

Erasmus+ Comparative Report

on
SMEs and youth
organizations
cooperation

This study was conducted within the framework of *Cooperate to Operate - bringing together youth organizations and SMEs through corporate social responsibility (CoOp)* project.

CoOp project (2017-2019) aims to enhance the collaboration between Small-Medium Enterprises (SMEs) and youth organizations, thus to promote and encourage private investment in youth development, and education. The main objective of the project is to support youth workers and youth organizations to diversify their funding sources and attract investments from the business sector, by professionalizing them in the field of CSR and fundraising from SMEs.

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The project is outcome of a partnership between Norsensus Mediaforum (Norway), Youth Work Ireland (Ireland), Fundatia Danis (Romania), Asset Tec (Greece) and Fundacja Robinson Crusoe (Poland).

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Introduction

Context and objectives

CoOp Comparative Report was developed within *Cooperate to Operate - bringing together youth organizations and SMEs through corporate social responsibility (CoOp)* project. The main goal of the research was to collect relevant information that can be used by the CoOp partners in developing meaningful tools for youth organizations interested in enhancing their collaboration with Small and Medium Enterprises (SMEs) from their community.

CoOp Comparative Report extracts, summarizes and compares data from the national reports about the youth organizations and SMEs cooperation in Greece, Ireland, Norway, Poland and Romania, which were developed by the CoOp partners: Asset Tec (Greece), Youth Work Ireland (Ireland), Norsensus Mediaforum (Norway), Fundacja Robinson Crusoe (Poland) and Fundatia Danis (Romania).

The main objectives of the comparative report are: to give an overview of the national research findings; to comparatively analyze the information collected on the collaboration between SMEs and youth organizations from Greece, Ireland, Norway, Poland and Romania; and to identify the specificities, the commonalities and differences in the cooperation between youth organizations and SMEs, in approaches the two sectors take, in motivations and needs they have when they get involved in cross-sector work, and in the plans they establish for their potential collaboration. The comparative report, first, serves the partner organizations in the process of developing meaningful tools for youth organizations and youth workers interested in improving their collaboration with the SMEs sector, tools, such as a training and a training toolkit for youth workers in the field of fundraising and CSR, ready tools for fundraising for youth organizations, best practices guide for youth organizations-SMEs cooperation, policies briefs for improving the national policies in the field of youth-business sector cooperation, and a vlog with stories that could motivate both sectors for improving collaboration for the wellbeing of their communities. The comparative report also serves any other European organization, institution, enterprise interested in the cooperation between SMEs and youth organizations, or interested in further developing CoOp research or similar European projects, or in using the data presented here for improving the cross-sector cooperation between youth organizations and SMEs, through education, training or consultancy services.

Methodology used in the national reports

First, CoOp partners conducted literature reviews looking to previous studies on SMEs' community involvement, on youth sector fundraising and CSR activities, and on cooperation between SMEs and youth organizations, in their countries, respectively in Greece, Ireland, Norway, Poland and Romania. In the countries where reports and studies were scarce, partners also interviewed couple of experts working with SMEs or specialized in CSR or fundraising activities. The final reviews helped us both in collecting relevant information about the youth sector, the SMEs sector from the five countries, and their fundraising and CSR activities, and in identifying the informational gaps in regards to the collaboration between the youth organizations and SMEs.

Then, following the CoOp research design, the partners conducted national surveys targeting, in total, 319 youth organizations and NGOs working with young people from the five countries. 85 organizations answered to the surveys, ensuring an overall 26.6% response rate. The general objective of the survey was to understand how youth organizations interact with small and medium enterprises (SMEs) from their communities, and what the youth organizations' needs are in regards to collaboration with the private sector.

For the third and last part of the research, the partners conducted focus groups and/or interviews with representatives of SMEs from their networks - in total, reaching 51 SMEs. The purpose of the face-to-face interactions with the owners or the employees of SMEs was to identify to what extent SMEs tend to follow a pattern or have a particular interest, while cooperating and establishing partnerships with youth organizations or NGOs working with young people. Besides the aspects related to cooperation practices among SMEs and youth organizations, the qualitative research also tackled the question of motivation, when it comes to SMEs' involvement in community development. Also, the research intended to build on the issue of successful collaborations that were made possible with the support of the SMEs, altogether having a positive and significant social impact on youth and their communities.

The youth organizations and the SMEs included in the field research were selected using the stakeholders networks of the CoOp partners, thus a convenience sampling method was used. We chose this sampling method, as the main goal of the research was to respond to the project partners and their stakeholders' needs and interests in regards to the topic of SMEs-youth organizations collaboration.

Before going further, it needs to be mentioned what CoOp partners refer to when using the "youth organization" term and the "CSR" (corporate social responsibility) and "community involvement" concepts. For CoOp partners a youth organization is an organization initiated and/or run predominantly by young people or an organization (NGO, nonprofit, charity, association, foundation, etc.) that predominantly works with young people, providing them specific services. CoOp partners are also aware of the complexity of the CSR concept, and all the areas it might include, such as business ethics, good governance, human rights, environment policies, economic value, labour issues and employees' rights, clients' rights, societal value, community and social projects, etc. - to name just a few of the CSR themes. However, in the CoOp project we are mainly interested in the companies' involvement in community or social projects. In this sense, there might be some parts in this report, but also in the national reports, in which we use alternatively community involvement and CSR activities, referring in both cases to those actions that the companies take to contribute to specific projects and activities that respond to specific societal needs from their local communities, or at national or international level.

Gaps in literature, from the CoOp partner countries

When the CoOp partners initiated the project, they have already identified some gaps in research referring to SMEs and youth organizations collaboration. Actually, the work on CoOp research was motivated by the lack of resources (reports and studies, national or European) on the cross-sector collaboration between the two actors. The thorough literature reviews conducted by the CoOp partners, within the project framework, confirmed the initial findings.

Regarding the SMEs' cooperation with the youth work sector, with the exception of Greece, where the SMEs' CSR or community involvement activities were intensively covered so far, the partners from Ireland, Norway, Poland and Romania could not identify relevant and up-to-date national studies or reports solely or significantly focused on SMEs' involvement in community or/and CSR activities. And, the work of the CoOp partners, in all the five countries, could not reveal any report or study presenting specifically the collaboration between SMEs and youth organizations or NGOs working with young people.

