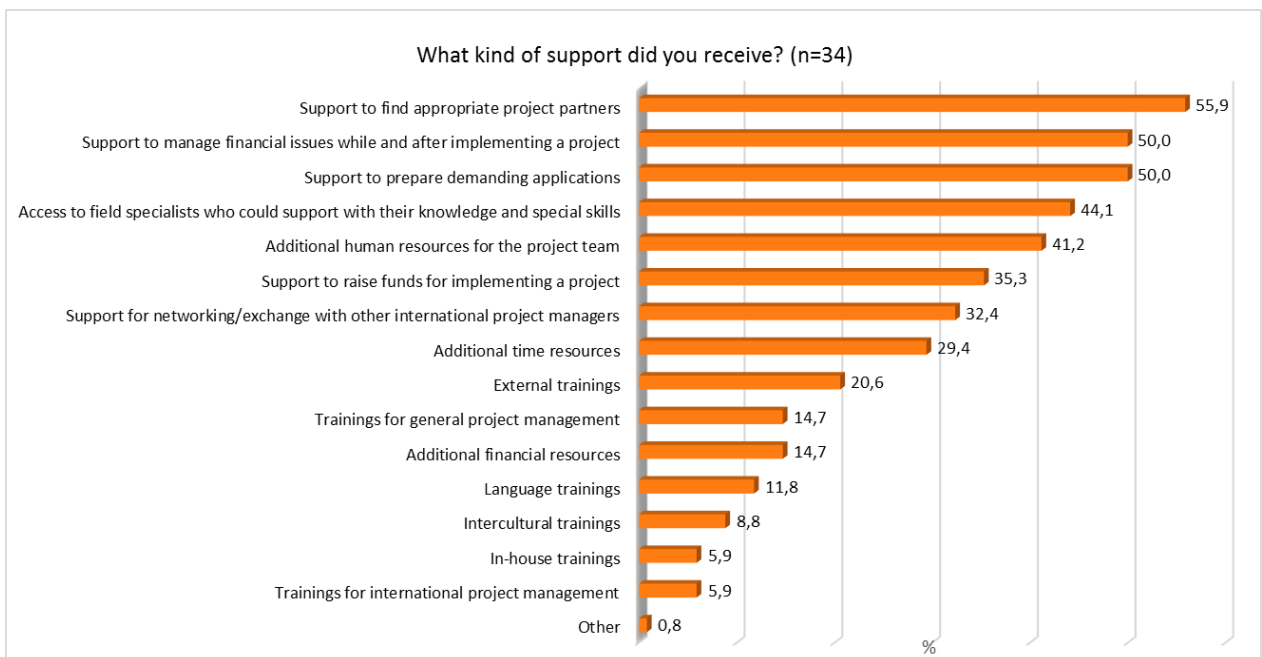
Fig. 8: What is your motivation to implement international projects?

When asked about the challenges they face in submitting applications, 88% of project managers interviewed stated to varying degrees that they knew too little about the requirements for successful applications to EU programmes. Lack of competence in the field of international cooperation and a lack of support from one's own organisation are also seen as challenges (see Fig. 9).



**Fig. 9: Which kind of challenges appear for you when applying for or implementing an international project?**

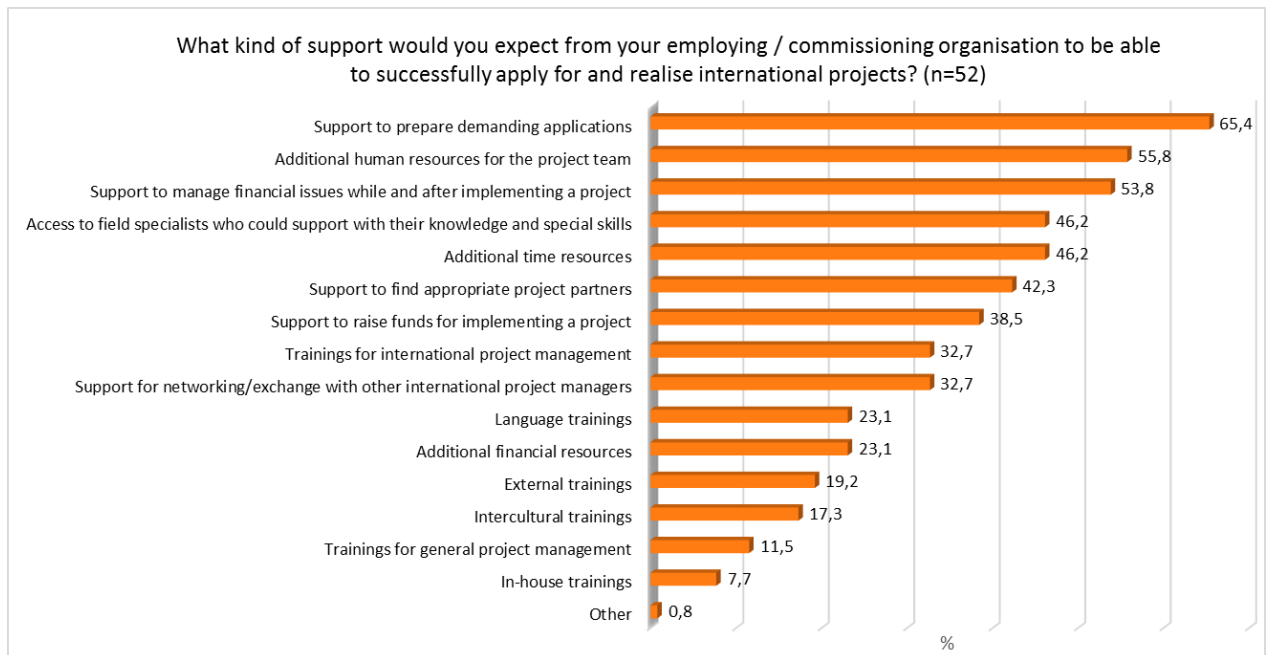
65.4% (34 p.) of the interviewed project managers state that they have received support from their own organisation for the application and implementation of international projects. More than half of them were supported in their search for suitable project partners (see Fig. 10). In each case, 50% were supported in dealing with financial issues or in preparing demanding applications. Training courses rank at the bottom of the list.



**Fig. 10: What kind of support did you receive (multiple answers possible)?**

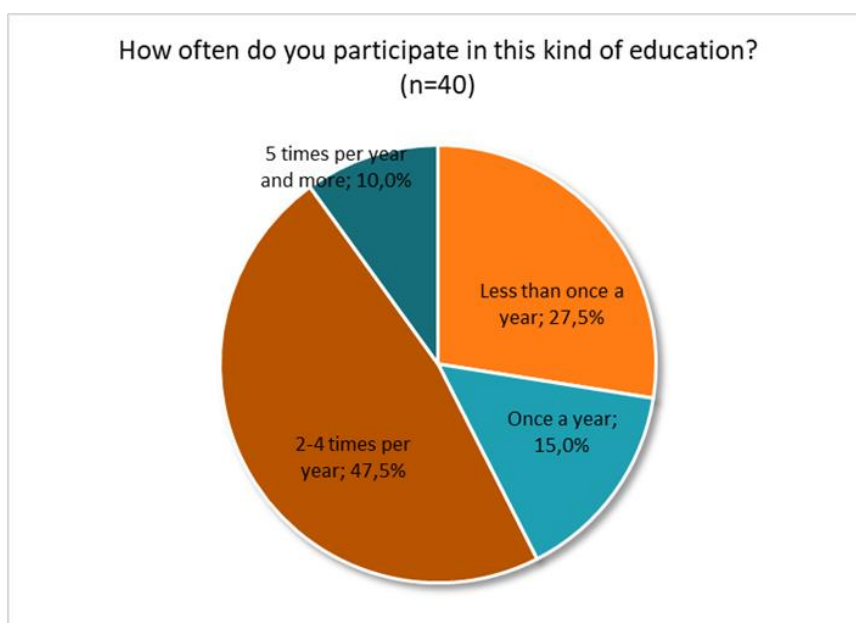
The project managers were also asked what support they would expect from their organisation (see Fig. 11). The most frequently cited (65.4%) was support in the preparation of demanding

applications. 55.8% expect additional human resources for the project team. 32.7% of the respondents expect further training in international project management, which only 5.9% (see Fig. 10) actually receive.



**Fig. 11: What kind of support would you expect from your employing/commissioning organisation to be able to successfully apply for and realise international projects (multiple answers possible)?**

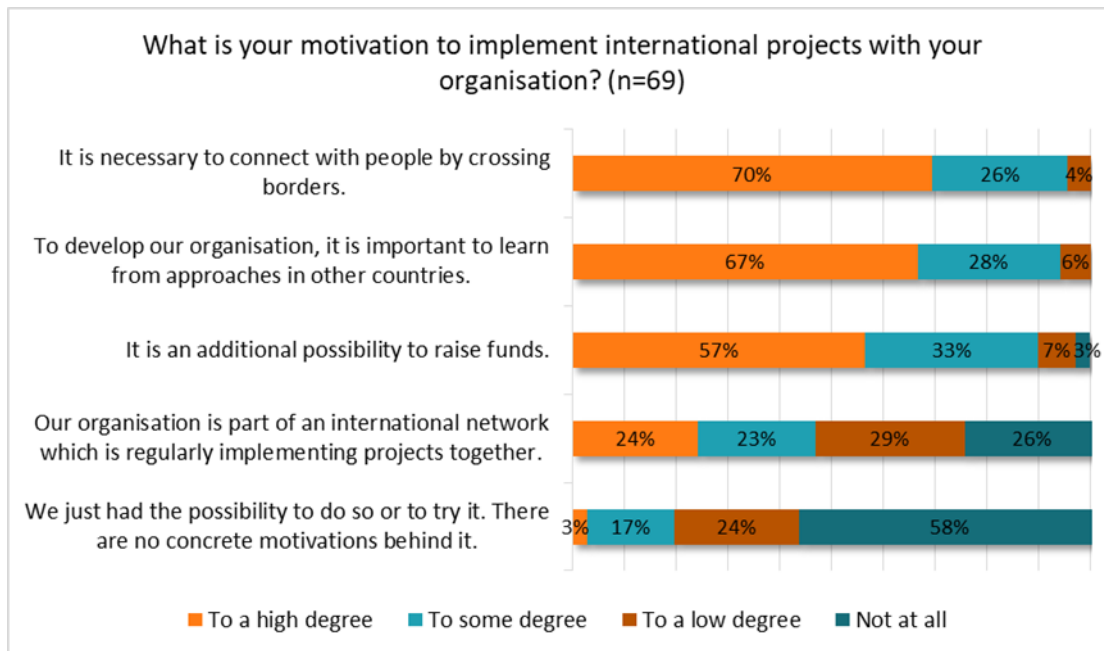
76.9% of the surveyed project managers (40 p.) use educational opportunities to expand their competences by their own initiative. 85% of them last participated in a training course or workshop, 80% in a conference or symposium, 50% in a webinar and 22.5% in a job shadowing. It is noticeable that many of the respondents (47.5%, see Fig. 12) take part in such training opportunities more or less 2 to 4 times a year, 10.0% even 5 times a year or more frequently.



**Fig. 12: How often do you participate in this kind of education?**

## II. Motivation and Support from the Perspective of the Management

The motivation for implementing international projects was also discussed at the management level (see Fig. 13). For the managerial level, i.e. the directors, managers or those responsible for international cooperation, the further development of the organisation and the opportunities to acquire further funding are important motivating factors in addition to networking.



**Fig. 13: What is your motivation to implement international projects with your organisation (multiple answers possible)?**

Only half of the respondents at the management level (34 p.) say that their organisation offers support to project managers who are involved in applying for or implementing international projects. Support for challenging applications is and has been offered particularly frequently (61.8%). 55.9% state that their organisation provides support in the search for suitable project partners and 52.9% in the acquisition of additional funding opportunities in project implementation. Support in the form of additional personnel, which more than half of the interviewed project managers want, is offered by 35.3% of the interviewed persons at the management level. External and internal training also rank low on the list at the managerial level.



Fig. 14: What kind of support did/do you offer (multiple answers possible)?

Money and time are the greatest challenges at management level when it comes to providing support for project managers (see Fig. 15). Only 6.2% of respondents say that financial resources are not a challenge. Lack of time is not challenging for only 7.6%. However, a lack of knowledge about opportunities and methods as well as access to competent people while putting together a project team is also mentioned. Approximately half of the respondents stated that this is true to some or to a high degree.

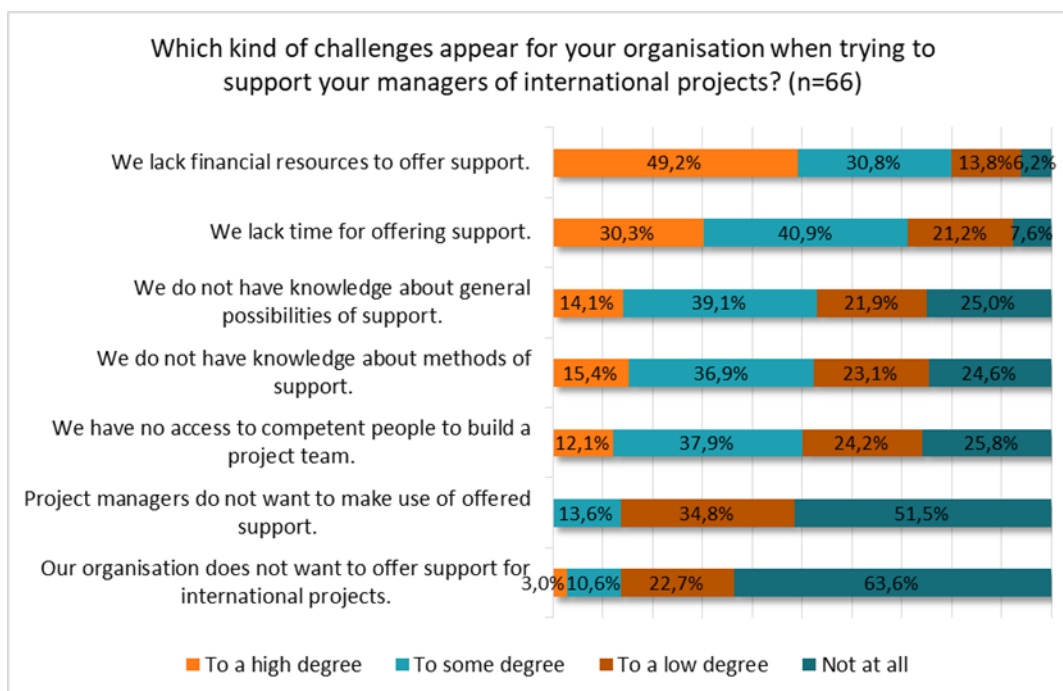


Fig. 15: Which kind of challenges appear for your organisation when trying to support your managers of international projects?

## 2.2 Polish Report on Successes and Challenges

By Agnieszka Dadak and Jerzy Kraus, FAIE

### I. Sample Description

#### a) Dissemination of the Online Survey

The online research in Poland was realised in the period January – March 2019. The thirteen interviews were conducted in the period March – April 2019.

The invitation to take part in the on-line survey was published on the FAIEs' webpage. Articles inviting to take part in the research were also published on: the ngo.pl internet portal (directed to persons related with the CSO sector), the EPALE platform (an European, multilingual, open membership community of adult learning professionals, including adult educators and trainers, guidance and support staff, researchers and academics, and policymakers, funded by the Erasmus+ programme) and on the eurodesk.pl internet portal (Eurodesk is an European network supporting the youth and youth workers). What is more, regular invitations were published on the FAIEs' Facebook profile (FB) and two other FB profiles run by FAIE ("Let's get active!" and "MyEU Portal") as well as on the FB pages and webpages of some organisations supporting NGOs (the webpage and FB of the OWES – Social Economy Support Center in Bielsko-Biała, the FB of the NGO Center in Katowice).

FAIE team did also inform about the research at meetings and training events organised in this period, among others – at the Eurodesk Network annual meeting. There were also over 200 personal invitations to take part in the research sent by e-mails within the FAIEs network. Moreover, over 400 e-mails were sent to the KA1 and KA2 Erasmus+ realisers and applicants (since the lists of applicants are published by the Polish National Agency) as well as to some beneficiaries of grants within Europe for Citizens and Creative Europe programmes.

At the end of the invitation to the on-line research it was an invitation to write to FAIE after filling in the questionnaire if somebody would be interested in the project and would like to be informed about the project offer directly. There were 14 persons who wrote back; all of them were invited to take part in the interviews. Seven of them agreed. The other 5 interviewees were invited within the FAIEs network. All the interviews were telephone interviews.

#### b) Characteristic of the Survey Respondents and Interviewees

There were 22 online survey respondents working in Poland who fit the direct target group of the research (i.e. working in the field of informal and non-formal adult education in civil society organisations). There were more women (63.6%) than men (18.2%) who took part in the online research. Most of the respondents represented the 40-49 years old age group (31.8%), followed by 30-39 years old (18.2%), 50-59 and 60-69 years old (3.6%) and 20-29 years old (4.5%). 18.2% of respondents did not answer this question. Concerning the field of professional education, most of the respondents declared education in the field of management/marketing (22.7%), followed



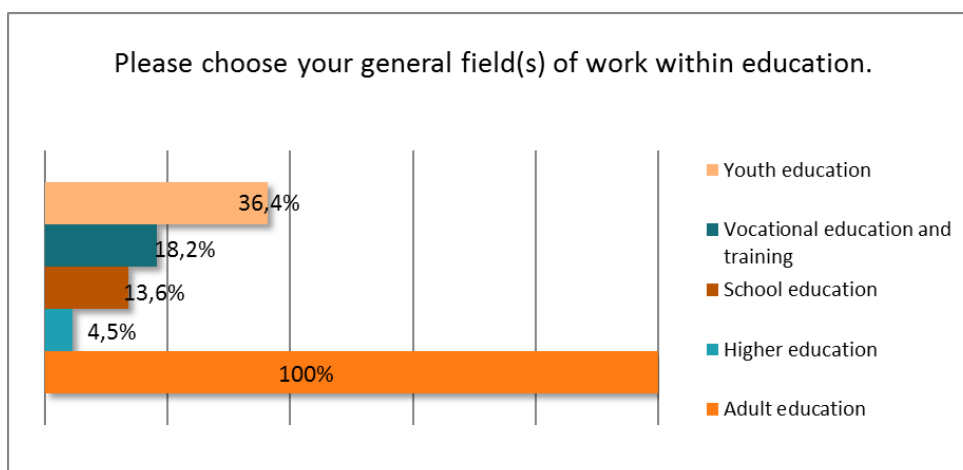
by economy, social sciences (psychology, sociology etc.), arts/culture and other (both 18.2%). The smallest group declared education in the field of pedagogics/education (19.1%). There were no respondents representing education in the fields of law/administration, media/communication and engineering. Some respondents (18.2%) did not answer the personal questions.

Concerning the interviewees, there were 9 women and 4 men. Most of them represented the age groups 30 to 49 years old. Three respondents were seniors and 2 respondents came from small towns.

## II. Good Practice in International Project Management in Poland

### a) Fields of Work

Concerning **the general field(s) of work within education**, all of the online survey respondents worked in the field of adult education. Additionally, the respondents also worked in the fields of youth education (36.4%), vocational education and training (18.2%), school education (13.6%) and higher education (4.5%).



**Fig. 16: Please choose your general field(s) of work within education (multiple answers possible); Poland.**

Non-formal/informal learning as an educational sector was declared by 95.5% of the online survey respondents, and non-formal/informal and formal learning by 4.5% of respondents.

Concerning the **thematic fields of work**, they were very varied. Over half of the respondents group worked in the field of education and research (63.6%) and culture, sports and leisure time (59.1%). 40.9% declared international activities as the main field of activity, followed by local community and housing (31.8%), counselling, legal assistance and politics (22.7%) and philanthropy and volunteering (18.2%). Least represented were the fields of health (9.1%), religion and social (both 4.5%). There were no respondents working in the field of environment. 18.2% of the respondents chose the option "other", naming such areas of activities as: dance & performance studies; social and cultural inclusion through participation in cultural project; supporting persons with disabilities, their surroundings, social inclusion and promoting accessibility.

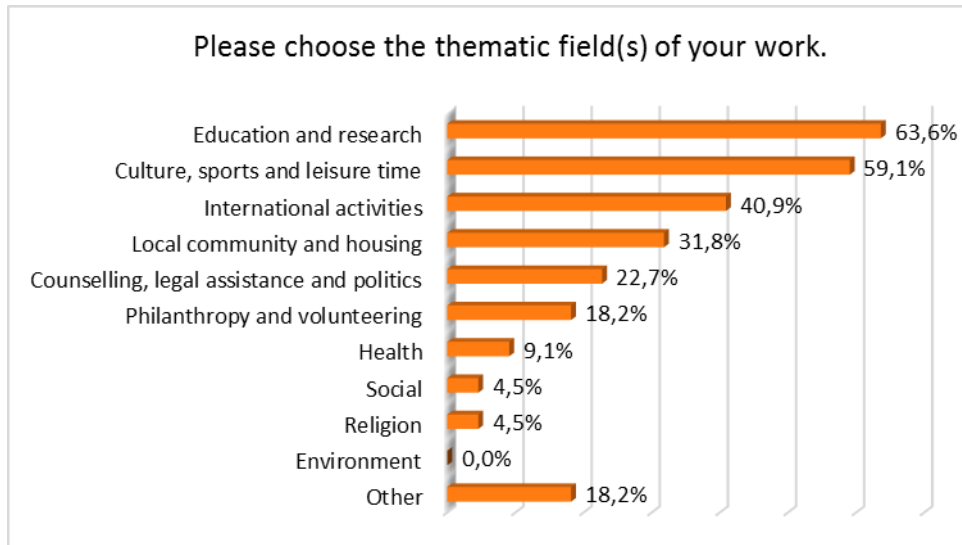


Fig. 17: Please choose the thematic field(s) of your work (multiple answers possible); Poland.

When it comes to the interviewees, the thematic field of work in the CSO non-formal adult education sector was quite varied among the interviewees. The organisations they represented are characterised below:

Group A	Group B	Group C	Group D
<b>An association</b> - women leadership/ counteracting violence against women/discrimination/ overuse of power	<b>An association</b> - ecological education, activating local society, education by culture	<b>A foundation</b> - education, lifelong learning	<b>A foundation</b> - social economy & entrepreneurship supporting
<b>A foundation</b> - youth work, entrepreneurship, supporting young entrepreneurs, experiential learning	<b>Educational Centre</b> - education, especially use the new technologies in education	<b>A foundation</b> - education, lifelong learning	<b>An association</b> - civic education, legal education, culture education through cultural exchanges
<b>Third Age University</b> - non-formal education for the seniors	<b>An association</b> - culture, cultural heritage (plaiting)	<b>An association</b> - youth education; education in the field of sustainable development	<b>A foundation</b> - education through therapy that uses contact with animals; intergenerational integration
<b>A foundation</b> - education/ civil society development			

Asked about the **current work status** in the field of education, all respondents – both the online research and interviews – declared working for a civil society organisation (CSO).

## b) Work Functions

Regarding **the function held in the CSO**, with multiple answers possible, 50.0% of online survey respondents described their function as a person responsible for international cooperation in the organisation, 50.0% as a project manager and 54.5% as a director/manager head/chairperson of the organisation. This indicates that the respondents held various functions in the organisations they worked for, often being both management bodies members and working as international projects managers.

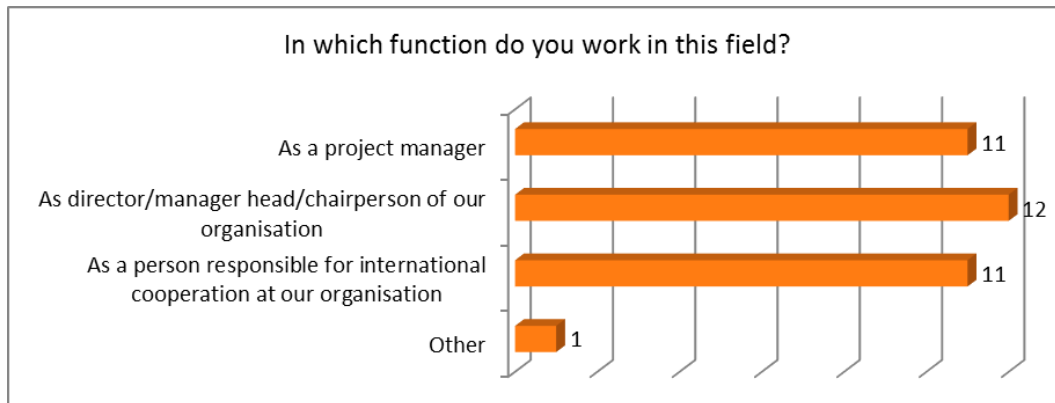


Fig. 18: In which function do you work in this field (multiple answers possible)?; Poland.

This tendency was confirmed during the interviews. Concerning the work status and role of the interviewees in their organisations, quite often – the respondents played many roles in their organisations, depending on current distribution of tasks (project manager/trainer/administration/cultural animation/board member ...). The time of working for the organisation was between 2 and 10 years; experience in working in the NGO (CSO) sector was between 2 and 16 years. The professional background of the respondents was very varied, often – it was more than one faculty (social sciences + economy/management several times).

## c) Experience with International Project Management

Concerning the respondents' **experience in applying for co-financing and realising international projects**, the vast majority of the online survey respondents have already applied for funding to work internationally in their field of action – 81.8% (only 18.2% answered “no”). Most of those who have applied were successful – 77.3% (4.5% answered “no”, 18.2% gave no answer). Asked about how many times have they realised an international project, 45.5% of respondents answered “5 times or more”, 22.7% “2-4 times”, 9.1% “once”.

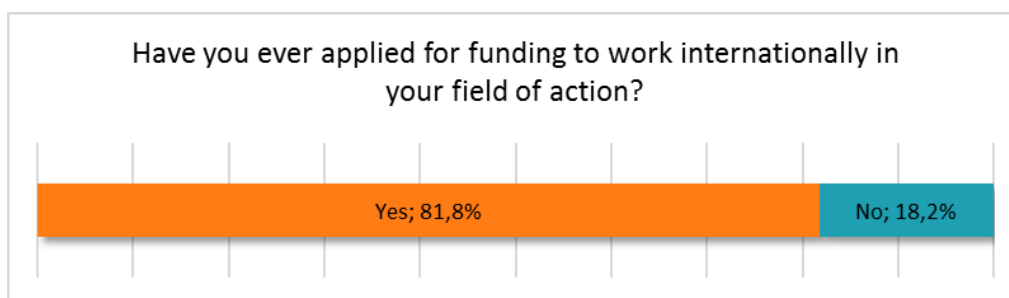


Fig. 19: Have you ever applied for funding to work internationally in your field of action?; Poland.

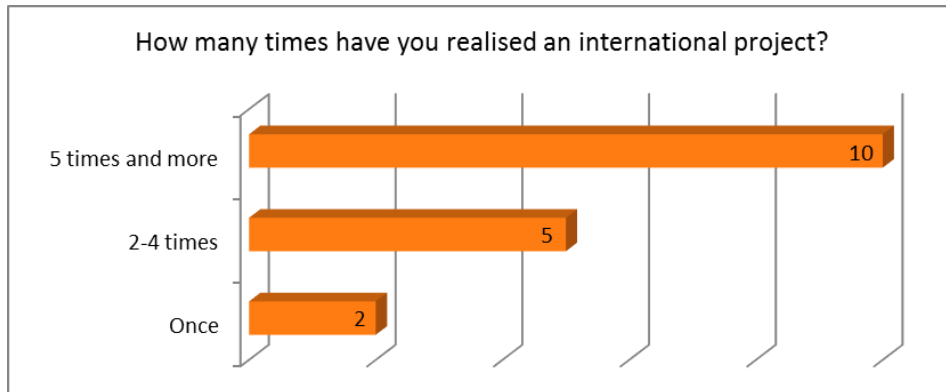


Fig. 20: How many times have you realised an international project?; Poland.

Regarding **the role the respondents' organisation played in the implementation of the international projects**, 88.2% declared being a coordinator/lead partner and 76.5% - being just a project partner. Since it was a multiply choice question, the answers indicate that some of the CSOs the respondents represented have experience both as a project partners and as coordinators.



Fig. 21: What role did your organisation play in the implementation of the international cooperation projects?; Poland.

**Asked how many times the interviewee/an organisation represented by him/her applied for and how often did they realise international cooperation project**, the answers were as follows:

- Applied: from several to around 100;
- Realised: 8 to 25 (experienced; group A & B);

The interviewees applied/realised projects within most of the available for CSOs programmes, such as Erasmus+ and former ones (Grundtvig, Comenius); Creative Europe, RITA, Europe for Citizens, Visegrad Fund, Horizon, Norway Grants, Euro-regions, cross-border programmes, ...

