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<http://genclikarastirmalari.gsb.gov.tr/>
 Journal of Youth Research • August 2022 • 10(27) • 15-33

ISSN 2791-8157

Received | 14 Aug 2021

Accepted | 10 Feb 2022

Stimulating Learning Organisation Through Erasmus+: Youth Organisations in Turkey*

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Abstract

Turkey's full participation in the European Union's Education and Youth Programmes (i.e., Erasmus+ Programme) since 2004 has been one of the ongoing components of Turkey-EU relations. As indicated by the Director of the National Agency of Turkey in 2021, the programme has supported 700,000 participants from Turkey in 36,000 projects over the course of 17 years. Youth organisations taking part in the learning mobility opportunities of the youth component of the Erasmus+ programme are just one of the programme's many beneficiaries.

In an effort to perform a theoretical analysis of the effects of Erasmus+ on youth organisations in Turkey, this article suggests that owing to their contextual characteristics, youth organisations have the potential to transform into learning organisation stimulated by their involvement in Erasmus+ youth projects. To answer how Erasmus+ may act as a trigger for this, qualitative data were collected from fifteen youth organisations from Turkey active in the programme and analysed around four components of the integrated model on learning organisation developed by Örténblad (2004) (i.e., organisational learning, learning at work, learning climate and learning structure). The findings suggest that three major factors, namely organisational consciousness on learning, participatory mechanisms in the organisation and team-based working structures, are mutually reinforcing characteristics able to help youth organisations transform into learning organisation through participation in Erasmus+/YiA training and support activities.

Keywords: Youth Organisation, Erasmus+ Programme, Learning Organisation, Youth Work.

* The author would like to thank the Centre for EU Education and Youth Programmes (National Agency of Turkey) of the Directorate for EU Affairs of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs for granting the official permission to use the data for academic purposes that it funded within the research project: "Competence Development and Capacity Building in Erasmus+: Youth in Action (RAY-CAP)". The opinions expressed in this article are those of the author and neither the European Commission nor the Turkish National Agency can be held responsible for any use of the information contained therein

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Öz

Türkiye'nin 2004 yılından bu yana Avrupa Birliği Eğitim ve Gençlik Programlarına (Erasmus+ Programı) tam katılımı, Türkiye-AB ilişkilerinin kesintisiz bir bileşeni olmuştur. Türkiye Ulusal Ajansı Başkanı tarafından 2021'de belirtildiği üzere, 17 yılda 36.000 projede Türkiye'den 700.000 katılımcıyı desteklemiştir. Özellikle Erasmus+ Programı'nın gençlik bileşeni kapsamındaki öğrenme hareketliliği fırsatlarına katılan gençlik kuruluşları programın birçok yararlanıcısından biridir.

Erasmus+ Programı'nın Türkiye'deki gençlik örgütleri üzerindeki etkilerini kuramsal bir perspektiften analiz etmek amacıyla, bu makale, özellikle bağlamsal özellikleri nedeniyle gençlik örgütlerinin öğrenen örgüte dönüşme potansiyeline sahip olduklarını ve Erasmus+ Programı'nın gençlik bileşenine katılımın, bu potansiyeli teşvik edebilecek mekanizmalardan biri olabileceğini öne sürmektedir. Erasmus+ Programı'nın nasıl bir teşvik sağlayabileceği sorusunu yanıtlamak için, Türkiye'den Program'a aktif katılan onbeş gençlik kuruluşundan toplanan nitel veriler, Örtlenblad (2004) tarafından geliştirilen bütünlük öğrenen örgüt modelinin dört bileşeni, (yani örgütsel öğrenme, işte öğrenme, öğrenme iklimi ve öğrenme yapısı), etrafında analiz edilmektedir. Bulgular, öğrenmeye ilişkin örgütsel bilinç, kuruluştaki katılımcı mekanizmalar ve ekip tabanlı çalışma yapıları olmak üzere üç ana faktörün, gençlik kuruluşlarının, Erasmus+ Programı'nın eğitim ve destek faaliyetlerine katılımları yoluyla öğrenen örgüte dönüşmesine yardımcı olacak şekilde, pekiştirici özellikler olarak tanımlanabileceğini göstermektedir.

Anahtar Kelimeler: Gençlik Kuruluşları, Erasmus+ Programı, Öğrenen Örgüt, Gençlik Çalışmaları.

Introduction

Turkey has fully participated in the European Union (EU) Education and Youth Programmes (known today as the Erasmus+ Programme) in 2004 (Hocaoğlu Bahadır & Gürsoy, 2020, p. 732). Implemented in Turkey for the last 17 years, the Erasmus+ Programme is one of the continuous, uninterrupted components of Turkey–EU relations. As indicated by the Director of the National Agency of Turkey, Erasmus+ has been an important instrument in strengthening dialogue between the EU and Turkey with more than 700,000 participants and 36,000 projects by 2021¹. Even at a point where Turkey–EU relations seem to be “at a standstill” (Eralp, 2018, p. 3), Erasmus+ continues to be lauded as one of the building blocks of “people-to-people contact” in a way to ensure “confidence-building” between Turkey and the EU.²

The co-operation between the EU and Turkey in the field of education and youth has precipitated an academic interest to analyse the impact of Erasmus+ on its different beneficiaries in Turkey. However, these studies are mainly confined to formal education, such as the impact of the Erasmus+ and learning mobility in Turkey on university students (Kuloğlu, 2020; Gökten & Emil, 2019), on academic/administrative staff (Kasalak, 2013; Hocaoğlu & Gürsoy, 2020) and on higher education institutions (Özdem, 2013; Hatisaru, 2017). Several other studies focus on teachers (Demirer & Dak, 2019, Topaç, 2019) and secondary schools (Kesik & Beycioğlu, 2020). Nevertheless, the youth component of Erasmus+

1 Speech of Mr. İlker Astarıcı on 22 February 2021. Available at <https://m.facebook.com/watch/?v=166941211901570>.

2 Statement by Josep Borrell-Fontelles, the High Representative and Vice-President of the European Commission. “LEAK: Borrell report suggests new carrot-and-stick approach for Turkey”, Euractiv, 21 March 2021. Retrieved from: <https://www.euractiv.com/section/global-europe/news/leak-borrell-report-suggests-new-carrot-and-stick-approach-for-turkey/>.

has received limited attention, and that attention focuses primarily on the effects of participation in European Voluntary Service projects (Çakı, 2014; Akgün et al., 2020). Thus, there is an identifiable gap in the literature analysing the impact of Erasmus+ in Turkey on youth leaders/workers, youth organisations or youth work at large.