In regards to the youth sector development and its fundraising and CSR activities, Ireland seems to have the most relevant coverage of the sector, with couple of studies describing the sector's state of art, and providing relevant information on methods of fundraising used by these NGOs, income sources they reach, and plans they have for the future, in regards to the diversification of their funding resources. Then, a similar situation can be found in Norway - with couple of reports and studies describing the structure of the Norwegian youth work sector, the activities and type of projects the organizations provide, and the funding received from the state. It has to be mentioned that in both countries the youth sector has already a long existence, and it seems to be strongly supported and financed by the state, in comparison with the other countries - Greece, Poland and Romania - in which the youth sector seems to be in its early stage of development, it functions with less support from the government, and it is less defined as a *youth* sector - still being constantly assimilated to the NGO sector, in general. In conclusion, the national reports from Greece, Poland and Romania include less information on the youth sector, and its collaboration with the business sector and SMEs, in particular.

In conclusion, with the exception of Greece, the case that was described above, from the perspective of the CoOp research aim, relevant information was missed by the previous reports and studies in regards to SMEs' involvement in CSR, and in community activities, in particular, and to their cooperation with the youth organizations, on topics, such as

- how many SMEs are involved in community projects or activities;
- what types of SMEs get involved;
- what types of causes or projects the SMEs support;
- what types of organizations they support;
- the financial value of their support;
- the motivation for giving;
- the decision making process in regards to the community involvement activities;
- their plans for the future in regards to their CSR or community involvement activities.

The same, as there are no relevant studies, in any of the countries included in the project, which specifically analyze the youth organizations' collaboration with SMEs, it can be concluded that the existing literature identified by the partners presents informational gaps on themes, such as

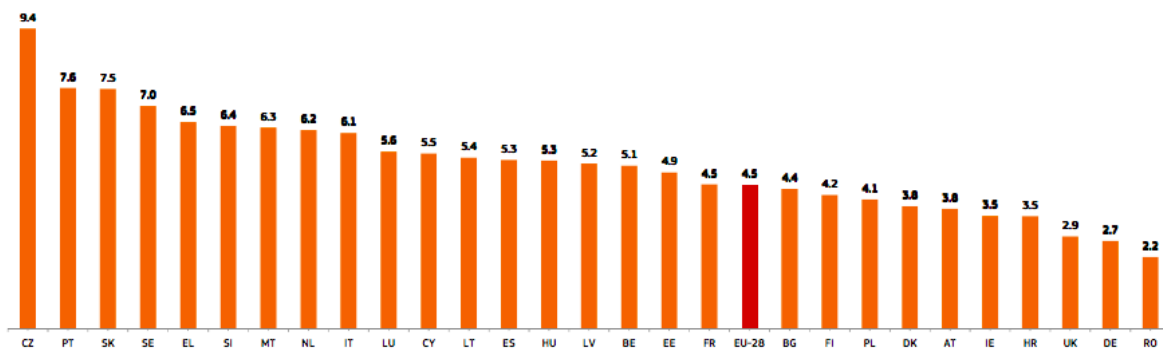
- the type of projects that youth organizations develop in collaboration with SMEs;
- the type of enterprises they work with;
- the type of the support received from SMEs;
- the financial value of the support the youth organizations received from SMEs;
- the methods of fundraising tried out by youth organizations when asking SMEs' support;
- the readiness of the youth organizations to collaborate with SMEs;
- the plans they have for future collaboration with SMEs.

Through the field research conducted within the CoOp project framework, we investigated some of these topics, and the comparative results will be presented further in this report. Also, it has to be mentioned that the CoOp partners included, in the national reports, studies that cover some of the gaps listed above, but which covered either the business sector in general, either the NGO sector as a whole. Based on these more general reports, some inferences and extrapolations were made in regards to possible trends and patterns about the CSR and fundraising activities of the SMEs and youth organizations; also, some of the national reports, based on the opinions shared by some external or internal experts in the field of CSR and fundraising, include information about the CSR and fundraising activities of the youth organizations and SMEs, extracted from the everyday long practice of these experts.

Overview of the SMEs sector in the CoOp partner countries

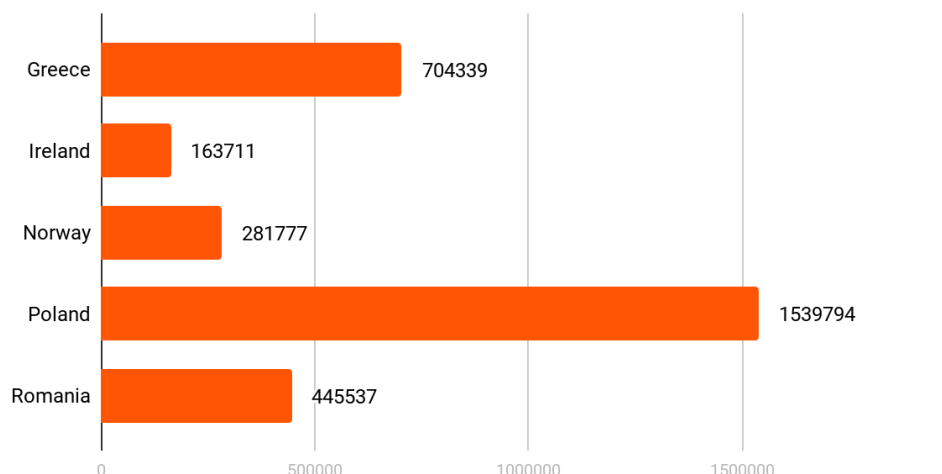
In all the five countries part of the CoOp project, respectively Greece, Ireland, Norway, Poland and Romania, SMEs represent an important part of the business sector - over 99.8% of the number of enterprises existing in these countries. However, Poland, Ireland and Romania have less SMEs, when their total number is reported to the number of the countries' inhabitants, being part of the 10 countries group that ranks lower than EU28 average, which is 4.5 SMEs per 100 inhabitants (European Commission, 2016). Thus, Poland has 4.1 SMEs/100 inhabitants, Ireland - 3.5, while Romanian is on the last place in EU28, with only 2.2 SMEs per 100 inhabitants (European Commission, 2016). Greece is in top five of the EU28 countries - with 6.5 SMEs/100 inhabitants (European Commission, 2016), while Norway has 5.3 SMEs/100 inhabitants (the rate was calculated using the SBA data on number of SMEs in Norway and the public figures about the number of the total population of Norway).