The **main topics of the international projects the interviewees applied for/realised** were very varied. Among others, there were: musical education/new technologies in education/bee-keeping (apiculture)/cooperation of schools/cooperation of enterprises/journalism/ethnographic research, exhibitions, workshops/cooperation with volunteers/gender equality/activation of women, youth/seniors/personal development/ecology/sustainable development/entrepreneurship/active citizenship/experiential learning/cooperation with the media ...

Having both experience in being a project partner and project leader among the experienced group (i.e. experienced international project managers – group A, and management bodies members of the CSOs experienced in international cooperation – group B) was also confirmed at the interviews. The respondents asked about the number of international projects applications submitted mentioned the ones they were leaders for. There were many more where they were project partners.

Asked **how many times their applications for co-financing international projects were unsuccessful**, most of the online survey respondents who applied already chose the option “5 times or more” (44.4%), and 27.8% “2-4 times”. There were two persons who answered “never”. Asked about the **reasons for unsuccessful application(s)**, most of the respondents who have already applied unsuccessfully thought the reason was that the evaluation score was not high enough (81.3%). 68.8% chose the answer “the positively assessed application was put on the substitutes list and at the end there was too less budget to fund it”, and 6.3% that “the organisation that applied resigned from the project realisation” (multiply choice question). Three of the respondents named other reasons, such as “donkey reviewer”, “the partner organisation did not comprehend the aim of the program” and “I don’t know”.

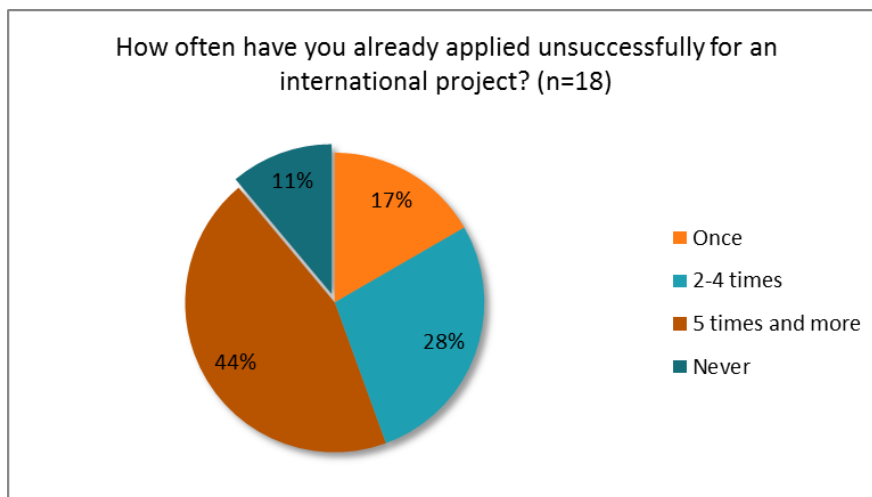


Fig. 22: How often have you already applied unsuccessfully for an international project?; Poland.

There were **some more possible reasons for unsuccessful applications** named by the interviewees, including:

- Strong competition;
- Too little money;
- Not well enough developed application/ low quality of the proposal;
- Unclear rules of assessment/ 'hidden agendas' of the evaluating experts;
- Evaluating experts who have not understood the project idea/underappreciated the project idea (innovative concepts);
- Forgetting about the priorities;
- Not the “right address” for the idea.

Drafting a slight difference in answers between the experienced and inexperienced project realisers, the experienced gave more possible reasons. This group is also more aware of the fact that

even good applications do not get co-financed sometimes and this is not a reason to get discouraged.

All the respondents who had not applied for international project funding yet answered the question "Are you interested in working internationally in your field of action?" with "Yes".

#### d) Motivation for International Cooperation

The persons, who declared that they are working as **international project managers**, were then asked about their motivation to do the job. When it comes to motivation to implement international projects, most of the online survey respondents to the high degree agrees with the statements "It is necessary to connect with people by crossing borders" (89%) and "I like the exchange with people from other countries in my field of work" (88%). 78% to a high degree agrees with the statement "I want to learn from approaches in other countries", and 67% with the statement "It is an additional possibility to raise funds". Most of the respondents deny that there was no concrete motivation behind trying international cooperation (78% of answers "to a low degree"/"not at all"). Only 44% of the respondents declare that they were just appointed by their organisations to do the job.

Asked about other motivations to implement international cooperation in an open question, the **experienced international projects managers** also named:

- The possibility to visit and live for a moment in other countries;
- Cooperation with the people from various countries – which makes it able to see the world from different perspective;
- Possibility to work using other language than the mother tongue. Intellectual challenge related to designing international projects;
- A wish to use the experience in the field, gained during the professional work, for the benefit of a Third Age University after getting retired;
- Meeting new people, learning their experiences, the possibility to exchange observations at common meetings;
- The possibility to get to know new persons, widening the horizon of thought, widening cultural as well as mental horizons;
- Working towards a common goal with very various people, especially the young people, who are open and full of enthusiasm to work;
- Personal satisfaction from this kind of work.

The interviewed experienced international project managers also mentioned:

- Travelling and learning in an international environment as a hobby/passion;
- "Creative strain" when people from different cultures meet;
- Joining something pleasant with something useful;
- Aiming at building sustainability of the CSO.

The persons who declared they hold the role of **managers/management bodies members** of the adult learning sector civil society organisations were also asked about their motivations to implement international projects in the organisations they manage.

Asked about their motivations, 72.7% of the management bodies members agree with the statement (“to a high degree” / “to some degree”) that to develop the organisation, it is important to learn from approaches in other countries and that it is necessary to connect with people by crossing borders. For 68.2% the motivation also was to use an additional possibility to raise funds. Only 22.7% of the respondents in this group declared their organisations not at all are members of international networks that would initiate common projects. 59.1% disagree with a statement that there was no concrete motivation to try the international cooperation. Again, it indicates that decision about entering into international cooperation is usually taken consciously by the management of the organisations.

The management bodies members were also asked about additional motivations to implement international projects in the organisations they manage in an open question. Among the ones mentioned were:

- Willingness to use experience at international projects implementation, acquired during professional work, for the needs of the Third Age University;
- Desire to travel as a part of the professional tasks;
- Empowering a dance project through involving persons from other countries;
- Personal preference for this area of work;
- Gaining access to new knowledge, experiences, working methods, contacts – which allows the organization to develop;
- Belief that cooperation and team work are more effective.

The interviewed management bodies members also mentioned:

- New markets (for selling products and services) (B – experienced);
- Reaching for new sources of co-financing (B);
- Curiosity/ new experiences/ exchange – philosophy of life/ gaining new perspectives (B);
- Willingness to use existing international contacts (B);
- Willingness to share own achievements (B);
- „It seems a natural stage of the CSO development” (B);
- Widening areas of activities (D – unexperienced);
- Searching for new ideas and good practices (D).

Common for **experienced international project managers and management bodies members** seems the way of taking decision about entering in international cooperation. It is not taken by chance. It seems to be a conscious decision, following inspiration and encouragement of one or more already experienced persons.

When it comes to motivation for realising international cooperation, the **experienced management bodies members** want to use existing contacts, develop them, but also to share own achievements. By some of them, international cooperation is seen as a natural stage of the CSO development.

The **unexperienced ones** are searching for new perspective and development possibilities for their organisations.

Language issue was signalled as a challenge by interviewed representatives of **all the four groups** (A, B, C, D).

### III. Indicators of Success

#### a) Support from management bodies

The persons declaring working as **international projects managers** were asked if they did receive any kind of support from their employing / commissioning organisation to apply for or to implement international projects. 69.2% of the project managers answered this question; the answer of two thirds of them was “yes” and the answer of one third was “no”.

Only 72.7% of the **managers and management bodies members** answered the question, if the organisation they manage offer support for the responsible managers applying for or implementing of international projects. Among those, the answer of 56.2% was negative, and the answer of 43.8% was positive.

Summarising the interview results, **neither the managers nor management bodies members interviewed** described any systematic support system offered by the organisation. It was mostly immediate support, such as advice from more experienced organisation member when needed. Usually all the persons involved in the project realisation support the project manager. Good cooperation with the accountant is regarded as a key support. There is no systematic support in small organisations (sometimes local government supports, sometimes the colleagues).

In more detail, the support may look as follows:

- The head project manager teaches the others;
- The manager receives formal support from the board;
- The manager runs the organisation with a colleague – who supports him;
- The other team members who cooperate, support;
- The board ensures the new person in the organisation is participating in international events; create supporting atmosphere;
- The board encourages the new persons in the organisation to write their projects – give advice, consult;
- The two managers have divided responsibilities – one person does international project; the other – local.

What else is needed? According to the interviewees:

- More support at financial management;
- Some tools supporting project management (supporting managing multiple projects);
- Upgrading administration;
- Someone else to do the administration and personnel administration;
- A budget – to be able to employ new person;
- Some management programme implementation – *“still it would be a challenge to use it consequently”* (experienced international project manager);
- Clear rules of cooperation with the project manager from the very beginning.

**Based on the online research results, it is hard to define any good practice concerning support for international projects managers.**



The main conclusion from the interviews is that people learn mostly at work, by themselves (learning on own mistakes) or from more experienced peers in their organisations.

## b) Educational Offers to Upgrade Competences

The **international project managers** were also asked if they use any educational offers to upgrade their competences, on their own. Here, 59.1% of the respondents did not answer this question; among those who answered, 31.8% said “yes” and the answer of 9.1% was “no”.

Quite little respondents answered the question concerning forms of upgrading competences chosen by the **international project managers** on their own (31.8%). Among those, who answered, most popular seems to be schoolings and workshops (31.8% answered they have used this form of education at least once), followed by conference/symposium (27.3% answer “yes”) and webinars (22.7%). Job-shadowing was least popular form of skills upgrading. Unfortunately, 68.2% of respondents did not answer this question at all.

Most of those respondents, who have used some educational offer, declare they do it 2 to 4 times per year (22.7%).

**The interviewees** though declared various forms of upgrading competences: often e-learning courses, participation in information meetings organised by the grant providers, webinars. The events attended were organised rather in the country (the costs).

There were various preferences observed (some of the respondents preferred online education, some – face-to-face education). Upgrading competences was declared by 3 respondents from the group A and two respondents from the group B. “*Yes: international trainings. It’s helpful – upgrades competences*” (A). Those who prefer “learning by doing” than taking part in schoolings or workshops, reasoned:

- “*No – in the field of management, because I have participated in numerous projects and learned there*”. (A/B)
- “*Not really. Rather learning by doing, using the others experience*”. (A)

To summarise – you may ask if the reason for such answers is lack of proper educational offer that would be attractive for international project managers, lack of time to take part in it, or maybe rather lack of the custom to upgrade competences at external training events.

## c) Special Indicators

Asked about if they have ever **taken part in (an) international project(s) as a participant** (not as project manager or organisation representative), most interviewees answered “yes”. Many were participating several times and with various roles („*I have participated in each possible role*”). In sum:

A – Experienced international projects managers: 4

B – Experienced lead staff/managers/management bodies members of A.L. CSOs: 3

C – Inexperienced international projects managers: 2

D – Inexperienced Lead staff/managers/management bodies members of A.L. CSOs: 0

The more experienced interviewees agreed that participation in the international projects (as a participant, observer, support for project team member) should be an immanent element of learning the international project managers job.

Asked about what **field of professional education is most relevant for working as an international project manager**, the interviewees presented quite various perspectives.

- „It depends on the person; still – economy/management makes the life easier“.
- „Management (since you get the technical aspect + social aspect – how to manage the team)“.
- „There’s no. Maybe interdisciplinary social studies. The manager must have both technical knowledge and merits knowledge in the field“.
- „It doesn’t matter. It’s not about education, but about competences. What’s important: financial matters, budgeting, effective communication“.

Others educational backgrounds mentioned were: law, international relations, sociology – preparing to work with people.

## IV. Challenges for International Project Management

### a) Challenges for Implementing International Projects

Based on the online survey results, it is hard to identify the biggest challenges that appear for the international projects managers when applying for or implementing international projects.

The answers are quite equally spread between the four answer possibilities (“to a very high degree”/ “to a high degree”/ “to a very low degree”/ “not at all”). *The biggest challenge that appear when applying for or implementing an international project for the **international project managers** seems to be not having enough skills that would be especially necessary in international cooperation projects* (33.3% of answers “to a very high degree”/ “to a high degree”). Still, 66.7% agree this is a challenge to a low degree/not at all.

44.4% agree that a challenge is “not getting enough support from an employing / commissioning organisation”, while 55.6% agree with this statement to a very low degree/not at all. Other challenges asked about in the research were:

- “I do not have enough general project management skills” (33.3% agree, 66.7% disagree);
- “I do not know enough about the demands on how to design successful applications for EU programmes” (33.3% agree, 66.7% disagree);
- “I do not get sufficient support from other members / the team of the organisation I am working for” (33.3% agree, 66.7% disagree).

40.9% deny that they do not see any benefits for themselves / their organisation in international cooperation. The conclusions that might be driven from answers to this question are diminished by the fact, that only 59.1% of the managers answered this question.

Asked about the challenges that appear for the international projects managers when applying for or implementing international projects in an open question, the international projects managers named the challenges related to:

- Formulating the content of the project application and the amount of time it consumes (*“the Erasmus+ application is quite long and complex, and you need to devote a lot of time for the process of its preparation.”/ “Each time, the challenge is the amount of work you need to devote to designing and describing the project idea – which does not always result in receiving co-funding”*);
- Not always being able to count on the colleagues’ support while implementing the project (*“I sometimes lack knowledge (or maybe rather a sense of) how to accomplish certain tasks or how to organize certain events”*);
- A challenge to motivate the members and the board of the organisation to realise international project for the first time (*“It was a great challenge to motivate the ... Third Age University members, who are elderly persons, pensioners, to realise the activities planned in the project actively. There were many concerns at the beginning, that they will not cope with the activities, especially with communication in English - which was the language of the international courses. Still, at the project implementation stage, everything went well”*).
- Combining the merits and the administrative work – at the stage of project implementation.
- Working with organizations / people who *“...turn out to be involved in too many projects at once, which sometimes results in poor quality of the work delivered”*.

Concerning the **reasons for successful applications**, the interviewees mentioned:

- Compliance of the project with the co-financing programme + a good response to the needs of the grant provider/ well addressing the programme priorities/ technically well described;
- Presenting well the project idea and planned activities; well-thought-of project concept; Addressing the current “trends on the market”;
- Measurable, clear, logical; just cool;
- Applying where you have a chance (probability of success; checking “less popular” fields).

## b) Challenges for Supporting Project Managers

The **managers/management bodies members** of the adult learning CSOs were asked similar question, to be answered from their perspective: “Which kind of challenges appear for your organisation when trying to support your managers of international projects?”. Here only 31.8% of respondents answered the question (36.4% in one case).

To start, 59.1% disagree with the statement that the international project managers do not want to make use of the offered support, and 45.5% denies that the organisation they manage does not want to offer support for international projects. Concerning the challenges – similarly as it was for the international project managers – the positive (that something is a challenge) and negative answers (that something is not a challenge) are spread quite equally. Significant difference may be noticed just for the answer option “We lack time for offering support”, where 45.5% of the respondents agrees with this statement (“To a high degree”/ “To some degree”), and 22.7% disagree (agree “to a low degree”/ “not at all”).

Other challenges asked about in the research were:

- “We do not have knowledge about general possibilities of support” (36.4% agree, 31.8% disagree);
- “We do not have knowledge about methods of support” (36.4% agree, 31.8% disagree);

- "We lack financial resources to offer support" (45.5% agree, 36.4% disagree);
- "We have no access to competent people to build a project team" (31.8% agree, 36.4 disagree).

Asked to add more challenges the respondent's organisation has been confronted with in an open question, there were mentioned by the management bodies members:

- *"For one of the trainees (intern) at the organisation – doing the works related with project administration and documentation turned out to be too boring; she imagined the work for an NGO differently. She quit."*
- *"Lack of stability in running the international project".*
- *"Small number of the organisation's workers; difficulties in recruiting involved, valuable volunteers supporting our activities".*
- *"Before writing the project, acquiring international partners for cooperation in the project, initiating the contact and further cooperation were the challenges".*

Asked, which kind of possibilities would they see to overcome these challenges, the adult learning CSOs management bodies members mentioned:

- *"There is a lack of a comprehensive approach to the implementation of international projects and the creation of a team for this purpose. The work is mainly based on the experience of individuals, who usually implement the project alone. Language skills are also a challenge. There is a lack of awareness that it takes time, commitment and patience to learn how to implement international projects."*
- *"Initiating new international contacts, cooperation in an international partners network".*
- *"I do not really see any possibilities [to overcome the challenges that appear for my organisation when trying to support your managers of international projects]. The administrative work is an immanent part of running an international project. Our organisation is too small to employ a specialist dealing just with the administration."*
- *"Taking part in appropriate trainings (courses) and watching others doing the job. Study visits to other organisation, that have experience in the field."*
- *"Widening the project team - involving in cooperation specialists and volunteers; updating/adjusting the internship programme in the organisation".*
- *"This is the complex issue at this point."*
- *"More support programmes for the non-governmental organisations. More co-financing for the third sector [i.e. CSO sector]."*

### c) Application and Realisation Stages

The **interviewees** were asked to differentiate the challenges characteristic for the application stage and those characteristic for the realisation stage. The challenges named were:

At the level of applying for co-financing:

- *"To know what you want and being able to write it";*
- Risk assessment;
- Necessity to devote a lot of time – still the result is unknown;
- Some ideas are not understood by the evaluators;
- Challenge with combining the current work with writing applications;

- Building the partnership, finding a good partner, formalities (for ex. signing cooperation letters, finding common points of interest).

At the level of project realisation:

- Finding a trustworthy partner and a person skilled in working internationally;
- Good communication with the partners;
- Working in dispersed teams;
- Project participants recruitment;
- „Hygiene“ of work (good distribution of tasks, work-life balance);
- Procedures;
- Communication;
- Unequal distribution of work, unequal effort;
- Problems with motivation to work;
- Busy partners;
- Problems with the language;
- Little money for management;
- The fact that E+NA does not support project at the realisation stage;
- Little tools making the project management easier;
- Financial liquidity challenge;
- Difficulties to find a good employee – ability to employ (insufficient/irregular financing);
- Differences in the bureaucratic workload;
- Vulture of work differences, communication, delivering on time.

What are the **pre-conditions to successfully realise international cooperation projects**? According to the interviewees' opinions, these are:

- Well identified problems – well set goals – well designed solutions;
- Finding a good project partner; trust in the project partners;
- Good time management;
- „Intercultural flexibility“ – ability to work with people from various cultures;
- Organisational capacity (competent staff willing to share experience, experienced project manager; interest in increasing competences and international cooperation in the organisation, good command of English);
- Internal motivation of the project partner to realise the project („*feeling it*“);
- Former participation in international projects („*so you would know what it is all about*“);
- Exchange of experiences, showing know-how, learning, increasing competences through trainings, workshops.

## 2.3 Italian Report on Successes and Challenges

By Lorenza Lupini and Luca Bordoni, COOSS

### I. Sample Description

In the period between January 2019 and April 2019, COOSS carried out the ITALIAN SURVEY on SUCCESSES STORY AND CHALLENGES for first time project managers (PM).

The methodology agreed to collect information foreseen an (1) ONLINE OPEN SURVEY followed by targeted (2) INTERVIEWS. Both for the online open survey and interviews, COOSS used the e-form and guidelines proposed by the leader partners of IO1 and then defined and agreed with the whole consortium. Respondents were selected according to the four different target groups identified.

*General field:* CSOs, adult education

*Specific four target groups:* (A) Project Manager / already experienced in Project Management; (B) Manager / already experienced in Project Management; (C) Project Manager / not experienced in Project Management; (D) Manager / not experienced in Project Management.

The main **channels** used to disseminate the **invitation** to the survey have been different from the online open survey and interviews.

#### a) Online Survey

To reach the target group of the online survey respondent, COOSS used several channels:

- e-mail
- personal call (telephone/mobile)
- face to face
- WhatsApp
- Messenger chat
- contact of Italian National Agency they spread the invitation among organisation already applied for Erasmus+ programme.

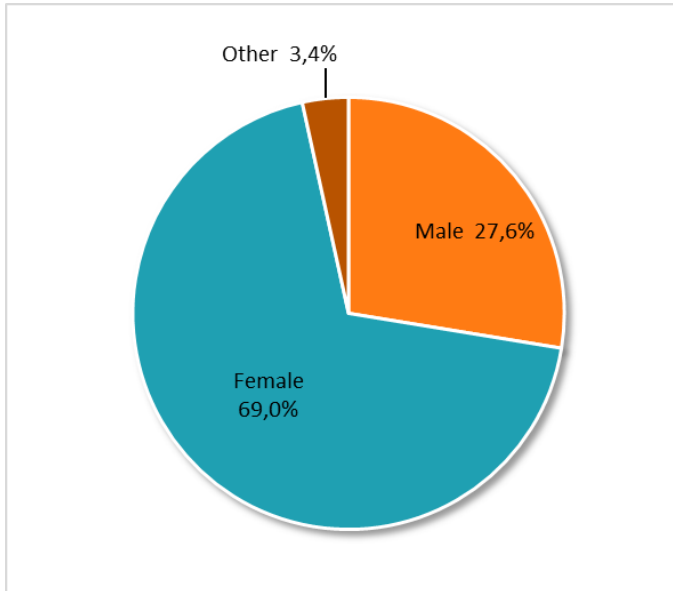
Respondents of the online survey were reached within COOSS network; specifically:

- partners of project, initiatives, courses
- associates
- users of services
- personal contact
- umbrella association

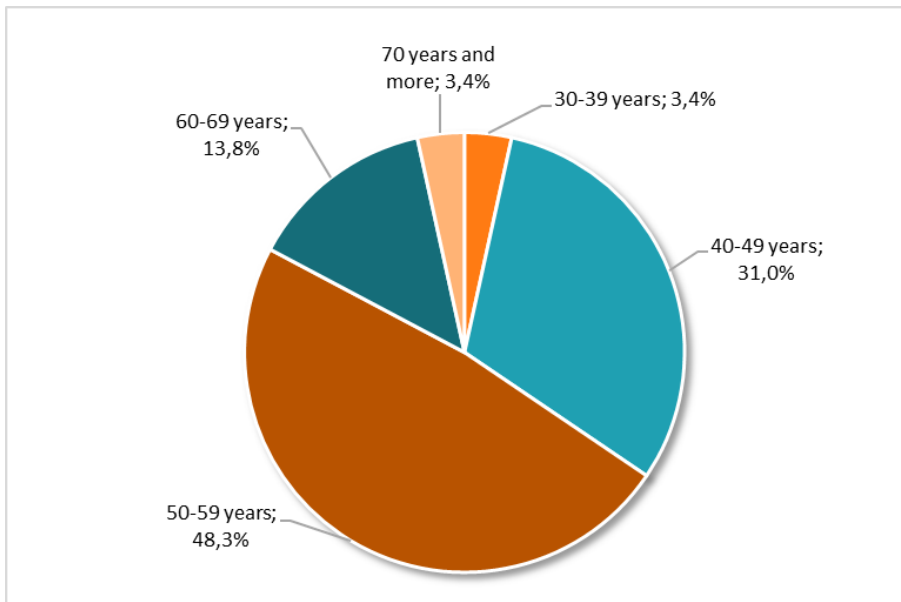
More than 80 invites were sent 18/01/2019 to 25/03/2019 and COOSS totally collected 44 answers about Success Story and Challenges; 29 perfectly fit to the identified target group. In this report part only these 29 answers will be considered.

The online Italian survey reached 29 people that may be included in final target group; among them 20 are women (69%), 8 males (27.6%) and the 3.4% (1 person) answered other.

Several age groups were represented, but the majority (48.3%, 14 people) are 40-49 years old and 30-39 years old (31%); the range 60-69 years old covers the 13.8% and people younger than 29 or older than 70 are only 2, one per group.



**Fig. 23: Please choose your gender; Italy.**



**Fig. 24: How old are you?; Italy.**

All respondents are coming from CSOs dealing with adult education, but the specific fields of professional education are various, as Fig. 25 is representing; it's interesting to underline the fact that the answer "other" as the higher value (37.9%), data that shows the extremely complex and variegated reality of CSO in Italy. Besides "other" definition, the fields of Management/Marketing and Media/Communication are the most represented (20.7% each); to follow social sciences (17.2%),

Pedagogics/Education and Art/Culture (13,8% each), Economy (6,9%), while Law/administration and Engineering have not been answered.

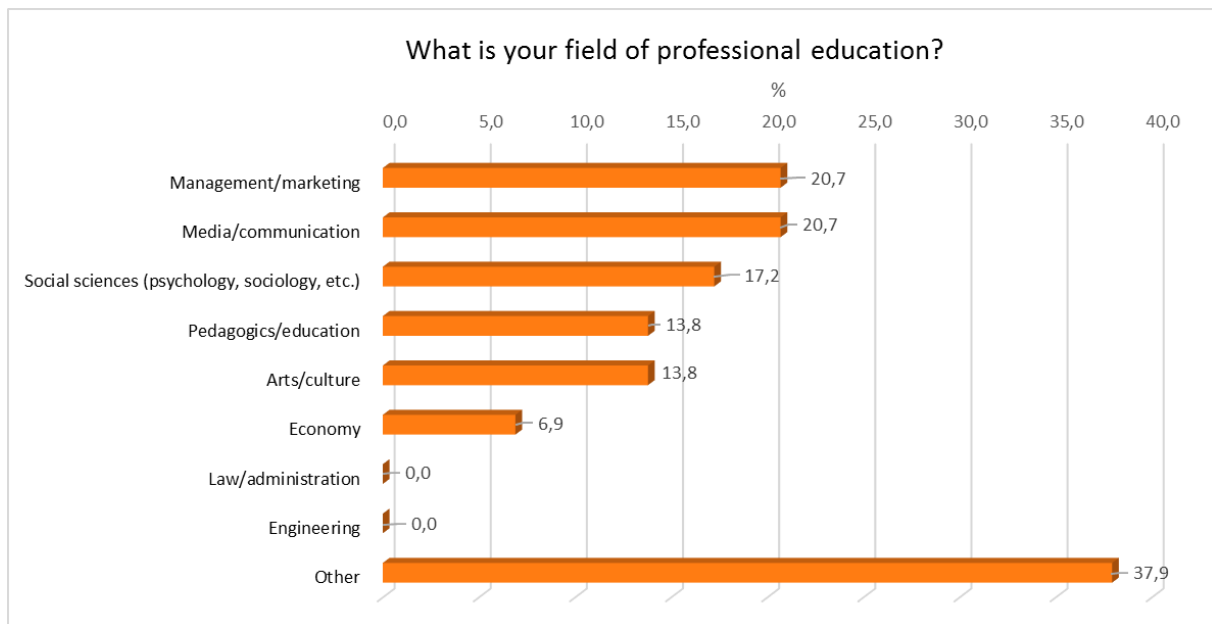


Fig. 25: What is your field of professional education? (multiple answers possible); Italy.

