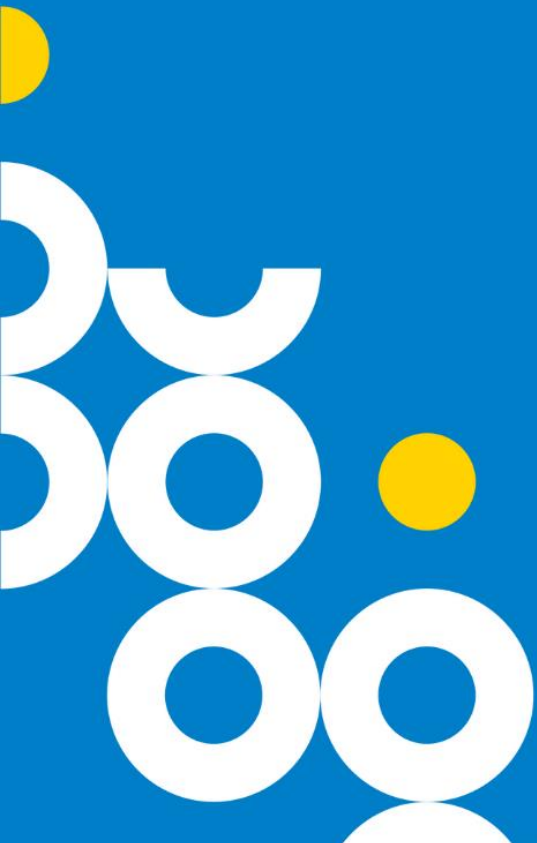# An analysis of European Solidarity Corps' Networking Activities (NET) 2020-22

Written by Annina Kurki

An analysis of European Solidarity Corps' Networking Activities (NET) 2020-22

Content

1. Introduction

SALTO European Solidarity Corps conducted an analysis of European Solidarity Corps' Networking Activities (NET) 2020-22 written by Annina Kurki. These have been extraordinary years in many ways. With the changes of the second European Solidarity Programme generation, shifting from a micro-planning to the macro-planning approach of TCA/NET activities in the work plans and yearly reports, the changes of the programme management tools from the European Commission side, to the change of eligibility period of NET-activities and not to forget about then implications on NET activities caused by the Covid-19 pandemic. All this changes led to a gap of evidence based data of NET-activities.

The purpose of the analysis is to get a better understanding of NET- activities based on evidence in the past years and support National agencies in their future work planning of NET activities.

Saying this, it is obvious that past years have been far from normal and it might seem weird to conduct an analysis in this period. But crisis periods are also good moments to have a close look on the most relevant and important pieces in a large and complex entirety. Practices that were obvious and normal needed to be re-thought, re-organized and re-valued. In that sense it seems a perfect moment and we took the opportunity to have a closer look on the NET-activities with the data we have, completed with qualitative interviews with NET-officers to close the data gaps.

Data collection

As the former EPlus Link is not used as program managing, monitoring and reporting tool for the new ESC programme generation, the main data source of this analysis is the SALTO Planning Board. The quantitative overview is focusing on the years 2020, 2021, 2022. Being well aware that the data is incomplete, also a comparison with the

European training calendar was made and additional qualitative interviews with NET-Officers were held in November and December 2022.

The quantitative data from the SALTO Planning Board was organised based on categories from a NET-matrix with categories developed by SALTO ESC in 2019:

- Number of activities
- Structure of activities (Single activities, LTA SNAC, LTA Recurrent)
- Cooperation with partner regions
- Size of the activity (Number of Participants)
- Type of the activity (Seminar, Training, Research, Contact making / Partner building activity, Study visit, Exchange of (good & bad) practise)
- 14 content topics the activity is tackling (inclusion, digital transformation, climate action & sustainability, participation, employability and entrepreneurship, concept of Solidarity, quality Support and Quality Improvement, Skills and competence development, alumni and post Placement support, recognition / Certification, dissemination and visibility, community building, European identity and values, ESC program in general)
- Target group based on participants role
- Target group based on participants experience about the program

Some parts of the data from the Planning Board were compared with the information from the European Training Calendar. The results from the first step were a quantitative overview (See attachment) which was also presented during the online TCA/NET meeting in autumn 2022.

Based on the quantitative analysis first data gaps and open questions appeared. It was time to deepen understanding with interviews of NET-officers. European Solidarity Corp Resource centre contacted potential National Agencies (NA) selected to cover

- a variety of different NA sizes,
- different geographical locations in Europe and
- to include the view of those NA`s whose data is missing in the quantitative data collection.

In the end 8 National Agencies agreed to participate in the interviews. The interviews were held online via MS Teams and recorded. The interviews focused on the budget year 2021 and mainly on hosting NET activities. Some parts of the questions tackled overall future scenarios of NET activities and general reflections about covid-pandemic effects. All the interviews were

transcribed, and the answers were re-organize based on the questions, and analysed in comparison with quantitative overview.