Figure 5: Number of SMEs per 100 inhabitants in 2015



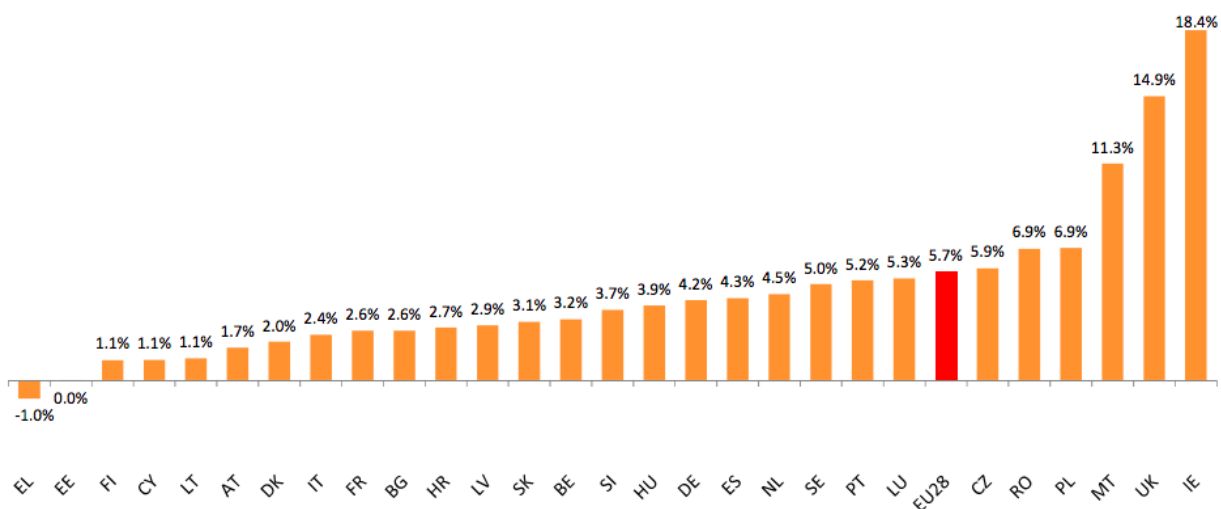
European Commission, 2016

Number of SMEs / country (using SBA Fact Sheets from 2016 for Greece, Ireland, Poland & Romania, and from 2014 for Norway)



Referring to these SMEs' added value, data from 2015 shows that Irish, Polish and Romanian SMEs sectors are in top 5 of EU28 countries, in terms of their annual growth. Irish SMEs are leading the EU28 group, with 18.4% annual growth, while Poland and Romania occupy the fourth and fifth places, both with 6.9% annual growth of the SMEs sector. Also, data from 2014, provided by Small Business Act for Europe Fact Sheets, shows that Norwegian SMEs had a 18.5% annual growth. Greece is at the other end of the ranking, being on the last place in EU28, with a negative annual growth of -1%.

Figure 13: EU SME value added annual growth by Member State, 2015



European Commission, 2016

Analyzing this general information of the SMEs, it can be concluded that, in general, SMEs from Ireland, Norway, Poland and Romania have the financial capacity of contributing to the development of their local communities, or at national or international level. Greek SMEs sector seems to still recover after the recent economic crisis, but the SMEs sector from Greece appears to have the technical capacity and some tradition in getting involved in CSR/community activities, as it is the only country, from the five included here, with such abundant literature (reports, studies, etc.) in the field of CSR for SMEs.

Overview of the youth organizations sector in the CoOp partner countries

The data about the youth organizations sectors from the CoOp countries, identified and collected by the CoOp partners through desk research, is hard to be presented in a comparative way as the available data is from different time periods, and it describes different demographics for the youth sector. However, we will try here to provide a general overview of the youth organizations from Greece, Ireland, Norway, Poland and Romania, with data from 2011-2016.

Regarding the number of the youth organizations, according to the CoOp national reports, estimations could be made only for Norway and Romania. Thus, in Norway, there are over 600 youth organizations, youth clubs and youth centers, while in Romania, it is estimated that there are around 2900 active youth organizations. For Greece, Ireland and Poland, there could be identified general information about the size of the NGO sector: in Greece - there are around 1000 NGOs, in Ireland - there are around 3200 NGOs, and in Poland - there are around 126,000 NGOs (all the figures are from the CoOp National Reports).

Describing the type of activities, projects or services the youth organizations provide, according to the CoOp National Reports:

- In Greece, the main domain of activities of NGOs, in general (not youth organizations) are: social solidarity & social inclusion, health & welfare, and education, training & employment rights;
- In Ireland, the main domain of activities of youth organizations are: recreation, arts and sport, welfare and well-being, issue-based activities, spiritual development;
- In Norway, the main domain of activities of youth organizations are: sports, culture, politics, religion and recreational activities;
- In Poland, the main domain of activities of youth organizations are: leisure activities aiming for social inclusion, sports and education;
- In Romania, the main domain of activities of youth organizations are: education, social services, culture, and sports & hobbies.

The information about the annual budgets of the youth organizations and/or their income sources is scarce and not always straightforward. Thus, for Romania and Poland, the CoOp National Reports make inferences about the annual budgets, looking to the general situation of the NGO sector - so, it is estimated that their budgets are low: less than 2800 EUR/year, for a Romanian youth organization; and up to 6000 EUR/year, for a Polish youth organization. Data for Greece is inconclusive on this aspect, as the only report about the Greek NGO sector refers to 67 NGOs, which generated, in total, 97 mil. EUR turnover, for 2011-2013 period. For Norwegian and Irish youth organizations, the data collected in the National Reports referred only to the total amount of funds received by these organizations from the state, thus no data could be inferred on their annual budgets.