## b) Qualitative Interviews

Group A	Group B	Group C	Group D
Social Cooperative – type B	Social Cooperative – type A	Umbrella organization – third sector	Cultural association
Umbrella organization – third sector	Umbrella organization – association for migrants and refugees	Cultural association	Cultural association
Umbrella organization – association for migrants and refugees	Anti-discrimination association	Umbrella organization of cooperatives	Counselling association

## II. Good Practice in International Project Management in Italy

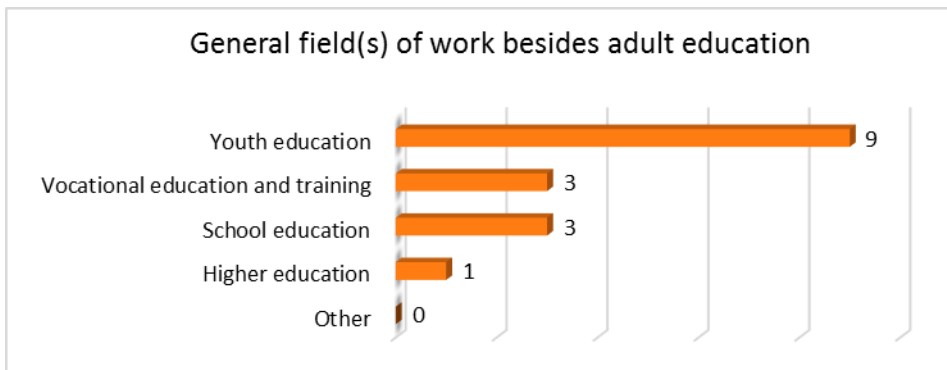
### a) Fields of Work

The 12 CSOs involved in the direct interviews (face to face or by Skype), provided an interesting scenario of regional context. The CSOs respondents belong to a several sectors, such as:

- social, cultural, tourism sector for people with special needs
- migrant and refugees
- Association socially active in combating the LGBT people discrimination

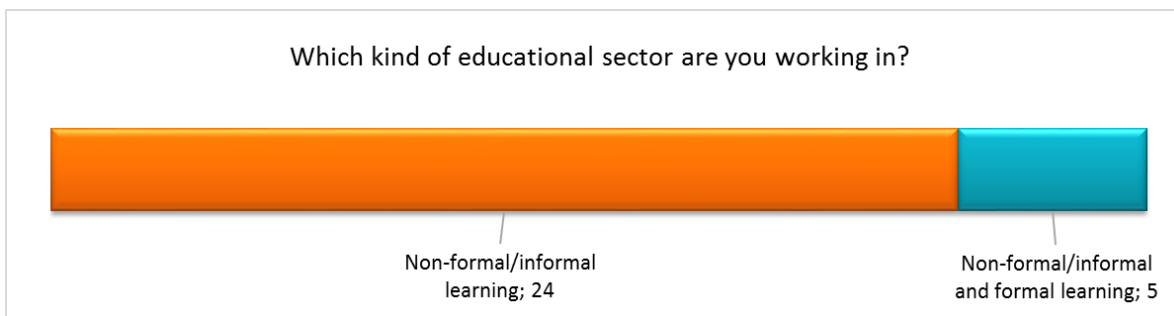


- Association involved in the social sector and local development projects
- strategy and development, social, cultural, innovation and education fields
- support of disadvantage people
- evaluation of EU projects
- promotion of local cultural heritage
- promotion of cultural events
- Umbrella organisation. Vocational and educational training sector
- culture, personal services: counselling, orientation, skills assessment
- autism field: courses for educators, promotion of awareness events, fundraising



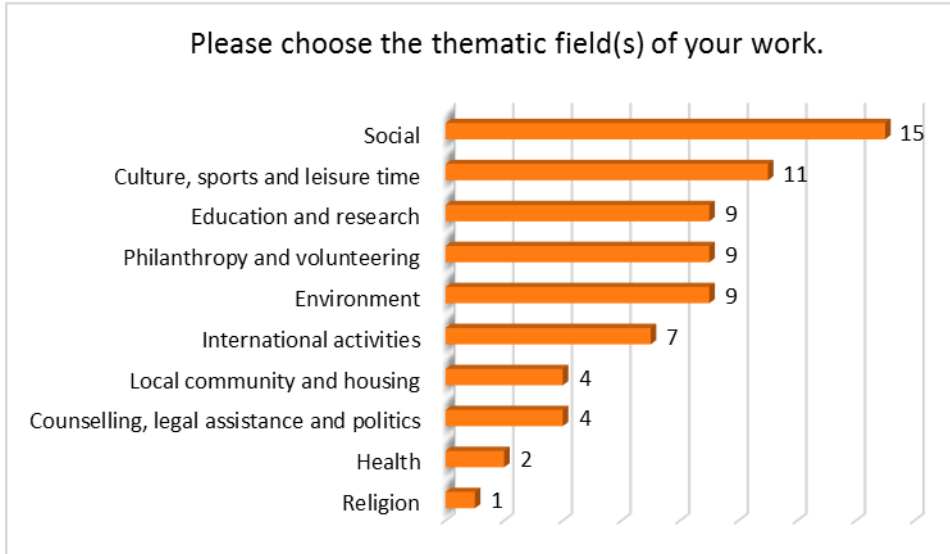
**Fig. 26: Please choose your general field(s) of work within education (multiple answers possible); Italy.**

As regards the 29 Italian CSOs involved in the online survey, most of them work actively in the “Youth education” field (9), 3 operating in the “VET” sector and always 3 work in “School education”. Only 1 respondent belong to the field of “Higher education”. In Fig. 27, instead, the type of learning proposed by the CSOs is shown. 24 persons responded that working in the sector of “non-formal / informal learning”, while 5 also work in formal learning field.



**Fig. 27: Which kind of educational sector are you working in (multiple answers possible)?; Italy.**

Fig. 27 shows the main sectors where the CSOs operate and where part of them have already apply. The main field of work is “Social” sector (15), followed by “Culture, sports and leisure time” (11). The sectors of “Education and research”, “philanthropy and volunteering” and “Environment” involve one-third of the whole sample (9). The CSOs that work on “International activities” are 7, those operating in “Counselling, legal assistance and politics” and “Local community and housing” 4. Only 2 organisations work in the “Health” sector and just 1 in the “Religion” field.



**Fig. 28: Please choose the thematic field(s) of your work (multiple answers possible); Italy.**

All organisations involved in the survey belong to the private sector.

The role of the respondents has been divided in 4 categories, as mentioned in the table above (already experienced group “A and B” and unexperienced group “C and D”, on the base of the role in the CSO). Within these groups the function covered by the Italian declared to be:

- a PM (13)
- a director/manager head/chairperson of CSO (6)
- a person responsible for international cooperation (10)
- other: volunteers (4)



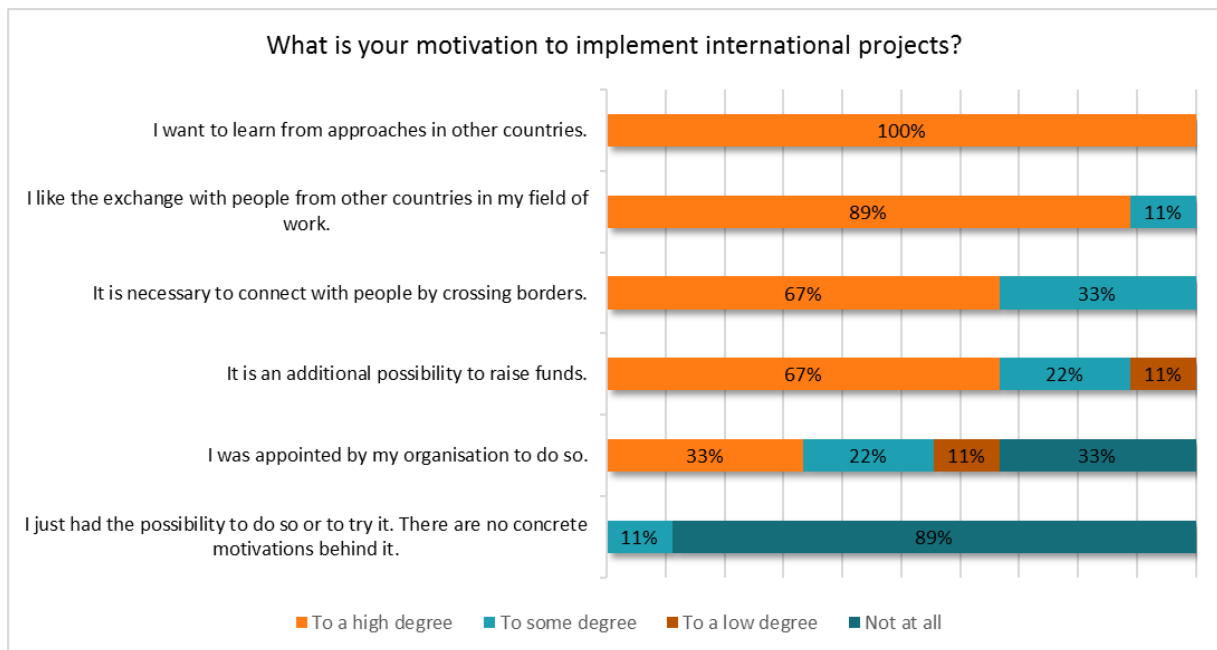
**Fig. 29: In which function do you work in this field (multiple answers possible)?; Italy.**

The 62.1% of the respondents affirm to have already applied for funding to work international, of which the 27.6% for 5 times and more, 6.9% 2-4 times and 10.3% once. The proposals successful applied were 72.2%. The CSOs experienced in EU funds have participated as a partner in the majority of proposals funded (84.6%). The 81.8% of the people unexperienced, instead, answered that would be interested in working internationally in their field of action.

## b) Motivation to Work Internationally

Fig. 30 shows what are the main reasons that encourage a CSO to take part to an international project. The 3 main motivations are the:

- importance to learn “other approaches” come from other countries
- need to “exchange with people from other countries in their field of work”
- necessity to connect people of different countries.



**Fig. 30: What is your motivation to implement international projects?; Italy.**

Other additional motivations provided by the respondents were:

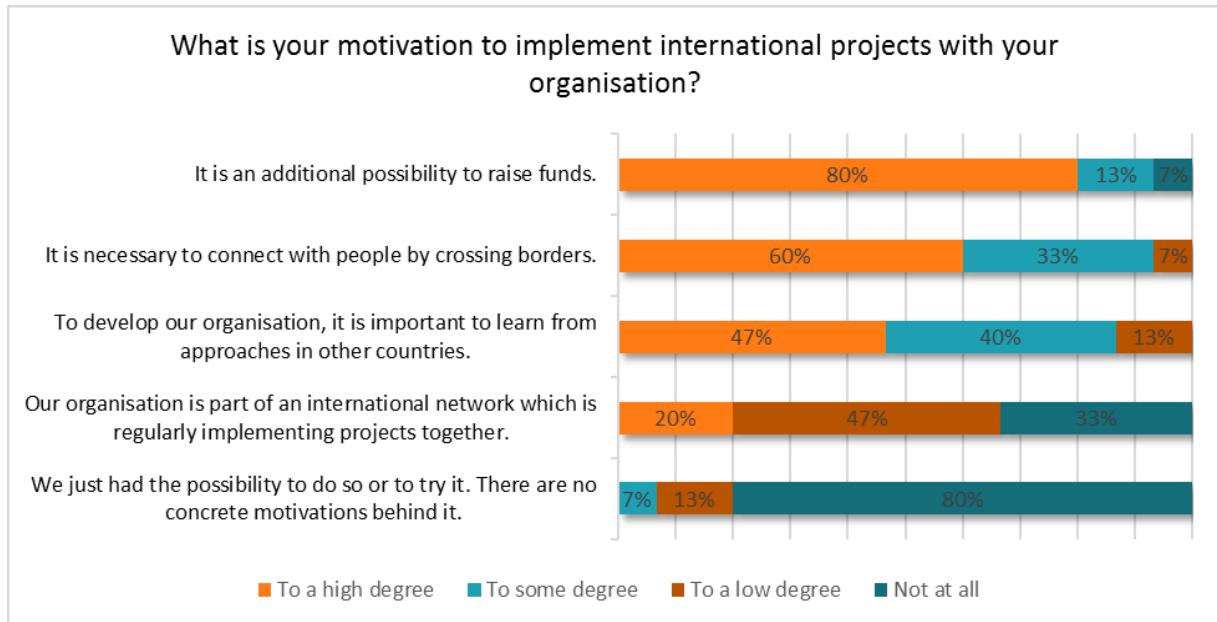
- growth of the association his/her working for
- the sector where he/she works, because it is dynamic, stimulating and offers the possibility of continuous updating
- an important opportunity to obtain funds and carry out innovative activities.

The main motivation to implement an international project (Fig. 31) were:

- necessity to connect people of different countries
- importance to learn “other approaches” come from other countries
- an additional possibility to raise funds.

Additional motivations given by an open question were:

- the mutual enrichment for all involved partners (diversity as an opportunity for growth)
- their topic is often international territories
- their activities and participation in project proposals both at local, national and international level are determined by the synergy existing between the voluntary and beneficiary members who attend our centre. All projects are consistent with CSO's mission.
- the raise awareness of the situation in the areas hit by the earthquake and take back tourism
- their perception as project design consultants.



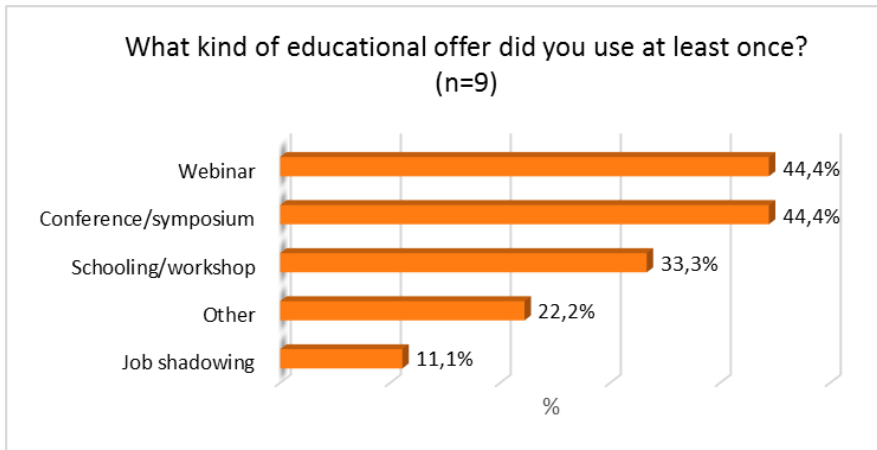
**Fig. 31: What is your motivation to implement international projects?; Italy.**

### III. Indicators of Success

The interviews collected several elements devoted to the international PMs considered key indicators for a successful application. The indicators are to:

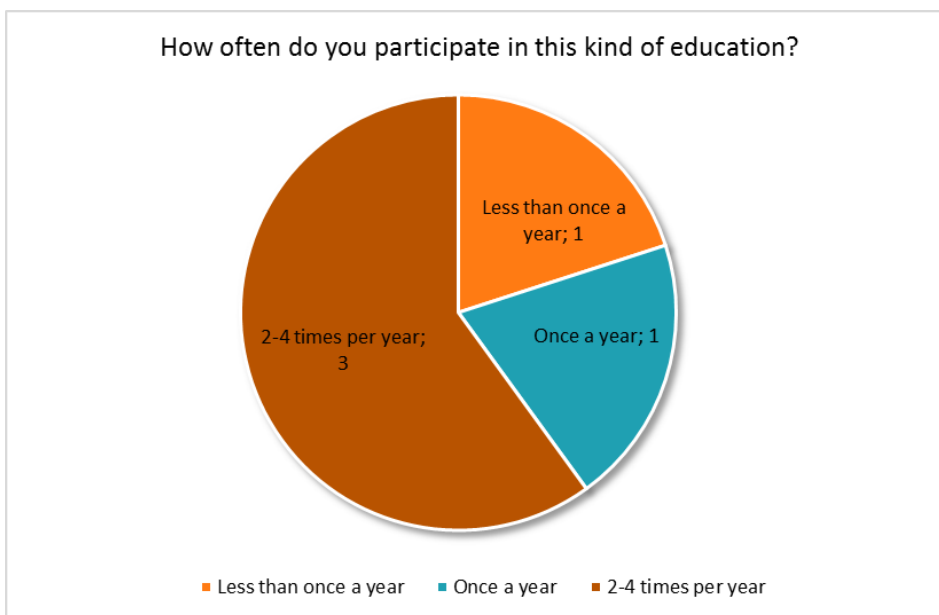
- have a solid background in the sector of reference (i.e. educational, training and counselling field as responsible and PMs of training courses / more than 10 years of experience / etc.)
- have an international project experience in the topic they deeply know
- be part of European network
- have a real and virtual exchange of good practices
- use the AGILE methodology/approach
- include a wide number of stakeholders and beneficiary of the project actions
- adopt the methodology of the project co-design
- have an in-depth knowledge of available programmes
- have a project idea in line with the programme aims and with the list of the EU priorities
- have a good partnership well-balanced
- adopt a previous analysis of the theme
- share a good project idea and common goals with the partners involved
- have a good internal team work
- possess the project management technical skills
- involve experts for supporting some technical and administrative aspects.

The online survey investigated also if PMs are receiving any kind of support from their organisations. 44,4% of the respondents answered that any kind of support was received. The graph below (Fig. 32) shows what kind of educational offer they used at least once to improve their EU skills.



**Fig. 32: What kind of educational offer did you use at least once (multiple answers possible)?; Italy.**

The educational offer mainly used is the “webinar” tool as well as “conference and symposium” (both 44.4%), followed by “schooling and workshop” (33.3%). The “job shadowing” method has been used only from 11.1% of the PMs.



**Fig. 33: How often did you participate in this kind of education?; Italy.**

Three respondents that obtained a form of educational support declare to have used it “between 2 and 4 times per year”. One person has benefited of this support “less than once a year”. Only one other respondent affirms to receive an educational sustain for “5 times per year and more”.

The CSOs are divided into offering support to the responsible manager in the application of the international project, one third declares to support him/her and two thirds do not.

## IV. Challenges for International Project Management

### c) Challenges for Implementing International Projects

The PMs and managers interviewed during face to face survey have been stimulated to share the main challenges encountered for develop and submit an international project.

The PMs that have already applied an EU project underlined the importance of knowledge exchange, contamination and to be part of a European network as opportunities provided by an international project. According to the PM experienced, the challenges to overcome for a first-time international PM are:

- to have a specific training in project management
- need of mentoring
- need of direct contact with people directly working with target group (to design and implement an effective proposal)
- to improve the communication among associates
- to have a stable teamwork
- the capability to approach a specific theme in a more complex way.

The point of view of the managers that have already applied were more or less the same of PM. They promoted the value of the EU network and the exchange of good practices. An added opportunity emerged was the possibility to improve at EU level the perception of minority rights. The challenges provided by managers were:

- the need of a good knowledge of project management, but focused on few programmes
- the necessity to improve ICT competences and cross skills.

The PMs interested to applied consider the participation to an international project as an opportunity to:

- increase the range of services to their users (in term of events, activities, training courses, etc.)
- stand out from other associations
- promote our offers
- make a European exchange of good practices (contents, methods, innovations, etc.)
- intercept funds.

For this third target group analysed the main challenges that hindered they participation in an EU project were the:

- lack of time
- lack of available financial resources (small association)
- lack of internal expertise to manage the process of submission
- low knowledge of English
- inadequate knowledge of technical terms
- need to improve internal skills in order to perform at European level
- presence of eligibility criteria too restrictive in some calls.

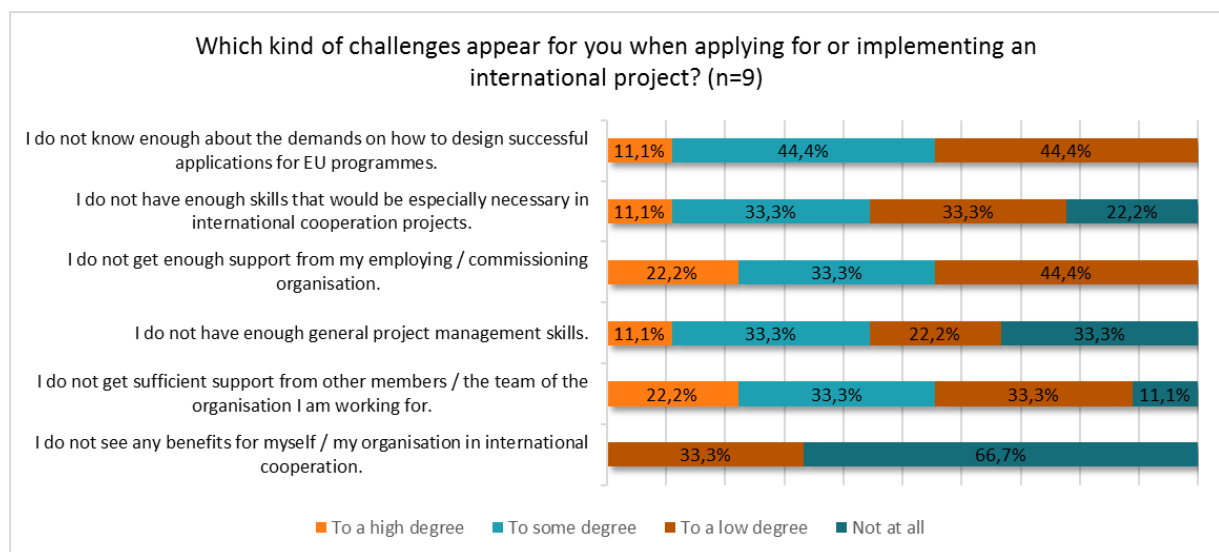
The final group of interviewees was composed by the managers interested to applied in international project. They considered the participation at EU level a good opportunity to have:

- visibility
- brand positioning
- internationalization
- networking
- to share important experience within a specific sector.

The challenges emerged from the managers unexperienced were the:

- lack of internal expertise
- lack of available financial resources (i.e. small association)
- difficulty in the build strong partnership
- low linguistic skills
- lack of administrative competencies.

The subject of the “challenges” was analysed also in the online research (see Fig. 34). The main obstacle chosen by respondents (with high level of degree) was the lack of knowledge “about the demands on how to design successful applications for EU programmes” (with 55.5% of some or high degree). The second challenges emerged for level of degree reached was the lack of “skills that would be especially necessary in international cooperation projects”. The majority of interviewees shown an agreed to consider the involvement in the international cooperation as a benefit for his/her CSO.



**Fig. 34: Which kind of challenges appear for you when applying for or implementing an international project?; Italy.**

Additional “challenges” were provided by respondents and concerned the:

- co-financing
- difficulty in making the employer understand that they need to invest in building relationships, study visits, etc. Difficulty of making the employer understand the importance of formulating project ideas in collaboration with the beneficiaries and not from above.
- difficulties related to lack of competence and poor supervision by a foreign coordinator
- lack of time and lack of resources

- difficulty to be part of a work team with a leader at his first experience of guiding a European project, with little competence in keeping alive the attention and understanding of the objectives to be achieved and little accustomed to participatory cooperative practices.

Analysing the same theme from the point of view of the CSOs managers (see Fig. 35), it emerged that the main challenges for their organisations “when they try to support the managers for participate in an international project” are:

- lack of financial resources
- lack of time.

Conversely, the challenges that obtain "less agree" in providing support to PM were the items:

- PMs do not want to make use of offered support
- our organisation does not want to offer support for international projects.

It emerged that the obstacle is not so ascribable to a will of CSOs managers but above all the lack of immaterial and material resource.



**Fig. 35: Which kind of challenges appear for your organization when trying to support your managers of international projects?; Italy.**

The additional “challenges” provided by managers were:

- the cultural, linguistic and competence barriers
- rigidity of roles and reticence to experience shared leadership
- the complexity of European programs
- to be alone
- the lack of economic capacity to participate in the call for tenders
- to have no experience
- to be a very small and newly developed reality
- to be displaced
- the lack of tools/spaces
- the timing of the calls not suitable for the needs of the moment.



In addition to the obstacles indicated above, the managers proposed some solutions to overcome the challenges emerged, such as:

- the possibility to participate as partner associated
- make the employer / client understand the importance of investing in staff with lasting relationships and offering opportunities for opening up to international partners, training, adopting more practical and result-oriented methods at work
- to continuously participate in calls for funds, so as to predict the critical moment
- to provide someone to help me during the periods of expiration, even outside help.

## 2.4 Hungarian Report on Successes and Challenges

By Marianna Labbancz, Hungarian Folk High School Society

### I. Sample Description

The Hungarian Folk High School Association (HFA) sent its partners e-mails which contained the link for the online survey. The HFA asked more than 100 associations to fill-in the online survey.

There were 16 online survey respondents who fit the direct target group of the research. Two of them are working in the field of formal as well as the non-formal adult education while 14 are working only in the non-formal adult education in civil society organisations.

All 16 respondents work in the field of adult education. Two of them work also in school education, one of them in higher education and six are also busy with youth education.

There were more men (50%) than women (37,5%) taking part in the online survey. (Two persons did not answer the question.) Most of the respondents represented the 60-69 years old age group (37,5%), followed by 70 years and older (25%), 50-59 years old (18,8%), and 40-49 years old (6,3%).

### II. Good Practice in International Project Management in Hungary

#### a) Fields of Work

Concerning the thematic field, most of the survey respondents work in the field of culture, sport and leisure time, or in local community and housing, as shown in fig. 36. One organisation marked itself as folk high school, another one as non-profit Kft. (Ltd.).

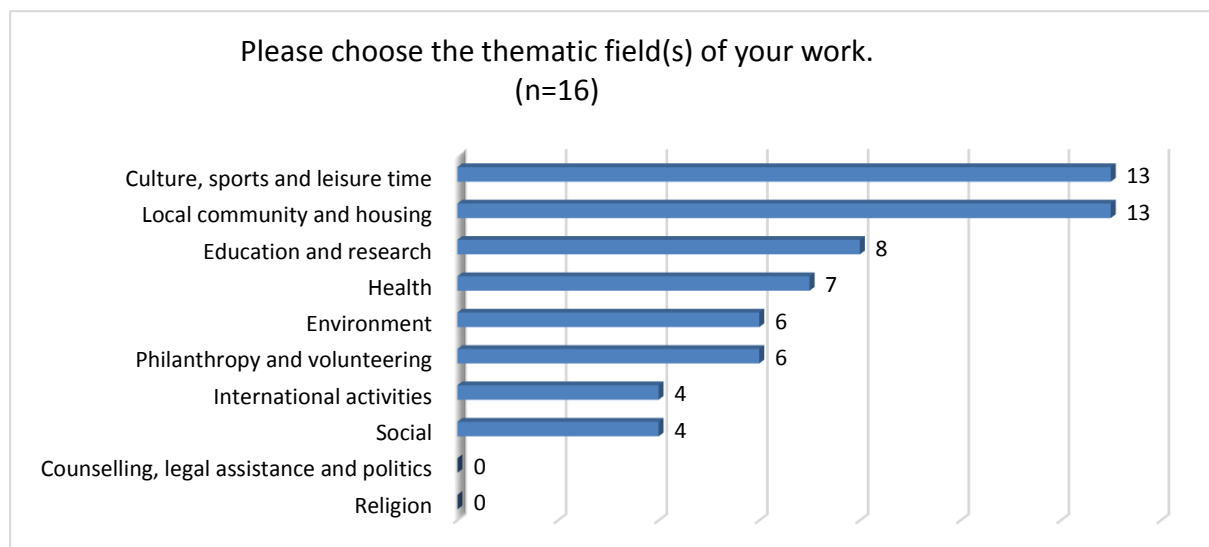


Fig. 36: Please choose the thematic field(s) of your work (multiple answers possible); Hungary.

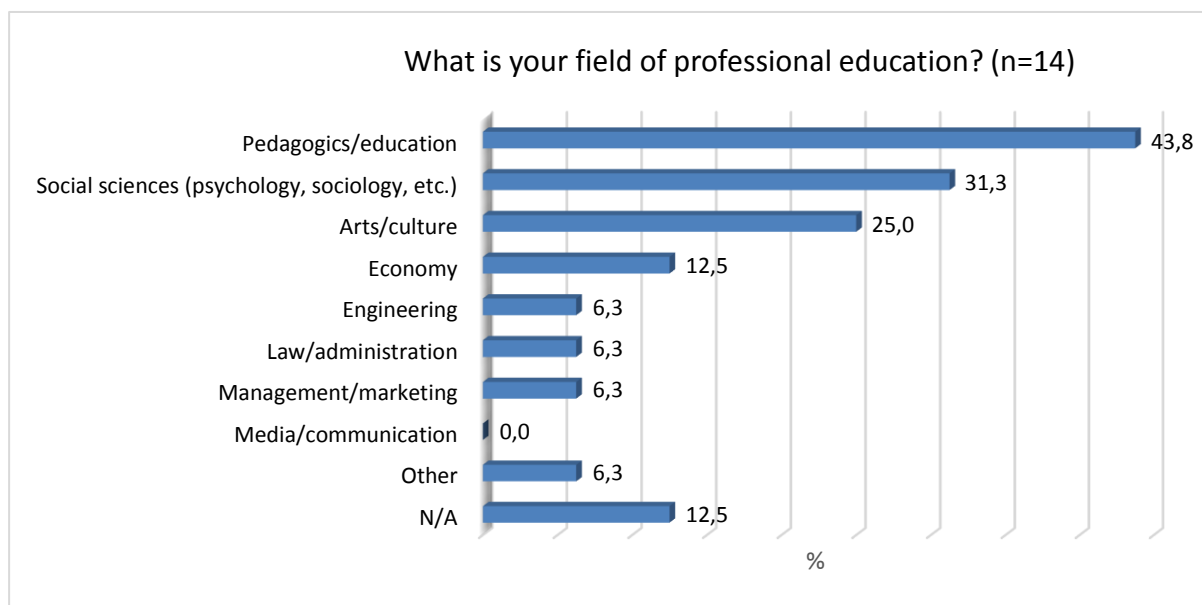
The interviewed CSOs offered a great variety of different thematic fields in the adult education sector, even that through our networks we contacted more basic skill development-oriented organizations. In the case of the organizations that are experienced in international cooperation the thematic palette has the following expertise and organizational types:

- basic skill competence development in marginalized regions (folk high schools)
- environmental education, agricultural education (folk high schools, social cooperatives, regional association of village coordinators)
- skill development with disabilities, courses for disabled citizens and for teachers/trainers (private foundations and local associations)
- education on folk traditions, dances, arts and crafts
- ICT (private foundations and local associations, local foundations managed by the local government)
- competency development in foreign languages and in foreign language training (associations managed by language schools)
- skill development for adult educators (folk high school)
- mindfulness (local associations, private associations)

In the case of the CSOs who are interested but never got involved on any level in international cooperation are mostly support organizations of local governmental providers. In their case their field of action is limited to the public service that they support, for example:

- library related activities (local associations)
- social (re)integration supporting activities, e.g. working with prisoners (folk high school)

In the field of professional education, most of the survey respondents declared that they have an education in the field of pedagogics/education (43.8%), followed by social sciences (psychology, sociology, etc.) (31.3%), arts/culture (25%), economy (12.5%). There were no respondents representing education in the fields of media/communication (Fig. 37).