This article aims to explore the effects of participation in Erasmus+ on youth organisations in Turkey in light of the *learning organisation* conceptual framework developed by Örttenblad (2004). There is limited research in the literature analysing *youth organisations as learning organisation* and the dynamics behind such a transition (for two rare examples, see Del Felice & Solheim, 2011; Soghomonyan, 2012). Learning organisation as a concept in Turkey has not been studied in relation to youth organisations; rather, it has been studied in relation to schools and school administrators/teachers (Aslan, 2019; Banoğlu & Peker, 2012) or higher education institutions (Yıldız et al., 2016).

This article suggests that, owing to their contextual characteristics, youth organisations have the potential to transform into learning organisation and one of the mechanisms to stimulate such a potential is the youth organisations' participation in the training and support activities of Erasmus+ youth component. In support of this hypothesis, this article attempts to answer how the learning organisation potential of the youth organisations in Turkey is triggered at different stages of their participation in Erasmus+. Accordingly, the article is structured as follows: The first part elaborates on the conceptual framework of *learning organisation* and introduces what Örttenblad (2004) labels as an *integrated approach of learning organisation*. The following section identifies *generalised organisational contexts* of youth organisations to show how youth organisations are conducive to learning. The next section details the qualitative data collection methods and research sample. Following this, qualitative data are analysed in four dimensions of the integrated model learning organisation (Örttenblad, 2004) to identify each dimension's specific mechanisms and characteristics. The article finds that the co-existence of all four of the model's dimensions and their mutually reinforcing characteristics analysed on the basis of their participation in the Erasmus+ training and support activities help youth organisations transform into learning organisation in light of three major factors: organisational consciousness with regards to learning, participatory mechanisms in the organisation and team-based working structures.

Conceptual Framework

Learning organisation emerged as a research agenda toward the end of the 1980s. Senge (1990, p. 3) described the concept as venues “where people continually expand their capacity to create the results they truly desire, where new and expansive patterns of thinking are nurtured, where collective aspiration is set free, and where people are continually learning how to learn together.” Such a learning process is maintained to result in the “eventual transformation of an organisation” (Pedler et al., 1989) that precipitates a “change in the behaviour of the organisation” (Huber, 1991). Voolaid and Ehrlich (2017, pp. 341–342) summarise the major emphases found in extant definitions of learning organisation as “continuously learning individuals, learning expressed in transformation is a natural part of the organisation; learning is a strategic and knowledgeably conducted process, an organisation has

structures and systems that promote learning and knowledge sharing, an organisation has learning capacity, and knowledge is taken as a competitive advantage”.

The originality of learning organisation conceptualisation lies in its “action-oriented” nature that seeks to develop “diagnostic and evaluative methodological tools” for the promotion of superior-quality learning experiences within the organisations (Greenan & Lorenz, 2009, p. 6). As such, a learning organisation implies systematic, empirical and functional analysis, the operationalisation of research on “how organisations make the transition to being a learning organisation” and whether or not there is a trigger for this transition (Tuggle, 2016, p. 455).

One of the functional approaches to the analysis of learning organisation is provided by Örténblad’s (2004) *integrated model of learning organisation*. The integrated characteristics of the model stem from the effort undertaken to overview and blend various definitions of learning organisation in the literature into a functional approach that provides a “new, workable model” to organisations in their endeavour to function as learning organisation (Örténblad, 2004, p. 132). This integrated model operationalises an empirical analysis of learning organisation by examining four complementary dimensions (i.e., organisational learning, learning at work, learning climate and learning structure) deemed to co-exist, albeit without equal emphasis (Örténblad, 2004, p. 135).

The first dimension of the integrated model of learning organisation is *organisational learning*. Örténblad (2004, pp. 132–133) states that it refers to “being aware of the need for different levels of learning, and storing of knowledge in the organisation”, where stored knowledge may be used in actual, real-life practices of the organisation, thus constituting organisational, as opposed to individual memory. Learning is suggested to be initiated by individuals who act as agents for the organisation and whose learning outcomes are collected and stored in the organisational memory as “routines, standard operating procedures, shared mental models, documents, manuals etc.” to make the learning and knowledge organisational (Örténblad, 2004, p. 133). The second dimension of the model—*learning at work*—refers to learning on the job (Örténblad, 2004, p. 133). This suggests that members of the organisation also learn while practicing their daily activities, which may also occur through interaction with customers in a way to satisfy their demands and needs. The third dimension is *learning climate* and is defined as “a positive atmosphere that makes learning easy and natural” to be ensured by the organisation in a “facilitated but not controlled” manner (Örténblad, 2004, p. 134). The fourth dimension of the integrated model is *learning structure*, which is to be “flexible” and “decentralised” so as to facilitate its members’ ability to learn from their environment and customers and to respond to their changing needs and demands through quick decisions (Örténblad, 2004, p. 134). Such a learning structure is to be shaped around an “organic team-based structure” where teams assume authority to make quick decisions with a “holistic perspective of the organisation’s business” and are informed about other team members’ tasks to replace their colleagues whenever necessary (Örténblad, 2004, p. 134).

In his later works, Örténblad (2015, p. 164) further develops the model by adding context-adapted characteristics of learning organisation into the model, referring to the identification of generalised organisational contexts in which particular types of organisations are embedded to identify the

conditions under which organisations may better perform as learning organisation. Before discussing the qualitative analysis, the following section aims to summarise the overall context in which youth organisations both exist and function in order to demonstrate how conducive they are in their ability to transform into a learning organisation.

Contextual Characteristics of Youth Organisations

Three general characteristics of the context in which youth organisations are embedded can be identified from the literature: their wider universe (i.e., youth work), their nature and the availability of structural learning instruments/programmes.