In terms of the income sources of the youth organizations/NGOs, the CoOp National reports show:

- In Greece, the NGOs' main income sources are: private donations and public funds;
- In Ireland, the main income sources of the youth organizations are: government grants or contracts and individuals' support;

- In Norway, the youth organizations are heavily dependent on public funding;
- In Poland, the NGOs' main income sources are: national government funds, membership fees and private donations;
- In Romania, the youth organizations' main income sources/funding methods are: public grants, membership fees, sponsorship from companies and fundraising through special events.

In all the countries, there is a dynamic youth sector, with hundreds or thousands youth organizations. However, the information on the youth sectors from the five countries, identified by the CoOp partners, shows that there is no much cooperation between the youth organizations and the SMEs. The youth organizations, respectively NGOs seem to be better connected to public institutions (through public contracts or grants) and individual donors. In conclusion, the cooperation with the SMEs sector could diversify the youth organizations' funding sources, and it could open the door to more innovation and more expertise from the private sector in the field of youth work.

ACTIVITIES, PROJECTS OR SERVICES THE YOUTH ORGANIZATIONS PROVIDE



GREECE

social solidarity & social inclusion,
health & welfare, education,
training & employment rights



IRELAND

recreation, arts, sports, welfare &
well-being, issue-based activities,
spiritual development



NORWAY

sports, culture, politics, religion,
recreational activities



POLAND

leisure activities aiming for social
inclusion, sports, education








ROMANIA

education, social services, culture,
sports & hobbies



YOUTH ORGANIZATIONS/NGOs INCOME SOURCES

CoOp LITERATURE REVIEWS DATA

Country	income sources identified by the CoOp partners in previous reports and studies
 GREECE	private donations, public funds
 IRELAND	government grants or government contracts, individual donors
 NORWAY	local government, national government
 POLAND	national government funds, membership fees and private donation
 ROMANIA	public grants, membership fees, sponsorship from companies, fundraising through special events

Comparative report on youth organizations' cooperation with SMEs in the CoOp partner countries

Following the CoOp research design, the partners conducted national surveys targeting, in total, 319 youth organizations and NGOs working with young people from Greece, Ireland, Norway, Poland and Romania. 85 organizations answered to the surveys, ensuring an overall 26.6% response rate. The general objective of the survey was to understand how youth organizations interact with small and medium enterprises (SMEs) from their communities; and what the youth organizations' needs are in regards to collaboration with the private sector.

Profile of the youth organizations part of the survey

The 85 youth organizations answering to the CoOp national surveys are working with young people, children/teenagers, or their members are predominantly young people. These are youth services organizations, youth information centers, youth clubs, students unions/associations, youth centers, or foundations and associations providing social, personal and professional development services to young people. They work locally, nationally or internationally, on topics, such as

- In Greece: entrepreneurship education, development education, social support for vulnerable youth groups, culture and sports;
- In Ireland: education, youth participation and engagement, and youth empowerment;
- In Norway: inclusion, sports, personal development, youth participation, youth policy, intercultural dialogue;
- In Poland: education, civic participation, entrepreneurship, employment or life skills development, social services for vulnerable youth groups;
- In Romania: inclusion and support for vulnerable youth groups, personal and professional development, representation of youth (students), entrepreneurship education, youth participation, empowerment, mental health, arts, and education.

Looking to the size of their annual budgets, Romanian youth organizations work with less funds, while Irish organizations run the biggest budgets in our group of countries, most probably following, actually, the economic patterns of the countries:

Country	% of organizations with annual budgets smaller than 20,000 EUR	% of organizations with annual budgets bigger than 200,000 EUR
Greece	30%	30%
Ireland	0%	85%
Norway	0%	18%
Poland	26%	20%
Romania	67%	14.5%

Referring to the main interest of our research, the cooperation with the SMEs sector, we also inquired the youth organizations about their sources of income. Romanian youth organizations showed to have the most intense cooperation with the sector, as 62% of the respondents mentioned SMEs as one of their income sources (it was also the most often mentioned income source). Polish organizations were on the other end of the interaction spectrum - no respondent from this country mentioned SMEs being one of their income sources (a paradox as we will see further in the report, as some of them mentioned some contributions from SMEs to their annual budgets):

Country	most often mentioned income sources by the youth organizations	% of organizations mentioning SMEs as one of their income sources
Greece	European public funds, individual donors	10%
Ireland	national government, European public funds	25%
Norway	local government funds, membership fees, national funds, individual donors,	46%
Poland	public funds (national government, European funds, local funds), individual donors	0%
Romania	large or multinational companies, individual donors, European funds	62%

The youth organizations which took part in the CoOp national surveys are very diverse in size, level of work and sectors of activity, and less diverse in terms of types of income sources. Public grants or public contracts (local, regional, national and European) are the most preferred by the youth organizations - also these type of funds, usually, require less fundraising experience and fundraising effort. In countries, such as Romania, where youth organizations have lower budgets, which also means less funds from the government (local or national), there is more involvement from the SMEs sector - the data shows that there are more youth organizations working with SMEs and having them among their annual main income sources than in the other four countries. At the same time, it can be observed a higher cooperation between the youth organizations and SMEs in Norway, where youth organizations are actually heavily dependent on public funds. This could be explained by the volunteering and the community culture, revealed in the following part of the report, on the SMEs' involvement in the community activities.

Youth organizations' current collaboration with SMEs from their community

As it could be observed above, youth organizations from the five countries have some interactions with SMEs from their communities. The CoOp national surveys have also looked to how the youth organizations actually interact with the SMEs - how much SMEs' contribute to their annual budgets, how often the youth organizations contact the enterprises, whom they contact, and who contact the SMEs.

Analyzing the data from the national surveys, we found a paradox. Even if Polish youth organizations did not consider SMEs as one of their income sources, 46% of the respondents said that SMEs contribute to their budgets, and these contributions represent up to 10% of their annual budgets. This paradox could be explained by the fact that the SMEs' contribution is perceived as being so low, that the respondents did not consider them as a relevant income source. In the cases of the other countries included in our research, Norwegian and Greek youth organizations also experience low contributions from the SMEs to their annual budgets - most of them reporting these contributions to be less than 10% of their budgets. Only in Ireland and Romania, similar number of youth organizations reported contributions as representing less than 10% or between 11%-30% of their annual budgets. In conclusion, no matter the country, for the majority of the youth organizations, SMEs' financial support represents small contributions to their annual budgets.