**Fig. 37: What is your field of professional education (multiple answers possible)?; Hungary.**

## b) Employment, roles and responsibilities

Asked about their function in the field (Fig. 38), eight (50%) of the online survey respondents chose the answer that he/she works as a project manager, seven (43.8%) as a director/manager/head/chairperson of their organisation; and one (6.3%) described his/her role as a person responsible for international cooperation at the organisation.

Four persons chose the answer “other” and defined the role as association secretary, chief financial officer, or volunteer. The answers indicate, that some of the respondents play two or more of the above-mentioned roles in their organisations.

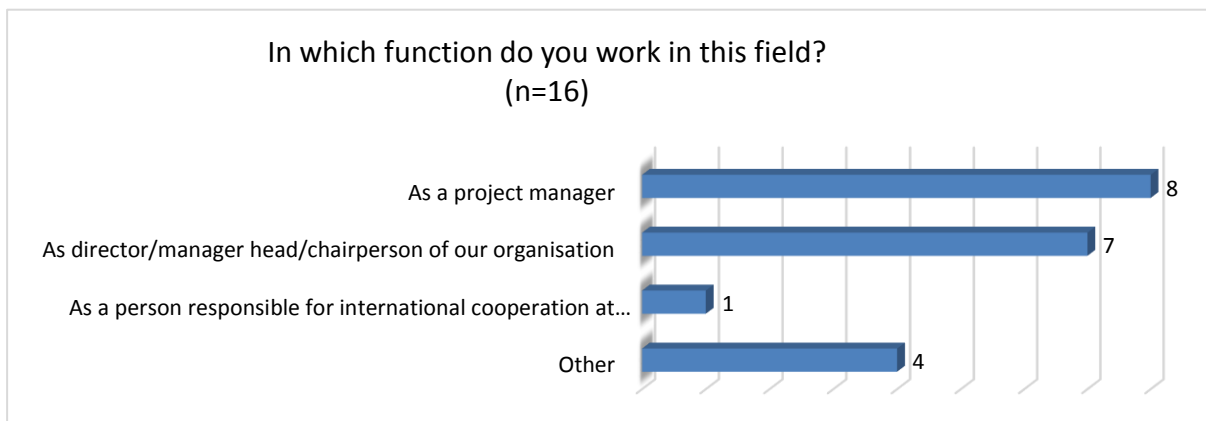


Fig. 38: In which function do you work in this field (multiple answers possible)?; Hungary.

The interviewed directors, project managers and CSO leaders were mostly employed by their associations even if in some cases not full time. On the decision-making level, board members and trustees we find variety based on the level of professionalism, size of the action field and target area of the CSO. While in the case of local CSOs these roles are fulfilled on a voluntary basis and we can only find – or even half time working – employee the bigger more professional associations are working with bigger managing bodies and 3 to 5 employees in general. Regarding international cooperation, it is usual that with support of the project they are able to employ one or even two freelancers or they can support the salary of an already existing employee from the project.

After the interviews, it was clear for us that international cooperation is playing a very important role in the life of the CSOs not only on a level of activates or regarding the financial income than also supporting the cohesion within the CSOs. Activities with foreign partners are great for external connection balding but they can also strengthen the connection within decision makers, employees, volunteers and locals under the umbrella of the CSO.

Most of the interviews mentioned that being part of an international project team for the first time is a huge discovery on an organizational and personal level as well and even if they divided the project related task with the organization everybody was active in some level.

*„It was a serious learning process, which we enjoyed thoroughly. In the beginning, we felt completely lost, because we didn't know the process of application and project implementation. But we were enthusiastic and committed; we went to all the informative events, and slowly learned the ropes. I can say that to some extent, all of our colleagues were involved in the project, which is also a reason for our success”*

The educational background of the interviewed people was mostly in correlation with their thematic fields. It is very common that they hold degrees in pedagogy, andragogy, sociology and social work besides their thematic interest, but only 5% of the examined project managers had a relevant university, college or other course degrees in business or management. One of the interviewed decision-makers – a member of the managing body of a folk high school – referred to this:

*“When we went to our first partner meeting, we didn’t know how we will be able to share our expertise and how the project partners could and would be able to benefit from our participation. We had no idea how this exchange of knowledge and working together will work. But we knew that we dare to ask, we dare to say: we don’t know and we are grateful if it can be driven a bit in the beginning. So whatever degree we had, here, it was only important to be open and speak the same language.”*

### III. Indicators of Success

#### a) Experience and Approach

Among the online survey respondents, 12 (75%) have experience at applying for funding for international cooperation. For 10 (62.5%) of them the applications were successful. Most of the experienced (successful) in international projects realisation four (25%) realised 2 to 4 projects, three (18.8%) 5 or more projects, and three of them (18.8%) realised only one project.

From those of the 10 whose applications were successful, 5 has played the role as coordinator/lead partner. On the other hand, each experienced respondent has played sometimes also the role as another partner.

Questioning, how often they already have applied unsuccessfully for an international project, 12 answered “yes”. Among them, nine (75%) have already applied unsuccessfully 2-4 times, two (16.7%) 5 times and more, and one (8.3%) applied unsuccessfully only once (Fig. 39).

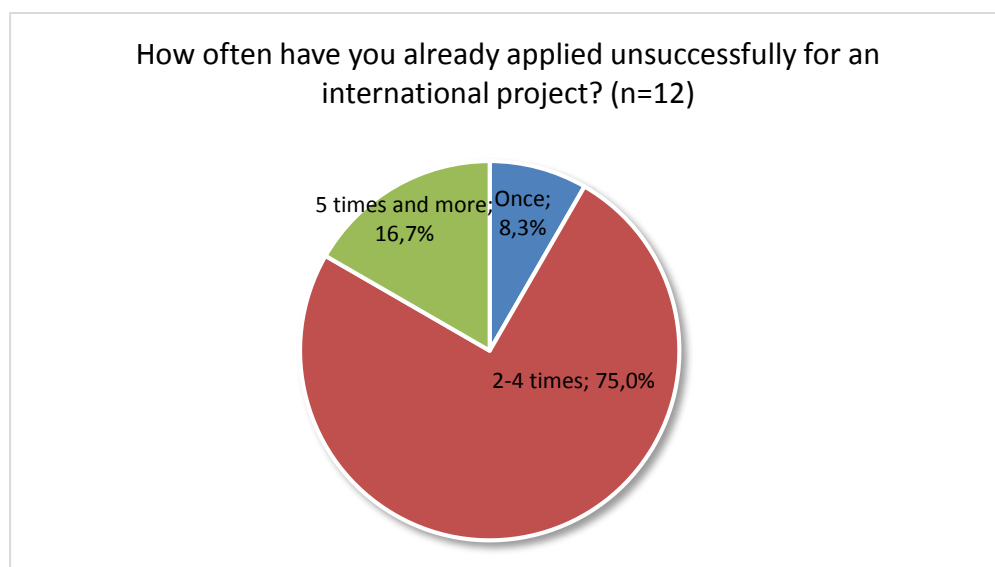


Fig. 39: How often have you already applied unsuccessfully for an international project?; Hungary.

The 12 respondents who had unsuccessful applications were asked, what was the reason for it. The evaluation score was not high enough in cases of nine persons (56.3%), the positively assessed application was put on the substitutes list, and at the end there was too less budget to fund it in cases of five respondents (31.3%).

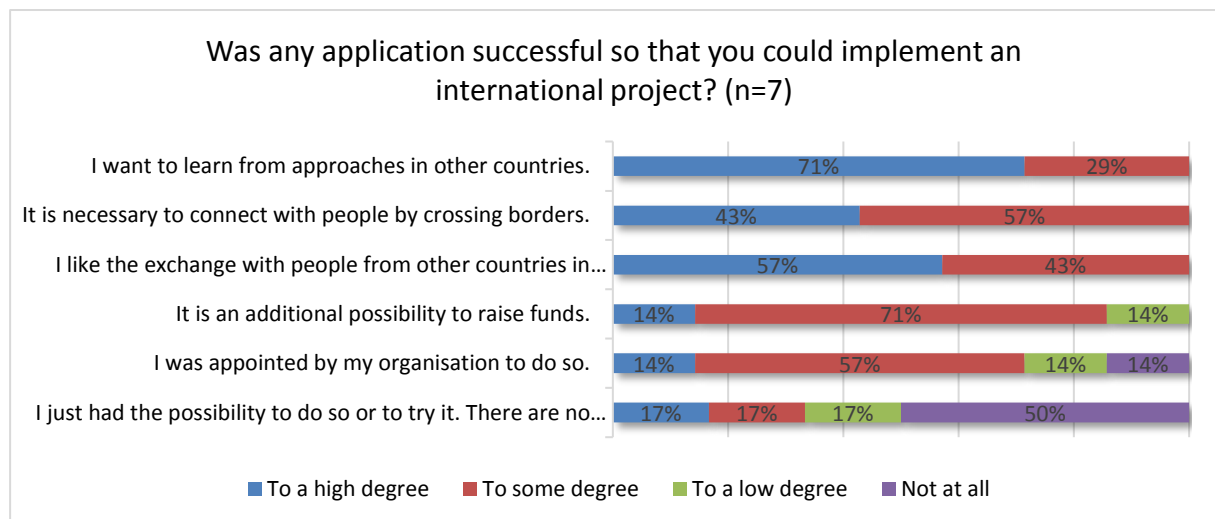
There was only one CSO in our spectrum now, who is continually applying for several types of international programmes and this kind of activity is part of their usual yearly plan. The associations who applied are usually entering in partner role, not more often than 1-3 times per 5 years. The funding opportunities/founding bodies vary as the following:

- Erasmus+, LLP earlier
- Visegrad Found
- European Cultural Foundation
- Different national programmes on supporting cultural cooperation within the Hungarian diaspora, mainly with Romania, Ukraine, Serbia, and Slovakia

The topics of the successful applications are correlating with the action fields of the interviewed organisations, usually with elements of curriculum development, training of trainers, data or information collecting and spreading and pilot courses.

## b) Motivation

On the question, what are the main reasons that encourage a CSO to take part in an international project, most of the respondents answered that they wanted to learn approaches in other countries (71% to a high degree), also they liked to exchange with people from other countries in the own field of work (57% to a high degree), and further that it would be necessary to connect with people by crossing borders (43% to a high degree) (see Fig. 40).



**Fig. 40: Was any application successful so that you could implement an international project?; Hungary.**

When we looked behind the project initiatives at the examined CSOs we tried to map what kind of motivations and ambitions are fuelling the applications on organisational and personal levels.

Practice and learning: Continued learning is important for everybody. Target groups, trainers, and managers need to introduce to new ideas and solutions all the time and international partnerships are sustainable ways of learning on all levels.

Stability and finances: the Erasmus+ project is a great opportunity to have a bone of our activities and partial income for a few years. While it involves a great amount of work and research it also allows us to sustain partially our activities.

Networking and community building: The professional and personal support that we received during our last project cooperation was immeasurable during the very hard past few years that we have to experience here in Hungary as a civil society organization.

### c) Reasons for Success

When we were searching for key elements of success during the interviews it was a term that always came up in different ways and we can summarize it as innovation and flexibility.

*“What I mean by innovation is not particularly mean to figure out something that nobody did before you. It’s more a way of changing the point of view and look to the same unsolved problem from a different angle and with 21st first century solution in your hands.”*

Another underlined element of the successful project realization is the cooperation between the CSO and their target group:

*“I have implemented a number of projects already, with different students, but we always managed to build a team worth cooperating with, and it was a pleasure to work with them, too. I think students should be treated as partners in the case of foreign traineeships, too.”*

When we asked the decision makers and members of the managing bodies at the interviewed CSOs about what are the minimum requirements to be confident to jump into an international project they collected the following factors:

- Language knowledge
- Time & human resource management (do we have staff members able to work on the project and we can pay or do we have dedicated volunteers, who cannot financially benefit from participating in the project?)
- Free resources (finances, time, volunteers, expert help) because of the unpredictable nature of the cooperation
- The right project manager personality and project team members who are not only speaking foreign languages but they speak the “language of the interculturality”

*“It is not enough to be a great expert in an international working group, you also need to be able to quickly be part of the team and get into its rhythm work with its flow not against it, even if you would do differently at home on the national level.”*

Concerning the educational offer used at least once, all the online survey respondents answered schooling/workshop (100%) and conference/symposium (100%). Less used was job shadowing (50%). and webinars (16,7%) (see Fig. 41).

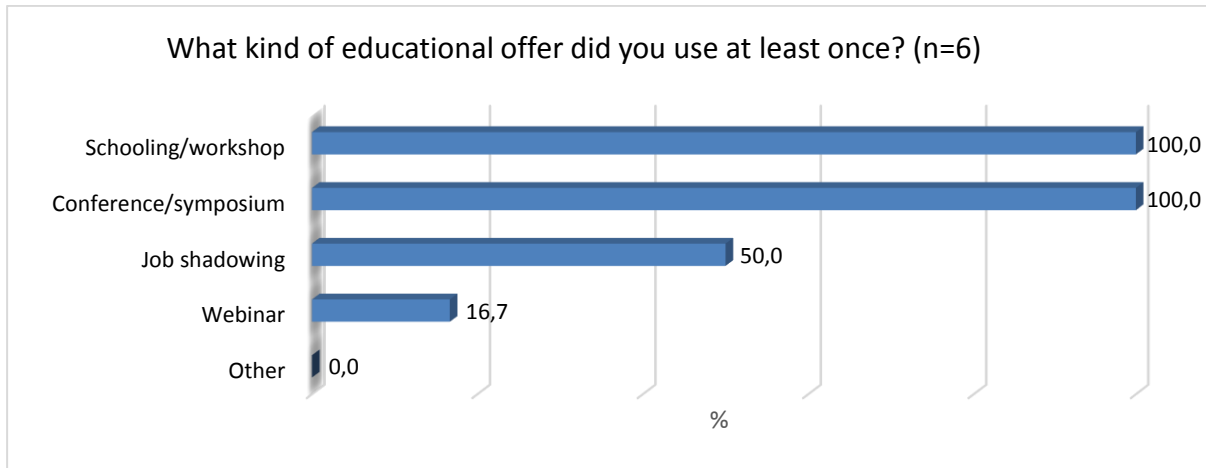


Fig. 41: What kind of educational offer did you use at least once (multiple answers possible)?; Hungary.

## IV. Challenges for International Project Management

### a) Rejected Projects

One of the CSOs participating in the research applied with an ERASMUS+ project idea for several years in a row as a coordinator organization. Using their experience and the others who were partners in non-founded applications we could collect the followings as reasons behind the rejection:

- too many similar applications in the same action filed (learning with disabilities)
- not enough wide range of partners (geographically or type wise)
- not enough detailed evaluation after the rejection to develop the project further for the next application round
- the political situation, the political involvement of the CSOs locally or nationally
- lack of experience in the application writing and process

### b) Difficulties during the Implementation

Those CSOs who participated as partners in international cooperation all mentioned in some ways the importance of the ability to rearrange the plans during the implementation.

*“One aspect of key importance is flexible project implementation. You can always change your plans a little, or reorganize the activities if it serves the project well. Another very important thing is that the host institution should be selected carefully in order to find the right partner. However good an organization or a project plan is, however skillful and hard-working the participants are, nobody is going to feel comfortable in the project if the interests and goals don't meet somewhere if those involved expect different things from the project. The key to the success of our project was that the two organizations matched perfectly.”*

On the question, which kind of challenges appear for their organisation when trying to support their managers, as the most frequent challenge the directors participating in the online survey



mentioned the lack of financial resources to offer support (80%) and lack of time for offering support. A smaller challenge is that the organisation does not want offer support (40% “not at all”) (see Fig. 42)



**Fig. 42: Which kind of challenges appear for your organisation when trying to support your managers of international projects?; Hungary.**

## 2.5 Danish Report on Successes and Challenges

By Hans Jørgen Vodsgaard, Interfolk

### I. The Survey Approach and Respondent Groups

#### a) A Combined Survey

The Danish survey of the successes and challenges for project managers and organisations with international cooperation in the field of adult education in a civil society context took place in the period from January to April 2019.

The survey consisted of an online questionnaire as well as a series of interviews. A total of 35 Danish organisations took part in the questionnaire of which 26 responses have been included as valid respondents from civil society association with key activities in the field of adult education; and 6 respondents that have been engaged in international project cooperation took part in the series of interviews.

#### b) Channels of Invitations

The main channels used to disseminate the invitation to the online questionnaire were:

1. Invitations with link to the online survey send by email to Interfolk's own network and contact lists, including:
  - Civil society associations that are members of the Danish Baltic Sea NGO Network (approx. 40)
  - Liberal adult education networks and associations (approx. 35)
  - Other associations in the field of lifelong learning and culture and heritage (approx. 40)
  - Former Danish receivers of Nordplus Adult grants in the field of lifelong learning (approx. 85)
2. Agreement with the national Cultural umbrella, DFKS that includes nine national associations in the field of voluntary culture and heritage to dissemination the invitation to their own networks (approx. 50)
3. Agreement with the Danish Erasmus+ National Agency to disseminate the invitation to all former applicants to the Erasmus+ KA1 and KA2 programme (approx. 500)

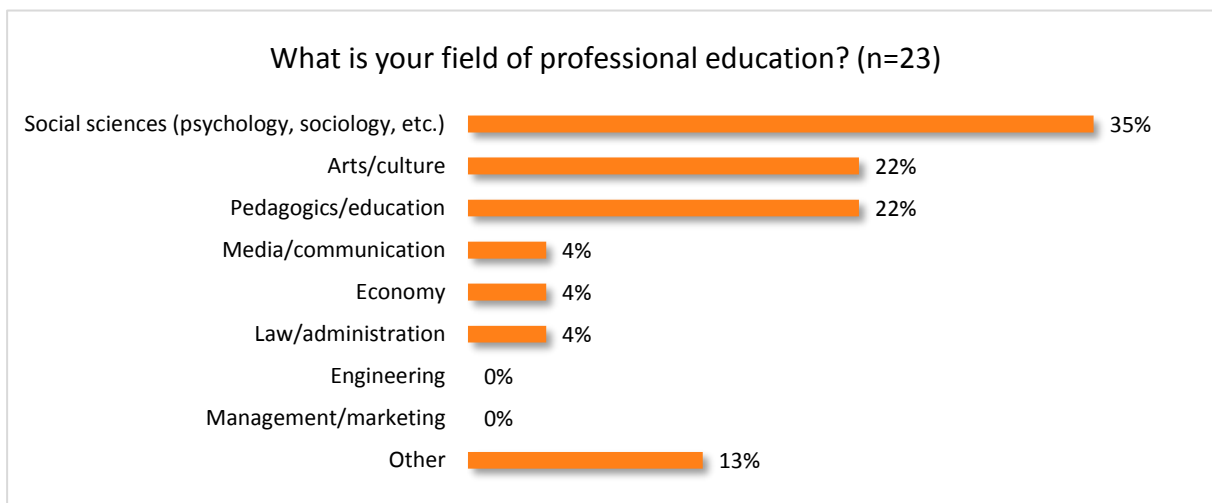
The group of interviewees were found primarily by personal invitations in Interfolk's own network and secondarily by contact to respondents in the online survey that expressed interest in being contacted.

### c) Respondents of the Online Survey

The valid number of respondents to the Danish online survey were 26; and 23 of them answered the demographic questions which show that around two thirds of the respondents (65%) are men and nearly one third (30%) are women, while one other person chose “other”.

Several age groups are represented, where the biggest are people older than 60 years (43%) and the smallest are people between 20 – 39 years (13%), while people from 40 – 49 years and from 50 – 59 years each represent 22%. The relative high age average for the respondents is not surprising, but a general tendency for the cultural area of the Danish civil society sector, where many active are retired seniors that have the free time to be active.

Concerning the educational background, as can be seen in Fig. 43 below, most of the respondents have an education in the field of social sciences (35%), and many have it in pedagogics/education and in Arts/culture (both 22%). Nearly none have it in media/communication, economy and law/administration (all 4%) and none in management/marketing and engineering.



**Fig. 43: What is your field of professional education (multiple answers possible)?; Denmark.**

It may in general not be representative for the Danish field of adult education in a civil society context that the staff and board members have an educational background with such a high level of social science and arts and culture, while a background in pedagogics and education seems more representative when we focus on associations that are active in the field of adult education. The relative high level of people with an education in arts and culture may refer to the network of the Danish partner that include a high degree of associations that are active in the field of participatory arts and voluntary culture.

### d) Characteristic of Interviewees

In all, we interviewed 12 representatives for managers and boards from associations where half already have tried to be engaged in international project work, while the other half could have an interest to try it.

But we only include half of the interviewees in this first Report about challenges for international project work, namely the project managers (group A) and management bodies (group B) that already have tried to be engaged in international project cooperation. In the second Report about competence profiles for international project managers, we include all 12 interviewees.

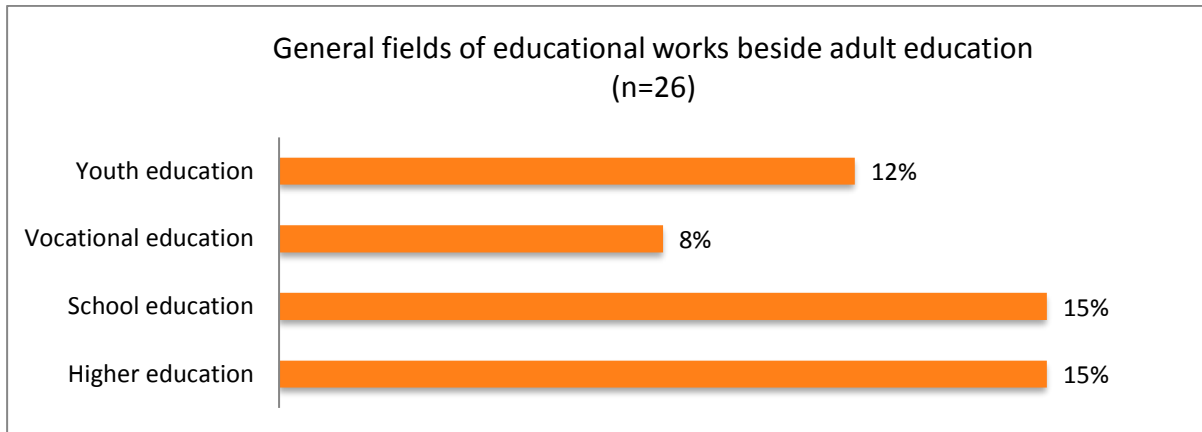
Among the six interviewees included in this Report from group A and B, there were in total 3 men and 3 women. Most of them represented the age groups 50 – 69 years old.

Danish group of interviewees			
Group A: Managers in association that have tried to work internationally	Group B: Boards etc. in associations that have tried to work internationally	Group C: Managers have not tried, but are interested	Group D: Boards etc in associations that not have tried yet.
<b>Manager at a national foundation</b> – active in the field of heritage and lifelong learning	<b>Chairman at national foundation</b> – active in the field of heritage and lifelong learning	<b>Project leader at Folk high School</b> – active in field of non-formal lifelong learning	<b>Chairman of a Folk High school</b> – active in the field of non-formal lifelong learning
<b>Secretary General in a National Culture Association</b> – arts and culture based informal lifelong learning	<b>Chairman in a National Culture Association</b> – arts and culture based informal lifelong learning	<b>Adviser at a national NGO</b> – active in the social and philanthropic field	<b>Board member of the national NGO</b> – active in the social and philanthropic field
<b>Director of an Adult Education association</b> – active in the area of non-formal adult education and lifelong learning	<b>Board member of an Adult Education association</b> – active in the area of non-formal adult education and lifelong learning	<b>Manager at a national health association</b> – active mainly with adults with disabilities including social and cultural field	<b>Chairman of a local environmental association</b> – active in nature protection with related youth and adult education activities.

## II. Good Practice in International Project Management in Denmark

### a) Fields of Work

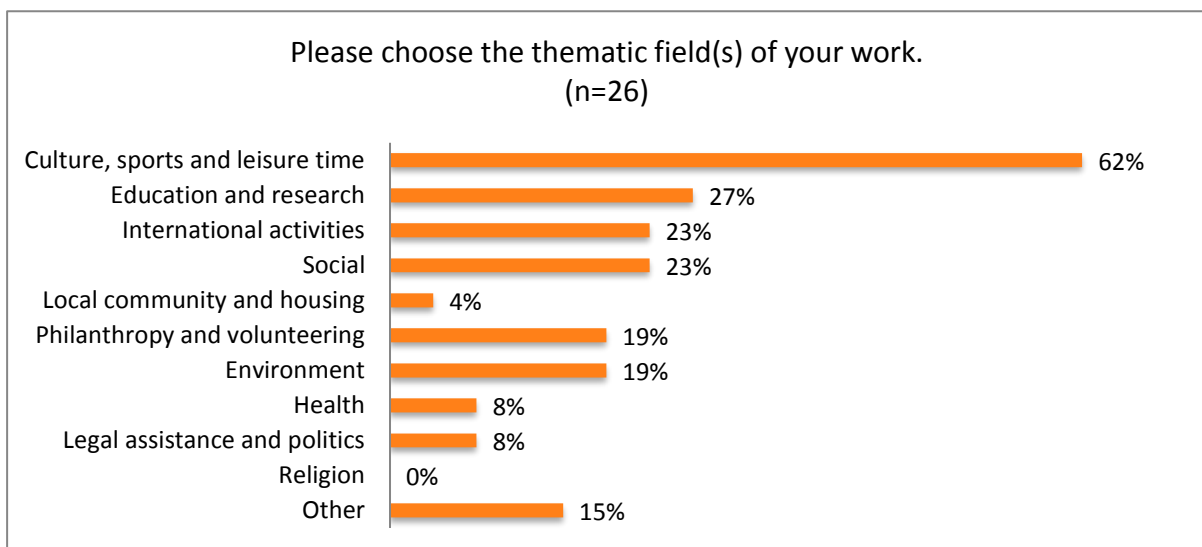
For the analysis of the online survey we out of the total of 35 respondents only selected the 26 that worked in the field of adult education. Here most worked with non-formal/informal learning (85%) and some worked with non-formal/informal as well as formal adult learning (15%).



**Fig. 44: Please choose your general field(s) of work within education (multiple answers possible); Denmark.**

Additionally, we asked if they also worked in other fields of education beside adult education. As can be seen in Fig. 44, the respondents also worked in the fields of youth education (12%), vocational education and training (8%), school education (15%) and higher education (15%).

We also asked about the respondents' thematic fields of work, where multiple answers were possible. Here a clear majority had worked in the field of culture, sports and leisure time (62%), while approx.  $\frac{1}{4}$  also had worked in education and research (27%), international activities (23%) and the social area (23%). Some also worked with philanthropy and volunteering (19%) and environment (19%), and few with health (8%), legal assistance and politics (8%) and local community and housing (4%), counselling, and none with religion.