With this analysis we also want to emphasize that this document is ment to **contribute to a deeper discussion among NET-officers** especially on the interlinks of TCA and NET and it should **support NA colleagues in their future work programme planning**. We hope it offers a summarised overview of past years and some hints and insights that can guide the planning of the NET-activities in the future.

2. Covid-times and fast transition to on-line based activities

Since the analysed years are not representing "normal years", it is valid to start to look at how the COVID-19 pandemic affected the planned activities. During the year 2020, 2021 and 2022 (not complete yet), it seems that the amount of activities in the Planning Board stayed the same - around 40. The year 2020 shows that a lot of activities were planned in the Planning Board (82) and due to COVID only half of them ended up on the European Training Calendar. A majority of implemented activities were on-line. The content of the activities resonates with the situation and extreme times. Activities were for examples: support for volunteers, online mentoring, support for mental health.

Covid- times were visible also during the interviews . Most interviewees defined a successful point as the fast transition to online activities. Odd times made some things also more visible - like the fact that NET-activities needs to be more flexible:

"Covid made some things more clear, and show´s that the agenda need to be more flexible"

On the other hand many mentions that the most difficult thing during the past years has been the transition to on-line activities and participants' motivation and commitment.

"To find a way to keep participants motivated during on-line training – we lost a lot of pax during the training. "

It seems that interviewees have mixed feelings about the on-line transition: On one hand it was the biggest success story and on the other hand it felt like one of the most difficult things during the past years. In light of quantitative overview and the content of activities it seems that

National Agencies and NET-officers have the ability to adapt to fast changing situations. For future planning it might be wise to look carefully at which activities are working well on-line.

2.2. Conclusion Covid-times and fast transition to on-line based activities

- NET officers are flexible and react quick on changes
  - Activities were delivered on-line – this led partially to success moments but also caused at the same time struggles in past years
  - Extreme times were also visible in the content of activities (support for volunteers, online mentoring, support for mental health)

3. Planning Board, Training Calendar, and Hidden activities?

In the early states we noticed that databases Planning Board and European Training Calendar showed a different number of activities. In the quantitative overview the gap between planned activities in the Planning Board and in the European Training Calendar varied based on the year. First covid year 2020 there were 41 trainings more in the Planning Board than in the Training Calendar. By 2021 the gap was 10 training more in the European Training Calendar than in the Planning Board. That made us wonder – if some activities are not visible through any of these tools. Interviews with NA colleagues gave us some explanations.

Legend:
- No of activites in Planningboard
- No of activities in SALTO Training Calendar

Interviews showed that during covid times many activities were planned and entered in the Planning Board and then postponed or cancelled. In some cases the same activities were cancelled and later on re-opened again with a different date, and in these cases, it was not written in the Planning board again. It was visible only in the Training Calendar.

" ..Postponing activities – felt no sense to put them to the Planning Board without accrued data."

The fast changing situation because of covid was one obvious reason for the gaps between the tools. But the interviews showed something else as well. Since the Planning Board is not mandatory to use, some NA´s/officers are not using it if they have ready made plans. Plans can be agreed with partners in some other forum.

" If you have partners and ready made plans, than just call in the Training calendar. But it (Planning Board) is a good tool when we need the support from other NA´s."

Some answers also showed that it is unclear how the planning process goes and when to put it to the Planning Board.

Instead the European Training Calendar is seen as a tool for finding participants for international activities. Most interviewees use it regularly as a firm part of the implementation process. Some recognize situations when the training calendar is not used for finding participants such as for national activities and those international activities that are not open for everyone – like targeted for specific groups, like neighbour country or same language group.

"..maybe activities from the same language groups are missing.."

Other colleagues recognized cases where time is short, the selection and promotion of the NET-activity is not done via the European Training Calendar.

"..Training calendar gives core information about the training from our network to select participants, but sometimes we are organising activities that goes with very short applying time – than we don't use training calendar, we pick up participants from different channels.. "

These answers reflected that it is possible that some NET-activities can be missed in both tools.

The possibility to mix TCA and NET budgets that might also affect the numbers of NET-activities. Some interviewees were confused when the activity is for NET and when it is for TCA. Some activities are relevant for both programs and for technical reasons in the tools it is needed to choose just one program that it serves.

Nevertheless we have to embed the tool also in a historic context as the Planning Board grew over time and it now serves two independent programs and that seems to create some uncertainty on how to mark the activities. This was tackled also during interviews:

" NET can be under TCA, it would help, if there were clear spot where you can mark, which budget/ program it is for. Also in training calendar. That could help us to rout our sending activities as well and maybe it would be more equal numbers between NET and TCA."

" If some activity is for both, we mark it as TCA, for TCA we have a significant budget. "

Interviewees shared that it is possible that there are some "hidden NET activities" that are not visible in these two tools. For sure COVID-times did mess up the planning process and the possibility to mix two budgets confuses sometimes, but behind this there were some valid reasons why in some cases some activities are invisible either in the Planning board or in the European Training Calendar.

