

## Approaching the youth in evaluation research – conclusions from Youth Impact project

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## Abstract

This study concerns evaluation of projects addressed to the youth (aged 15–24) – a group of special interest in many public policies, especially those related to transition between a phase of education and a phase of work.

Its main goal is to find ways of reaching and involving the beneficiaries of the youth projects as well as to support the development of the youth and increase quality of the evaluation of these projects.

Using the expertise of the Youth Impact project cooperation partners and literature review the author considers major specificities of the youth living conditions (dominance of education, minor role of work and underemployment, increased mobility, superiority in information and mobile technologies, submergence in social media) and particular requirements of approaching the minors (17 y.o. and younger).

The complexities of reaching the youth group (especially the NEETs – *youth not in employment, education or training*) as well as satisfying their psychological needs are treated not only as problems to deal with but also as opportunities, which can be used to increase the quality of evaluation, to make it more adequate, effective and participatory.

The starting point of multidimensional dependency, vulnerability and accompanying protection measures can be transformed into more active, entrepreneurial attitude supported by the new skills and empowering experience gained not only in the youth project itself but also by means of the participatory evaluation.

## Introduction

This study concerns evaluation of youth projects, i.e. those related to the transition from the dependent to independent role in life of beneficiaries of these projects, especially youth employment projects in which the planned change is related with getting decent employment.

Given the transitory role of these projects, it is important to realise what is the point of departure of the young participants as well as engage their unique user-perspective and development potentials.

Basing on the experience of Youth Project cooperation partners and the literature review the study analyses how to adapt the evaluation research to the complexities of reaching and efficiently collecting data from the young project participants. These complexities include:

- 1) Specific living conditions of the youth aged 15–24 resulting from:
  - a) participation in group forms of education,
  - b) having no decent employment or no paid work at all,
  - c) high mobility,
  - d) widespread use of digital and mobile technologies,
  - e) submergence in social media,
  - f) complexity of reaching the NEETs,
- 2) Special legal situation of the minors,
- 3) Psychological and social needs related to intensive development processes during the transition to adulthood.

The starting point of multidimensional dependency, vulnerability and accompanying protection measures can be transformed into more active, entrepreneurial attitude supported by the new skills and empowering experience gained not only in the youth project itself but also by means of the participatory evaluation. The scope of the youth involvement in evaluation should be meaningful but still adjusted to their choice, abilities as well as to resources available for the evaluation and can vary from the role of consultant thorough collaborator to co-owner of the process (Kirby 2004).

The implementation of participatory approach gives the evaluation even more impact both on the evaluated project and on its young participants. Their engagement in the participatory evaluation raises their social competences by engaging them in new social roles, i.e. the roles of influential stakeholders and not only as research subjects. What is more, engaging young project participants into active roles builds their positive motivation to participate in something important and useful – the project improvement. At the same time, they can identify new research issues, help to design communicative research tools, interpret findings, discuss conclusions and recommendations, take part in dissemination of reporting products etc.

## 1. Specificity of youth living conditions as a challenge and opportunity for evaluating youth projects

### 1.1. Conducting evaluation with the participants engaged in education

Studying is the dominant activity in the life of the youth aged 15–24. Labour Force Survey data show that nearly all youth aged from 15 to 17 years old take part in some form of education or training (97%). Among the next age group youth (18–24 y.o.) majority of young EU citizens still can be met in some education facility (61%) although majority of them also engage in some sort of employment.

**Table 1. The EU-27 youth in education or training**

Age group \ Year	2019	2020
15–17 years old	96.8%	96.3%
18–24 years old	60.9%	61.0%

Source: Eurostat, edat\_lfse\_18

The Youth Impact project cooperation partners agreed that the youth's involvement in education constitutes a great opportunity for evaluators to easily access the target group of the evaluated projects and collect data through observation, surveys, group interviews, etc. Regardless the method used the researchers ought to make sure there are appropriate conditions for collecting data, such as: an isolated room and dedicated time (respondents should not be under time pressure).

### 1.2. Complexity of asking about the youth employment status

While gathering data on financial or labour market status of the youth – key feature not only for youth employment projects – the prevalence and specificity of their employment must be taken into account. First of all employment is not dominant activity among the youth – as Labour Force Survey shows only 1/3 of them have some work and the COVID-19 pandemic had visible impact on the decrease of this employment (from 33,4% in 2019 to 31,4% in 2020).