The first contextual characteristic of youth organisations is youth work—considered as “a tool for personal development, social integration and active citizenship of young people” through “activities with, for and by young people of a social, cultural, educational or political nature”³. Lauritzen (2006) defines the overarching aim of youth work as “integration and inclusion of young people in society” to ensure “personal and social emancipation of young people” often to be pursued by learning situated within out-of-school education characterised by non-formal education/learning. Non-formal education within youth work is suggested to be “structured, based on learning objectives, learning time and specific learning support and it is intentional”, and includes, but is not limited to “voluntary and often self-organised character of learning”, “participative and learner-centred approach”, and “a supportive learning environment” (EC & COE, 2004, pp. 5–6). Non-formal education exists in a “learning continuum” with informal and formal education (Fennes & Otten, 2008) that complement each other. An integral part of learning in youth work is intercultural learning, developed to tackle societal challenges, aiming at “social and cultural learning in international training and learning settings in terms of empathy, role distance and tolerating ambiguity” (Fennes & Otten, 2008). Lastly, youth work depends on the voluntary participation of young people (Coussée, 2012, p. 84) in all youth work activities. Key actors of youth work are “the youth organisation, the youth worker and the young person” (Siurala, 2017, p. 227). The aims of youth work are usually fulfilled by youth organisations and their youth workers/leaders, either in a professional or voluntary manner, to “respond positively and purposefully to the different needs, wants and issues facing a diversity of young people” (Williamson, 201, p. 20).

The second context-related characteristic is that youth work actors are, given the myriad forms that youth work takes, incredibly diverse. Defined by their own diverse historical, cultural and political backgrounds, youth work actors exist at the local, regional, national and international levels. Accordingly, youth work can be delivered by public or non-governmental organisations (NGOs), led either by young people themselves, by informal groups or through governmental youth services to serve young people (Dunne et al., 2014). In such a diverse context, youth organisations can take the form of a public institution (e.g., youth centres of a ministry or municipality), a non-governmental organisation (e.g., associations, foundations, charities) or even a group of young people who have come together under a single roof to pursue youth-related activities.

3 Council of Europe, “Youth Work Essentials”. Available online at <https://www.coe.int/en/web/youth-portfolio/youth-work-essentials>.

The final contextual characteristic of youth organisations is the availability of structural learning instruments—mostly in form of youth programmes—purposefully designed for those working with and for young people, namely youth workers/leaders and youth organisations. Operating at different levels and financed by governments and/or international/supranational organisations, these programmes support non-formal education/learning, volunteering and mobility. Here, learning mobility appears as a concept bridging (usually cross-country) movement and the (usually non-formal/informal) education of young people, youth leaders and youth workers to develop “personal and professional competences, communication, interpersonal and intercultural skills, and active citizenship” (Kristensen, 2019, p. 5). A prominent example is the youth component of the EU’s Erasmus+ programme. The youth component of the programme (formerly called Youth in Action) supports and funds youth exchanges, youth volunteering, and training and support activities for youth workers/leaders. *Mobility of youth workers* (MoYW) and *Transnational Cooperation Activities* (TCA) are two components that directly target youth workers, youth leaders/trainers and youth organisations. MoYW activities cover “transnational/international seminars, training courses, contact-making events, study visits and job shadowing visits” that aim “to support professional development of youth workers”, on the one hand, and “to contribute to capacity building of the youth organisations” and “its impact on youth workers’ daily work with young people”, on the other⁴. Comprising a range of events (e.g., seminars, workshops, training courses and partnership-building activities), TCA aims not only to “improve the quality and impact of the programme at a systemic level” by providing opportunities to create and/or extend contacts/cooperation between youth organisations across Europe but also to gain knowledge and practical skills on Erasmus+ and project ideas⁵.

The literature presented above suggests that youth organisations exist and function in a context conducive to learning where non-formal and intercultural learning are promoted. Youth workers/leaders act not only as agents providing learning opportunities to young people but also as recipients of learning themselves through structured programmes purposefully designed and implemented by youth organisations for them. Here, the research question is how those structured programmes actually stimulate learning for the youth organisations, structurally or through youth workers, in a way to enhance their capacities as learning organisation.

Data Collection and Sampling

The field work for the empirical analysis presented in this article was conducted as a part of the Competence Development and Capacity Building in Erasmus+: Youth in Action (RAY-CAP) research project designed and implemented by the RAY Network⁶. Qualitative data were collected in line

4 Erasmus+ Programme Guide, Version 1, 20/10/2016, pp.79. Available online at: http://ec.europa.eu/programmes/erasmus-plus/sites/erasmusplus/files/files/resources/erasmus-plus-programme-guide_en.pdf.

5 “<https://www.erasmusplus.org.uk/transnational-cooperation-activities>” and “<https://www.salto-youth.net/rc/training-and-cooperation/nationalagencies/>”.

6 For more details about the RAY Network - Research-based Analysis of European Youth Programmes, please see <https://www.researchyouth.net/>.

with Module C of the RAY-CAP research project, which aimed to analyse “how training and support activities within Erasmus+/YiA contribute to the development of organisations involved in Erasmus+/YiA”⁷. The field work conducted in Turkey was facilitated and funded by the Centre for EU Education and Youth Programmes (Turkish National Agency), a member of the RAY Network since 2012. Permission to use the qualitative data collected within the scope of RAY-CAP for academic purposes in this article was officially granted by the Centre for EU Education and Youth Programmes in letter no. E-54424665-619-12104.

This article adopts a qualitative research approach to analyse the role that Erasmus+/YiA training and support activities play in stimulating youth organisations to become learning organisations whilst simultaneously identifying the mechanisms and characteristics in this process. Such a processual phenomenon (Blaikie, 2010) is to be traced through the experiences and perceptions of the organisational actors collected through semi-structured interviews in an attempt to establish a relational understanding of the process, as opposed to making generalisations.

The questions set used to collect qualitative data for this study was prepared by RAY-CAP working group composed of researchers from various European countries including the author of this article. The questions set was informed by the conceptual framework paper⁸ published by RAY-CAP and contained five principal question categories regarding (i) the selection, preparation and follow-up of training and support activities, (ii) the previous and future organisational change and development of the youth organisations interviewed and (iii) between three and five questions for each of these five categories. To ensure validity and reliability, the interviews were audio-recorded and transcribed verbatim for coding. In presenting the analysis, direct quotes from the interviewees were provided to illustrate interviewees’ experiences and to show how certain conclusions were derived from the evidence.

For the qualitative analysis in this article, a two-cycle qualitative coding method was adopted (Saldaña, J., 2009). The first cycle of coding sought to identify the mechanisms and their characteristics adopted by the interviewed youth organisations throughout the initiation, preparation, participation and follow up of Erasmus+/YiA training and support activities. The second cycle regrouped the coded data into four aspects of integrated model of Örtenblad (2004).

The interviews were conducted with twenty-one representatives/key staff members (including directors, staff and/or team members) of fifteen youth organisations in Turkey between 1 March and 14 May 2018. Nine interviews were conducted face-to-face and six by telephone (Table 1).

7 <https://www.researchyouth.net/projects/cap/>.