3.1. Conclusion Planning Board, Training Calendar, and Hidden activities

- Covid times effected the cooperation and planning process and how the activities were visible in Planning Board and European Training Calendar.
- Optional use of Planning Board -> in some cases it is not necessary to use it.
- Training Calendar has seen as firm part of choosing participants for international events.
- In some cases the training calendar and especially the pre-selection process is not used – e.g. if activities are targeted to specific language target groups or for short online webinars as well as where the selection process has a tight time line
- Mixing budget between NET/TCA can effect on what is under NET - technical use of the Planning Board
- Wishes from colleagues for the future: To make the planning process clear, could there be some basic process diagram/picture to help newcomers to jump on board?
- For the new planning tool (cooperation platform),there is the wish to have a clear understanding and agreement among colleagues on how to mark the activities.

4. Single Activity, LTA SNAC, LTA Recurrent – how do we structure it?

One part of the analysis also looked on how the activities were categorised between single activity – LTA SNAC – Other LTA and LTA Recurrent. Based on the quantitative overview from the Planning Board most of the activities are single activities. LTA (SNAC`s) are new initiatives under NET and the majority of LTA´s is covered by TCA, so it is understandable that they are not visible in the years 2020 and 2021. The budget year 2022 is still ongoing, so in that sense the numbers are not giving deep insights into how the NET activities are or will be divided between single activities and LTA´s at this stage.
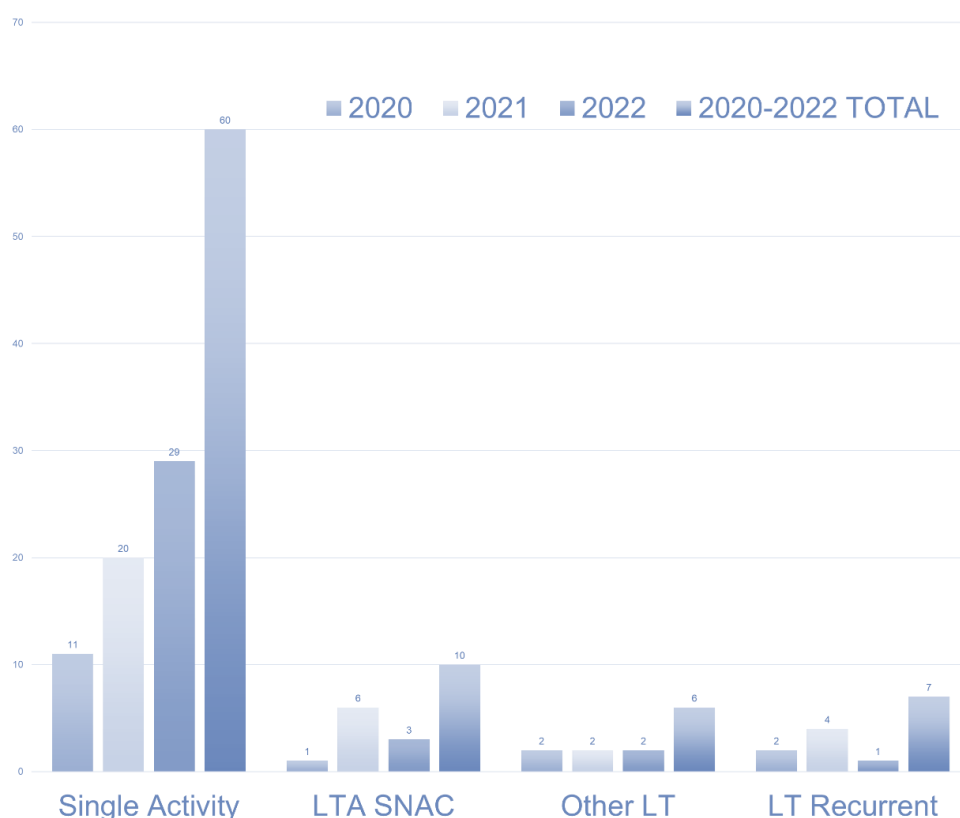
The interviews were tackling how interviewees see the relation between Single Activities, LTA SNAC and LTA Recurrent. Answers show that there is some unclearness on what is/what is not just between LTA`s but which of the LTA SNACS are for NET and which for TCA. Some referred that they are part of a SNAC but not sure if it is part of the European Solidarity Corps.

"It´s a bit confusing what is what. Some of them are long and demanding in sense of workload. It is hard to find out how it actually works.."

Most of the interviewees had a good understanding of different concepts and they recognize the trend form qualitative overview - most of the activities are single activities and there were clear vision how it is divided:

"Activities that are more how to use program or how to increase quality are single activities and thematic can be part of LTA´s."

Some of the interviewees were very aware of the concepts and had adapt that to their own planning process:

"...some single activities was thematically same as one LTA that we are not involved. We are not doing it again... since it is under some LTA, our principle is not going to double it, If some activities seems to be missing, we can try to cover those."