When asked about successful collaboration or successful joint-projects with SMEs, most of the projects mentioned by the youth organizations from the five countries focused on the following areas: first, the organizations received the help of the companies' staff, who volunteered in activities which directly involved young people, or in supporting activities (training for staff, painting, cleaning, organizing youth centers, know-how & expertise in specific fields, such as IT, etc.); second, the youth organizations received financial or in-kind support from the SMEs in organizing special events (galas, festivals, sport events, public picnics, conferences or workshops, etc.); finally, the youth organizations received grants from the companies to implement specific projects dedicated to young people.

Analyzing further the interaction of the youth organizations with the SMEs, for those youth organizations that collaborate actually with SMEs, the national data shows actually limited number of interactions between the two sectors, both in terms of number of SMEs that usually one organization works with, and number of meeting moments one organization has with a particular SME during one year. The majority of the youth organizations that collaborate with SMEs from Norway work with up to 3 SMEs/year, in Ireland, the majority of youth organizations work, annually, with 3 to 10 SMEs, while in Greece, Poland and Romania - similar number of organizations work with up to 3 SMEs or with 3 to 10 SMEs, during one year. In conclusion, most of the organizations, from those which interact with SMEs, contact the enterprises less than 3 times per year, or between 3 and 5 times per year.

In Ireland and Greece, when contacting the enterprises, the youth organizations favorite contact person is first the SME owner or the executive director/general manager, and only afterwards the Marketing/PR person or the CSR person. In Norway, Poland and Romania, the first preferred contact person is the Marketing/ PR person or the CSR person (if this exists), and only afterwards the SME owner or the executive director/general manager. However, it is interesting how these two categories were the most preferred for all the countries, less attention being given to the CFOs/person in charge with the financial department, or to the person in charge with the human resources department.

Finally, analyzing who takes the responsibility of interacting with the SMEs, it can be observed that in Norway, Ireland and Romania, the most often mentioned person was the Executive Director of the organization, while in Poland and Greece the most often mentioned was the fundraiser, respectively the marketing/PR person.

Youth organizations' prospective collaboration with SMEs from their community

For developing meaningful tools for youth organizations, in order to improve their cooperation with the SMEs sector, the CoOp national surveys also inquired the interests of the youth organizations in starting or developing this cooperation. First, through the survey, we asked the youth organizations' representatives to think about the type of resources they would need from SMEs, in the following two years. The main three resources chosen by the youth organizations, from the five countries, are summarized below:

If you cooperate or you would like to cooperate with SMEs in the future, what will be the specific resources you would need from the SMEs, for the next 2 years? (choose all the responses that match your organization)

Country	1st resource needed	2nd resource needed	3rd resource needed
Greece	Money - 95%	Networks of professionals and partners - 65%	Products or services - 55%
Ireland	Money - 85%	Networks of professionals and partners - 60%	Expertise - 55%
Norway	Employees that could volunteer for the organization - 100% SMEs facilities or offices (for specific meetings, events, etc.) - 100%	Products or services - 73%	Money - 64% The networks of professionals and partners - 64%
Poland	Money - 87%	Products or services - 80%	Expertise - 73%
Romania	Money - 100%	Networks of professionals and partners - 67%	Products or services - 57%

As it can be observed, Norway is a very particular case - as money (the first resource mentioned by the youth organizations from the other four countries) comes, practically, only on the fourth or fifth place - as the first position is split between volunteering and facilities, and the last position, between money and the SMEs' networks of professionals and partners. All the other countries mentioned money, as the most important resource needed. It can be also observed, that in the Romanian case, 100% of the respondents chosen money as the main resource needed, and this can be explained by the fact that the organizations have the lowest budgets in the five countries.

Then, we also asked the NGOs to mention concrete projects in which they would like to involve SMEs in the following years. Comparing the data from the five countries, it is interesting to notice that most of the concrete projects mentioned by the youth organizations focused on the following three areas: first, the organizations would like to get the business support in providing internships, apprenticeships, working opportunities or scholarships for young people; second, the organizations would like to get SMEs support for developing the capacity of the organizations themselves (training, expertise, know-how, learning materials, equipments, etc.); finally, the organizations would like to get the financial support of the SMEs to provide current or new activities for young people (activities or projects that focus on personal and professional development for young people, leisure and social, or sport activities, career counselling, etc.).

We also asked the NGOs' representatives what will be the type of company that they would prefer to work with, and they could choose one or more of the following options:

TYPES OF COMPANIES THAT NGOs WOULD PREFER TO WORK WITH



	Small companies , because we can have direct contact with the owner or the main decision maker in involving the company in community projects.	
	Bigger companies , which have a designated person or department in charge with the collaboration with NGOs, charities or CSR activities.	
	Companies that have a specific CSR strategy or philanthropy strategy and clear objectives for their community involvement.	
	Companies that do not have a specific philanthropy or CSR strategy , and are open to discuss and adapt their support in accordance with our organization's projects.	

 Cooperate to Operate

When choosing among the four options, the most preferred type of company for Greece, Ireland, Norway and Poland was type C. (*Companies that have a specific CSR strategy or philanthropy strategy* and clear objectives for their community involvement), while for Romania - type B. (*Bigger companies*, which have a designated person or department in charge with the collaboration with NGOs, charities or CSR activities). Still, type C. company was on the second place in the top of preferences of the Romanian youth organizations.

Choosing between small companies (type A), and bigger companies (type B.), Greek, Irish and Romanian youth organizations prefer to work with bigger companies that have a designated person or department in charge with the collaboration with NGOs; Norwegian organizations prefer to work with smaller companies (type B.), because they can have direct contact with the owner or the main decision maker; and finally, Polish organizations have similar attitude for type A. and B., none of these being preferred.