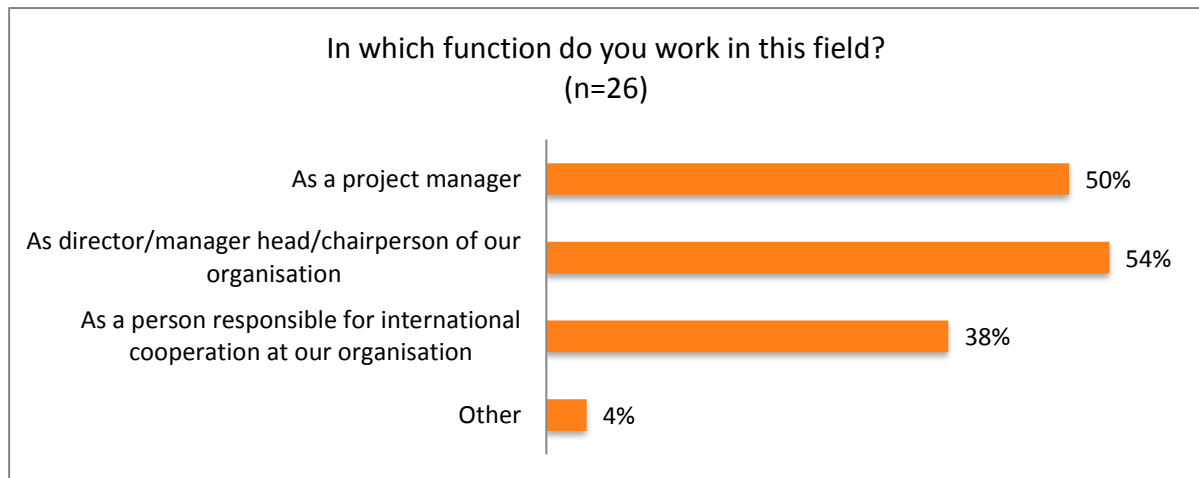


**Fig. 45: Please choose the thematic field(s) of your work (multiple answers possible); Denmark.**

## **b) Work Functions**

Furthermore, the respondents were asked about the function of their work. All respondents declared they worked for a civil society organisation (CSO) and not a combination of a CSO and a

public institution. They were also asked, which work function they had in the CSO, where multiple choice answers were possible.



**Fig. 46: In which function do you work in this field (multiple answers possible)?; Denmark.**

Here 54% had a function as a director/manager/head/chairperson of the organisation, 50% as a project manager, 38% as a person responsible for international cooperation in the organisation, and finally 4% selected other. This indicates that the respondents held various functions in the organisations they worked for, often being both members of the management bodies and working as international projects managers.

This tendency to have combined functions was confirmed during the interviews. It seemed the interviewees quite often had several roles in their organisations, where they both could be employed as project manager or have other specific tasks and at the same time be represented in the board of the association.

The manager at the national foundation, where at the same time represented in the board, so she represented at the same time both the perspective of the project manager and the board. Likewise, the board member of the adult education association also in some periods has been employed with a fix-timed project contract on part time in one of the international projects. It was mainly the members from the management bodies that had been engaged in the associations in longer periods up to 10 years and more on a voluntary basis, while the management staff tended to shift work place more often, but typical to other associations in the civil society sector.

The educational background of the respondents was mainly a higher education in the field of pedagogics/education as teachers or in the humanities or social science; and most had completed further training by shorter courses, especially in the area of management and communication.

### **c) Experiences with International Project Work**

In general, the respondents in the online survey had a wide experience with applying for co-financing and realising international projects.

The majority of the on-line survey respondents have already applied for funding to work internationally in the field of adult education (69%), while a minority haven't tried it (31%); and in the

big group of applicants, the majority had been successful with getting their applications approved (72%).

The group of successful applicants were asked, how many times they had realised an international project, and as can be seen in Fig. 47 below, the majority, like 54% had tried to realise an international project 5 times or more, 38% had tried it 2 – 4 times, and 8% had only tried it 1 time.

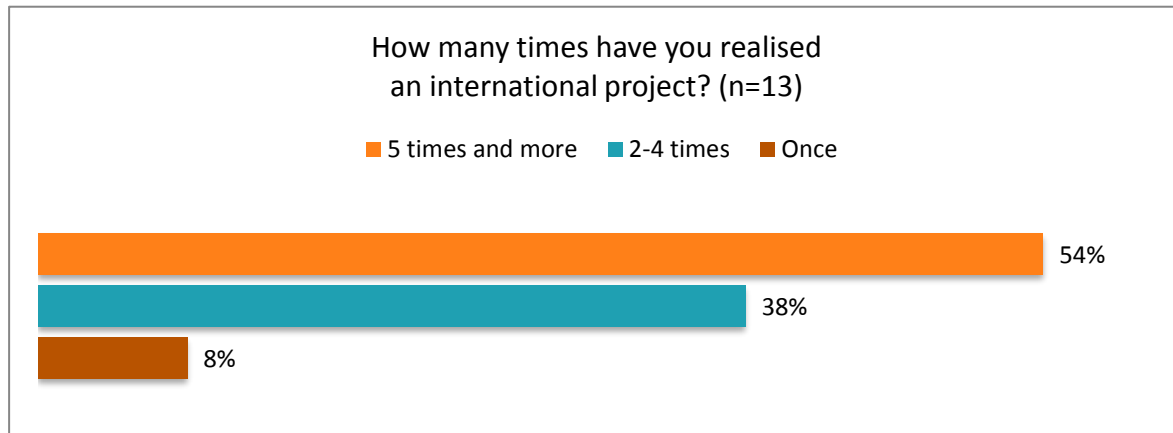


Fig. 47: How many times have you realised an international project?; Denmark.

The figures indicate that the group that had been engaged in an international project tended to repeat the experience. It seems it can be difficult to start to work internationally, but first you have started to do it, you wish to do it more times.

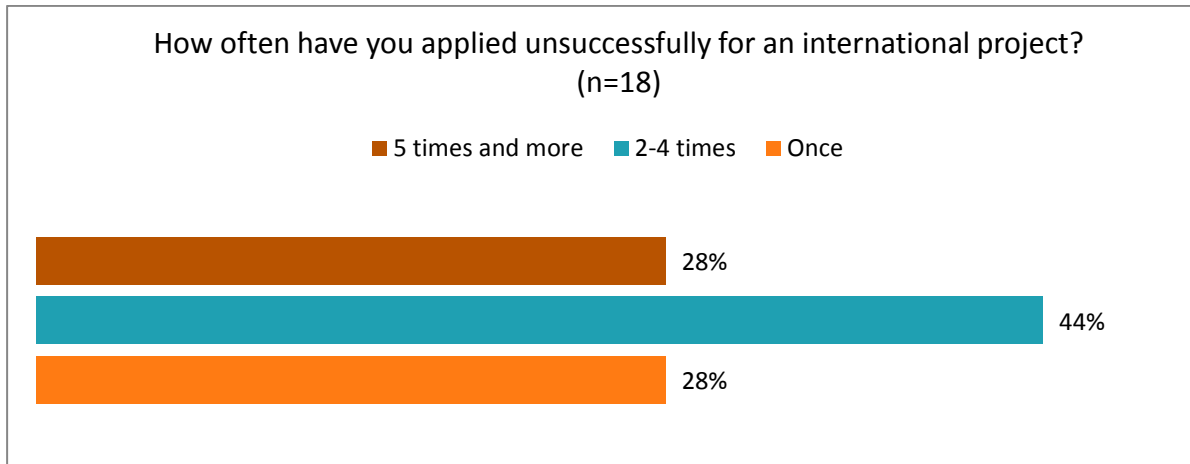
This tendency to be involved many times, when you first have started, was confirmed during the interviews. One interviewee mentioned he the last 10 years had made approx. 15 EU applications and have got 7 approved and he had been a partner in 2 more projects, so it is a quite good success rate. It has mainly been the EU-Commission's lifelong learning programmes, before the Grundtvig programme and the last years the Erasmus+ programme; but he had also tried the Creative Europe programme two times, with one approved, and one time the Europe for Citizen programme without any luck. He added that he as properly other applicants tend to apply for the programmes, where he already had been successful and it could imply a sort of too near-sighted approach to the many possible funding options.

Another interviewee from the cultural field mentioned that they had prioritised the Nordic funding programmes even though the grants were smaller, because the applications were not so difficult to complete, the success rates were in general higher, and the management and reporting of the projects were a lot easier to handle.

#### d) Degree and Reason of Unsuccessful Applications

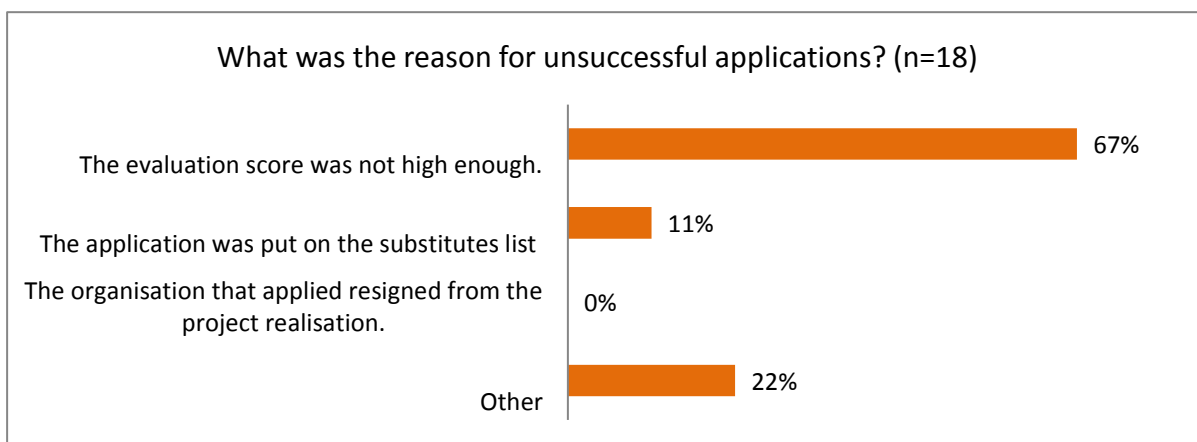
The online survey also asked about the degree and possible reasons of unsuccessful applications for international project support.

Asked how many times their applications for co-financing international projects were unsuccessful, most of the respondents chose the option "2 – 4 times" (44%), while fewer chose "5 times or more" (28%) or "Once" (also 28%).



**Fig. 48: How often have you already applied unsuccessfully for an international project?; Denmark.**

Asked about the reasons for the unsuccessful application(s), most of the respondents reasonable enough stated that “the evaluation score was not high enough” (67%), while some mentioned “the application was put on a waiting list” (11%), and more stated “other reasons” (22%), which one explained in relation to a Nordic application: “Don’t know, there follows no explanation of the rejection”; and that is different from the EU applications, where the applicant can see the score card and reasons for the score. None stated that “the organisation that applied resigned from the project realisation”.



**Fig. 49: What was the reason for unsuccessful applications?; Denmark.**

The general challenge for the applicants is the very hard competition with success rates typical below 20 pct. for most of the EU programmes in most of the EU countries. This general reason for the many unsuccessful applications was confirmed during the interviews.

The manager from the adult education association emphasised that you only have a chance, if you are prepared to use a lot of time and resources on the application work, and still there is a high risk of not getting the grant. It can be interesting to design the project idea and develop the project concept and find and involve partners; but the work with preparing the applications is very hard and time consuming. Typical the text of the final application can be a PDF-print of more than 200 pages. You must expect even as an experienced applicant to use more than 4 weeks of fulltime work to develop and prepare an application to the big EU programmes like Erasmus+, Creative



Europe and Europe for Citizens. So, you and your organisation must see it as a very risky investment of time and resources, and typically many associations don't have such resources.

### e) Interests of the Project Managers

The online survey also asked about the interest of the project managers to work internationally in their field of action; and nearly all expressed an interest (88%), while a small group didn't state such an interest (12%).

The respondents that expressed an interest, were then asked (see Fig. 43 below), why they were interested? And a clear majority stated content-related and idealistic reasons. The highest score got the statement: "It is necessary to connect with people by crossing borders" (73% high degree, 36% some degree and 9% low degree). The second highest score got the statement: "I want to learn from approaches in other countries" (64% high degree and 36% some degree). The third highest score got the statement: "I like the exchange with people from other countries in my field of work" (55% high degree, 36% some degree, 9% low degree).

The more pragmatic reasons got lower scores. The narrow economic statement "It is an additional possibility to raise funds" got a middle score (45% high degree, 27% some degree, 27% low degree). The subordinate statement: "I was appointed by my organisation to do so" got surprisingly a relatively high score (36% high degree, 9% some degree, 18% low degree, and 36% not at all). Finally, the spineless statement: "I just had the possibility to do so or to try it. There are no concrete motivations behind it" got the lowest score (2% high degree, 18% some degree, 30% low degree, 50% not at all).

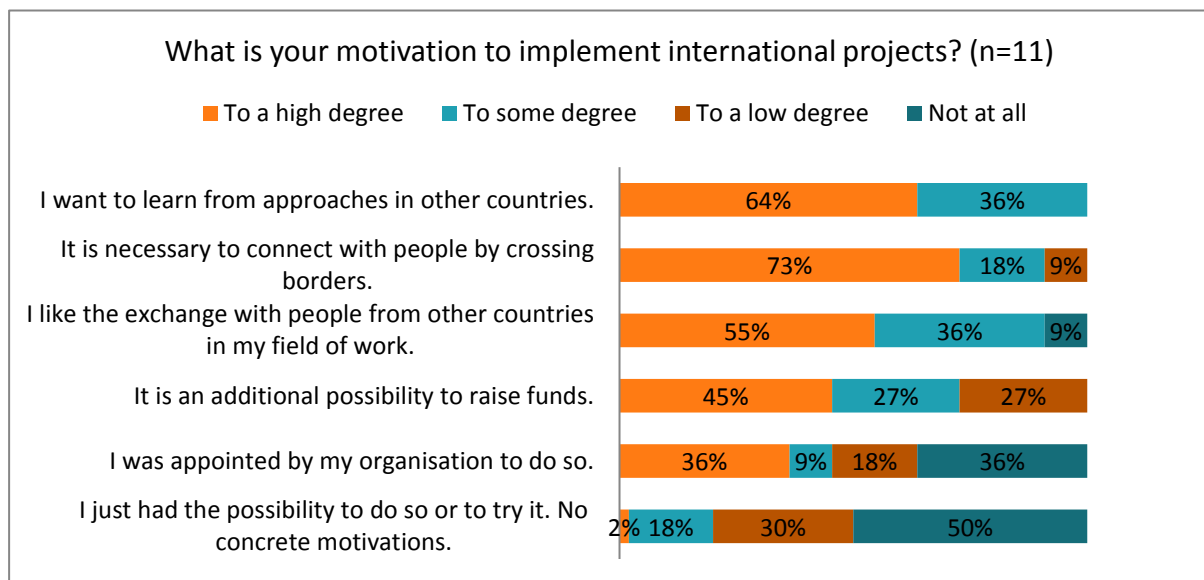


Fig. 50: What is your motivation to implement international projects?; Denmark.

During the interviews, the experienced international project managers were also asked about their motivation to implement international cooperation projects. All the interviewees emphasised in varied forms the added value of the people-to-people contact as a professional as well as personal bonus. As an example, the secretary general from the culture association mentioned "there can be more reasons. First it gives new experiences for quality development; secondly it

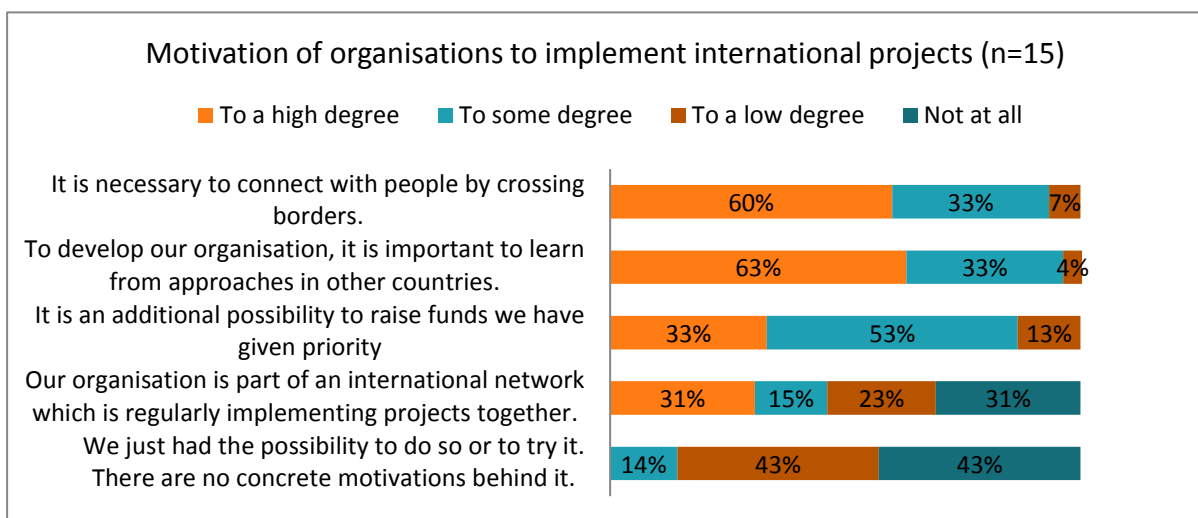
implies some extra funding possibilities to initiate interesting projects; and then it is very fulfilling on a personal and professional level to meet, exchange experiences and work together with partners from other countries and learn about their situation and approaches and practices.”

## f) Interests of the Management Bodies

The members of the management bodies, such as board members, chairmen, presidents, etc. were also asked (see Fig. 51 below) about their motivations to support international project work in their organisations.

The statements with the highest score were the content-related and idealistic reasons: “To develop the organisation, it is important to learn from approaches in other countries” (63% high degree, 33% some degree, 4% low degree). A bit lower we have the statement: “It is necessary to connect with people by crossing borders” (60% high degree, 33% some degree, 7% low degree).

The management bodies also gave some support to the more pragmatic financial reason: “It is an additional possibility to raise funds, we have given priority” (33% high degree, 53% some degree, 13% low degree). The more cooperative statement: “Our organization is part of an international network, which is regularly implementing projects together” also got some support (31% high degree, 15% some degree, 23% low degree, 31% not at all). Finally, the spineless statement: “I just had the possibility to do so or to try it. There are no concrete motivations behind it” got the lowest score (0% high degree, 14% some degree, 43% low degree, 43% not at all).



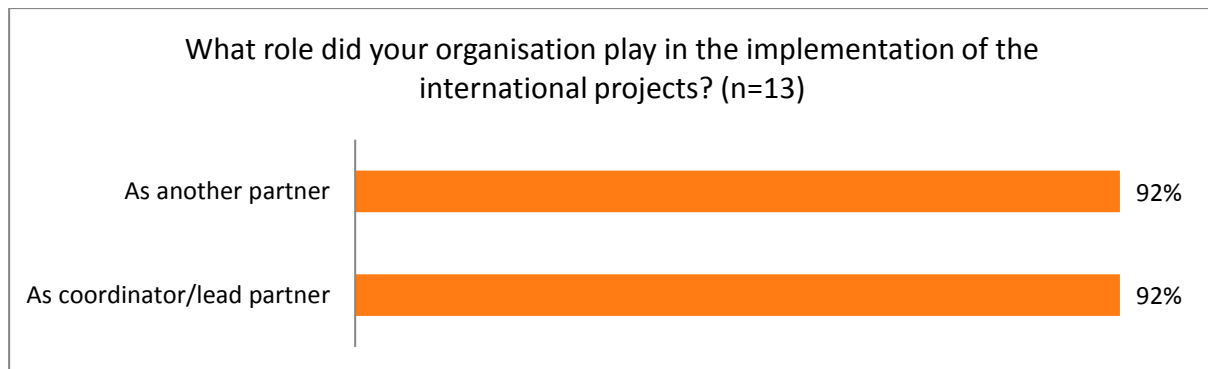
**Fig. 51: What is your motivation to implement international projects with your organisation?; Denmark.**

When we compare the priorities of the project managers and the members of the management bodies, we can see that they share the point of view that the international exchange of experiences and knowledge is valuable, the cooperation must be based on content-related reasons, and the additional possibility to raise funds is also important for the organisations.

### g) Varied Roles as Coordinator or Partner

In the online survey we also asked (see Fig. 52) about what role the organisation had in the implemented international projects, either as coordinator or as partner organisation.

Since it was a multiply choice question, the answers indicate that most of the organisations, which the respondents represented, had been involved in international project cooperation, both as partners and as coordinators (with 92% for both roles).



**Fig. 52: What role did your organisation play in the implementation of the international projects (multiple answers were possible)?; Denmark.**

The interviews also indicated that the civil society associations engaged in international project cooperation have functioned mainly as partners but also as coordinators. Typically, associations start their international cooperation as partners, and thereafter some have the motivation and resources to also be a coordinator. Anyhow, in any project team there is only one coordinator and several partners, so the partners will always be the majority in the international cooperation.

The secretary general in the culture association mentioned in the interview that “It is in many ways easier to be partner than coordinator in a project, but on the other hand it can also imply some extra effort to promote your own organisation as a potential partner”.

The manager of the national foundation referred to the words of Jesus according to Matthew 13:12 “Whoever has, to him shall be given, and he shall have more abundance”. Or in other words, if you are a big well-established NGO with many employees, it is a lot easier to promote your organisation as a potential partner in international projects. Yes, often you can just await that some applicant organisations will find and invite you to join the applications. Contrary, it can be more challenging for smaller associations to be selected as partners, so they may instead try to be coordinators, if they wish to work internationally.

## III. Indicators of Success

### a) Degree of Support from the Management Bodies

Overall, the support from the management bodies to the applicants and project managers in the associations is not impressive. In the online survey, we asked the project managers: “Did you receive any kind of support from your employing/commissioning organisation to apply for or to implement international projects?”; and only 55% said yes, and 45% no.

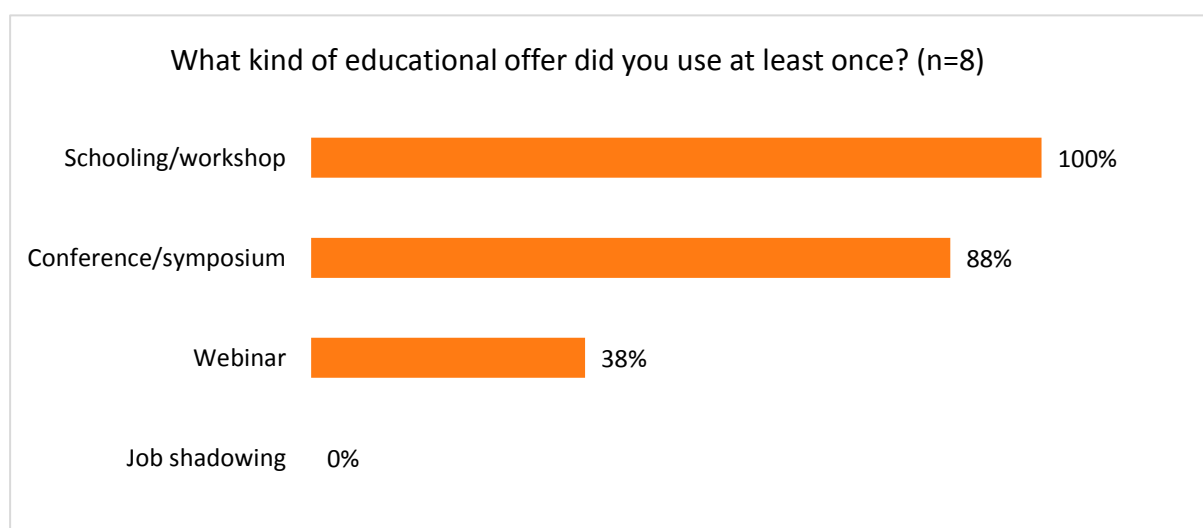
The interviews strengthened the impression of a need for more support. Here we also asked, if they as project managers “did receive any kind of support from your employing/commissioning organisation? If yes, what kind of support? Was that helpful? What would be helpful?”

The director at the adult education association replied: “No, our organisation didn’t have the resources to give special support to the project manager, neither for doing the application work or afterwards to coordinate the project. We had to find our own way and learn by ourselves as we proceeded. It would have been helpful to get support both regarding the application work and the coordination work. The support could be in the form of advices or mentoring from experienced fund-raisers and coordinators as well as short training courses, maybe in a national context if possible or else in a transnational context.”

## b) Educational Offers to Upgrade Competences

The international project managers were also asked if they on their own did use any educational offers to upgrade their competences. Quite positively, a majority of 73% said yes, and just 27% said no.

The majority that used educational offers were then asked (see Fig. 53 below): “What kind of educational offer did you use at least once?” Here the most used offer was the schooling/workshops (100%), then the short conferences/symposium (88%), and the webinar got the third highest ranking (38%), while job shadowing wasn’t used at all.



**Fig. 53: What kind of educational offer did you use at least once (multiple answers possible)?; Denmark.**

The interviews gave the impression that the management bodies don’t prioritise a more systematic further education of their staff to handle the international work.

None of the project managers mentioned a paid further education training programme, but some had tried or get Erasmus+ mobility support to further education. The manager at the national foundation mentioned that he had “applied more times for, and one time received an Erasmus+ mobility grant for a week course about preparing successful EU applications; and it was very useful.” He didn’t know of any relevant Danish courses about coordination and management of EU

projects, while there may be some relevant courses on EU level; but they are rather expensive, and for his organisation, it demands an Erasmus mobility grant to use the possibilities.

### c) Degree of Further Education

In the online survey we also asked (see Fig. 54 below) the group of project managers: “How often do you participate in this kind of education”; and overall the answers were unimpressive.

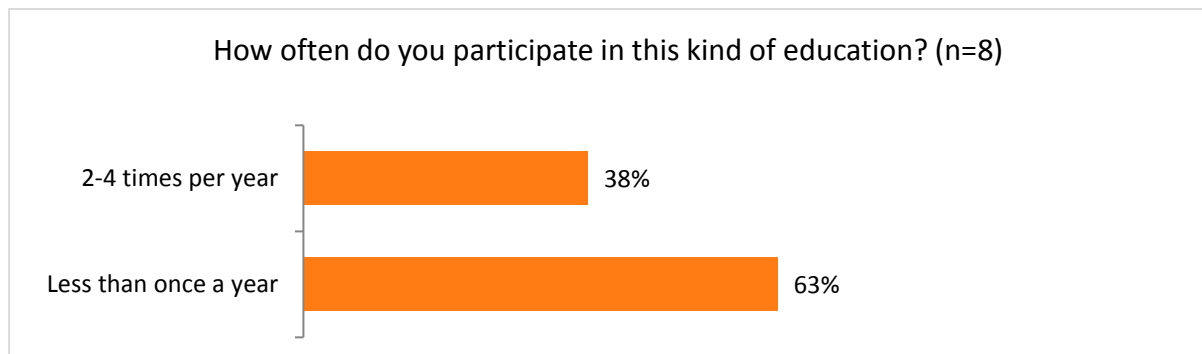


Fig. 54: How often do you participate in this kind of education?; Denmark.

Most of the respondents, who have used any educational offer, declared they have used it less than once a year (63%), while a minor group had used it 2 – 4 times per year (38%).

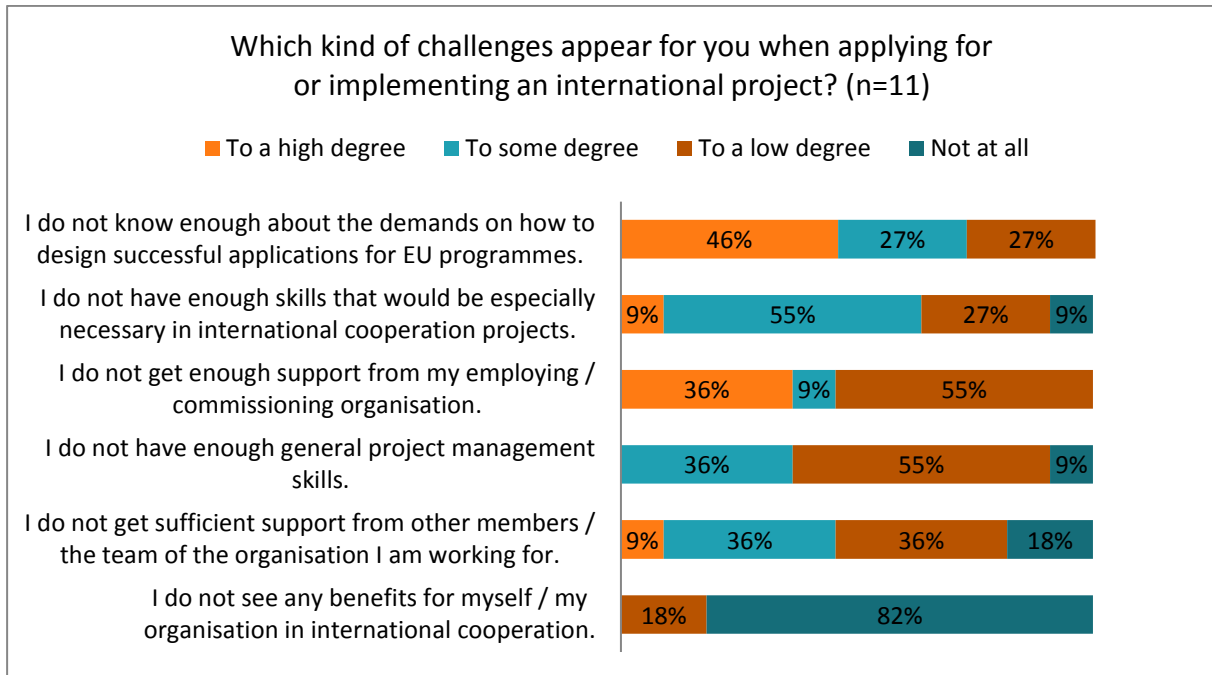
The impression of a low priority of further education was substantiated by the interviews. The director of the adult education association mentioned that the key staff quite often participated in 1-day conferences to gain new inputs and strengthen their networks, while there wasn't time and money to pay longer training offers, neither 1-2 weeks courses nor part-time semester offers. The main problem is to get and pay the needed extra staff to replace the staff on educational leave. Here the Erasmus+ and other Nordic mobility support programme can help to pay all the cost of fees, travel and accommodation, but still they don't refund the salary of the lost work days.