Some answers also reflected on the nature of LTA/single activities. On the other hand single activities can be more flexible and easier to adapt national needs:

" Single activities you can have more flexibility about the content and how well it fit your countries needs, maybe that´s why it is more popular and more interesting to host. "

Long term activities Recurrent (LTA) activities received mixed feedback. Some said that ready-made modules are not so interesting to host, since you don't have much to say about the content - it is more about arranging the practicalities. Some National Agency, that were struggling with workload saw that LTA Recurrent was an easy way to organise NET-activities and it can release the workload. Maybe the overall NET budget is also affecting on how much each NA is willing to use LTA Recurrent offers.

"We used the format that works like Tosca or Mobility Taster to spear our NA for workload – that is how we have focused on."

On the other hand, some saw that Long term activities (LTA SNACS) can bring more impact to the activities since they are framed with a strategy.

" In the future, I see that we are implementing more LTA´s framed with strategy - that could have more impact in the society."

This analysis shows that there is variety in how well the concept of LTA SNAC / LTA Recurrent and single activities is understood. Summarising the answers, it seems that all different types of activities have a place in NET-activities. This variety can bring the flexibility and fulfil the different needs of each single National Agency.

## Conclusion LTA/LTA recurrent/ single activities

- Knowledge and understanding varies among NA officers
- Overall confusion how SNACS are structured
- Mainly NET activities are still single activities
- Single activities can serve better national needs
- LTA Recurrents can ease NA´s the workload
- Can there be more impact when strategy behind the activity like LTA SNACS?

5. Role of Partner regions

Within the analyses we also wanted to have a closer look on the co-operation between partner regions (Third countries neighbouring the EU: Western Balkans, Neighbourhood East, South-Mediterranean countries, Russian Federation) Quantitative overview shows that most of the activities are open for all regions. A minority are just for EU member states, and some are specifically targeted to strengthen cooperation with some partner regions.
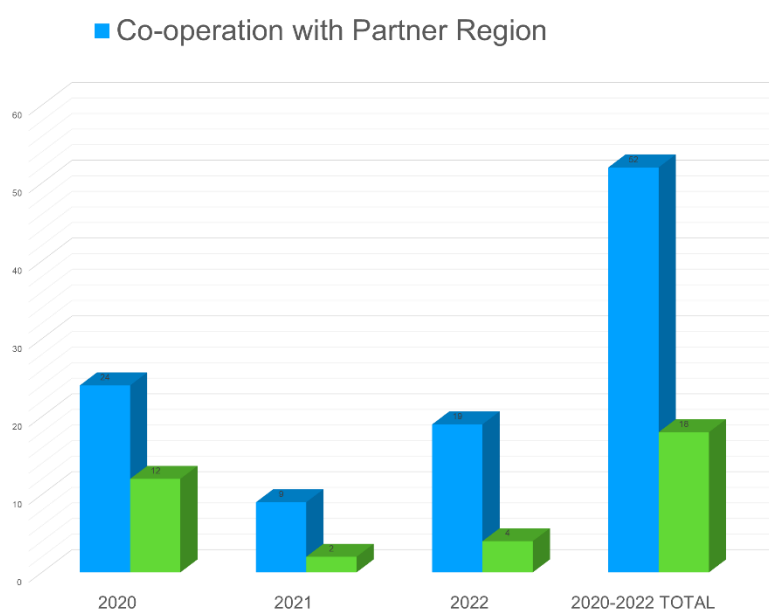
This topic has been discussed previously during the TCA/NET-officers network meetings, and there are some practical barriers that can exclude participants from partner regions like long visa procedures which require a longer phase between the approved application and the implemented residential event. This is also a recognized and researched issue in the volunteering field (see study: Study on removing obstacles to cross-border solidarity activities 2020[1]). It is good to keep in mind how it can affect the planning process and timelines. This practical barriers was also visible during interviews:

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[1] https://op.europa.eu/en/publication-detail/-/publication/1a7042cb-e678-11ea-ad25-01aa75ed71a1

"Now it is hard because of war in Ukraine – all visa and entering the country, but hopefully would get easier after the war again."

During the interviews 5 out of 8 said that they work pro-actively with partner regions. Only one said that it is not on the agenda of the National agency at this stage. The reasons for working with partner regions varied from geographical reasons, like working with neighbour countries or to practical reasons like most of the volunteers are coming from some of the partner region countries.

"We work closely with our closest region – Eastern/South countries – we implement specific trainings with them."

"Eastern Europe and Caucasus are important regions because a lot of volunteers are coming from there – so this is an important region for us."

Some were hoping to establish new cooperation relationships in the future, and some went even further with their analysis and hoped working with partner regions could solve problems to find participants both in the program but also in the NET activities.

"Sometimes it is hard to find participants to come to our country – at least inside EU, it´s seems that the pool is dry. There are no participants.

Cooperation with partner regions can lead to more potential participants – it widens the target group."

Interviews showed that partner regions play an important role in NET activities and in the European Solidarity Corps programme in general.

Conclusion role of partnering regions

- Specific actions are implemented together with partner regions
- Important stakeholders in volunteering field gives a reason to involved in the NET activities as well
- Practical barriers like long visa procedures, short notice for participants when confirmed
- Solidarity beyond EU borders?