8 Research Project on competence development and capacity building in Erasmus+ Youth in Action – Conceptual Framework for Youth Work within E+/YiA focused on competences, training and learning [draft version], 18 April 2016, prepared by Doris Bammer, Andreas Karsten and Helmut Fennes.

Table 1. List of Interviewees

Id No.	Type of Organisation	Year of Establishment	Type of Erasmus+/YiA Projects Between 2014-2018	Number of Interviewees	Type of Interview
TR-01	Public organisation	2013	8 TCA; 1 KA1	2	Face-to-face
TR-02	Public organisation	2016	2 TCA; 2KA1 (non-MoYW)	1	Face-to-face
TR-03	NGO	2014	2 TCA; 4 KA1	2	Face-to-face
TR-04	NGO	2012	2 KA1; 1; KA3	1	Telephone
TR-05	NGO	2006	1 TCA; 4 KA1; 8 KA1 (non-MoYW); 2 KA3	1	Telephone
TR-06	NGO	2008	1 TCA; 5 KA1; 1 KA1 (non-MoYW)	2	Face-to-face
TR-07	NGO	2009	1 TCA; 1 KA1; 11 KA1 (non-MoYW)	1	Telephone
TR-08	Public organisation	2013	4 TCA; 1 KA1; 1 KA3	1	Telephone
TR-09	NGO	2010	3 TCA; 6 KA1 (non-MoYW)	1	Telephone
TR-10	Public organisation	2012	7 TCA; 7 KA1 (non-MoYW); 1 KA2	2	Face-to-face
TR-11	NGO	2014	2 TCA; 2 KA1; 2 KA3	3	Face-to-face
TR-12	Public organisation	2014	6 TCA; 7 KA1 (non-MoYW)	1	Face-to-face
TR-13	Public organisation	2011	5 TCA; 3 KA1 (non-MoYW)	1	Telephone
TR-14	NGO	2002	9 TCA; 1 KA1; 1 KA2	1	Face-to-face
TR-15	NGO	2012	1 TCA; 4 KA1; 9 KA1 (non-MoYW)	1	Face-to-face

In line with criterion sampling (Patton, 1990, p. 176), the major selection criteria for the youth organisations interviewed were that they (i) be repeatedly/regularly involved in international training and support activities for youth workers and (ii) having implemented several relevant youth work projects in Erasmus+/YiA between 2014 and 2018, and particularly Key Action 1 (KA1) – Mobility of Youth Workers (MoYW) and Transnational Cooperation Activities (TCA). In addition, the research sample aimed at a diversity in terms of type of organisation, size of organisation, level of Erasmus+/YiA involvement, approaches to international youth work and activity types. Such criteria are to ensure

ample variety whilst analysing how youth organisations differed in their experiences with Erasmus+/YiA training and support activities.

Six of the youth organisations interviewed were public and nine were NGOs. Among the public organisations, one was a specialised youth unit of a state university, two were international affairs units affiliated with two separate municipalities and one was the project unit associated with the district governor's office. While these four organisations were units specialised to conduct youth work as under the purview of a larger public institution, the remaining two public institutions were youth centres—one affiliated with a municipality and the other with Turkey's Ministry of Youth and Sports. For the purposes of this study, these specific units were deemed independent organisations and, when necessary, their relationship to a larger organisation is taken into consideration. Out of fifteen youth organisations in the sample, nine were NGOs that worked directly with young people (eight associations and one foundation).

The youth organisations interviewed were located in six geographical regions of Turkey. The oldest was established in 2002, the youngest in 2016 and the remaining ten were founded between 2010 and 2015. The size of these organisations' core staff varied between five and twenty-five members, and were further bolstered by a wider circle of volunteers, interns and experts taking part in their activities. All the team members in public organisations were full-time staff members whereas almost all team members in the NGOs were volunteers. All fifteen youth organisations worked directly with and for young people at the local, national and international level by organising activities promoting youth mobility, structured dialogue, strategic partnership projects, social responsibility projects, and both cultural and sports activities. The themes embraced by their activities include active participation to social/democratic life, social/personal development, volunteering, skills development, leadership and social entrepreneurship. All of these organisations arrange and provide trainings and projects to support youth work and/or build civil society capacity. As shown in Table 1, the youth organisations in the research sample were actively involved in numerous training and support activities within the Erasmus+/YiA between 2014 and 2018. In addition, those youth organisations had also participated in or hosted other types of Erasmus+/YiA projects, the most wide-spread of which being European Voluntary Service (EVS) projects.

Field Work Findings

The emphasis that youth work places on learning combined with the availability of structured learning activities for youth organisations imbue youth organisations with the potential to become learning organisation. To analyse whether or not their participation in those activities would stimulate their transformation into learning organisation, the respondents in the research sample were asked questions about the processes of initiation, preparation, participation and follow up of Erasmus+/YiA training and support activities that they either attended or hosted. This section details the qualitative findings for the fifteen youth organisations included in the research sample under the four dimensions of Örténblad's (2004; 2015) integrated model (i.e., organisational learning, learning at work, learning climate and learning structure). The mechanisms and characteristics developed and

adopted by the youth organisations interviewed during their involvement in Erasmus+/YiA training and support activities are presented at the end of each sub-section together with their relation to the aforementioned dimensions of the model.

Organisational Learning

In line with the integrated model, *organisational learning* can be categorised and explored by (i) awareness about and identification of the learning needs of the individuals, teams and the organisation, (ii) storing knowledge so as to nurture organisational memory and (iii) using this collective memory in organisational practices.

The qualitative data evince a considerable degree of awareness with regards to different learning needs both at the organisational and team level. Indeed, this need explains why an organisation's members participate in Erasmus+/YiA training and support activities. Moreover, organisational learning needs were reconciled with those of the beneficiaries of the youth organisations. Teams' learning needs during the process were deliberated over before being shared with the organisation's management to take an action.

“The point is to perceive the needs of this organisation. If we are to spare time for training, then it must add something to us. Otherwise, we lack the capacity to organise training programmes just for responding to individual needs and requests. Any need must benefit the association's activities.” [TR-07, NGO]

“Our team focuses on three benefits while making decisions. The first benefit—an absolute must—pertains to social benefits and responding to needs. The second pertains to how the act benefits the organisation. The third pertains to how the act contributes to individual development.” [TR-12, Public organisation]

Nearly all the interviewees responded that either formal or informal team reflection was a common method employed to identify learning needs. This cooperative process generally functioned either within or between different units of the organisation in the form of extensive discussion among team members, thus permitting the expertise and opinions of different units to be integrated into the process. A needs analysis was observed to be used to feed the team reflection process. Surveys and participatory, purposeful feedback were employed to identify needs. The data reveal that once the learning needs and corresponding activities were identified, the participants planned to attend these activities were informed of organisations' expectations in a participatory way, as they were also considered agents of the organisation and thus expected to transfer the learning outcomes from the activity to the youth organisation.