Choosing between a company with a CSR/philanthropy strategy (type C.) and a company without a CSR/philanthropy (type D.), all the youth organizations from the five countries preferred type C. - the youth organizations preferring the companies type C. outnumbered by 1.5 or 2 the youth organizations preferring the companies without a CSR/philanthropy strategy (type D.).

When asked to describe the “perfect SME partner”, there were three areas that the youth organizations from the five countries have in common: first, they are all interested in working with companies that leave behind the business/for-profit agenda, and commit to strategic, long-term partnerships with the youth organizations; second, the youth organizations consider that a perfect business partner will share the values of the organizations, believe in the missions of the organizations, and be interested to seriously engage in the work with young people; finally, the perfect business partner will be honest, transparent and open to the youth organization partner. Also, a common pattern for youth organizations from Greece, Poland and Romania was that the youth organizations would like that the partner companies to show flexibility and adaptability when working with the youth sector.

Main conclusions

The 85 youth organizations that responded to our national surveys are very diverse in activities, and, in general, showed financial stability, with the Irish organizations running the biggest budgets, and Romanian organizations - the smallest budgets. Most of the youth organizations work with public funds, and in addition they develop their activities and projects with the support of their members (membership fees) and individual donors; the only exception is the one of the Romanian youth organizations that primarily work with large and multinational companies, and then with public money, especially European public funds.

The collaboration with the SMEs sector is limited for all the youth organizations, as the SMEs' contribution to the annual budgets of the youth organizations, in most of the cases, is less than 10% of the total budget. Romania and Norway are the countries in which a higher number of youth organizations work with SMEs, when comparing to other countries - respectively, in Romania, 62% of the NGOs reported to work with SMEs (most probably in their effort to find additional funding resources, as the public funds are limited for the sector), and in Norway, 46% of the organizations reported to work with SMEs (most probably involving their employees as volunteers or using their facilities).

So far, the youth organizations that collaborated with SMEs, tried and were successful in receiving SMEs' support in activities that involved SMEs' employees as volunteers, in special events, for which they received financial or in-kind support from SMEs, and in youth projects, fully or partially granted by SMEs. In most of the countries, the person that is responsible for involving the companies in the organization's projects or activities is the executive director, while in Greece and Poland, the first responsible is the fundraiser.

In regards to the needs the youth organizations have in mind when they think about future collaboration with SMEs, in four countries (Greece, Ireland, Poland and Romania) the most wanted resource is money, while in Norway the most wanted resources are SMEs' employees (as volunteers) and SMEs' facilities (offices, training rooms, etc.).

Finally, in terms of wishful thinking about the "perfect" company the youth organizations would like to work with - this is a bigger company that has a CSR strategy/philanthropy strategy, or at least a designated person in charge with the CSR and community involvement activities.

The following part of the comparative report it would help us in understanding the other side of the story of the collaboration between the youth organizations and small-medium enterprises, offering the perspective of the SMEs on their involvement and work conducted in cooperation with youth organizations/NGOs.

YOUTH ORGANIZATIONS WORK

CoOp NATIONAL SURVEYS DATA



GREECE

entrepreneurship education,
development education, social
support for vulnerable youth groups,
culture, sports



IRELAND

education, youth participation &
engagement, youth empowerment



NORWAY

inclusion, sports, personal
development, youth participation,
youth policy, intercultural dialogue



POLAND

education, civic participation,
entrepreneurship, employment or
life skills development, social
services for vulnerable youth groups








ROMANIA

social inclusion, personal and
professional development, youth
participation, entrepreneurship
education, mental health, arts, education



YOUTH ORGANIZATIONS ANNUAL BUDGETS






CoOp NATIONAL SURVEYS DATA

Country	% of organizations with annual budgets smaller than 20,000 EUR	% of organizations with annual budgets bigger than 200,000 EUR
 GREECE	30%	30%
 IRELAND	0%	85%
 NORWAY	0%	18%
 POLAND	26%	20%
 ROMANIA	67%	14.5%



YOUTH ORGANIZATIONS INCOME SOURCES

CoOp NATIONAL SURVEYS DATA

Country	most often mentioned income sources	% of organizations mentioning SMEs as one of their income sources
 GREECE	European public funds, individual donors	10%
 IRELAND	national government, European public funds	25%
 NORWAY	local government, membership fees, national government, individual donors,	46%
 POLAND	public funds (national, European and local funds), individual donors	0%
 ROMANIA	large or multinational companies, individual donors, European public funds	62%

3 AREAS OF SUCCESSFUL COLLABORATION



BETWEEN **NGOs** AND **SMEs**

1

SMEs staff **volunteered** in activities involving young people, or in supporting activities (painting, cleaning, organizing youth centers; training courses / workshops for NGOs staff; know-how & expertise in specific fields).



2

SMEs provided **financial or in-kind support** for organizing **special events** (galas, festivals, sport events, public picnics, conferences or workshops, etc.).

























3

SMEs provided **grants** to implement specific projects dedicated to young people.



WHAT ARE THE SPECIFIC **RESOURCES** **YOUTH ORGANIZATIONS** NEED FROM **SMEs**?

Country	1 resource	2 resource	3 resource
 GREECE	 Money - 95%	 Networks of professionals and partners - 65%	 Products or services - 55%
 IRELAND	 Money - 85%	 Networks of professionals and partners - 60%	 Expertise - 55%
 NORWAY	 Volunteers - 100%  SMEs facilities or offices - 100%	 Products or services - 73%	 Money - 64%  Networks of professionals and partners - 64%
 POLAND	 Money - 87%	 Products or services - 80%	 Expertise - 73%
 ROMANIA	 Money - 100%	 Networks of professionals and partners - 67%	 Products or services - 57%

Comparative report on SMEs' collaboration with youth organizations in the CoOp partner countries

For the third and last part of the research, the partners conducted focus groups and/or interviews with representatives of SMEs from their network - in total, reaching 51 SMEs. These are very diverse both in size and sector of activity, working at local, regional or national level. In regards to their sectors of activity, there is a higher number of companies (more than 10) in the sector of communication, marketing, media, publishing, arts and entertainment, but the rest of the SMEs are active in very diverse sectors, such as business consultancy, VET, retails, health services, HORECA, construction, financial services, real estate, IT, telecommunications, etc.