6. Content of activities - How to use the program or boost for important themes?

One interesting part of the analyses is the content of the NET activities. Looking at the content of NET-activities and the information provided in the Planning Board, it is visible that the planned activities are divided. On the other hand, a big part of the activities are on how to use the program and how to implement high quality projects. That contains: The ESC program in general, Quality Support and Quality Improvement, Skills and competence development .

Yearly Distribution of NET Events on Different Themes
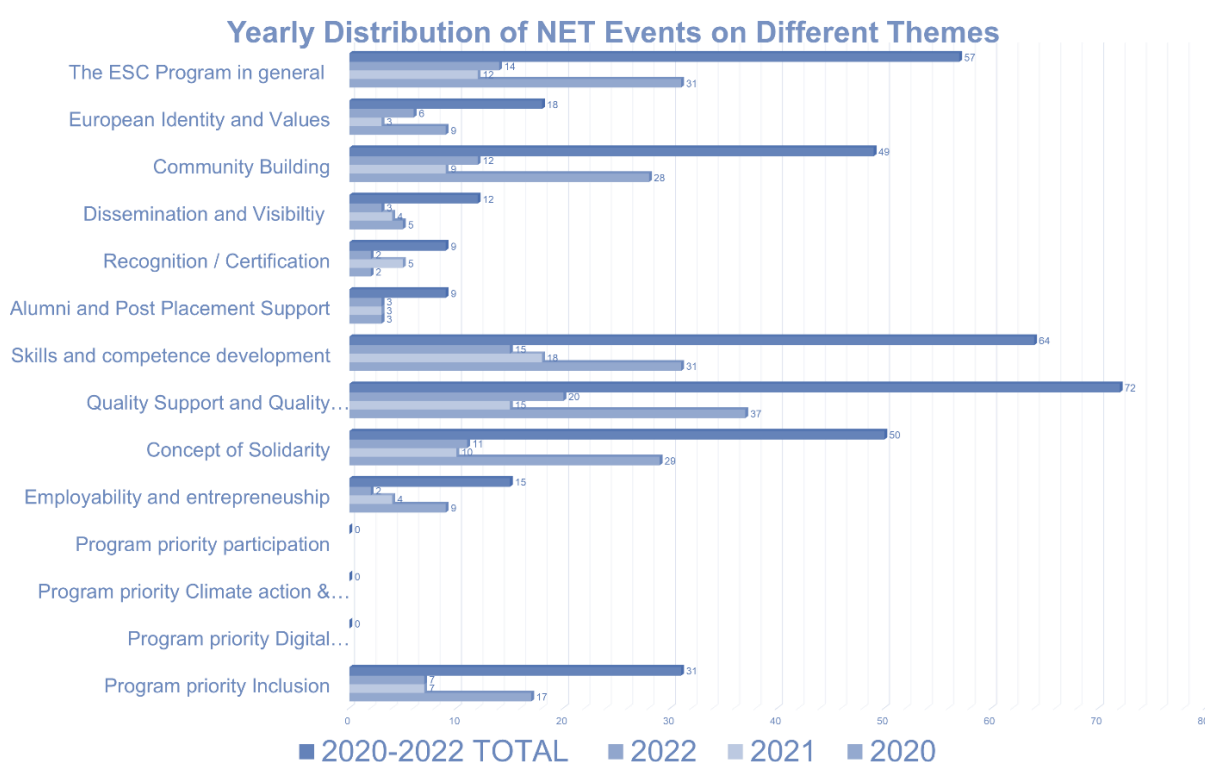
In many interviews the NA officers recognized the importance of training beneficiaries about the different possibilities the program has to offer and how to ensure or increase the quality elements of the projects.

"Our activities are focused on quality support, Improvement of project quality. Skills and competences are important and it´s for project coordinators. – so many elements that need to be known when you run example volunteering projects."

Other parts of the planned activities are more thematically concentrated like program priorities, European identity & values and concept of olidarity. This division and distribution of activities was recognized also by the participating NA officers during the interviews.

"I can not put more weight on one or the other, both are important – training about how to use the program but also thematic training. In our reality it is a combination of both."

"In general, it seems that NA´s are following the same pattern, not really any surprises."

If we look deeper on the themes, one Interesting outcome is that activities focusing on community building and the concept of solidarity are present in relatively every analysed year.

This topics were mentioned during the interviews as well:

"Community building in volunteering makes super sense.. and Partnership Building Activities are part of this, and we focus on that."

"..ESC is really in the beginning with NET activities – a lot of space for improvement on content.. biggest challenge is solidarity - what it is and but that in the context of different countries."

In the Planning Board we found that the topic on inclusion is represented by the same amount of activities of each analysed year. It indicates that inclusion is a firm part of the program and can be seen as an impact of the Inclusion and diversity strategy and the work of SALTO, Inclusion & Diversity. Which has worked constantly for several years with the topic. During the interviews several interviewees were talking about inclusion as one of the most important topics.

"..but in hosting we concentrate on inclusion , it´s always somehow related to inclusion. "

" Inclusion was our priority in 2021 and it still is."