“Almost all of the trainings are shaped according to requests fielded from the youth. They drop by the centre both individually and in groups to convey their training needs. We also conduct an annual survey on local needs. These surveys include questions on the problems and needs of youth [in our city]. Then trainings are planned based on survey findings. Apart from this, our staff members are also able to voice their opinions.” [TR-13, Public organisation]

The second dimension of organisational learning pertains to the digital and physical storage of knowledge gathered from the activities. The data demonstrate that youth organisations first collectivise the experiences and learning outcomes of the organisation’s training and support activities and they archive them in such a way that forms collective organisational memory. This is observed to ensure continuity in the organisation and to communicate the achievements of activities to beneficiaries, local partners and wider networks of the organisation. Team meetings—either in regular formal settings or in more spontaneous, informal settings—were also indicated to be yet another method of sharing learning outcomes, to collect participants’ feedback about activities, to share materials collected from activities and to discuss any potential follow-up initiatives.

The data also pointed to the various ways of using the knowledge stored in the organisations’ activities, such as tailoring materials to organisations’ objectives, putting them into practice in their activities with young people or preparing new training materials by using them. Putting learning outcomes into action at the organisational level includes developing novel project ideas and forging relationships with new partners.

“If there are some tools and outputs, then we use them in our system. If they do not fit into our system in their original forms, then we adapt them. We also think about developing tools in the projects we host.” [TR-03, NGO]

“If the theme is relevant, we practice what we have learned by conducting workshops with young people whenever the situation allows. We even developed a brochure on gender, for instance, and use in all of our activities.” [TR-14, NGO]

Table 2 presents an overview of the findings attained from the qualitative analysis and how they relate to organisational learning.

Table 2. Mechanisms and Their Characteristics Identified for Organisational Learning

Organisational learning	Mechanisms	Characteristics
Identification of needs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Needs analysis - Formal and informal team reflection - Surveys and feedback 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Co-operative - Participatory - Purposeful
Storage of knowledge	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Collectivising knowledge - Storing knowledge 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Collective
Putting knowledge into practice	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Tailoring knowledge to objectives/needs 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Integrative

Learning at Work

The integrated model enabled to perform an examination of *learning at work* as to (i) how organisations’ actual practices aid them in learning new and efficient ways of satisfying young people’s demands and needs and (ii) how youth organisations interact with their “customers”, or, in other words, young people.

The data show that the majority of the youth organisations interviewed consider their activities to be learning processes. Evaluating the experiences gained through extant activities and projects was considered an effective way of identifying an organisation's learning needs. By reflecting upon the problems faced and the needs of young people, organisations were observed to likewise able to enhance their learning initiatives and improve their training and support programmes. One method utilised by youth organisations was to develop or use existing tools to gather feedback from participants who have completed said activities and then use them to draw a relevant needs map.

“We complete our activity reports in a specific format. We share information under several headings, namely, *how did we benefit from this activity, what should we do, what kind of institutional gaps are observed, what can we contribute* and the like.” [TR-10, Public organisation]

Another observed mechanism is to learn from the other organisations in the activities, and especially those at international level. The vast majority of respondents reported that they learned different approaches during activities as well as styles, best practices, notions of youth work, management cultures, and methods that can be used later on.

It was possible to observe that youth organisations learned both from positive interactions and from the challenges they faced whilst performing activities. Those respondents that experienced such problems reported having reflected upon the problems—sometimes even with their project partners; and adopting new methods to overcome these difficulties, which increased their problem-solving capacities. Respondents also reported instances where the experiences they gained from activities led to a new division of labour within the organisation, adding that they regarded this restructuring to incentivise improved organisational performance.

“Earlier, we faced budgeting, reporting and archiving problems as an organisation. In those early years, there was no one we could get support from. We have learned about financial reporting, EU project reporting and their follow-up procedures through hands-on experiences. Though this was a painful process, we have matured by learning through experience and then by incorporating these experience into our institutional capacity.” [TR-07, NGO]

The data likewise suggests that constant contact between youth organisations and young people (as their “customers”) was maintained. Respondents reported that maintaining an open mind towards young people and showing concern for their needs and demands were two skills that organisations had developed as a result of their experiences. Nearly all of the respondents indicated that the more they listened to young people and worked to respond to their demands, the more these young people engaged in activities.

“There has been an increase in the number of participants. Of course, this didn't happen overnight, as various factors converged to bring about this increase. We responded directly to young people's requests through our activities, designed training programmes according to the needs they expressed and led activities with headings that young people would be interested in rather than standardised ones, such as giving a course on graffiti instead of paper marbling.” [TR-13, Public organisation]

Table 3 presents an overview of the findings attained from the qualitative analysis and how they related to learning at work.

Table 3. Mechanisms and Characteristics Identified for Learning At Work

Learning at work	Mechanisms	Characteristics
On-the-job learning	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Evaluation - Reflection - Receiving feedback - Learning from challenges 	- Increased problem-solving capacity
Interaction with beneficiaries	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Listening to beneficiaries 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Open-minded - Engaging

Learning Climate

The qualitative data also shed light on *learning climate*, which refers to the ways youth organisations encourage and provide space for learning at different levels training and support activities.

All the organisations interviewed valued structured learning activities as an instrument of learning for organisations' individual members, teams and the organisation at large. Consequently, all of the youth organisations interviewed were observed to strongly encourage and facilitate their members' participation in training and support activities, and particularly in Erasmus+/YiA projects.

Respondents' most preferred structured-learning activity was to attend and host training courses that equipped the "agent of organisation"—the participants—with diverse skills. Training courses were generally reported to aid participants in acquiring the skills needed to prepare and manage projects, to facilitate non-formal learning opportunities, to bring together newcomers and experienced youth workers in an environment in which they can learn from each other and from the trainers, to establish and enlarge extant networks and to expedite future co-operation. More specifically, respondents considered training courses on project preparation and management to offer participants the opportunity to integrate their ideas into new projects. Respondents indicated that training courses on non-formal education allowed them to learn new methods, novel ways of thinking and new attitudes—all of which they believed help increase the potential of youth organisations. Lastly, respondents considered training courses on a particular topic to increase organisations' problem-solving capacities, as they focused on difficult situations that could be faced during activities conducted with young people.