The purpose of the face-to-face interactions with the owners or the employees of the SMEs was to identify to what extent the SMEs tend to follow a pattern or have a particular interest while cooperating and establishing partnerships with youth organizations or NGOs working with young people. Besides the aspects related to cooperation practices among SMEs and youth organizations, the qualitative research also tackled the question of motivation when it comes to SMEs involvement in community development. Also, the research intended to build on the issue of successful collaborations that were made possible with the support of the SMEs, altogether having a positive and significant social impact on youth and their communities.

SMEs' needs and motivation in regards to their community involvement

Interviewing the selected SMEs, we tried to find out what the companies' motivation, needs and interests are when they choose to collaborate with NGOs/youth organizations or when they choose to get involved in community activities. With couple of exceptions from Poland, all the other SMEs from the group of five countries previously supported a community cause or a youth organization or a NGO - thus all of them had examples and stories to share, practices to talk about and recommendations to make to the nonprofit sector.

The only common motivation for all the SMEs from the five countries is the *local focus* of the projects, activities, causes they support. In other words, the enterprises prefer to use their contribution in their own communities or home cities (for larger companies), and see with their eyes, right there, the impact of their contribution. Then, taking country by country, we could conclude that:

- For the Greek SMEs, the most important factors are the shared values with the organizations they choose to support and the local focus of the projects or of the activities;
- For the Irish SMEs, the most important motivational factor seems to be the willingness to give back to the community, and then, it has to be a cause they could get attached and involved in, based on a personal recommendation or on the personal interest of the SME owner;
- For the Norwegian SMEs, the most important motivational factors are the volunteering culture, specific for the country; the feeling of social responsibility of the owners; the importance of the cause for the community (it has to be in the public debates), and also the need to better reach or reach more clients;

- For the Polish SMEs, the most important motivations for giving are related to the need of the company to engage their employees in community activities (for employee motivation and retention reasons), and to the local focus and local impact of the projects;
- For the Romanian SMEs, the most important motivations for involvement refer to the need of the companies to better reach their clients, but also their business partners, to the need for community recognition, but also to the willingness to give back to the community and see the immediate impact of their contribution.

SMEs community involvement or CSR activities, and cooperation with the youth organizations

The first interesting aspect, which is worth mentioning in the comparative report, is the fact that most of the SMEs (with the few exceptions of some larger businesses), interviewed for the CoOp research, did not use the term CSR for defining or describing the support provided to different causes, projects, nonprofit organizations, public institutions, church or specific humanitarian causes. "Getting involved", "supporting", "giving back", "donating", "sponsoring" were the expressions more used by the SMEs' representatives during the interviews and focus groups.

The research results from the five countries did not lead to clear patterns in terms of how many projects the SMEs support during one year or how much money they would give for one project or per year. The number of projects differ from 1-2/year to 300 causes in the last years, while the value of the mentioned support ranges from 1,000 EUR/project to 200,000 EUR/year. However, the research shows clear preferences in each country in regards to the type of support provided, such as in-kind, financial, volunteering, etc. While in Norway and Ireland, the enterprises prefer to give financial support, in Romania and Greece - the companies prefer the in-kind support (in services or products), while in Poland there is a preferred interest in supporting the organizations with volunteers - directly helping in activities with target groups or providing expertise and know-how to the organizations. Yet, the in-kind support (products, services, facilities, equipments, etc.), financial support, volunteering - they are all present in all the countries, being mentioned by the interviewed SMEs' representatives.

The type of projects the companies support are very diverse, but the local focus seems to be the common characteristic of the supported projects in all the five countries. With the exceptions of the SMEs interviewed in Ireland (where few of them mentioned the involvement in youth projects or projects for young people), all the other SMEs included in the research, from Greece, Norway, Poland and Romania, mentioned their support to projects involving youth, such as sport events, sport clubs, festivals, cultural events, conferences, workshops, internships/apprenticeships, youth entrepreneurship, education, employment and training opportunities, social inclusion services, etc. In Norway, a particular interest was identified, which is not present in the other four countries, respective humanitarian causes and charity causes events, organized by the youth organizations and supported by the SMEs, for children and people, in developing countries. However, in most of the cases, the SMEs' representatives say that they do not have a specific interest or specific cause - the decision depends more on who asks, who recommends the organization or the project, and/or on the personal interest/motivation of the SME owner or of the main team members of the enterprise.

Actually, looking to the way in which the decisions are made in most of the SMEs, these are mostly ad-hoc decisions, based on the SME owner's interest, motivation, need, or on the opinion of the most

important team members of the SMEs. However, in couple of cases identified in Poland and in Norway, the companies have designed some funding or supporting schemes for NGOs, with annual calls or annual involvements in the work of specific NGOs. Other factors considered important in the decision making process, and mentioned in more than one country context, were: the previous relation or contact with the NGO (including previous results of the collaboration); personal contact with the NGO or recommendations made within the personal network of the decision maker, usually the owner (so it is a matter of trust); the NGO's capacity to professionally present and implement the project; and good reputation of the organization in the community.

With the same exceptions of larger companies, which run annual funding schemes for NGOs, the other SMEs participating in our research, from all the five countries, say that they do not have a CSR strategy or a philanthropy strategy or dedicated personnel for taking care of these activities. At the same time, in some countries, for instance in Ireland and Romania, the SMEs recognize that these activities happen because the NGOs come to them and ask for their involvement. The SMEs are not actively searching for causes or projects in which to get involved, but when they are asked, they support as much as they can. However, in all the countries, the interest and the need for long-term partnerships with youth organizations/NGOs was expressed by the SMEs' representatives. Some of them say that they already have some organizations they support periodically, based on the good results obtained in the previous projects, but they do not consider it as strategic involvement, because no strategy was designed from the SMEs side. Also, most of the SMEs want to see clear and immediate impact of their support, but do not necessarily assess the impact; and some of them do not even ask for reports from NGOs for the supported projects or activities. Exceptions were some SMEs in Greece, which were able to identify and talk about the impact of their community work.