It is interesting to see the themes that are increasing. It seems that activities dealing with European identity and values are growing. This could reflect on the war in Europe and societal discussions around it. Instead, activities dealing with employability and entrepreneurship have decreased from the year 2020-2022. It can reflect on the nature of the program – Solidarity operates more with communities and during the previous European Voluntary service (EVS) program the focus was more on learning and individual growth – like employability and entrepreneurship. One of the interviews pointed out the lack of the topic of employability and entrepreneurship.

"For me a bit surprising is low number of employability and entrepreneurship – I thought in Europe this is important topic, it´s visible in the European Commission and among colleagues."

On the other hand it is also interesting to see what content topics are missing. The new program priorities - Digital transformation, Climate action & sustainability, Youth participation are still underrepresented. It is valid to think of the reasons for that. One explanation can be the tools - planning board. It seems that these topics are visible in written descriptions of the activities, but not marked as a priority, so it might refer to technical issues in the tool.

Mixing the budget between NET and TCA can offer one answer - Maybe these topics tackling the new priorities are mainly covered by TCA? The interviews offered more food for thoughts about new priorities:

" It´s clear that "new" priorities are not visible like digi transformation, green and participation, since it´s not defined what it means in the frame of ESC – it´s so new!"

"Lack of new priorities makes sense - how they link to ESC? If that´s not clary sad, I would probably mark them as TCA.."

"It will be interesting to see how it will be evaluated in the end – the new priorities. When the program gets more clear maybe it makes more sense to prioritise things.."

Based on interviews, it seems that new priorities are not clear yet in the frame of the European Solidarity Corps. The program, the volunteering field and National Agencies need more time to define and form them.

To summarise both quantitative overview and results of interviews, it seems to be clear that NET activities have a strong role to train and support how to use the program and how to make qualitative projects. On the other hand also thematic topics are visible. Clearly defining solidarity is one of the core elements, but also community building and inclusion are relevant contents. It will be interesting to see what kind of role the new priorities will be playing in the future.

Conclusion Content and use of NET activities by NAs

- Division of the activities - training how to use the program/ topic related activities.
  - Solidarity, community building are present, most likely also due to the support of an own programme SALTO – SALTO ESC
  - Increasing European values and identity
    - reflection of the societal situation in Europe - covid crises and war?
  - Decreasing employability and entrepreneurship
   - Swift of the focus point from the old EVS-program?

     ○ Inclusion is a firm part of the program and can be seen as an impact of the Inclusion and diversity strategy and the work of SALTO, Inclusion & Diversity.
  ● Role of the new priorities in the future

7. Participants

The main beneficiary of NET activities are the participants. The result of the quantitative overview from the Planning Board underlines that many activities are not that clearly targeted when they are in the planning phase. Most of the activities are marked to be targeted for both - newcomers and Experienced program users. That trend is visible in every analysed year.
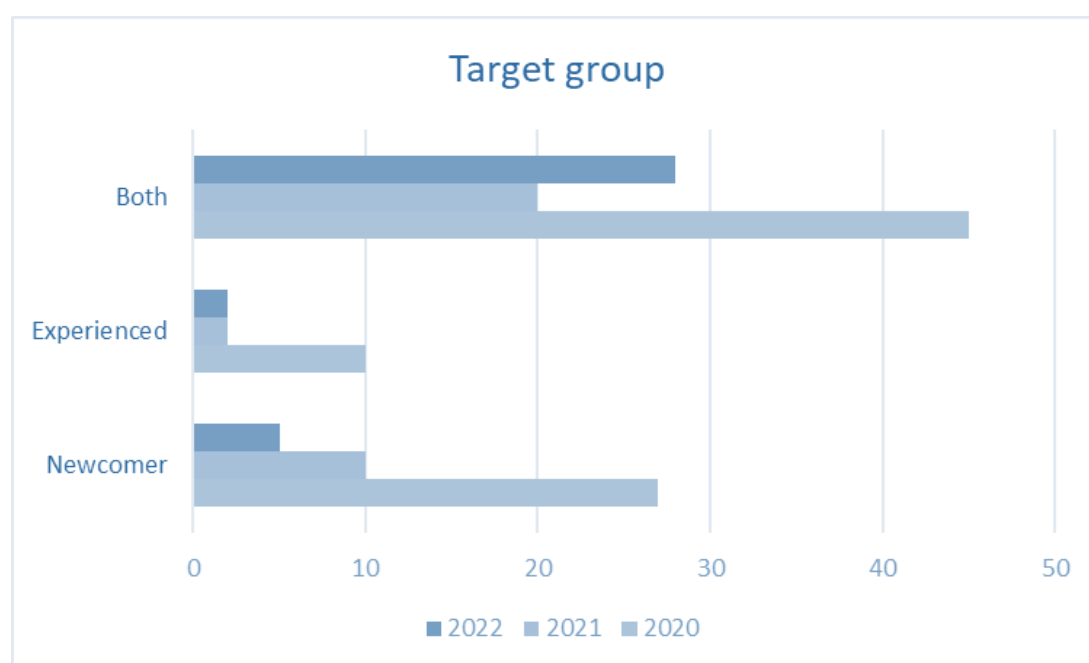
This can reflect on the nature of the planning process. In early states it is more loose and it will sharpen after the planning has started together with international partners. Th is seems to be confirmed as the calls in Training Calendar are more clear concerning the addressed target groups.