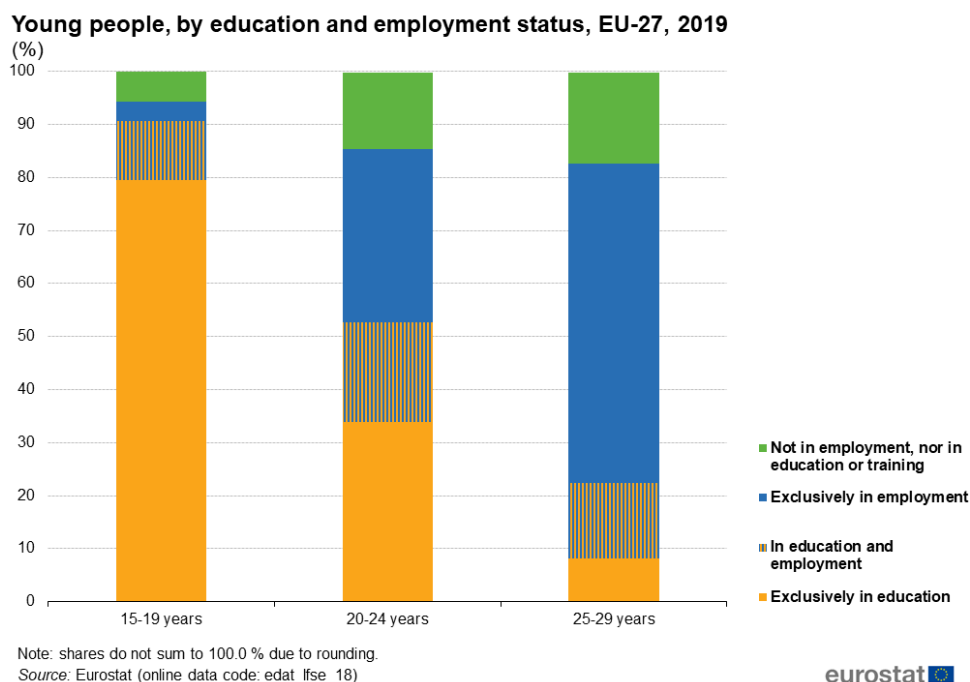
**Table 2. The EU-27 youth in employment**

Age group \ Year	2019	2020
15–17 years old	8.2%	7.6%
18–24 years old	43.9%	41.6%

Source: Eurostat, edat\_lfse\_18

Of course the employment status among the minors (8% in 15–17 age group) is many times rarer than among the older group of youth (42%–44% in 18–24 age group). Another important difference between the underage and young adults (of legal age) is that in the latter group there are more people who focus on the employment only (25–26%) than those who combine employment with education or training (17–18%), while among the younger group nearly all employed report participation in education.

The complex relations between employment status and engagement in education among different age groups are shown well on the following diagram.



As a consequence of these facts, evaluators of the youth projects should never ask questions based on the assumption that the project beneficiary is working or has income from employment. Asking about this can be tricky as work of the youth occurs in highly diversified forms and sometimes is underpaid or not paid at all. Also the legal status, scope, permanence and stability of work is often atypical. To quote just some examples of answers for the type of work performed by the youth: a free help in the paid work of a close family member, a one-time job, occasional work, holiday work, part-time work, replacement job, trial work, internship, apprenticeship, vocational preparation (in which the proportion of study to work and earnings vary widely and may or may not be considered work), work in exchange for accommodation, food and pocket money, voluntary work with various levels of covering own costs, work performed under various contracts ranging from regular employment contracts to specific contracts, promoting products or services on social media in exchange for the goods or services received, undeclared work such as tutoring, remuneration for private lessons, sex or illegal activities.

Considering this variety of employment status researcher should clearly define what types of activities are important for the evaluation purposes and be clear what is considered work, job or employment. A few good examples of precise questions on employment status and types of work can be found in *ILO school-to-work transition survey* (Elder 2009).