"Non-formal learning methods and relevant educational programmes in youth projects—you learn these through practise and by developing a strong memory. I have come across learning methods that use games and have even applied these methods in many of the projects organised by my organisation. They help you understand different ways of thinking, such as the importance of empathy while role playing." [TR-10, Public organisation]

Another indicator of an effective learning climate is when youth organisations are open to receive suggestions and support learning opportunities. This occurs mostly in the form of teams but can also

happen through the participation of volunteers or the organisation’s management boards. The data illustrate that suggestions for organising or participating in a learning activity were welcomed and seriously considered in a participatory way.

“Everybody has their own specific area of responsibility. Each person follows up on the project calls, grants and partners related to their specific area. Then we discuss these with the office team here and participate if we all agree on it.” [TR-11, NGO]

“Ideas may also come from the management. For instance, we are running a project on combating cyber-bullying and that idea came directly [from our manager]. Now the team also believe that it was truly an issue to be addressed.” [TR-12, Public organisation]

Organisational support for preparing structured-learning activities point out to a positive, conducive learning atmosphere in the youth organisations. Nearly all of the respondents reported that suggested learning activities were collectively discussed and responsibilities (e.g., informing participants about the activity, providing them with information that might be useful during the activity, sharing their own past experiences and both gathering and responding to participants’ questions and concerns about the activity) were collectively assumed. Respondents also reported that these structured-support activities were ensured that a visible bond be established between participants—one that would facilitate the transfer of their learning experiences to the organisation following the activity.

Table 4 presents an overview of the findings attained from the qualitative analysis and how they related to learning climate.

Table 4. Mechanisms and Characteristics Identified for Learning Climate

Learning Climate	Mechanisms	Characteristics
A positive atmosphere that makes learning easy and natural	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Valuing structured-learning activities - Facilitating participation in structured-learning activities, such as training courses 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Encouraging - Supportive
Facilitated but not controlled learning	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Supporting preparation activities - Communicating the organisation’s expectations 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Collective - Participatory - Supportive

Learning Structure

In youth organisations, *learning structure* involves active, team-based organisational engagement that ensures flexible and decentralised decision-making and implementation mechanisms.

The data collected reveal that all the youth organisations interviewed—both public and non-governmental—have team-based structures in which division of labour was ensured among the members and awareness of each other’s workload was assured through regular meetings and communication. Organisations were observed to benefit from methods such as double responsibility or a back-up system in which responsibility is shared simultaneously among team members in a way that guarantees that each other’s tasks be fulfilled in the absence of their colleagues when, for instance, they are busy

participating in training and support activities. An outcome of such flexibility, respondents perceived workloads to be a collective responsibility shared among all team members, encouraging participation in structured-learning activities.

“We follow up on each other’s work. We have a meeting at least once a week when we’re all together. We make a list of things to be done in these meetings so that each team member knows what the other members are working on. There is also a double support system in which we try to have at least two people in charge of each task. This back-up system works in cases where some cannot fulfil their responsibilities.” [TR-13, Public organisation]

The data further demonstrate that although some variation exists at the procedural level between public and non-governmental youth organisations, teams are the major decision-making agents in nearly all of the youth organisations interviewed. The interviewees from all six public youth organisations indicated that teams ensured preparations and made preliminary decisions to identify and implement structured-learning activities. They also indicated, however, the obligation to follow a number of formal procedures in public organisations in order to obtain managerial approval to organise or attend learning activities.

“We submit our application to the activities after identifying needs and determining a relevant activity. In fact, we make that decision together as a team and then inform upper management about it. Since we’re sure of our direction, our director gives us the authority to do this. This is what we mean when we say youth empowerment.” [TR-01, Public organisation]

For non-governmental youth organisations, teams seem to be the main decision makers. Respondents affiliated with non-governmental youth organisations expressed that teams held regular meetings to consult a wider audience on structured-learning activities. Respondents reported that the relationship between teams—particularly in the smaller organisations—and executive boards in the decision-making process was less formal and more participatory. In such situations, the executive board assumed a supportive role and generally made formal decisions relating to activities’ finances and administration.

“The executive board makes decision solely on administrative and financial matters. We solicit everyone’s opinion in all other activities related to a project. Decisions are made through a majority vote in a democratic manner. It’s not possible for the executive board to do this by itself. In larger contexts, people need to persuade each other to reach a majority.” [TR-03, NGO]

Finally, the data also support the existence of decentralised, flexible learning structures in the youth organisations interviewed, thus substantiating the role of team-based structures with respect to operational daily functions. Firstly, all respondents agreed that teams were heavily engaged in to identifying organisations’ learning needs in a participatory manner. Secondly, the respondents indicated that teams were the actual decision-makers for learning activities. Thirdly, respondents described numerous cases in which teams were highly engaged at different stages of learning activities (e.g., preparation and support for the participants). Fourthly, teams assumed an integral role in

ensuring that learning outcomes are embraced through formal and informal exchanges between team members by their respective organisations. Lastly, teams dealt with new project ideas and networks/ partners that arose during learning activities, reflecting on new ways to implement these activities in real life, deciding on how to prepare new projects, developing procedures for new learning activities and taking responsibility for scouting out, contacting and dealing with new partners.

Table 5 presents an overview of the findings obtained from the qualitative analysis and how they are related to learning structures.

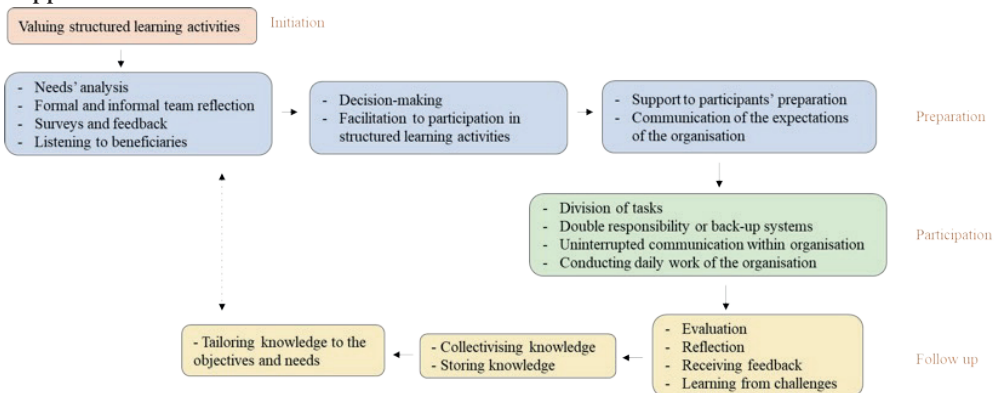
Table 5. Mechanisms and Characteristics of Learning Structure