Recommendations made by SMEs to youth organizations

In order to collect relevant information to develop useful tools for youth organizations to improve their cooperation with the SMEs sector, we have also asked the enterprises' representatives to provide some recommendations for the youth organizations interested in the cross-sector cooperation field. Two important and common areas came out of the interviews and focus groups conducted in the five countries: one, related to the issue of trust; and the second, related to the way of solicitation - needs, objectives and estimated results. First, in four of the countries (Ireland, Norway, Poland and Romania), the SMEs owners or representatives insisted that the youth organizations should make sure they spend the necessary time on developing a trustable relationship with the enterprises, and that they present to the companies a trustable cause or project. Second, in Greece, Ireland, Norway and Romania, SMEs recommended the youth organizations to make sure that when they make the solicitation this should include clear needs, clear and simple/reachable objectives, achievable and concrete results, and clear expectations from the companies.

Other recommendations that were made by the interviewed SMEs' representatives, in more than one country were: the youth organizations should focus on generating and proving direct and immediate impact of their projects over their target groups; the youth organizations should improve their dissemination network and promotion tools they use; the youth organizations should improve their business expertise or/and business language; and the youth organizations should ensure transparency and accountability of their activities and projects.

Main conclusions

The 51 SMEs that were interviewed in the CoOp research are very diverse in terms of size and sector of activity, and most of them (with very few exceptions from Poland) were already involved in CSR/community activities, and all of them are interested in keeping or developing these type of activities.

In regards to the SMEs' motivation or interest towards community activities, the only common interest or need was the *local focus* of the projects or of the activities, meaning that the companies are interested in supporting their local communities. Then, other motivational factors were mentioned, ranging from moral responsibility or giving back to the community to the interest for community recognition and public promotion. Also, almost all the SMEs showed interest in supporting youth projects or projects for young people, but there was no such a preferred cause for most of the enterprises. Usually, the cause to be supported is selected based on the interest, need or personal motivation of the SME owner or of the main members of his/her team, or it depends on the organization that is asking - on its reputation or on who, from the SME stakeholders network, recommends the organization.

There are different types of support SMEs prefer to give to community projects run by NGOs/youth organizations: in Ireland and Norway, SMEs prefer to give more financial support; in Greece and Romania, SMEs prefer to give more in-kind support (services and products), and in Poland, SMEs prefer to involve their employees in volunteering actions.

Most of the SMEs, with very few exceptions of those that run community involvement funding schemes, do not have a CSR or a philanthropy strategy or dedicated staff for taking care of these activities. However, the enterprises are interested in developing long-term partnerships with trustable and accountable organizations, with clear causes, objectives and estimated results. Also, they would like to work with organizations that can demonstrate immediate and visible impact over the community, or/and that can provide some benefits to the companies in regards to their employees, clients or business partners.

MOTIVATION TO SUPPORT FOR THE SMEs IN THE 5 COUNTRIES



GREECE

the shared values with the NGOs;
the local focus of the projects or of
the activities



IRELAND

the willingness to give back to the
community; "the right cause" for the
SME owner



NORWAY

the volunteering culture; the social
responsibility feeling; the importance
of the cause for the community; the
need to reach more clients



POLAND

the need to engage the employees in
community activities; the local focus
and the local impact of the projects



ROMANIA

the need to better reach clients & business
partners; community recognition; giving
back to the community; the immediate
impact of the projects



Final remarks

The CoOp National Reports and the CoOp Comparative Report aimed at answering to some of the identified gaps in literature in regards to:

- SMEs' involvement in CSR, in general, and community activities, in particular, and to their cooperation with the youth organizations, on topics, such as
 - how many SMEs are involved in community projects or activities;
 - what types of SMEs get involved;
 - what types of causes or projects the SMEs support;
 - what types of organizations they support;
 - the financial value of their support;
 - the motivation for giving;
 - the decision making process in regards to the community involvement activities;
 - their plans for the future in regards to their CSR or community involvement activities.
- youth organizations' collaboration with SMEs, on themes, such as
 - the type of projects that youth organizations develop in collaboration with SMEs;
 - the type of enterprises they work with;
 - the type of the support received from SMEs;
 - the financial value of the support the youth organizations received from SMEs;
 - the methods of fundraising tried out by youth organizations when asking SMEs' support;
 - the readiness of the youth organizations to collaborate with SMEs;
 - the plans they have for future collaboration with SMEs.

Through the field research conducted within the CoOp project framework, we investigated some of these topics, and the comparative results were presented in this report. Here are some final remarks on the data obtained from surveying and interviewing youth organizations and SMEs from Greece, Ireland, Norway, Poland and Romania:

- Both youth organizations and SMEs seem to be interested and have concrete needs for developing cross-sector collaboration;
- Both sectors have limited experience in cooperating with the other sector;
- Most of the SMEs are already committed to causes that support young people, and are interested to continue supporting projects and activities targeting youth;
- Youth organizations, in general, manage mostly public funds, and they seem less experienced in working with the private sector. One of the causes of this limited interaction with the private sector could be their lack of knowledge, skills and resources for fundraising activities;
- Both sectors seem to have limited human resources for the fundraising, respectively CSR/community activities, as the responsibility for these is usually taken by the executive director of the youth organization, respectively the SME owner;
- The youth organizations and SMEs need to find some reconciliations and compromises, or, better, common solutions to the following issues:

3 ISSUES TO BE SOLVED IN PARTNERSHIP



BETWEEN **NGOs** AND **SMEs**

THE ISSUE	Youth organizations current perspective	SMEs current perspective
1 Support needed versus offered	They need mostly financial support from SMEs.	They prefer to give mostly in-kind support or to volunteer for the causes they choose. The financial support is limited and less preferred.
2 “The perfect partner”	They prefer to work with companies with CSR/philanthropy strategy and/or with dedicated staff for this activities.	Most of the SMEs do not have a CSR strategy, the decision is, most of the time, personal, based on the interests, needs, and motivation of the SMEs owner.
3 Expectations towards the other sector	They expect companies to be: committed to the cause, on long-term, to share the same values, and to be honest, open and transparent.	They expect youth organizations to be trustable and clear about the needs and objectives; and to help in motivating employees, and in better reaching or reaching more clients and business partners.

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