### *1.3. Adapting data collection methods to high mobility of the youth*

People aged 15–24 change their place of residence much more often than older people due to education or seeking a job. A contributing factor is that most of the youth have no children yet and the average age of woman at birth of first child grows systematically.

**Table 3. The EU-27 mean age of woman at birth of first child**

Year	Average age
2015	29.0
2016	29.1
2017	29.2
2018	29.3
2019	29.4

Source: Eurostat, TPS00017, last update 28/06/2021

Besides general mobility, the young people exhibit also higher than average daily mobility. As a result, traditional methods of collecting data based on a home address work poorly in the case of youth. Therefore, in the case of the youth, it is particularly important to use the opportunities connected with the evaluated project to conduct the research in face to face contact or obtain a phone number or the name of an individual profile on a messaging application, and then base a data collection strategy on these contact details. The findings of studies using both postal questionnaire and the CAWI<sup>1</sup> method showed that in case of the youth the response rate in CAWI is higher<sup>2</sup> and the scope of missing data is smaller<sup>3</sup>.

### *1.4. Adapting research tools to mobile internet communication devices*

The Youth Impact cooperation partners agreed that the youth tend to prefer electronic technologies than paper ones in much higher degree than any other group of the population. Eurostat data on ICT use confirms that the age group up to 24 years had 95% daily users of internet even before pandemic of COVID-19, while in general population of 16–74 years old this indicator was significantly lower (77%). It is worth to note that in some majority of the EU countries the percentage of internet users among the group below age of 25 reached 99% or 100%.

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<sup>1</sup> Computer Assisted Web Interview.

<sup>2</sup> The web-push protocol produced a higher response rate than the mailed pencil and paper protocol in the Monitoring the Future panel study, without substantially affecting estimates of substance use once attrition weights and socio-demographic variables were factored in (Patrick et al. 2021).

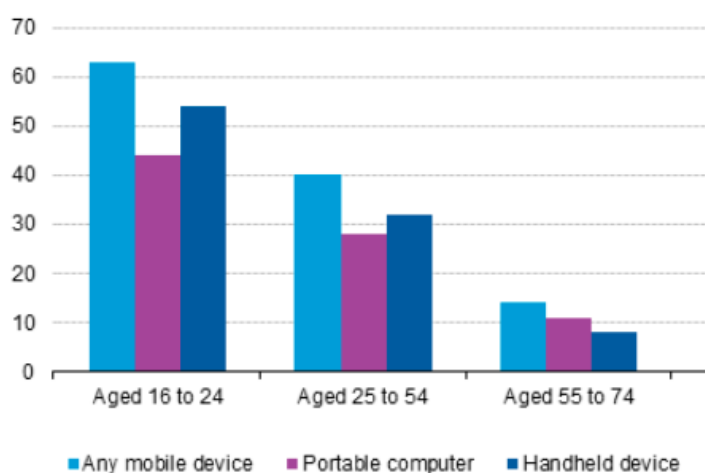
<sup>3</sup> Adolescent drug prevalence estimates in the United States differed little across electronic tablet versus paper-and-pencil survey modes, and showed little to no effect modification by socio-demographics. Levels of missing data were lower for electronic tablets (Miech et al. 2021).

**Table 4. Percentage of the EU-27 population accessing internet every day by age**

Age group \ Year	2019	2020
16–19 years old	95%	95%
20–24 years old	95%	95%
25–64 years old	80%	83%
65–74 years old	43%	47%

Source: Eurostat, ISOC\_CI\_IFP\_FU, last update: 25/05/2021

Taking into account these statistics, it is worth to use internet-based research tools when surveying the youth. What is more, these tools should be adapted to smartphones as the mobile internet usage is the dominant form among the youth (one simple question per screen, simple and legible form, not too long list of answers).<sup>4</sup> Even the data from 2012 already indicated the mobile technology prevalence among the youngest generations, and of course this phenomenon could only grew higher with the general spreading of the smartphones.



Source: Eurostat (online data code: isoc\_cimobi\_dev)

The experience of Youth Impact cooperation partners showed also that sometimes data collection can be done in very casual and simplified form during work or events with a small or medium size group (e.g. using such application as “Kahoot!”). Launching an ad-hoc mini-survey among participants is possible also during on-line event or training using build-in functionalities of popular communicators (e.g. in Google Meet, Teams, Zoom).