Related to the target group, during the interviews an interesting dilemma popped out. Since the NET-activities are seen as a tool to train and support beneficiaries, in many cases project beneficiaries are also participants of NET-activities. Some countries are in the situation that they need new beneficiaries and NET-activities are a good tool to get new beneficiaries on board. But some recognize an issue. With the limited financial programme resources some National Agencies face the challenge that there is no need to attract new beneficiaries. And old program users are so occupied and have limited resources to attend further NET activities.

" We are targeting trainings for both – but maybe a little bit more to experienced. It is a bubble – same organisations are going around, even we try to reach new users. "

"..money is out so no need to have new beneficiaries and old ones don't have time to participate in any activities.. "

" The pool of solidarity people are a bit.. it´s not growing massively, In volunteering there have been same organisations for years, sometimes couple of more are coming, but at the same time they are dealing with the money since the budget is lower. And Solidarity projects they are informal groups and they are coming and going.. It´s dropped down in resent years.. so many things are going on.."

It is clear that during the interviews the answers were referring to volunteering and not so much to solidarity projects. It can be that those are seen as a national activities and that's why it was not mentioned during the interviews. Could there be space in NET activities for activities that are targeted more to Solidarity projects?

These answers somehow reflect the situation, to whom NET-activities should be offered? What is the main need? This seems to vary country to country and could be wise to look

closer together with the situation of project application and applicants. It might be wise to re-think the situation with old beneficiaries and the need to find new ones. Is it a firm strategic approach, that old good ones are a permanent part of the program, or could there be space to

have some healthy competitions about project funds?

This all leads to the next topic. Lack of good, relevant participants. In many answers the raised issue was finding suitable, well profiled participants to the promoted NET activities.

"Many activities- but it is hard to find participants! We miss the key ingredient that participants could find interesting. We are struggling, really struggling to find participants!"

This all paints a picture that NET activities need to be reviewed as a firm part of the European Solidarity Corps program, how they link to the situation with limited project funds and what aims and needs the activities should serve. Most of the interviewees could not define the reasons for the lack of participants. Some mention the changes of mindset after covid or economical difficulties. Some were talking about the barriers that can block participation like language skills.

"Language issue is a big for us.. it is a real barrier for many."

Some of the interviewees reflected that one reason can be the overall visibility of the European Solidarity Corps Program. Relatively new program has still work to do to be more seen and known. NET-activities can be one part to solve it.

"We also have some difficulties with participants, not finding them. We need to make the program more visible- people don't know about the program and they don't apply (NET activities). We need to spread the information and do communication campaigns. – We have values, we have money - we have an important program, the European Solidarity Corps , also E+ but people don't know about it. It's frustrating."

One thing that could be seen closer is, how well the promoting and marketing of the activities are working.

" We are also facing that in sending and hosting activities there is the same participants in different activities. I think the problem is the serving the information about the programs. "

During the interviews some reflected on what could help to attract well profile participants and what kind of activities have been most popular. Answers were; better recognition of the value of the activities/learning, better targeted activities with concrete, practical elements -activities like study visits.

" Maybe more effort for Youth Pass certificates, maybe that can also lift the level of applicants.. "

"Study visits has more potential. it´s partnership building and getting to know practises and build up capacity, it´s also more doable – not necessary 5 days, but just 2-3. It can be more realistic to organisations to participate."

"Most popular activities are the one that are well targeted to specific group – like mental health or mentors, or thematically targeted like environment or concept of solidarity.."

All this leads to the question: what is the key ingredient that brings relevant participants to the NET-activities? What barriers can there be that blocks the participation? Unfortunately this analysis does not give an answer to that. But in the future it would be interesting to analyse past activities and see which of them were most popular and why.

Conclusion participants

- Bubble of same participants - Often project beneficiaries are also participants of NET activities.
- Define to whom NET activities should be offered:
    - This seems to vary country to country and could be wise to look closer together with the situation of project application and applicants.
- Lack of participants. Why?
    - Visibility of the Program

- Different mindset after covid
- Economical difficulties

- Lack of resources among volunteering organisations/civil society organisations
- The barriers that can block participation like language skills
- Role of promotion and marketing of activities
  - Solution:
    - More targeted activities like study visits
    - Better use of recognition of the value the activity - Youth Pass

8. Monitoring and following-up

In the interviews we also wanted to have a closer look on best practises on how to monitor or follow-up NET-activities. Based on the interviews the systematic qualitative monitoring is insufficient.