## IV. Challenges for International Project Management

### a) Challenges for Implementing International Projects

In general, the project managers are confronted with many challenges when applying as well as implementing international projects. In the online survey, we asked (see Fig. 55 below) the project managers: about six possible challenges.

The three biggest challenges were about lack of knowledge to design the applications (46% high degree, 27% some degree, 27% low degree); lack of skills to coordinate international projects (9% high degree, 55% some degree, 27% low degree, 9% not at all); and not least a lack of support from my employing organisation (36% high degree, 9% some degree, 55% low degree).



**Fig. 55: Which kind of challenges appear for you when applying for or implementing an international project?; Denmark.**

The three minor challenges were about a lack of support from other members in my organisation (9% high degree, 36% some degree, 36% low degree, 18% not at all); my own lack of general project management skills (0% high degree, 36% some degree, 55% low degree, 9% not at all); and I don't see any benefits for myself or for my organisation with international cooperation (0% high degree, 0% some degree, 18% low degree, 82% not at all).

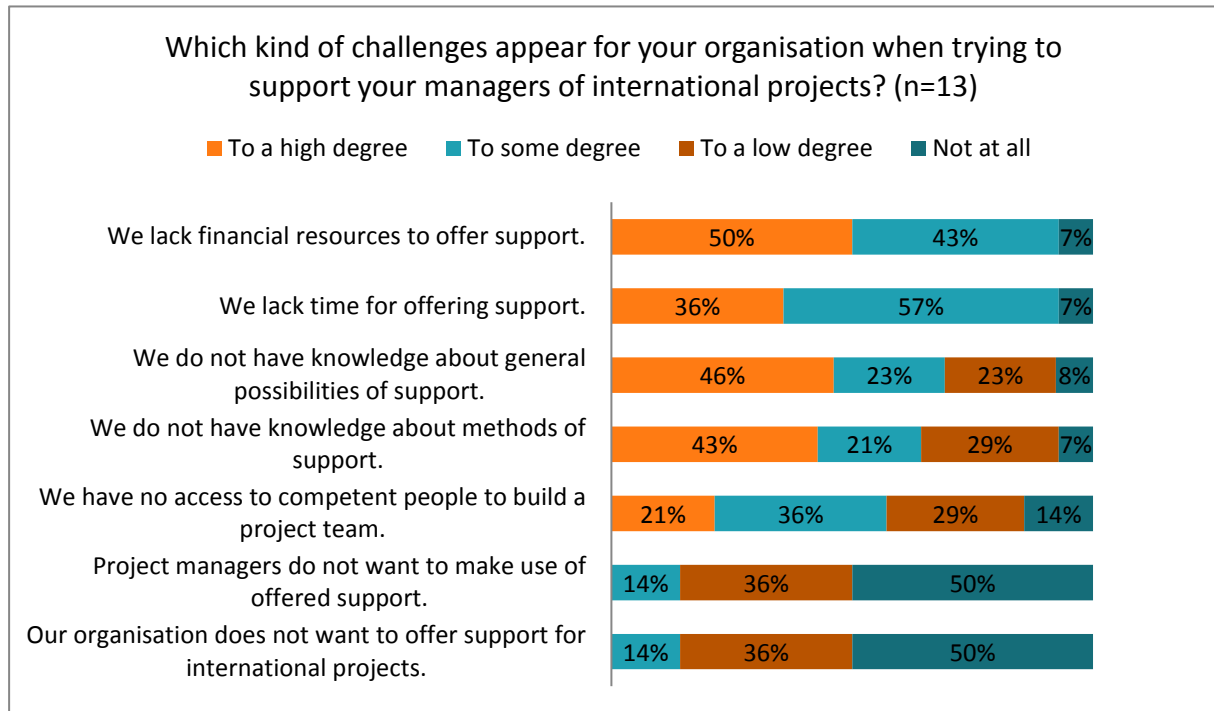
The lack of knowledge to sign application was confirmed in the follow-up open question, where a respondent mentioned that he or she "has been on a course to apply for the EU programme, after having been a partner, not a coordinator in a Grundtvig project. Gave up because it had apparently been even more complicated. Has since applied successfully for Nordplus."

The overall message from the online survey was that the project managers mainly need to upgrade their knowledge to design applications for the international projects and their skills to coordinate international projects, and for this they also need more support from their management bodies.

These messages were substantiated in the interviews. To the question about "the pre-conditions to successfully realise international cooperation projects", the manager of the national foundation mentioned: "I think the pre-conditions are two-fold. First you must have the time and resources to invest in a person or a project team that can prepare an application with the needed quality to have a chance to get a grant; and accept that the chances for success may still be less than 50%. Secondly you must have the staff that can act as project coordinators of quite demanding international projects as well as staff to handle the financial management and the final reporting. Typical you need to have persons with former experiences as project managers in a local or national context and you properly also could need some extra training or further education to handle such tasks."

## b) Challenges for Supporting the Project Managers

In the online survey, we also asked the members of the management bodies (see Fig. 56 below) about which kind of challenges appear for your organisation, when you try to support your managers of international projects?



**Fig. 56: Which kind of challenges appear for your organisation when trying to support your managers of international projects?; Denmark.**

The biggest challenge was the lack of financial resources to offer support (50% high degree, 43% some degree, 7% low degree). Thereafter four related reasons referring to lack of resources were seen as other rather high challenges, namely “we lack time for offering support”, “we do not have knowledge about general possibilities of support”, “we do not have knowledge about methods of support”, and we have no access to competent people to build a project team”.

Minor challenges were that “project managers do not want to make use of offered support” and “or organisation does not want to offer support for international project” (both 0% high degree, 14% some degree, 36% low degree, 50% not at all).

The overall message from the online survey is not a lack of interest, but a lack of resources in the organisations to provide the needed support. It seems the project managers need more, better and cheaper external support, if they shall strengthen their involvement in international projects.

As a respondent mentioned in the open question about the challenges: “It is hard to find places to get advice and help”. To the open question about how to overcome these challenges other respondents proposed “Video link where all steps in the application are reviewed” and again “better access to counselling” or “a dedicated consultant that can offer support and help with the application”.

The interviews confirmed these key messages. The chairman of the national foundation mentioned that “The Danish National Agency for the EU programmes provides 1-day information meetings, where they tell about the programmes and introduce the application form, but it is more about the technical demands and they don’t include more in-depth tweaks and tricks on how to make a successful application. They also provide a 1-day information meeting for successful applicants, where they tell about the frame and demands of completing and reporting the projects; but it is on a very basic level. So, there is a clear need for European training courses, both on preparing applications and on coordinating projects, including special courses on sub-questions like financial management, internal communication in the project teams, dissemination, evaluation etc.”

The board member of the Adult Education Association could imagine that a new open network for beginners in international project cooperation could both be helpful and motivating; and it could be good if it was open for both the key staff and the members of the management bodies.



## 2.6 Austrian Report on Successes and Challenges

By Aron Weigl and Isabel Monaghan, EDUCULT

### I. Sample Description

#### a) Online Survey

The survey of project managers and organisations in the field of adult civil society education was available online between January and April 2019. The invitation to join was sent to participants of ERASMUS+ programmes in the field of adult education and made known via EPALE and the institute's own e-mail and newsletter mailing list. A total of 27 Austrian organisations took part in the survey, of which 18 responses could be included in the evaluation of successes and challenges of international project management in civil society organisations.

Eleven survey participants are female (61.1%), five are male (27.8%), one person chose "Other" (5.6%) and another was classified as N/A (5.6%). Most of the respondents are between 30 and 59 years old, with the 50- to 59-year-olds making up the largest proportion (38.9%). 27.8% are between 30 and 39 years old. Two people stated that they are between 40 and 49 or 60 and 69 years old (11.1%), one person is between 20 and 29 years old (5.6%) and one person considered N/A (5.6%).

Most survey participants have a training background in the field of pedagogy/education (55.6%). Others are in the fields of art/culture, management/marketing and social sciences (27.8% each). Economic training backgrounds and media/communication are less represented (11.1% each). Engineering and law/administration are not represented (0.0% each).

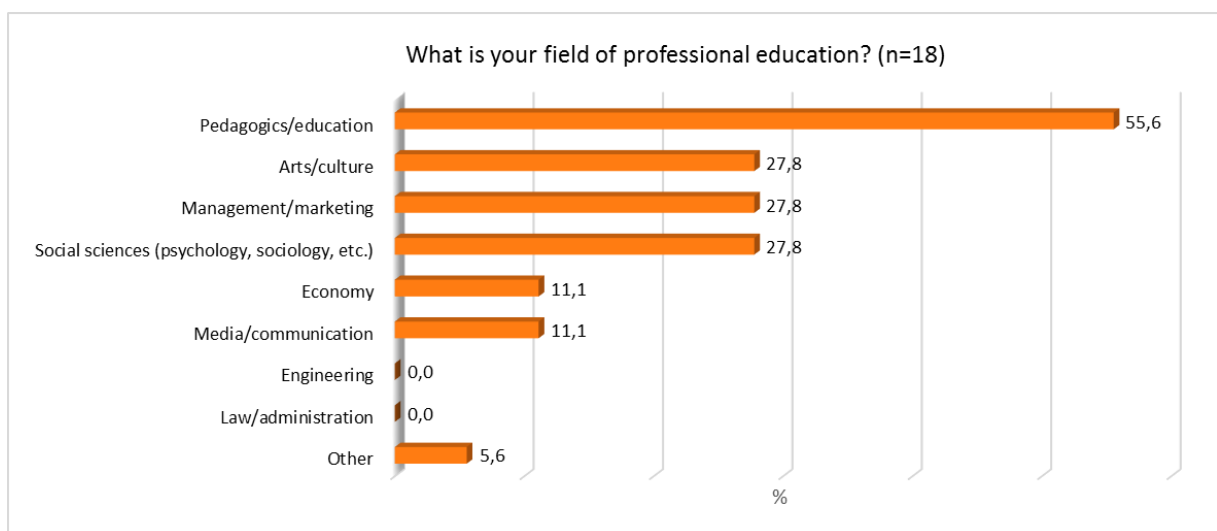


Fig. 57: What is your field of professional education (multiple answers were possible)?; Austria.

## b) Qualitative Interviews

The interviewees were selected from the EDUCULT network, from the organisations successfully involved in international projects (Erasmus+) in recent years, and from those interested in further talks on the basis of the online survey. Interview partners fell into four target groups:

- A. Project managers experienced in internal project management (at least 2 international projects)
- B. Organisational leaders experienced in internal project management (at least 2 international projects)
- C. Project managers inexperienced in international project management
- D. Organizational leaders inexperienced in international project management

Group A	Group B	Group C	Group D
Continuing education and consulting; future development	Continuing education and consulting; future development	Further education and consulting; art, culture, diversity, participation	Further education and consulting; art, culture, diversity, participation
Events and continuing education; civic education	Events and continuing education; civic education	Events and counselling for newcomers and re-entrants; diversity and gender	Continuing education, events and counselling; social affairs, inclusion and participation
Events and educational offers; art and culture, participation	Events and educational offers; art and culture, participation	Events and educational offers; art and culture, diversity	
Educational counselling, quality development; interculturality, integration		Training and consulting; research	

Ten telephone interviews took place in March and April 2019. Due to the multiple roles of the interviewed persons, the four groups can be covered 13 times in total.

The fact that many of the interviewees are organisation managers, who are themselves also active in direct project management, distinguishes the civil society sector in Austria. A differentiated evaluation of the answers from the survey and the interviews with regard to the function therefore does not appear to make sense.

The interviewees have similar professional backgrounds to those involved in the survey. They come directly from education, education management, e-learning, quality management, social pedagogy, theatre or political science.

## II. Good Practice in International Project Management in Austria

### a) Fields of Work

Although the sample only includes persons working in the field of adult education, it is clear that the respondents in Austria usually also work in other fields of education. In the sample, those who are also active in vocational (further) education are most strongly represented. 44.4% of the respondents (8 p.) belong to this group. One third (6 p.) also work in youth education. Fewer people are also active in school education (3 p.; 16.7%) and higher education (2 p.; 11.1%) in addition to adult education.

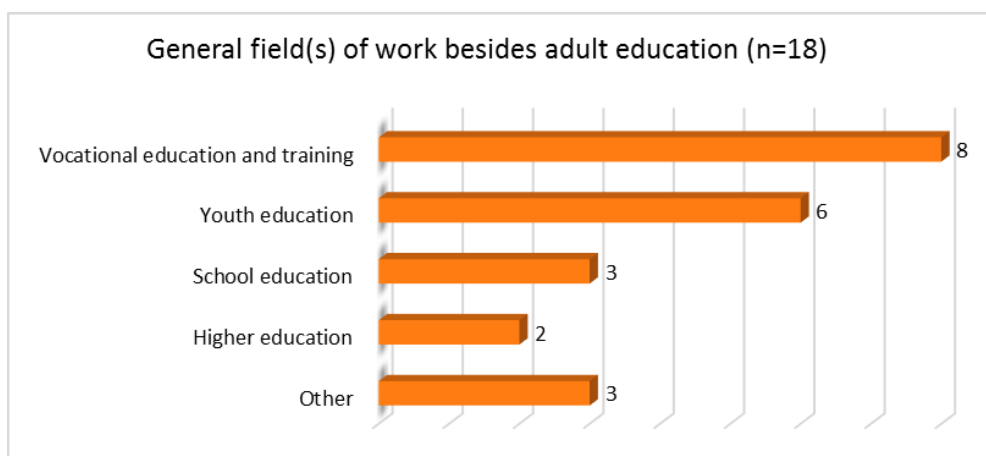


Fig. 58: Please choose your field(s) of work besides adult education (multiple answers possible); Austria.

The criterion for selecting the sample was activity in the field of non-formal and/or informal learning. Two thirds of the respondents work exclusively in this field, while one third state that they are active in both non-formal/informal and formal learning.

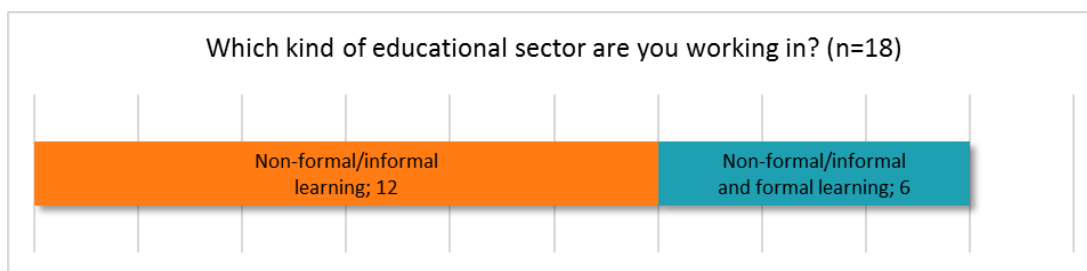


Fig. 59: Which kind of educational sector are you working in (multiple answers possible)?; Austria.

In terms of content and subject matter, the interviewees move in very different fields, with the largest proportion, two thirds, being assigned to the field of education and science. Due to the sample selection by EDUCULT, it is not surprising that the second largest group is active in the field of culture, sport and leisure (44.4%). Furthermore, the fields international activities (38.9%) and social affairs (33.3%) as well as health (27.8%) are mentioned more often.

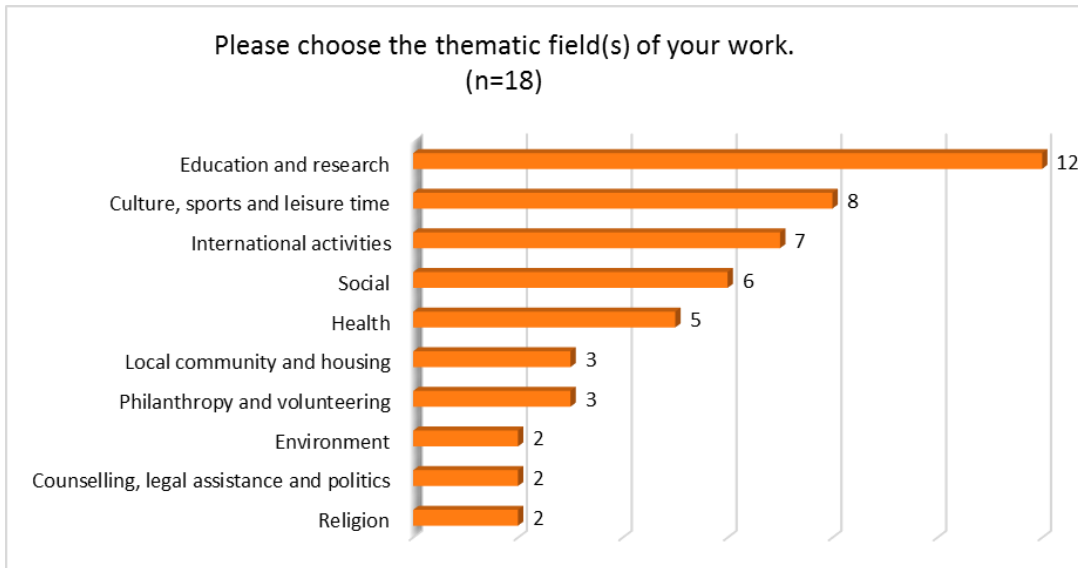


Fig. 60: Please choose the thematic field(s) of your work (multiple answers possible); Austria.

## b) Work Functions

All 18 respondents work in a civil society organisation. One of them answered that he/she would also work for a public organisation.

It is noticeable that several of the respondents are active both as project managers (12 p.; 66.7%) and as directors or leaders of their own organisations (9 p.; 50.0%). Four respondents are responsible for international cooperation within the organisation and one person works as technical assistant to the management.

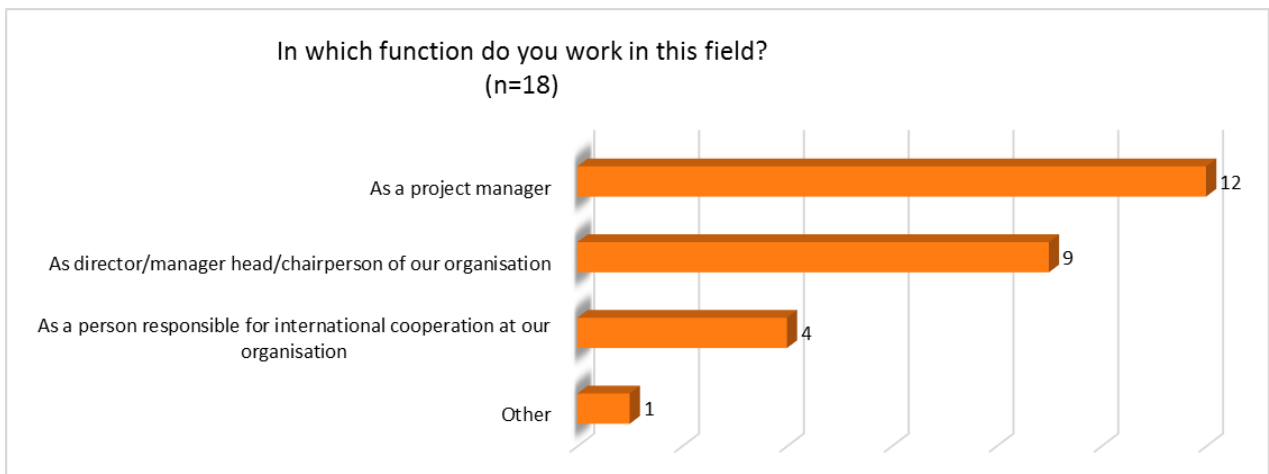


Fig. 61: In which function do you work in this field (multiple answers were possible)?; Austria.

### c) Experience with International Project Management

About three quarters of the respondents (14 p.; 77.8%) have already submitted applications for international projects. Of these, thirteen stated that at least one application had already been successful, so at least one international project could be implemented, i.e. 72.2% of the total.

In addition to the successfully implemented projects, most of those who have already submitted applications (7 out of 14) were involved in two to four unsuccessful submissions. Three people had no success with an application one time. And three had also applied five times or more without success. Only one respondent stated that they had never been unsuccessful.

The interviewees mentioned different funding programmes they applied for in the past: Strategic Partnerships in Erasmus+, Creative Europe, Europe for Citizens, ESF, LEADER, INTERREG, Horizon2020, ESS (a programme of the Austrian Academy of Sciences), and the former Grundtvig programme. If they cooperate internationally, then it was mainly with European partners, but also in one case with partners in the USA.

One half of the survey respondents was involved in international projects as coordinating partners. With the exception of one organisation, they were all involved in projects as normal partners, as well as four others, i.e. a total of thirteen persons (72.2%). For this reason, the differences between these two groups in answering the questions are not significant and are not presented separately.

The interview data adds information about the size of these international partnerships. Mainly there were not more than 7 other organisations involved in a cooperation project. The duration of one project was normally between one and three years; and the organisations normally work in 2 to 4 international projects per year.

Most of those who have already implemented international projects did so at least twice (twelve out of thirteen). Thus, two thirds (66.6%) of all survey participants can be described as experienced while the rest, one third, can be described as inexperienced in international project management.

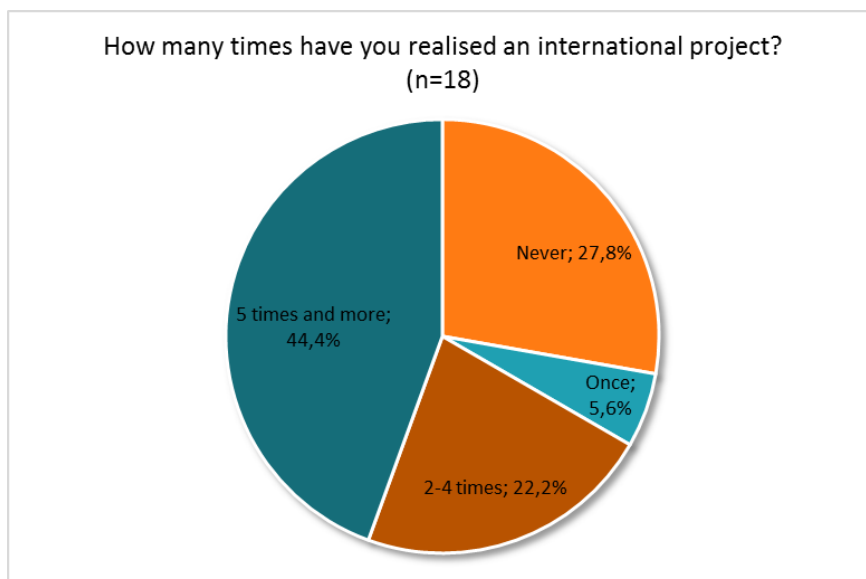


Fig. 62: How many times have you realised an international project?; Austria.

## d) Motivation for International Cooperation

The respondents in Austria answered in a similar way as the respondents of other countries in terms of their motivation to work in an international cooperation project. It is also important for them to connect with people by crossing borders (67% to a high degree) and to exchange with people from other countries in the specific field of work (58% to a high degree). Yet, the Austrian respondents give less importance to learn from approaches in other countries than the European sample (50% to a high degree). Much less say that they were appointed to work internationally to some degree (18%). And nearly all deny that there are no concrete motivations behind it (90% to a low degree or not at all).

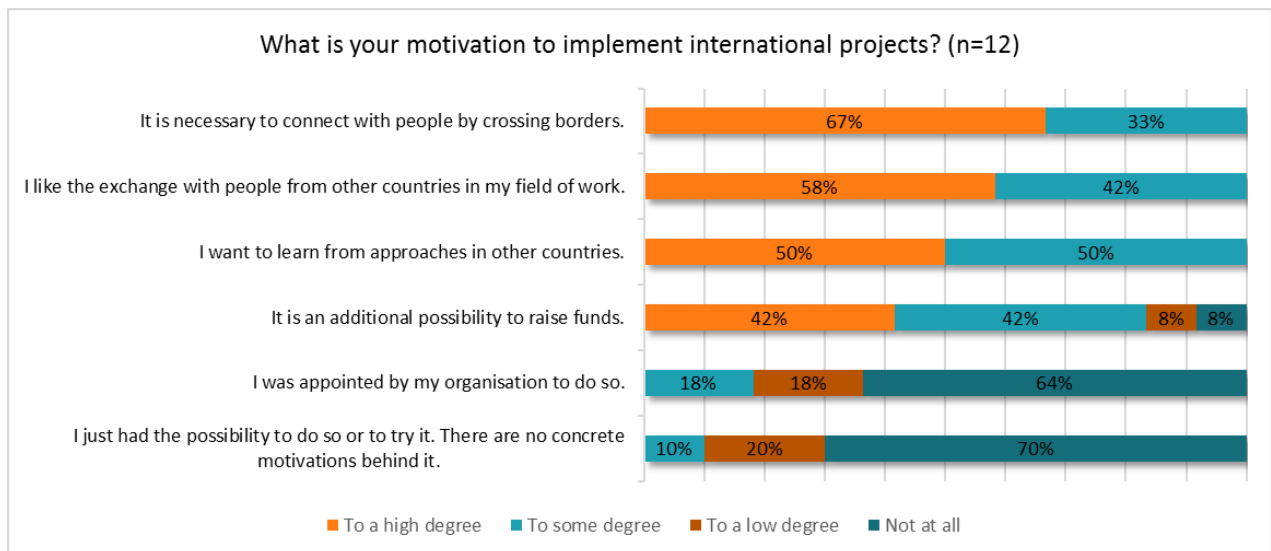


Fig. 63: What is your motivation to implement international projects?; Austria.

In the open question, the interviewees also emphasise that it is essential to work internationally in their professional field. Another person noted that the transnational development of the field was an important motivation.

Among the interviewees the motivation to work in international cooperation projects, seems not to be connected with own experiences of international exchange in the past. Around half of the interviewees told about personal participations in Erasmus studies, youth exchange, international volunteer work, educational travel, or similar activities.

The organisation leaders were also asked for their motivation to implement international projects. Compared to the project managers, the organisation leaders see the additional possibility to raise funds as more important (70% to a high degree). In comparison with the European sample, the Austrian organisations are more often part of an international network which is regularly implementing projects together (70% to a high degree or to some degree).

As other motivations, the respondents mention: strengthening of human rights, strengthening of qualitative educational approaches, and strengthening of an open image of humanity.

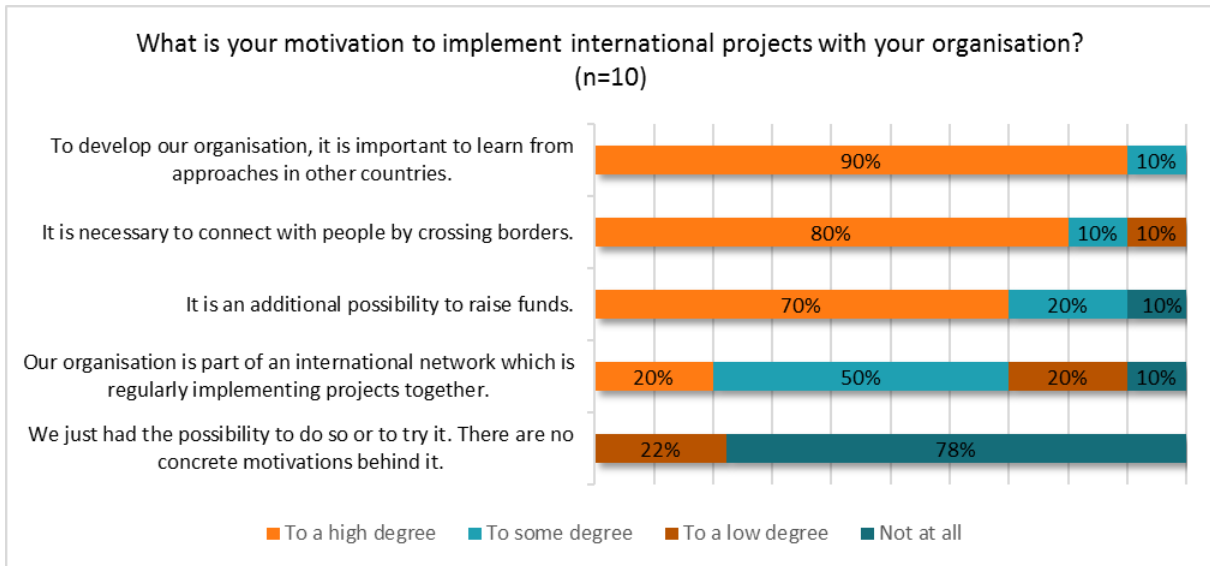


Fig. 64: What is your motivation to implement international projects with your organisation?; Austria.