<sup>4</sup> A project focused on developing social competences among young inhabitants of remote areas of Małopolska Region measures the progress in social competences among project recipients by means of installing social competence tests application on smartphones of the project beneficiaries (<https://dziedzictwo.mistia.org.pl/>)

### ***1.5. Counteracting “chaos” with regular reminders***

A characteristic feature of the way of life of contemporary youth is their overstimulation resulting from all kind of factors starting from traditional ones such as intensive education, rich social life and development of own interests and additionally flooded by messages and content transmitted via smartphones and other means of ICT communication. This may contribute to “a level of chaos” as Kirby calls it (2004) and can result in forgetting about such obligations as filling out a questionnaire, participating in an interview, etc.

Therefore, the Youth Impact cooperation partners agreed that, it is important to regularly send messages reminding to young respondents about the dates of the arranged interview, filling in the questionnaire, etc.

### ***1.6. Social media as an opportunity for innovative recruitment of young interviewees***

The submergence of the youth in social media applications is well known phenomenon and the Eurostat data confirm that 87% of the EU-27 youth aged 16-24 participated in these kind of networks creating a profile, posting messages or by other form of contribution at least once in 3 month in research conducted in 2020 (Eurostat 2021).

This activity can be of some use for researchers. For instance, it can be used as an alternative way of recruitment for individual interviews. A researcher can find internet groups gathering young people from a given town or school, as well as a group with specific interests, sometimes even a participants of particular project. When trying to invite somebody from such a group – the proposition should be made directly to particular participant – not to influence the interactions in the given group.

Similarly, there ought to be no data collection on the forum of the social media group (interaction with the whole group) as it could pose a threat to the mental well-being of group participants who, by responding to the researcher’s proposals or questions, could be exposed to the judgement of other group participants. Besides an evaluator must consider a significant bias of the obtained answers, which could result from respondents’ considerations of reactions by the important members of the group.

### ***1.7. How to reach the NEETs***

The typical problems of reaching the youth grow even bigger when the evaluated project is addressed to NEETs<sup>5</sup> – the young people who are not employed nor engaged in any form of education or training. As they are detached from educational and job-related institutions and often not covered by any institutional support or supervision, it is very difficult to find any opportunity to get in touch with them.

Solutions to this type of problem are not easy and direct, especially if there is a need to find NEET persons who have not participated in the project under evaluation, but still is someone

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<sup>5</sup> NEET(s) – the youth who are Not in Employment, Education or Training.



very similar to the project beneficiaries. In case when a comparison group is needed a researcher may try to research a group of NEETs participating in some other project(s). Another option is to compare the results obtained in the group covered by the evaluated project with a group of candidates, who did not become beneficiaries of the project (of course taking into account the features or reasons for not qualifying for the project).

In case NEET youths are needed to conduct some qualitative research to understand casual processes, complex motivations or consequences, such persons can be reached via institutions/organisations which casually or permanently provide help to young people having problems with completing obligatory education, leaving child care homes or correction institutions, having serious problems with health, addiction, unemployment, homelessness etc.

## **2. Legal and ethical requirements of evaluating with the minors**

Evident complexities of conducting the youth project evaluations arise when the project beneficiaries are 17 years old or younger and therefore legally belong to the category of children (UN 1989). In this case they are under special protection of law due to their fragile status,<sup>6</sup> which – in the age group of 15–17 refers mostly to their dependent position concerning material as well as psychological and social needs.<sup>7</sup>

Although in most countries the minors acquire some autonomy at the age of 15 (e.g. the right to take up work), still their participation in projects or activities or evaluation research, including interviewing, observing etc. requires consent from their parents / legal guardians. A consent to participate in the evaluation must refer to precisely specified research.<sup>8</sup>

Of course as with participants of all age groups, it is necessary to obtain a consent for the processing and storage of personal data.<sup>9</sup> In case of sound or video recording an explicit consent must also be granted.

A practical tip for this matters worked out within the Youth Impact project is that it is worth to get all needed consents, including the consent on participation in evaluation, simultaneously with other consents related to participation in the evaluated project (during procedures of enrolment – at the beginning of the project).