National Agencies have some kind of follow-up system. Most often it is for their hosting activities, consisting of final reports from trainers/ facilitators and collecting feedback from participants. For sending activities it is common to collect feedback after the event. Feedback can be tied to the financial reimbursement of travel costs and it is often collected via questionnaires. In some cases follow-up is done two times - right after the event and then 6-12 months after the event. The aim is to see the permanent changes.

Some had organised meet-ups with participants before and after the event and collected information through the meetings. That was mentioned as good but demanding practice

that is impossible to repeat for each event. It seems that data is collected but in most of the cases not evaluated well. Many answers underline that even if the data is available, it is not well used.

> "In the TCA`s we used to send questionnaires, one after three weeks and one after year to follow the impact. So there we collect the data, but we don't really use the evaluation of the data. In the NET we need to review the process and see if we will use it."

Most of the answers reflected that there is a need to improve follow-up and monitoring and some were planning to use external experts to help with evaluation.

"We could also add some external evaluator to help us. We are not researchers - so someone who could help with questions, evaluation and analyses. Like once a year or something."

Almost everyone recognizes that following up and monitoring could be improved and better used in the planning states of the NET-activities. But some were more realistic and wondered about the workload of more efficient monitoring. Some were thinking how it could look like - a well working monitoring system.

"It would be interesting to know how this kind of qualitative monitoring system would look like."

"We could always improve, example it would be nice to follow the new partnerships – but to be realistic, no one has time for this! Even if we do it, I´m not sure if we could benefit from these results."

In all, based on the interviews most of the NA´s have simple monitoring and follow-up system, but it is not effectively used in the planning of NET-activities. Opinions and ideas seems to vary how much weight it is wise to put on it, and think realistically is it even possible to find a system that easily serves the need. There is also some centralised data collected by the European Commission that could be used to analyse NET-activities. For now the responsibility has been only on the shoulders of NA´s and SALTO´s.

Conclusion monitoring and follow-up

- Recognized of NET officers to improve qualitative monitoring
- Data is collected - not well evaluated
- Could systematically collected and analysed data help planning of future activities?
- Role of centralised data from COM?

9. Future of NET-activities

To close the interviews we also wanted to take a look in future scenarios of NET-activities. We allowed ourselves and colleagues to dream. Many wishes addressed the like roles of NET activities, resources, content and type of the activities. During the interviews NET- activities were compared with the TCA activities. In many cases the person giving the interview was in charge of both programmes,TCA and NET. Some answers said that NET-activities should have a stronger role next to TCA´s. One way of stronger the role is build up a stronger identity:

> "We need to strengthen the NET officers. NET officer positions need to be stronger than at the moment, with stronger own identity, and the capacity to develop more and good NET activities or modules- it´s crucial."

Some interviewees hoped for better communication and networking among colleagues and strategic approach for planning the activities. Several mentions the overall visibility of the Solidarity Corps Program as a one element to improve in the future.

> "We have lots of activities targeted to different and diverse target groups – but we are not Erasmus+ we are European Solidarity Corps, so we need to focus on visibility of the program. It´s possibilities, like the volunteering aspect in European youth programmes. "

Some of the future scenarios were concentrating on the content and type of the activity. They hoped to have more concrete and practical activities like study visits and also shorter activities from 5 days to 2-4 days. Some were wishing alongside non-formal training methods / activities, activities which are based on evidence and research. Someone was hoping for more creativity to the content of the activities.

"I know the aim is to have constructive ways of planning and not to have to many activities to compete to each other - but with out this competition we don't get brilliant training concepts! It might be wishful thinking to get more creativity for net activities…and trough that bit more successful! "

One interesting topic that was mentioned a couple of times during the interviews, was the activities about new priorities in the context of the European Solidarity Corps Program. One future wish was, to use more external experts, who are not so close connected with the youth field, when defining and planning activities for new priorities. Some were hoping for ready-made concepts and training/ activity modulus that could be easy to host and offer. Some of the interviewees were thinking the role of the field of discovering the new priorities and the same time the issue that there is not proper instrument organisations to do experiments:

"ESC dose not have a playground for this like TCA has (youth workers mobility), so where are the organisations who can do experiments around this?"

Overall the ideas and visions about the future looked bright and optimistic and wishes and scenarios were concrete and in many ways realistic. Many of the answers were thankful for the well working NET-network supported by SALTO T&C, helpful colleagues and the inputs of SALTO European Solidarity Corps.

"In the future We will keep on organising short and meaningful activities so people can be interested to join and get inspired!"

"Keep on building a warm community!"

Conclusion wishes for the future of NET activities

- Stronger role of NET-activities and NET officers
- Better visibility for the ESC program also supported by the European Youth Portal
- Good cooperation among colleagues
- More creativity to the contents
  - Instrument for the organisations to develop and try out new formats equivalent to the youth workers mobility in Erasmus+
- More concrete, practical activities like study visits
- Shorter activities (from 5 days to 3-4 day)
- Alongside non-formal methods some activities which are based on evidence and research
- Help for forming the understanding of the new priorities in context of European Solidarity Corps:
  - Involvement of experts outside of the usual "bubble"(related to each priority) when creating activities.
  - Ready-made NET formats for new priorities