### III. Indicators of Success

#### a) Degree of Support from Management Bodies

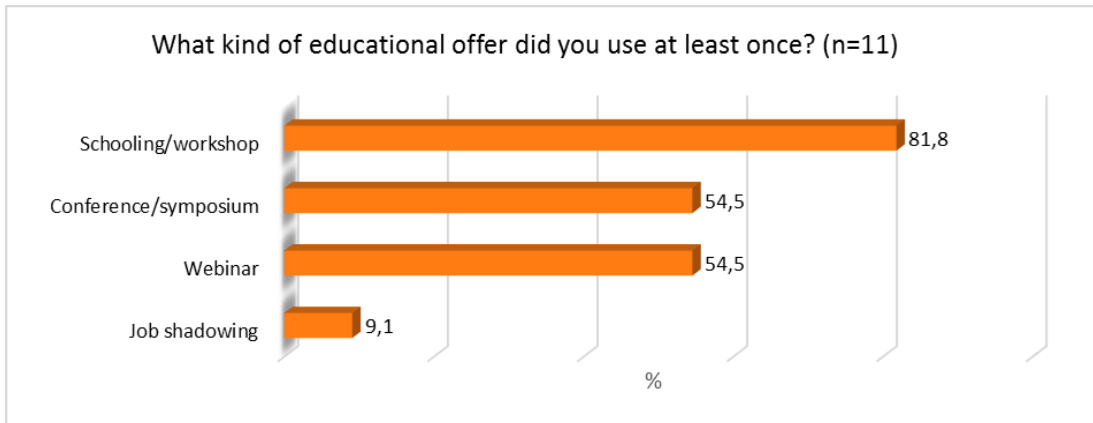
In general, it can be said that organisations support their project managers in working internationally. The project managers were asked in, if they received any kind of support from their employing/commissioning organisation to apply for or to implement international projects. Nine of the twelve respondents said they did receive support from their organisation.

The organisational leaders and responsible persons for international cooperation in the organisation were equally asked if their organisation would offer support for project managers when applying for or implementing an international project. Their answers reflected the responses given by the project managers. Seven of ten affirmed that their organisation would support their project managers in this way. The remaining three said that their organisations would not support project managers with their international projects.

As 75% of project managers received support and 70% of organisational leaders reported offering support, it is unsurprising that support is mentioned as an indicator of success in interviews. The types of aid referenced included assistance in financial and legal matters, as well as support in different project stages and guidance from experienced colleagues.

#### b) Educational Offers to Upgrade Competences

Eleven of the twelve project managers responded that they used educational offers to upgrade their competences on their own. Most of them (9 p.) participated in schoolings or workshops, while half made use of webinars. Also six respondents took part in conferences/symposia to improve their competences. Only one person participated in a job shadowing programme as a means of improving their competences.

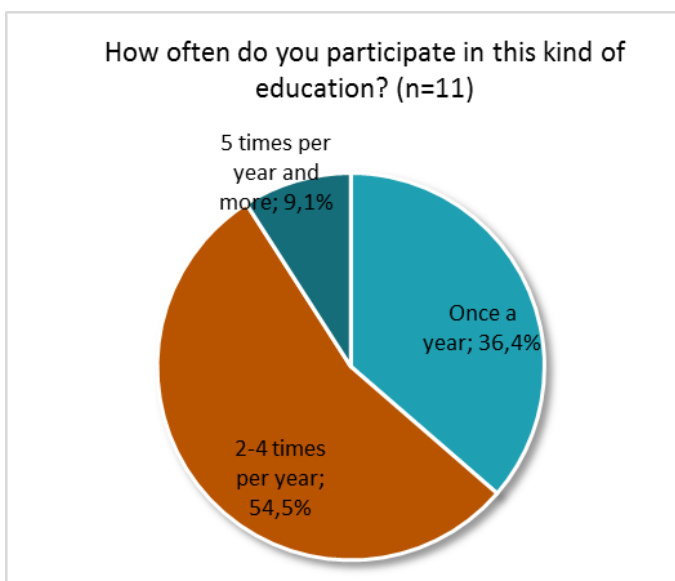


**Fig. 65: What kind of educational offer did you use at least once (multiple answers possible)?; Austria.**

These results were reinforced in the interviews, where training opportunities were mentioned twice as strong indicators of success. Interviewees reported training opportunities including workshops, webinars and blended learning facilities as indicators of success. Job shadowing opportunities were not mentioned in interviews, though support from experienced colleagues was referenced once as an indicator of success.

Respondents were asked how frequently they participated in educational offers and the responses were encouraging. The majority (54.5%) participated in two to four opportunities a year, while 36.4% participated once a year and the minority (9.1%) responded with five times a year or more.

Though the majority of project managers participated in educational training opportunities at least annually, the frequency of their participation is still an area of concern. In order to be effective, an interviewee claimed, these opportunities must offer project managers the knowledge and resources they require throughout the lifecycle of the project and not just at the start or middle of it. Therefore participating in upwards of two training opportunities would be ideal for the success of project managers.



**Fig. 66: How often do you participate in this kind of education?; Austria.**



### c) Further Indicators

Besides the support from the management bodies and educational offers, the interviewees mentioned other indicators of success. They reflect the skills and characteristics of the international project managers included in the cooperation:

- Lead partner with experience in international projects and necessary structures and resources
- Having a common language (good English speakers)
- Motivated project managers for the international work
- Good understanding of the project call
- Good support by national agencies which is used by the project managers

For the participating organisations it would be good to have:

- Combination of established partnerships and acquisition of new ones
- Own staff with diverse expertise and overlapping responsibilities / knowledge so that absences can be compensated effectively
- Clear definition of tasks
- Well adapted project plan to the current priorities and requirements of the participating organisations; writing the application together to distribute the expertise well and adapt to the needs of each organisation
- Smart communication platform / project management system
- Combination of funding possibilities in one project

## IV. Challenges for International Project Managers

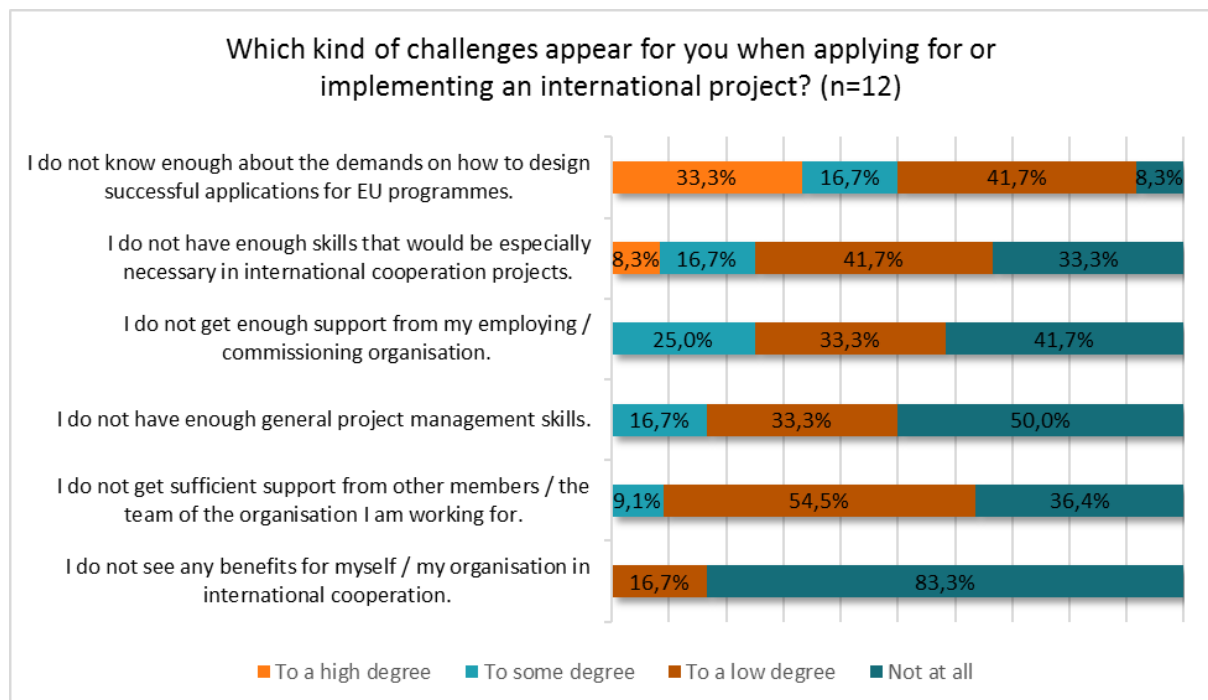
### a) Challenges for Implementing International Projects

The respondents were asked to rate the specific challenges they confronted frequently when applying for or implementing international projects. The biggest hindrance was a lack of knowledge pertaining to the design of applications for EU programmes (33.3% high degree, 16.7% some degree, 41.7% low degree, 8.3% not at all). Struggling to design applications for EU projects recurred throughout the interviews as both an obstacle and a significant indicator of success. Assistance in the writing of the proposals, pre-checks and final checks by national agencies, and strategic planning in funding applications were all noted as critical to success. It is therefore unsurprising that a lack of coordination, resources and time in the application and planning processes are also mentioned in interviews as significant challenges that project managers face.

Project managers also reported the absence of necessary skills in international project management (8.3% high degree, 16.7% some degree, 41.7% low degree, 33.3% not at all) as an obstacle to their success. According to interviews, these skills included a lack of information on project coordination, poor financial management, low levels of experience, and difficulty in task-sharing. Interviewees also mentioned experiences and competences of different partners not aligning as a challenge they are faced with in international project management. One interviewee suggested that opportunities for improving these skills and competences may be hindered further as training workshops are often time consuming and costly.

Some of the surveyed project managers also felt that they did not receive enough support from their commissioning organisation, although those interviewed did not feel as strongly about it (25.0% some degree, 33.3% low degree, 41.7% not at all). In interviews, limited support from management organisations was mentioned once. More frequent were complaints about differing skills and expectations between partner organisations.

The more minor challenges included a lack of general project management skills (16.7% some degree, 33.7% low degree, 50.0% not at all); insufficient support from other members and the organisation's team (9.1% some degree, 54.5% low degree, 36.4% not at all), and finally not seeing the benefit of international project management for one's self or the organisation (16.7% low degree, 83.3% not at all).



**Fig. 67: Which kind of challenges appear for you when applying for or implementing an international project?; Austria.**

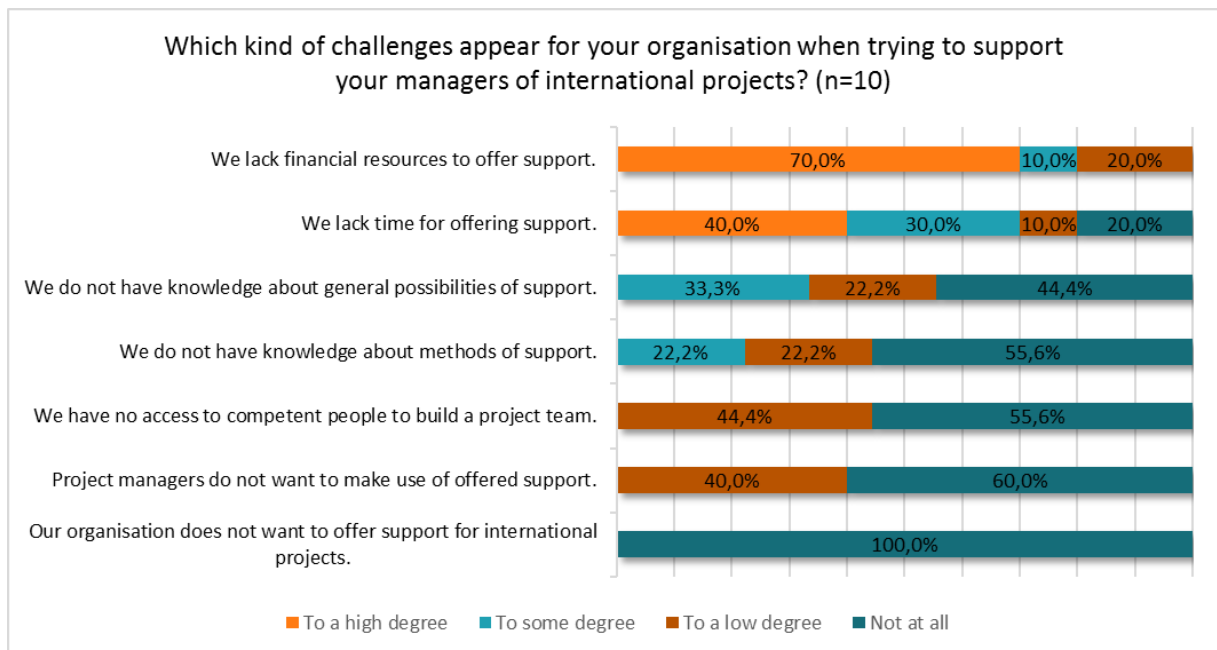
## b) Challenges for Supporting Project Managers

On the management level, respondents were asked to respond to the question: Which kind of challenges appear for your organisation when trying to support your managers of international projects? The most common response was a lack of financial resources (70% high degree, 10% some degree, 20% low degree). In second, was a lack of time to support project managers (40% high degree, 30% some degree, 10% low degree, 20% not at all).

Some respondents claimed there was not enough knowledge about general possibilities for support (33.3% some degree, 22.2% low degree, 44.4% not at all). The most minor challenge to supporting project managers was a lack of knowledge about methods of support (22.2 % some degree, 22.2% low degree, 55.6% not at all).

There was wide consensus on the least challenging obstacles, which included: no access to competent people for a project team (44.4% low degree, 55.6% not at all); project managers being

disinterested in support (40.0% low degree, 60.0% not at all); the organisation being disinterested in support (100.0% not at all).



**Fig. 68: Which kind of challenges appear for your organisation when trying to support your managers of international projects?; Austria.**

## 3. Support Offered by National Agencies

By Isabel Monaghan, EDUCULT

In an effort to better the support systems available to international project realisers, it is necessary to evaluate the opportunities and resources currently being offered. Therefore, the following analyses the success of applications for funding related to adult education, alongside the opportunities offered by national agencies to both applicants and beneficiaries in the fields of adult education (more specifically KA1 and KA2 programmes). For the assessment of successful applications, only the responses to survey questions were utilized and therefore all numbers included were reported by national agencies. In terms of applicant and beneficiary supports, both the responses of national agencies to surveying and the practices collected following an evaluation of national agency websites and portals were used. It should be noted that, as several agencies did not respond to the survey, some of the representation is uneven and a few agencies are overrepresented.

### 3.1 Quantitative Analysis

The national agencies that responded to the survey generally fell into three categories on this question. Those that reported the number of applicants for either or both KA1 and KA2 programmes to be upwards of 55, those that reported between 30 and 55 applicants, and those that reported less than 30 applicants.

In almost all cases the number of applicants corresponded to the size of the country. Therefore, the countries with the largest reported applicant pools were as follows: Italy, Poland, Romania, the United Kingdom, and the Czech Republic. Of these, the highest numbers came from Italy, with 2018 KA1 applications reaching 77 and KA2 at 143. The high numbers gathered from survey results within these countries were relatively unsurprising considering their sheer size; all of the aforementioned countries have populations in the tens of millions. The success rates of applicants in Poland, the UK and Romania were consistent for KA2 programs at around 30%. For Poland and the UK there was also consistency for KA1 successful applications at about 60% (Romania did not provide data for KA1). The Italian national agency approved between 30 to 35% of applicants for both KA1 and KA2 programmes.

The second largest group consisted of Lithuania, Slovenia, Croatia, and Denmark. These countries, with populations between two and nine million, reported between 30 and 55 applicants. The rates of acceptance for these countries were relatively inconsistent. While Croatia and Denmark reported high success rates in KA1 at 84% and 63% respectively, both Slovenia and Lithuania reported rates closer to 50%. In KA2 the results were similarly scattered. Slovenia reported a 20% success rate, Denmark 26%, Lithuania 50% and Croatia 35%.

Finally, fewer than 30 applicants for the 2017/2018 application round were received in Ireland, Norway, Luxembourg, and Malta. These results prove more complicated as not all of these countries have correspondingly small populations. Though Malta and Luxembourg have populations less than one million, Norway and Ireland are relatively larger. All of these countries, with the

exception of Ireland, did not provide separate success rates for KA1 and KA2. Luxembourg reported the highest percentage of success at around 80%, while Malta stood at 50% and Norway at 25%. Ireland did however report a 70% success rate for KA1 and a 50% success rate for KA2.

Across the board, the success of applications to KA1 programmes was higher than that of KA2 programmes.

## 3.2 Applicant Opportunities

Support for Individual Learning Mobility (KA1) and Strategic Partnership (KA2) applicants varies widely within the EU. Protocols for assisting candidates with their applications and providing necessary information depend upon the size and resources available to the Erasmus+ national agency in question. Most agencies offer program guides, necessary documents and information sessions to applicants. The nature of further support to applicants is not as predictable as support offered to beneficiaries, as there is perhaps less oversight and fewer resources made available by the EC. The following illustrates different types of assistance, serving the diverse needs of both the agencies and the applicants they work with.

**Epos**, the Erasmus+ national agency in Belgium, provides an extremely comprehensive support system to applicants interested in pursuing international project management. In the fall, they host an information day for KA1 applicants in Brussels, as well two information days for KA2 applicants in Brussels and the province of Diest. For both projects, **epos** provides a “Project Setup Form,” which can be used to articulate an idea with the opportunity to then receive feedback on it. These forms can be submitted as late as February 1<sup>st</sup> of the application year. The website also advertises funding available for consultations with potential partners abroad, so long as these visits take place before the end of January.<sup>1</sup>

Applicants may also benefit from writing assistance at one of three writing sessions for each respective initiative (KA1 and KA2); all three events take place in different cities around Belgium. Though **epos** does not offer commentary on completed proposals, they do recommend consulting two other Flemish organisations: Europe House Ryckvelde and Europe Castle Alden Biesen.

**Epos** stands out among its peer organisations across the EU for its personalized support throughout the application process. Such support was uncommon both on agency websites as well as in the survey responses. The agencies may struggle to provide individualized resources due to being underfunded, understaffed or otherwise overwhelmed with large numbers of applicants. However, several agencies aside from **epos** took measures to accommodate applicants in a more personalized manner. In a response to one of the project surveys, an employee at the Austrian Exchange Service (**OeAD**) recalled that they offer both pre- and post- application checks. That is, the **OeAD** evaluates the potential success of a project based on its strategy and aim in the initial check and then, after the candidate has made the recommended changes, a personal phone call is made with the applicant to discuss the first draft of the project application.

The Slovenian, Norwegian and Irish agencies make mention of similar offers in their survey responses and on their websites, citing trainings and writing workshops as well as individual follow-

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<sup>1</sup> <https://www.epos-vlaanderen.be/nl/wil-je-een-aanvraag-voor-een-strategisch-partnerschap-ka2-doen>

ups on the phone, via e-mail or face-to-face.<sup>2</sup> Opportunities for applicants to meet or speak with evaluators or agency employees one-on-one are valuable to applicants but appear to be problematic. The Spanish national agency, **SEPIE**, addresses this challenge by providing candidates with personalized telephone service key codes. These code as allow applicants to contact evaluators conveniently about projects to receive personalized advice.<sup>3</sup>

Effectively using technology to convey information to applicants and facilitate their success is often necessary when personalized support is not feasible. **Ecorys UK** offers an Erasmus+ quiz to assist applicants in determining which key action they should apply under. The Irish agency **Léargas** regularly updates its blog, called insights, with articles available to beneficiaries and applicants. The blog has a “Project Lifecycle” page that offers advice to managers at all stages of their projects. The blog is an especially helpful tool, as it also allows current or former project managers to post and share their experiences and tips.

The **French Erasmus+ Agency**, though not outstanding in its support, must be mentioned for its portal Penelope+, which is available to all Erasmus+ beneficiaries and candidates. No password is necessary to use the site, and it offers assistance to candidates as well as beneficiaries. In terms of applicants, the site provides a search engine for candidates to find Erasmus+ “developers,” or actors in various fields able to provide advice to potential applicants. The search engine consists of a map of developers with the option to filter the results for region, project type, sector, and type of assistance.<sup>4</sup>

Penelope+ also offers documents needed for candidates preparing their applications, clear breakdowns of the processes and necessary steps for applications and good practice examples from past beneficiaries. Generic partner search tools such as EPALÉ, Europass, and Euroguidance are available on the site. The options to subscribe to the newsletter or to follow the national agency on Facebook, Twitter and other social media sites also exist for candidates and beneficiaries. The appearance of the site stands out among other national agency platforms and websites as straightforward and accessible, which is significant for first time project realisers.

Within the Erasmus+ nation agencies, support for applicants appears to be the most in need of growth. However, agencies have a great deal of autonomy in terms of the assistance offered to candidates, allowing them to cater more specifically to the needs of the communities they serve. Generally, a combination of opportunities for personalized support with technological and online resources appear to meet the needs of project realisers interested in participating in KA1 and KA2 programs.

### 3.3 Beneficiary Opportunities

Information on opportunities offered to beneficiaries may not be entirely complete, as events and news are likely circulated by email or online platforms available to recipients of grants. Most of the information available was gathered from responses to surveys sent to national agencies, which offers an in-depth but selective view of the resources made available. Yet most national agencies

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<sup>2</sup> <https://www.leargas.ie/>

<sup>3</sup> <http://www.sepie.es/>

<sup>4</sup> <https://www.erasmusplus.fr/penelope/developpeurs.php>

offer similar opportunities to beneficiaries of KA1 and KA2 grants, as the outcomes for their support are monitored more strictly. There is some variation on technique and, once again, on the level of personalization in the national agencies' approach. The variations and consistencies will be explored in order to gain greater perspective on the nature of agency support.

Almost all national agencies offer a kick-off meeting for the new beneficiaries. These meetings generally include the financial and legal information necessary to begin the project. As the survey response from **ANPCDEF** put it, these meetings focused on:

the content of the agreement and its annexes, technical and financial management, risk prevention, how to use Mobility Tool+, dissemination and exploitation of results issues, features of the intellectual outputs, the requirements of the monitoring and checks to be performed by the NA (national agency) during the lifecycle of the project.

The kick-off meetings often set the tone for the relationship between the national agency and the project managers. Some agencies, like the **ANPCDEF**, ensure the attendance of project managers from previous years at these initial meetings. These experienced project managers not only have an opportunity to share their work, they can also discuss some of the challenges and successes they encountered. The Slovenian national agency **CMEPIUS** emphasized the importance of networking opportunities and mutual cooperation “between beneficiaries and (the) NA (national agency) and also among beneficiaries themselves” in their survey response.

Opportunities for outreach and connection between beneficiaries are not scarce throughout the lifecycle of a project either. Agencies offer tutorials, webinars or workshops about dissemination and promotion both within the Erasmus+ community as well as outside of it. The Irish agency **Léargas** gives managers a chance to post on the website's blog.<sup>5</sup> Similarly, **Ecorys UK** publishes Erasmus+ stories, which are available for inspiration and good practice as well as for promotional opportunities.<sup>6</sup> Peer-sharing can also occur at mid-year seminars. The Italian national agency **INDIRE** organizes an annual monitoring seminar for KA2 beneficiaries. An average of 100 managers participate in the meeting, which provides further information about the Mobility + Tool and other online resources. Yet the seminar also gives each beneficiary the chance to present the highlights, objectives and materials of his or her project. Monitoring the projects as they progress is a necessary duty of all national agencies, however the nature of these checks range from “Progress Monitoring Reports” used by **ANPCDEF**, to more personal over-the-phone consultations used by the Polish agency **FRSE**.

Support provided throughout the year reflects the same tension seen in the application phase between personalization and technological savviness. Ideally, agencies provide both online tools to beneficiaries in tandem with more individual attention. **ANPCDEF**, for example, offers a webinar and face-to-face workshop on using the Mobility Tool+ and preparing for the final report. Agencies can also organize events with national agencies in other fields or countries. Through collaboration countries can share costs and responsibilities, while encouraging international cooperation and networking. In August 2018, the French national agency together with the Finnish, Luxembourgish, and Croatian offices organised an event on the effectiveness of projects. According to an attendee,

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<sup>5</sup> <https://www.leargas.ie/blogs/>

<sup>6</sup> <https://www.erasmusplus.org.uk/stories/sector>

The seminar met expectations and it was nice that there were so many participants. Our project ended last summer, but it was nice to notice that we had done things right. It was also interesting to hear how other countries are doing their work in the field. From the experience of others, you get ideas for your own work.<sup>7</sup>

Transnational Cooperation Activities (TCAs) are especially valuable to program managers in smaller countries or those with limited access to Erasmus+ resources, as they can utilize opportunities offered in other countries and interact with project managers from across Europe. TCAs can incorporate a range of events, seminars and workshops that enable Erasmus+ national agencies to collaborate and share best practice. Program managers can apply to attend TCAs, which are organized by national agencies with specific goals in mind.

Agencies that cannot coordinate multiple meetings or seminars due to size or funding may also offer webinars or online workshops instead. **INDIRE**, the Italian national agency, gives each beneficiary organization a personal reserved page on its website, with access to all relevant documents, contacts and details about payments and seminar materials. They also make webinars that prepare beneficiaries for the final report.

Though thematically the national agencies face many of the same challenges in supporting the beneficiaries of grants as they do the applicants, the disparities between national agencies is not as severe. The expectations for the program managers allow not only for greater support for beneficiaries, but improved access to that support. At this time, developing the support for candidates is perhaps more pressing than bettering support for beneficiaries. Also, bettering the systems that affect applicants (face-to-face counselling, online resources, etc.) would likely have the same desired effect on beneficiaries.

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<sup>7</sup> [http://www.cimo.fi/ajankohtaista/101/1/eurooppalainen\\_koulutus\\_antoi\\_tyokaluja\\_hankkeiden\\_vaikeiden\\_arviointiin\\_ja\\_levitykseen](http://www.cimo.fi/ajankohtaista/101/1/eurooppalainen_koulutus_antoi_tyokaluja_hankkeiden_vaikeiden_arviointiin_ja_levitykseen)



## 4. Perspectives on Needs and Challenges

### 4.1 Essential Conclusions and Country Comparison

By Aron Weigl, EDUCULT

The study on successes and challenges in international project management in the field of lifelong learning points to two fundamental characteristics of the civil society field:

1. Within Europe, the field is very diverse and different conditions prevail in different countries.
2. However, similar success indicators can be identified in detail and challenges faced by international project managers and their organisations can be described.

In the following, we will therefore look at the particularities of each case on the one hand and the similarities on the other. Due to the small number of cases in the survey, no generalising conclusions can be drawn. On a qualitative level - especially in combination with the interviews - insights can be drawn for the area of civil society international project management.

#### I. Samples in the countries

The participants in the surveys in the countries differ in many respects. The fields of work in which most of the respondents are still active in addition to lifelong learning are youth work in Italy and Poland, school in Hungary, higher education and school in Denmark and vocational training in Austria.

The experience of the survey participants also varies widely. In Poland, for example, respondents are the most experienced group. More than two thirds have already worked as coordinators and two thirds have also implemented at least two international projects to date. In Italy, on the other hand, the survey participants have the least experience. Around a third have more than two international projects implemented and only a little more than a quarter have already coordinated international cooperation themselves.

The functions within the organisations also differ. Project managers and organisation managers in all countries participated in the survey with roughly the same frequency. However, the number of people responsible for international cooperation is very divergent. This function is mentioned above all among the Italian respondents, but also in Poland and Denmark, and to a lesser extent in Austria and Hungary. In Italy, on the other hand, fewer organisational managers took part.

Similarities can be observed in the thematic field. In all countries, civil society organisations from the cultural sector and, more frequently, from the educational sector took part above all. Only in Hungary do those working in the field of community and housing and in Italy those working in the field of social affairs represent even larger groups.

Due to these differences in the composition of the samples - and the small number of cases - diverging answers can be expected with regard to success indicators and challenges. More detailed

statements are therefore only possible on a qualitative level and in triangulation with the interview evaluations.