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<sup>6</sup> <https://www.unicef.org/child-rights-convention/child-rights-why-they-matter>

<sup>7</sup> These needs and their consequences for conducting evaluation research will be discussed in further sections.

<sup>8</sup> The research must be specified by its name and the entity conducting it. A person asked for the consent should be informed about an aim of the study, a way of using the results, scope and method of collecting information from the participant, as well as ensured about the anonymity and protection of confidentiality of collected data and ought to receive information on the right to refuse or withdraw from participation at any stage of the evaluation.

<sup>9</sup> This refers to all EU and EEA member states as well as some other countries including United Kingdom, Turkey, Mauritius, Chile, Japan, Brazil, South Korea, Argentina and Kenya.

Besides the above mentioned legal requirements, an evaluator who wants to act in line with the ethical codes issued by associations of professional evaluators,<sup>10</sup> organisations of social scientists or market researchers needs to follow some more standards referring to research with the minors. One of them is to ensure that research staff:

- do not contact the underage youth without the presence of the responsible adult (e.g. parent or teacher),
- offer to present a document confirming their role in the study,
- are trained in conducting research with the minors.

Last but not least issue mentioned in the ethical standards with a special relevance to the underage youth participating in the evaluation research is that the whole information on the study as well as questions asked during the research, must be understandable. To answer this need Perpetua Kirby proposed using participatory approach in which some young people could consult the research materials "(e.g. questionnaires, interview schedules, leaflets, reports etc.) are worded in a language that is clear to their peers" (Kirby 2004).

### **3. Participatory approach as a way of answering psychological needs of the youth and getting better quality of youth projects' evaluation**

#### ***3.1. Dealing with psychological needs of the youth***

According to the findings of developmental psychology a successful transition to adulthood depends on satisfaction of certain basic needs during the early phases of human development. In case of early age deficits but also in case of their adequate satisfaction in childhood still most of these needs should be taken care of also in work with the youth – however in a form adjusted to situation of older teenagers or young adults.

Michael Borg-Laufs mentioned four of such basic needs, most of which are quite general and can have several dimensions:

- 1) orientation / control (incl. understanding of the surrounding world, autonomy, some influence on the environment),
- 2) self-esteem protection,
- 3) pleasure gain/distress avoidance,
- 4) (emotional) attachment.

Borg-Laufs argues that satisfaction of these needs should serve as a guidance for pedagogical and psychosocial work with the children and adolescents (Borg-Laufs 2013), however serious deficits or traumas experienced in the childhood may be very difficult to compensate (e.g. lack

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<sup>10</sup> Standards for conducting research among minors are contained in ethical codes and related documents elaborated by:

- 1) associations of sociologists (e.g. Code of Ethics of the Polish Sociological Association),
- 2) associations of market researchers (ICC/ESOMAR International Code),
- 3) associations of evaluators (e.g. Czech Evaluation Society, Slovak Evaluation Society, Polish Evaluation Society, German DeGEval, American Evaluation Association, The Australasian Evaluation Society, United Kingdom Evaluation Society)

of safe and supportive relations with parents) as they produce *maladaptive schemas* as described by Jeffry E. Young (Young and Klosko 1993). The idea of meeting the psychosocial needs while conducting evaluation of youth focused projects is a base for many publications proposing participatory approach in evaluation (e.g. Billett et al. 2019, Checkoway et al. 2004, Flores et al. 2007, Heath et al. 2009, Kirby 2004, Stuart et al. 2015). Below some of the most important issues concerning involvement of young project beneficiaries in evaluation (participatory approach) as a response for major psychological needs of the youth will be discussed.

Beginning with the first set of needs (orientation / control) elaborated by Borg-Laufs, it is good to underline that involving the youth to participatory evaluation can answer their need for understanding the world around, including the project they partake. To achieve this an evaluator ought to provide young project participants with information that explains what is evaluation, what aim it serves in terms of project improvement, what results can be expected, what methods can be used etc. And of course the researcher must be ready to discuss all these issues together with explaining the logic of evaluated project itself. Going further and inviting the youth into participation into some evaluation tasks the participatory approach can also generate a sense of understanding and even influencing the surrounding world which can contribute to satisfaction of the psychological needs included in the first set of the above mentioned basic needs.