Learning Structure	Mechanisms	Characteristics
Flexible and decentralised structure	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Team-based structure - Division of tasks - Double responsibility or back-up systems - Uninterrupted communication within organisation 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Collective - Supportive
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Decision-making 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Participatory - Consultative - Supportive
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Conducting daily organisational work 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Participatory - Engaging - Facilitative - Innovative

Synthesis of The Findings

The results of the qualitative analysis suggest that youth organisations may realise their full potential as learning organisation by participating in diverse Erasmus+/YiA training and support activities (see Tables 2, 3, 4 and 5). Figure 1 synthesises the learning mechanisms in four stages of the process (i.e., initiation, preparation, participation and follow up), emphasising their potential in engendering interaction and reinforcement. The implications of this finding for the learning organisation literature are discussed in the following section.

Figure 1. Learning Mechanisms in The Different Stages of Erasmus+/YiA Training and Support Activities



Discussion of Findings

A synthesis of the results obtained from the qualitative analysis suggest that the four dimensions of learning organisation conceptualisation of Örtenblad (2004) co-exist with one another and that the mechanisms under each dimension may co-function in a way that reinforces organisational structure and functioning of youth organisations.

To begin with, the value placed on structured-learning activities is observed to depend on youth organisations' contextual characteristics, which include a focus on non-formal learning (Lauritzen, 2006), intercultural learning (Fennes & Otten, 2008) and learning mobility (Kristiansen, 2019). A learning climate that considers structured-learning activities to be a learning instrument for members, teams and the organisation at large helps foster a high degree of awareness on learning needs.

Different dimensions of learning organisations were observed to reinforce each other at different stages of training and support activities. As highlighted in other studies (Arslan, 2019; Del Felice & Solheim, 2011; Senge, 1990), teams constitute an essential part of the learning structure. However, the results of the qualitative analysis allow to argue that existence of the teams is a necessary, albeit insufficient condition for being a learning organisation. An organisation's learning climate should facilitate both ideational and practical learning on the large scale so that teams can communicate organisations' expectations to participants and transferring activities' outcomes back into the organisation. Further authority should be assumed by teams, because this is a factor to contribute to the learning at work processes by ensuring evaluation, reflection and learning from challenges upon participation in structured-learning activities. Finally, teams help collectivise and store knowledge, tailoring it to fit into youth organisations' day-to-day activities, as a part of organisational learning dimension. In this sense, the qualitative analysis shows that the importance of teams surpasses the cultural aspects of learning organisations defined by some scholars in relation to the importance of learning leaders (Hailey & James, 2002) or of structural elements such as the capable professionals (Kinder, 2002). Rather, teams form the relational or horizontal component of learning organisation conceptualisation and are delegated the power to make decisions by formal managers through a participatory, supportive managerial approach. Accordingly, teams actually stand at the intersection of all four dimensions of Örtenblad's (2004) integrated model.

The qualitative analysis also shows that cognitive and structural elements in the learning organisation conceptualisation should reinforce each other. As such, an analysis of learning organisation based on "collective/shared dimensions of learning and knowledge construction" (Soghomonyan, 2012, p. 37) that emphasises the role of cognitive processes of "meaning creation" may refer to the learning climate or learning at work aspects of learning organisation. However, the qualitative analysis shows that learning structure also plays an important role in the process of tailoring knowledge to the objectives and needs of the organisation. Therefore, learning at work mechanisms (e.g., evaluation, reflection, feedback, learning from challenges and listening to beneficiaries) may collectivise knowledge construction when there is a team-based learning structure, division of tasks and enhanced decision-making and implementation processes.

Both the existence of these mechanisms and their specific characteristics are observed as factors that can stimulate youth organisations' potential to transform into learning organisation. The qualitative analysis shows that mechanisms work in a collective, participatory, supportive and facilitative manner at various levels. These characteristics are suggested to enhance youth organisations' learning capacities by engaging the beneficiaries of the organisations into the learning activities, empowering the teams to fulfil a facilitative role, and, assuming a collective responsibility for learning.

Finally, the qualitative analysis shows that as a result of developing and implementing participatory, supportive and facilitative learning mechanisms, the youth organisations can modify or change their behaviours or actions through learning as proposed by Garvin (1993) or Huber (1991). This can indeed increase their problem-solving capacity and flexibility in a rapidly changing environment, defined as the ultimate objective of being a learning organisation by the scholars such as Senge (1990).

Conclusions

This article analyses youth organisations' involvement in structured-learning activities (i.e., training and support activities within the context of Erasmus+/YiA) as one of the mechanisms effective in stimulating youth organisations' transition into learning organisation. This process is reinforced by the contextual characteristics of youth organisations, in which non-formal and intercultural learning are promoted, youth workers not only provide learning opportunities to young people but learn themselves and there are structured programmes purposefully from which youth organisations may benefit.

The results of the qualitative analysis suggest that the co-existence of four dimensions of learning organisation, given their mutually reinforcing characteristics, can help youth organisations transform into learning organisation. Three emergent factors to help youth organisations are identified as: (i) organisational consciousness with regards to learning, (ii) participatory mechanisms in the organisation and (iii) team-based working structures. Considering that the characteristics of youth work are conducive to learning, the youth organisations interviewed seem to be highly conscious about learning. Learning opportunities are regarded as an integral part of team-based structures, and these structures usually employ participatory decision-making and implementation mechanisms even in bureaucratic public organisations. This, in turn, increases organisational flexibility and facilitates youth organisations' functions and activities.

This article contends that in its potential capacity to act not only as a trigger (Tuggle, 2016) for youth organisations' transformation into learning organisations but also as a constructive component in Turkey-EU relations, the Erasmus+ Programme's training and support activities go beyond being merely a financial resource for youth organisations in Turkey; and they function as a mechanism that helps them enhance their abilities, redefine their objectives and increase their potential to serve young people in Turkey and Europe. Thus, support schemes for youth and youth work should be further diversified and implemented at different levels—particularly at the local, national and European levels—in order to realise youth organisations' potential to become learning organisation. This would in turn contribute to better targeting and empowering young people whose needs continue to change rapidly in today's world.