## II. Motivations

Some general statements can be made with regard to the motivations of the actors. The project managers want to learn above all from approaches in other countries. In this sense, they see it as necessary to cross borders in order to come into contact with people. Everyone likes the exchange with people from their field of work in other countries.

This can be said equally for all actors in all participating countries, also for the organisational management level. In most cases there were always concrete motivations behind the implementation of international cooperation. The majority of civil society organisations see international projects as an opportunity to generate additional funding.

## III. Indicators of Success

Basically, it can be said that the more experienced a project manager is, the more successfully he/she implements international projects. As far as the characteristics of project managers are concerned, no particularly successful type can be identified - apart from international project experience. According to the interview analysis, the direction of the training has no effect on the degree of success of the later work.

General indicators of success, which are equally visible in all countries, are general:

- many years of experience with international cooperation;
- a good embedding in European/international networks;
- a deep knowledge of EU programmes, their requirements and objectives;
- a well-balanced partnership and similar project objectives pursued by the partners;
- sufficient English language skills.

In the interviews and the analysis of the offers of the national agencies, it becomes clear that the countries differ in particular with regard to the starting conditions for international cooperation. There are a number of national agencies for Erasmus+ and Creative Europe that offer good support and thus provide a good basis for project applications, but also for implementation. However, most National Agencies, which offer more extensive support, focus on the preparation and application phase, and less on systematic assistance in the course of project implementation. For example, interview partners in Austria report on a multi-stage feedback procedure right through to application, which begins with the project idea.

In principle, such offers can be described as indicators for successful international projects, but they do not represent a guarantee. Many organisations already fail to make use of the support possibilities.

On the other hand, the survey does not provide any clear indication that the project managers who received intensive support from their organisation were able to submit successful applications or to implement the international project better than others. The data provided by the survey participants in the different countries vary greatly in this respect. The figures range between one

third of the surveyed organisation managers in Italy who say they support their project managers and up to 86% of the surveyed project managers in Hungary who say they have been supported.

There is no connection between the level of support and successful project implementation in the past, as the example of Poland shows. Most of the respondents (68%) were able to implement international projects, especially as coordinators, but only 44% of the respondents stated that they supported their project managers.

The interviews, on the other hand, show that “support” itself can be defined very broadly. It often consists of more experienced colleagues helping ad hoc. Systematic offers of support for international cooperation are generally the exception in the civil society sector in all countries. The smaller the organisations, the rarer they (can) provide that. There, the organisational leaders are usually also project managers at the same time. A division between project managers tends to take place to the effect that there are responsibilities for national/local on the one hand and international projects on the other.

In the acquisition phase, support is more likely to be observed, especially in order to prepare applications and find suitable project partners as well as to provide funding for the project. The latter is at least what those responsible for the organisation say, but the project managers see it less that way. In the implementation of the project, the support of employees who take care of accounting and financial management is given.

Project managers hope consistently to receive additional personnel for the project team. This already indicates one of the biggest challenges in international project management, but also in civil society work in general: personnel bottlenecks, which are ultimately due to budgetary limitations.

A rarely available support offer, but also a little expected one, is trainings for general project management, intercultural trainings and language courses. Less given, but hoped for by project managers, are trainings in international project management. This definitely describes a vacancy in all participating countries. The only thing from the interviews in different countries is the attitude that “learning-by-doing” is the best method to improve oneself in the management area. However, this perspective may be based on the fact that no comparison is possible due to the lack of offers and therefore the autodidactic variant is the most promising so far.

## IV. Challenges

Even with the existence of trainings of this kind, challenges arise for the project managers. Lack of time often prevents the use of such support services, as interview partners in some countries report.

It is consistently clear that the application procedure is particularly challenging for the same reason. It takes time and staff to write successful applications. Here a difference between the experienced and the inexperienced interviewees and interview partners becomes clear. While the experienced interviewees point mainly to time as a decisive resource, inexperienced interviewees also regard the content of the application as a major challenge.

In addition, civil society organisations in some participating countries lack the competence to successfully coordinate international projects. Especially in Hungary and Denmark this is mentioned as a challenge.

The organisation managers confirm what the project managers make clear: Above all, there is a lack of financial resources, but also of time to offer support. It does not always seem to be a problem that the project managers do not want to make use of possible support offers or that the organisation does not want to offer support. Therefore, there is no lack of will.

There is a difference between the interviewees with regard to other points: A lack of knowledge about support possibilities and methods as well as access to competent project managers is described as a challenge in some countries.

The more experienced interviewees mention negative influences on international project implementation: e.g. disregarding the strengths and weaknesses of the various partners is a particular disadvantage for implementation. That is why it would be necessary to involve the partners already during the project planning phase. By doing so, it would be possible to draft the application and to design the project accordingly to their needs and expertise.

## 4.2 Concluding Perspectives and Recommendations

By all partners; summarised by Aron Weigl, EDUCULT

The fact that experience is mentioned as one of the most important indicators of success makes it clear that creating a good support offer especially for first-time project managers is a good way to motivate project managers to work internationally and to increase their capacity in this field. Entering international cooperation is often the biggest challenge. It is also important to accept failure in order to be able to gain experience in the first place.

It is likely, then, that the most important task when offering support must be to eliminate hurdles for first-time project implementations.

### I. Common Needs

Overall, we can say that CSOs interested in cooperating internationally for the first time are hesitant to try. Not due to the lack of professional skills or expertise, but mostly because they don't know where to find first-hand information on the implementation process. They would like to know more about the real organisational and financial risks that they might encounter. A lack of inspiration is an inhibiting factor as well. Most of the unexperienced project managers agreed that they would like to see and read about success stories of partners or lead organisations. When it comes to financial bureaucracy, taxes, and other administrative rules, there should also be country-oriented support as the systems differ from country to country.

The general message from the online survey was that the project managers mainly need to upgrade their knowledge and skills in order to design applications for international cooperation and coordinate international projects. For this they also need support from their management bodies. This support is varying from country to country and especially from organisation to organisation, so a general support network would help to overcome inequality. The situation is similar with regard to support from the National Agencies. Last but not least, the possible support in the form of advice, training, and mentoring from other actors in the international project context is not well established.

Therefore, we can locate the following general needs:

- specific training for support in the understanding of calls for funds including the linguistic aspect (especially technical English), and application writing skills;
- financial and human resources in the civil society organisations;
- access to a consolidated international partnership network;
- increasing knowledge concerning the marketing of the project activities;
- support at recruiting new, competent staff and volunteers;
- increasing inter-sectoral cooperation to enhance the impact of the sector.

## II. Recommendations for the Development of Support

The aim of the project is to establish a support network for project managers who wish to become internationally active. Following the formulated needs, it would therefore make sense to develop the following support services.

First, it would be necessary to offer easy access to in-depth support both for those preparing applications as well as for those coordinating an international project. Fulfilling the coordinator function includes helping potential partners to promote themselves and to handle their new positions as partners in international projects. A support network needs to address this challenge.

The support could be in form of

- counselling and mentoring, and also access to tools and video clips and knowledge pills with thematic advice to prepare applications and to handle coordination (and to become a partner);
- tailored support for small CSOs for each stage of the project application and implementation (i.e. how to read a call, how to estimate a budget, how to build the partnership, etc.);
- new thematic Erasmus+ courses with focus on the challenges for first-time international project managers responding to the identified needs;
- educational tools of idea mapping, how to turn a problem-solving idea into a project;
- educational tools on basic budget planning;
- “do’s” and “don’ts” in application writing, partner search, and project planning;
- shared experiences, personal stories of what to do when things go wrong (in general the support sources are focused on good planning and preventing, but what do they do when typical problems occur? to whom do they turn? what do others do in similar situations?);
- access to an international network for beginners to get support and motivation to prioritise international cooperation;
- a platform to support the initiation phase of first partnerships;
- educational tools, templates on how to reach out (where? in what form? when? on what level of planning?) for partners;
- job shadowing to give the possibility to participate in international project activities as an element of learning typical tasks of international project management;
- a glossary about technical English used in project management and English vocabulary in the field of lifelong learning/adult education.

Eventually the support should lead to

- an increased level of networking that enhances the impact of the sector;
- a joint lobby for the sector – among others to increase the possibilities of co-financing for international cooperation;
- the opportunity to learn from others’ experience, possibly with options to directly reach out to more experienced organisations.

From our point of view, these options for supporting project managers make sense. The report on key competences, which is based on this study, completes the picture by researching the skills required in international projects and identifying meaningful training opportunities in this context.

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## A2. Guides for Interviews (English version)<sup>8</sup>

### Interview Questionnaire

Target group A: project managers / applied already

#### Interview Setting

- Personal/telephone interview

#### Before conducting

- Explain the objective and context of the project and the research
- Indicate that the interview is anonymous, but organisation will possibly be mentioned
- If recording: ask for permission
- Ask for open questions before starting

#### Subject

- Identification of good practice in international project management in the CSO non-formal adult education sector
- Indicators for success of international project management
- Competences for realising international cooperation projects
- Inputs for a first-time international project managers support network and needed support

### A Introduction

A1 What is your thematic field of work in the CSO non-formal adult education sector? (Culture, Social, Health, International Activities, etc.)

A2 What work status and role do you have? (employed, freelancing; project manager, director, responsible for international cooperation)

A3 Since when are you working at your organisation/in this environment?

A4 What is your professional background?

---

<sup>8</sup> The aim of the interviews was to get to know about successes and challenges as well as the needs for support in international project management. As part of the survey, the partners interviewed four varied groups: A) experienced project managers; B) experienced management bodies; C) inexperienced but interested project managers; D) inexperienced but interested management bodies. There are some minor differences between the interview guides for the four groups. Here, the guide for group A as the most representative of the four guides is presented.

---

## B International Activity

---

B1 How many times have you applied for and how often did you realise an international cooperation project? In which programme (financing body) did you apply for funding?

B2 If there were any unsuccessful applications, what do you think were the reasons?

B3 What are possible reasons for successful applications?

B4 What are the main topics of the international projects you applied for/realised?

B5 Have you ever taken part in (an) international project(s) as a participant (not as project manager or organisation representative)? If yes, what kind of participation has that been (e.g. youth exchange, volunteering abroad, studying abroad, international training/meeting/job shadowing)?

---

## C Support for International Managers

---

C1 What is your motivation to implement international cooperation projects? *[If there is no input from the respondent, give some examples from the survey]*

C2 Which kind of challenges appear for you when applying for or implementing an international cooperation project? *[If there is no input from the respondent, give some examples from the survey]*

C3 What are the pre-conditions to successfully realise international cooperation projects? *[If there is no input from the respondent, give some examples from the survey]*

C4 Did you receive any kind of support from your employing/commissioning organisation? If yes, what kind of support? Was that helpful? What would be helpful? *[If there is no input from the respondent, give some examples from the survey]*

C5 Do you use any educational offers to upgrade your competences? If yes, what kind of offers and did they help you in the implementation of the international project(s)? *[If there is no input from the respondent, give some examples from the survey]*

C6 In your opinion, what field of professional education is most relevant for working as an international project manager?

---

## D Competences for International Project Management

---

**Provide a short presentation** of the project objective to develop an adapted PMI Triangle for CSOs, and outline the three-leg composition of competences (see annex 1, page 2).

D1 Which competences/skills did you need the most for preparing a successful application for an international cooperation project? Why?

D2 Which competences/skills would you need to improve personally to be a better international project manager?

D3 **[Provide a short outline** of the meaning of technical skills (see annex 1, page 2)!]

Which technical skills do you see as most important for international project managers? Why?

D4 [**Provide a short outline** of the meaning of leadership skills (see annex 1, page 2)!]

Which leadership skills do you see as most important for international project managers? Why?

D5 [**Provide a short outline** of the meaning of strategic and management skills (see annex 1, page 2)!]

Which strategic and business management skills do you see as most important for international project managers? Why?

D6 What kind of support to strengthen your skills would you prefer? Should the support mainly be in the form of national and European training courses, Portal tools, e-mentoring, and/or the provision of international support network? Why?

---

## E Inputs for a Support Network

---

E1 Within the project we are going to found an international network supporting international project managers and civil society organisations realising international cooperation. What kind of support should such a network provide?

E2 What kind of online tools, knowledge pills, guidance support, etc. should an Online Portal provide for first-time international project managers?

E3 What kind of support should a mentoring service provide for first-time international project managers?

E4 What kind of support should training possibilities provide for first-time international project managers?

E5 Is there anything else you would like to share with us?

***Thank you for your time!***

## A3. Online Questionnaire (English version)<sup>9</sup>

### First-time international project realisers support network

Thank you for participating in our survey!

The ERASMUS+ project “First-time international project realisers support network” aims at delivering and sustaining a support portal that gathers all the information essential for international project managers and third sector adult education organisations planning to incorporate international cooperation into their strategies. The project’s other purpose is to establish a European network supporting the initiation, planning and realisation of partnerships as well as European cooperation in the field of life-long learning.

Your participation in this survey is an important contribution to reach these aims!

Your answers are treated anonymously and your IP address will not be saved. Answering the questions takes about 15 minutes. We would be glad if you take this time. Please do not use the backward / forward buttons of your browser, otherwise the survey may be cancelled.

Many thanks!

### Your Field of Action

**1.) Where is your place of work? In which country is your organisation located? \***

- Austria
- Denmark
- Hungary
- Italy
- Poland
- Other:

**2.) Please choose the general field(s) of your activity in the field of education. (multiple answers possible) \***

- Adult education
- School education
- Vocational education and training
- Higher education
- Youth education
- Other:

**3.) Which kind of educational sector are you working in? (multiple answers possible) \***

- Formal learning

---

<sup>9</sup> Our baseline analysis included two multilateral surveys: the first one on challenges and success stories of first-time international project cooperation, and the second one on key competences and needs for support; but the online query combined the two surveys in one questionnaire which is presented here. The first survey includes the question series: Q1, Q2, Q3, Q4, Q6, Q7, Q8, Q9, Q10, Q11, Q12, Q14, Q15, Q16, Q17, Q18, Q19, Q20, Q27, Q28, Q29, Q34, Q6xQ7.

- Non-formal or informal learning

**4.) Please choose the thematic field(s) of your action. (multiple answers possible) \***

- Culture and leisure time
- Education and research
- Health
- Social
- Environment
- Local community and housing
- Counselling, legal assistance and politics
- Philanthropy and volunteering
- International activities
- Religion
- Other:

**5.) What is your current work status in this field? (multiple answers possible) \***

- Working for a civil society organisation
- Working for a public organisation
- Other:

**6.) In which function do you work in this field? (multiple answers possible) \***

- As a project manager [a]
- As director/manager/head/chairperson of our organisation [b]
- As a person responsible for international cooperation at our organisation [c]
- Other:

## International Activity

**7.) Have you ever applied for funding to work internationally in your field of action? \***

- Yes [a]
- No [b]

**A. [If a] Was any application successful so that you could implement an international project? \***

- Yes [c]
- No [d]

**1. [If c] How many times did you realise an international project? \***

- Once
- 2-4 times
- 5 times and more

**2. [If c] In which role has the organisation you work for been involved in international projects? (multiple answers possible) \***

- As coordinator
- As another partner

**3. [If c, d] How often have you already applied unsuccessfully for an international project? \***

- Once
- 2-4 times

- 5 times and more
- Never

**4. [If c, d] What was the reason for unsuccessful application(s)? (multiple choices)**

- The evaluation score was not high enough.
- The positively assessed application was put on the substitutes list and at the end there was too less budget to fund it.
- The organisation that applied resigned from the project realisation.
- Other:

**B. [If b] Are you interested in working internationally in your field of action? \***

- Yes
- No [→ end of survey]

## Support for International Project Managers

[Questions for project managers:]

**8.) [If 6.a] What is your motivation to implement international projects?**

	To a high degree	To some degree	To a low degree	Not at all
I want to learn from approaches in other countries.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
It is necessary to connect with people by crossing borders.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
It is an additional possibility to raise funds.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I like the exchange with people from other countries in my field of work.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I was appointed by my organisation to do so.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I just had the possibility to do so or to try it. There are no concrete motivations behind it.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

**9.) Here you can add more motivations:**

**10.) [If 6.a] Which kind of challenges appear for you when applying for or implementing an international project?**

	To a high degree	To some degree	To a low degree	Not at all
I do not have enough general project management skills.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I do not have enough skills that would be especially necessary in international cooperation projects.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I do not know enough about the demands on how to design successful applications for EU programmes.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I do not get enough support from my employing / commissioning organisation.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

I do not get sufficient support from other members / the team of the organisation I am working for.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I do not see any benefits for myself / my organisation in international cooperation.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

**11.) Here you can add more challenges you have been confronted with:**

**12.) [If 6.a] Did you as project manager receive any kind of support from your employing / commissioning organisation to apply for or to implement international projects? \***

- Yes [a]
- No [b]

**A. [If a] What kind of support did you receive? (multiple answers possible)**

- Support to find appropriate project partners
- Support for networking/exchange with other international project managers
- Support to raise funds for implementing a project
- Support to prepare demanding applications
- Support to manage financial issues while and after implementing a project
- Additional time resources
- Additional financial resources
- Additional human resources for the project team
- Access to field specialists who could support with their knowledge and special skills (e.g. communication experts, accountant officers)
- Intercultural trainings
- Language trainings
- Trainings for international project management
- Trainings for general project management
- In-house trainings
- External trainings
- Other:

**13.) [If 6.a] What kind of support would you expect from your employing / commissioning organisation to be able to successfully apply for and realise international projects? (multiple answers possible)**

- Support for networking/exchange with other international project managers
- Support to raise funds for implementing a project
- Support to manage financial issues while and after implementing a project
- Additional time resources
- Additional financial resources
- Intercultural trainings
- Language trainings
- Trainings for international project management
- Trainings for general project management
- In-house trainings
- External trainings
- Other:

**14.) [If 6.a] Do you use any educational offers to upgrade your competences on your own?**

- Yes [a]
- No [b]



**A. [If a] What kind of educational offer did you use at least once? (multiple answers possible)**

- Webinar
- Conference/symposium
- Schooling/workshop
- Job shadowing
- Other:

**B. [If a] How often do you participate in this kind of education?**

- Less than once a year
- Once a year
- 2-4 times per year
- 5 times per year and more

[Questions for management bodies:]

**15.) [If 6.bc] What is your motivation to implement international projects with your organisation?**

	To a high degree	To some degree	To a low degree	Not at all
To develop our organisation, it is important to learn from approaches in other countries.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
It is necessary to connect with people by crossing borders.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
It is an additional possibility to raise funds.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Our organisation is part of an international network which is regularly implementing projects together.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
We just had the possibility to do so or to try it. There are no concrete motivations behind it.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

**16.) Here you can add more motivations:**

**17.) [If 6.bc] Does your organisation offer support for the responsible managers applying for or implementing of international projects? \***

- Yes [a]
- No [b]

**A. [If a] What kind of support did/do you offer? (multiple answers possible)**

- Support for networking/exchange with other international project managers
- Support to raise funds for implementing a project
- Support to manage financial issues while and after implementing a project
- Additional time resources
- Additional financial resources
- Intercultural trainings
- Language trainings
- Trainings for international project management
- Trainings for general project management

- In-house trainings
- External trainings
- Other:

**18.) [If 6.bc] Which kind of challenges appear for your organisation when trying to support your managers of international projects?**

	To a high degree	To some degree	To a low degree	Not at all
We do not have knowledge about general possibilities of support.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
We do not have knowledge about methods of support.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
We lack financial resources to offer support.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
We lack time for offering support.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
We have no access to competent people to build a project team.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Project managers do not want to make use of offered support.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Our organisation does not want to offer support for international projects.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

**19.) Here you can add more challenges your organisation has been confronted with:**

**20.) [If 6.bc] Which kind of possibilities would you see to overcome these challenges?**

### Assessment of Management Competences

<b>21.) Technical skills *</b>		Tick 3 competences you especially wish to improve.
Please choose the 3 technical competences, you most need to improve to be better to manage EU projects (by getting training, mentoring and other support)		
Technical project management refers to more technical competences to plan and execute the project in the area of adult education in a civil society context.		
1	<b>English language skills,</b> i.e. high level of reading, writing and speaking English as the common foreign language in European cooperation, incl. skills in terminology of adult education in a civil society context.	
2	<b>General fund-raising skills,</b> i.e. how to design a project idea in a structured manner, engage co-applicants, design the application and present it to be co-funded by specific funds and programmes.	
3	<b>Organising Idea Workshops,</b> i.e. idea generation during group sessions, like brain-storming or brain-writing, where engaged stakeholders qualify the project idea or design solutions to unforeseen problems.	
4	<b>Project planning and scheduling,</b> i.e. to plan the break down structure of the work programme, fx the SMART manner with Specific / Measurable / Achievable / Realistic / Timely goals, key activities and outputs.	

5	<b>Budgeting and cost estimation,</b> i.e. to add the detailed cost estimates of the activity plan into a detailed budget plan, which help to monitor the budget and to provide a work programme related account.	
6	<b>Coordinating the team work,</b> i.e. to put the work plan into practice by creating task lists, nominating responsibilities, supervising the execution with clear procedures for controlling and time management.	
7	<b>Financial management,</b> i.e. to manage the planning, budgeting, accounting, internal control, auditing, procurement, disbursement and financial reporting in accordance with the project plan.	
8	<b>Internal communication,</b> i.e. to plan and implement an effective and assertive communication with the project team, that defines What, Why, Who, Where, When and How, incl. the ICT means to use.	
9	<b>Dissemination,</b> i.e. to plan the dissemination in accordance with the stakeholders and target groups in the civil society area and to provide the specific means to reach them, incl. use of social media.	
10	<b>Evaluation skills,</b> i.e. to plan, conduct and report progress and impact evaluation, incl. to define methodology and procedures and to design online evaluation forms.	
<b>22.) Here you can mention 1 extra technical competence (not mentioned above), you also wish to improve to be a better manager of EU projects.</b>		
11		

<b>23.) Leadership competences *</b>		Tick 3 competences you especially wish to improve.
Please choose the 3 leadership competences, you most need to improve to be better to manage EU projects (by training, mentoring and other support)		
Leadership competences refers to the ability to build team spirit, present visions for your team members and inspire them to achieve the target and to help them dealing with the various stakeholders in the project.		
1	<b>Effective communication in the CSO context,</b> i.e. to communicate the project vision and meaning of the activities to stakeholders and specially to reach out to key stakeholders from the civil society contexts.	
2	<b>Motivation and Influencing,</b> i.e. to motivate the project team and key stakeholders with clear goals and empower them to put their mark on the work, which reinforces the cohesion and co-ownership.	
3	<b>Empathy and Situational Understanding,</b> i.e. to engage in free human relationships and understand and meet the needs of your project participants and be good at bringing the strengths of the participants into play.	

4	<b>Team Building including volunteers,</b> i.e. to promote ownership in the project team and related volunteers and promote a constructive collaborative culture with a strong mutual responsibility and motivation.	
5	<b>Improvisation and agility,</b> i.e. to be able to act agile when needed and to improvise in unforeseen situations to ensure progress and effect by following openings, possibilities and the flow of the context.	
6	<b>Motivation by good exemplary practice,</b> i.e. to motivate by being a good example by keeping deadlines and focussing on the goals and content, to take responsibility and act in a compassionate, honest and transparent way.	
7	<b>Delegating project tasks,</b> i.e. as coordinator to delegate as many tasks as possible to get more time for dealing with the unexpected, and to gain more time to engage the project work as a whole.	
8	<b>Moderating meetings and events,</b> i.e. to have the skills and attitude to moderate consortium meetings, plenary sessions and bigger project events both face to face and on virtual events (by Skype, etc.).	
9	<b>Peer-to-peer counselling,</b> i.e. to counsel and help other team member with specific project tasks, or rather to provide counselling and advice on a peer-to-peer level in a cross-border and multilateral context.	
10	<b>Conflict resolution,</b> i.e. to successfully navigate in internal and external conflicts and challenging situations and mediate between different point of view and ability to take the final decision.	
<b>24.) Here you can mention 1 extra leadership competence (not mentioned above), you also wish to improve to be a better manager of EU projects.</b>		
11		

<b>25.) Strategic and Business Management Skills *</b>		Tick 3 competences you especially wish to improve.
Please choose the 3 Strategic and Business Management competences, you most need to improve to be better to manage EU projects (by training, mentoring and other support).		
Strategic and Business Management competences refer to knowledge of and expertise in the area of activity so the team better can execute the projects accordingly to the strategy of the organisation and with a high knowledge of the area they are working in.		
1	<b>Insight knowledge of the CSOs providing adult education,</b> i.e. knowledge of the missions, needs and conditions of the CSOs sector of non-formal and informal adult education in your own country and the wider European community.	
2	<b>Insight knowledge of the situation in the involved partner countries,</b> i.e. a basic knowledge of the history and current challenges as well as of the CSO field in the involved partner countries.	

3	<b>Intercultural competences,</b> i.e. the ability to work in international context with the needed inter-cultural competences and basic understanding of and skills to behave in different cultural and social contexts.	
4	<b>International and multilateral network in the CSO field,</b> i.e. to have a strong European network in the CSO sector and the ability to find and select appropriate new partners. as well as to promote your own organisation as a future partner.	
5	<b>Knowledge of European funding programmes,</b> i.e. an overview of relevant funding programmes and not least an insight in the specific demands these programmes have for the project plan and the specific application design.	
6	<b>Need (and stakeholder) analysis,</b> i.e. to know how to analyse the need for the project idea and to clarify the means to meet the need and to involve the key stakeholders in the project plan.	
7	<b>SWOT and Risk analysis,</b> i.e. to clarify the Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats for the project plan, and state the obvious risks and plan how to handle them.	
8	<b>Legal and regulatory compliance,</b> i.e. to ensure that the planning and implementation of the project are aware of and take steps to comply with relevant laws, policies, and regulations in the area.	
9	<b>PR and Marketing compliance,</b> i.e. the ability to apply the tools and contact channels for information, promotion and dissemination of the project to the main target groups.	
10	<b>Synergies between national CSO projects and international CSO projects,</b> i.e. ability to see and use possible synergies by initiating parallel international and national projects with overlapping activities and outputs and supplementing funding possibilities.	
	<b>26.) Here you can mention 1 extra Strategic and Business Management leadership competence (not mentioned above), you also wish to improve to be a better manager of EU projects.</b>	
11		

## Personal Information

27.) Please choose your gender:

- Male
- Female
- Other

28.) How old are you?

- Less than 20 years old
- 20-29 years old

- 30-39 years old
- 40-49 years old
- 50-59 years old
- 60-69 years old
- 70 years old and more

**29.) What is your field of professional education? (multiple answers possible)**

- Law/administration
- Economy
- Management/marketing
- Media/communication
- Social sciences (psychology, sociology, etc.)
- Pedagogics/education
- Arts/culture
- Engineering
- Other:

### **We are interested in your opinion**

**30.) Within the project we are going to found an international network supporting international project managers and civil society organisations realising international co-operation. What kind of support should such a network provide?**

- Networking opportunities
- Trainings upgrading project management competences
- Possibilities for common development of international projects
- Others – please propose:

**31.) What kind of online tools, knowledge pills, guidance support, etc. should an Online Portal provide for first-time international project managers?**

**32.) What kind of support should a mentoring service provide for first-time international project managers?**

**33.) What kind of support should training possibilities provide for first-time international project managers?**

**34.) Is there anything else you would like to share with us?**

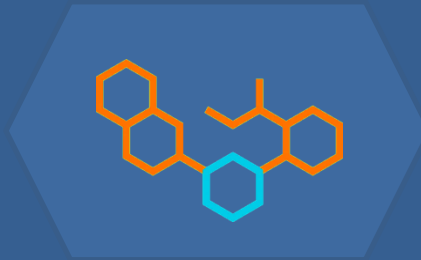
**Besides implementing this survey, we are conducting interviews. If you are interested to tell us about your experiences in international cooperation projects – or if you are just interested in our work, please write an e-mail to:**

Austria: aron.weigl@educult.at  
 Denmark: hjv@interfolk.dk  
 Hungary: zsofi.jeney.domingues@gmail.com  
 Italy: l.lupini@cooss.marche.it  
 Poland: faie@fundacjaie.eu

**We will keep you informed about the project events and the developed outputs.**

**Thank you very much for the participation in our survey!**





## **Successes and challenges.**

### **Report I on international project management in the civil society sector of adult education**

**This multilateral survey report on successes and challenges of international project management in the civil society sector of adult education has been developed as first intellectual output in the two-year Erasmus+ development project, Sept 2018 – Aug 2020, entitled: “First time international project realisers support network”.**

**The project is co-funded by the Erasmus+ programme of the European Union.**



**Erasmus+**