Even though an interest of the young people in understanding and influencing the evaluated project may seem to be natural consequence of orientation / control needs, still it is not always the case that each young person wants to participate in the evaluation. In reality the youth's desire to engage in evaluation activities, and the level of this involvement may vary. Therefore, the first obligation of the evaluator is to ask the youth for consent (even in case of the youth aged 15–17 and after receiving consent from the parents) – just to show respect to their need for autonomy. Consequently, their right to participate or not to participate in research should be clearly communicated and the reasons and consequences of each of the choices available should be clearly explained. The scope of involvement in activities of participatory evaluation also needs to be left to the decision of the youth. It can vary from the consultancy (of evaluation concept, tools, results etc.), through collaboration in various tasks (e.g. partnership in planning, tools preparation, data gathering and interpretation), to co-deciding on the strategic issues (incl. co-ownership of the results and deciding on the recommendations) (Checkoway and Richards-Schuster 2004). The researcher ought to be aware that some youth may be particularly reluctant to take part due to the fact they developed maladaptive schemas in childhood or do not want to expose their real deficits concerning literacy, numeracy, etc. (Kirby 2004). When proposing more or less advanced roles and also when deciding about the stage at which the inclusion of the youth is to happen, the evaluator needs to make sure the degree of participation is significant – to satisfy some the emotional needs and also to take into account several other questions concerning:

- capabilities of the young participants,

- young peoples' interest in particular tasks,
- powers structure in the evaluated project (how much space is there for the influence of the young beneficiaries),
- available resources (in more complicated tasks such as data collection fieldwork, support work of the professional personnel must be planned) (Kirby 2004).

Many authors emphasize the importance of involving the youth in early stage of evaluation (preferably at the planning and designing phase) as this gives the youth the best chance to develop a sense of meaningful contribution to the whole process and its results. This way the participatory evaluation increases the youth self-esteem coming from influential engagement in something useful and important (evaluation research, project improvement), proving oneself in a new important and creative role, and also bringing opportunity of social recognition from the authors and recipients of evaluation report.

There is however the other, aching part of the self-esteem need (second set of needs), which must be dealt with regardless if a young project beneficiary participates in evaluation as research partner of the evaluator or is just a subject of the research. This need requires to take care of emotional anxiety about other people judgements on the young person's reported behaviour or views – if disclosed during the research. This apprehension may refer to the young person's peer group but also adults upon whom the young project participant depends mentally or materially. Among the important adults there could be also members of the project staff. Taking this into account a researcher (also a young researcher) should always:

- underline the confidentiality of gathered information and explain measures taken for this purpose, both during the data collection, as well as their anonymization and generalized use in the reporting,
- secure conditions for completing interviews without presence of third parties,
- make sure that filling questionnaires is organized in place which guarantees anonymity including throwing auditorium questionnaires into a collection box (especially if collecting is done by personnel of the evaluated project) (Nałęcz 2020).

All concerns about such issues could be best detected, discussed and solution planned during meetings of the young project beneficiaries with the evaluator. In many publications concerning evaluation of youth projects the issues of safety and security are discussed together with other needs of young people such as sense of dignity (Kirby 2004).

Taking part in the participatory evaluation tasks can and even should provide some pleasant experience to satisfy *pleasure gain* need, which is particularly salient among children and youth. Therefore publications on youth participatory evaluation provide a lot of inspiration

how to organize the evaluation planning workshop, diagnose evaluation needs in an interactive, socially bonding and joyful ways<sup>11</sup>, often using gamification techniques<sup>12</sup>.

The last but not least of the four psychological needs is attachment. It is based on the safe, stable and supportive relations with early caregivers. In the later phases of development, the need for such stable, supportive relations can be played by close friends, and to some extent peer group as well as good educators, therapists etc. Anyway to meet the attachment need it requires much time and expertise. Therefore, to meet this need some authors advice employing support workers with experience of working with this age group. Their support should include as Perpetua Kirby writes:

- “Facilitating young people’s involvement, including offering group and individual support
- Advocating between young people and other professionals, organisations and community members
- Organising and administrating meetings
- Providing research preparation and training
- Making research interesting, accessible and engaging
- Demonstrating that young people’s contributions are valued
- Providing feedback on research findings and how the research is being used to improve things for young people
- Developing an exit strategy so that young people can continue to be supported, if requested and possible (...) [after the evaluation is completed]
- Evaluating young people’s involvement in the research” (Kirby 2004).

### ***3.2. Participatory approach as a way getting better quality of evaluation***

Besides contributing to the personal development and emancipation of the young project participants and therefore supporting the overarching aim of youth projects – transition to adulthood, there are many benefits to the quality of evaluation of youth focused projects regardless if explicit goals of such projects were support of youth employment, entrepreneurship, civic or cultural participation or anything else.

This gains can be earned by involving the youth in the various stages of the evaluation process, from reporting information needs, through co-deciding on priorities, planning, participating in implementation, interpretation of findings and dissemination of results.<sup>13</sup>

The following comprehensive list of the payoffs of using participatory approach in planning, conducting research and disseminating its results from Perpetua Kirby’s *A Guide to Actively*

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<sup>11</sup> For instance role-playing methods are proposed by Checkoway at al. (2004), many active workshop methods are described by Bartosiewicz-Niziołek at al. (2020), p. 47-49

<sup>12</sup> Kim Sabo Flores proposes even presenting evaluation results in form of a game show (2007).

<sup>13</sup> Nałęcz, S. (2020) *Considerations when evaluating projects aimed at young people aged 15–24*, in: Bartosiewicz-Niziołek M., Nałęcz, S., Penza-Gabler, Z., Pintera, E., Youth Employment Evaluation Toolkit. Your leverage to better youth employment projects, Youth Impact Project, Fundacja Rozwoju Demokracji Lokalnej, Warsaw

*Involving Young People in Research: For researchers, research commissioners, and managers,* can serve as a best motivation and explanation of involving the youth in evaluation.

- “Young people can identify research issues and questions that professional researchers may miss or not prioritise.
- They can help to ensure research tools (e.g. questionnaires, interview schedules, leaflets, reports etc) are worded in a language that is clear to their peers.
- Young people can offer a different perspective on what questions should be asked of respondents.
- Young interviewers may be able to help put their peers at ease in interviews, making the setting less formal.
- Young interviewees may open up more to their peers, depending on the topic and the skills of the young researcher (at other times, they may prefer to talk with a clearly independent and older professional).
- Researchers can develop their understanding of youth issues by working with young people and learn new skills for research.
- It can help researchers to stay mindful of young people’s perspectives on the research agenda and process.
- When young people present research findings and share their own related experiences, this can have a greater impact on audiences.
- Involving young people in research projects can help bridge gaps between them and older adults [and] can be the beginning of an ongoing dialogue with them [it refers mostly to the project managers but also to evaluators].
- It can help to ensure practitioners are more accountable to young service users through accessing research that is more relevant to them” (Kirby 2004).

## Conclusions

Thanks to the expertise of the Youth Impact project cooperation partners and literature review the study showed how to adapt the evaluation research to the complexities of reaching and efficiently collecting data from participants of the youth focused projects. These complexities included: specific living conditions of the youth aged 15–24 (participation in group forms of education, having no decent employment or no paid work at all, high mobility, widespread use of digital and mobile technologies, submergence in social media, complexity of reaching the NEETs), special legal situation of the minors as well as psychosocial needs related to intensive development processes during the transition to adulthood.

The study showed also how the implementation of participatory approach in the evaluation of youth projects can meet important psychological needs of the participants, contribute to their personal development as well as increase quality of the evaluation.

Responding to the youth’s needs of moving from passive and subordinate positions to the more constructive roles (consultants, collaborators or even co-decision makers) the participatory approach helps to meet the young participants’ needs referring to

understanding and influencing the world around, the needs referring to self-esteem of proving oneself by doing something challenging and useful and the need to feel some pleasure, which comes from participating in activities designed to be joyful and integrating. Such participatory mode of evaluation increases social competences of the youth and enhances quality of the evaluation. Young people can identify research issues which otherwise could have been underestimated or omitted, can ensure that research tools contain questions which are adequate and comprehensible for their peers, may help put their peers at ease of providing the needed data, can help in the data interpretation as well as in writing conclusions and recommendations and last but not least – support results dissemination, so it can have a greater impact.

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