In sum, it must be highlighted that the analysis in this study is limited to the analytical synthesis of the experiences of fifteen youth organisations in Turkey regarding their involvement in the initiation, preparation, participation and follow up stages of Erasmus+/YiA training and support activities between 2014 and 2018. As such, one should acknowledge that there could be other mechanisms that facilitate youth organisations' transformation into learning organisation, such as their own human and financial resources, but there may exist certain bottlenecks that might adversely affect the potential of youth organisations' transition, such as rigid organisational structures and organisational culture. In this sense, further qualitative and quantitative studies are needed to enrich the literature on youth organisations' becoming learning organisation.



GENİŞLETİLMİŞ ÖZET

ARAŞTIRMA / İNCELEME

Erasmus+ Vasıtasıyla Öğrenen Örgütü Teşvik Etmek: Türkiye’de Gençlik Kuruluşları*

*Asuman Göksel***

Giriş

Türkiye’nin Avrupa Birliği (AB) adaylığı kapsamında 2004’ten itibaren kesintisiz bir şekilde uygulamakta olduğu AB Eğitim ve Gençlik Programları (Erasmus+ Programı), Türkiye-AB ilişkilerinin uzun soluklu çıktılarında biridir. İzleyen yıllarda, Erasmus+ Programı’na katılımın Türkiye’deki çeşitli program yararlanıcıları üzerindeki etkisini inceleyen eden bir literatür oluşmaya başlamıştır.

Bu makale, Erasmus+ Programı’nın Türkiye’den programa katılan gençlik kuruluşları üzerindeki etkilerini Örttenblad’ın (2004) geliştirdiği “bütünleşik öğrenen örgüt modeli” kavramsal çerçevesinden yararlanarak incelemektedir. Makale, Türkiye’deki 15 gençlik kuruluşundan toplanan nitel veriler ışığında, bağlamsal özellikleri nedeniyle gençlik kuruluşlarının öğrenen örgütlere dönüşme potansiyelinin yüksek olduğunu ve Erasmus+ Programı’nın yapılandırılmış eğitim ve destek faaliyetlerine dahil olmanın bu potansiyeli harekete geçirilebilecek mekanizmalardan biri olduğunu savunmaktadır.

* Yazar, Dışişleri Bakanlığı Avrupa Birliği Başkanlığı Avrupa Birliği Eğitim ve Gençlik Programları Merkezi Başkanlığı’na (Türkiye Ulusal Ajansı) finansmanını sağladığı “Erasmus+ Gençlik Programı’nda Yeterlik Gelişimi ve Kapasite Geliştirme (RAY-CAP)” araştırma projesi kapsamındaki verilerin akademik amaçlarla kullanılması için vermiş olduğu resmi izin için teşekkür eder. Bu makalede yer alan içerik yazarın görüşlerini yansıtmaktadır ve bu görüşlerden Avrupa Komisyonu ve Türkiye Ulusal Ajansı sorumlu tutulamaz.

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Kavramsal Çerçeve

Senge (1990) ile birlikte özgün bir kavram olarak 1990’larda literatüre giren “öğrenen örgüt” kavramsallaştırmasının temel vurguları Voolaid ve Ehrlich (2017: 341-342) tarafından “sürekli öğrenen bireylerin varlığı; dönüşümlü açıklanan öğrenmenin örgütün doğal bir parçası olması; öğrenmenin stratejik ve bilinçli bir şekilde yürütülen bir süreç olması; bir örgütün öğrenmeyi ve bilgi paylaşımını teşvik eden yapılara ve sistemlere sahip olması; bir örgütün öğrenme kapasitesinin varlığı ve bilginin rekabet avantajı olarak algılanması” olarak özetlenmektedir. Örtenblad (2004) ise mevcut öğrenen örgüt tanımlarını işlevsel bir yaklaşımla harmanlayarak “bütünleşik öğrenen örgüt modeli”ni ortaya koymuş, bu modelin dört tamamlayıcı yönünü “örgütsel öğrenme”, “işte öğrenme”, “öğrenme ortamı” ve “öğrenme yapısı” olarak tanımlamıştır.

Bu makale, öncelikle gençlik örgütlerinin “genelleştirilmiş örgütsel bağlamları”nı (Örtenblad, 2015) üç temel özelliğe dayanarak incelemektedir. Birinci özellik, gençlik örgütlerinin geniş evreni olarak gençlik çalışmalarının öğrenmeyi yaygın öğrenme, kültürlerarası öğrenme ve gençlerin gönüllü katılımı düzeylerinde desteklemesidir. İkinci özellik, yerel, bölgesel, ulusal, uluslararası düzeylerde gençlik çalışması aktörlerinin çeşitliliğidir; gençlik kuruluşları da bu aktörlerden birisidir. Son özellik ise, çoğunlukla gençlik programları biçimini alan çeşitli yapılandırılmış öğrenme araçlarının varlığıdır. Bu tür “öğrenme hareketliliği” programlarının öne çıkan örneklerinden biri de AB Erasmus+ Programı’nın gençlik bileşenidir.

Bu çerçevede, öğrenmeye elverişli bir bağlam içerisinde mevcudiyetlerini ve faaliyetlerini sürdürmekte olan gençlik örgütleri sadece gençlere öğrenme fırsatları sağlayan araçlar değil; aynı zamanda kendileri de öğrenmenin alıcıları olarak tanımlanmaktadır. Burada araştırma sorusu, gençlik kuruluşlarının katıldıkları Erasmus+ Programı eğitim ve destek faaliyetlerinin bu kuruluşlarda öğrenen örgüt kapasitesini nasıl arttırdığıdır.

Veri Toplama ve Örneklem

Bu makale nitel araştırma yaklaşımı kullanarak, gençlik kuruluşlarının öğrenen örgüte dönüşme potansiyelini süreçsel bir yaklaşımla (Blaikie, 2010) incelemektedir. Nitel veriler, “Erasmus+ Gençlik Programı’nda Yeterlilik Gelişimi ve Kapasite Geliştirme Araştırma Projesi” (RAY-CAP) isimli Avrupa araştırma projesi kapsamında Türkiye’deki 15 gençlik örgütünün temsilcileri ile gerçekleştirilen yarı-yapılandırılmış görüşmelerle toplamıştır. Örneklem 2014-2018 yılları arasında Erasmus+ Programı eğitim ve destek faaliyetlerine mükerreren/düzenli olarak katılan gençlik kuruluşları arasından ölçüt örneklem (Patton, 1990, s.176) yöntemiyle seçilmiştir. Veriler iki döngülü kodlama sistemiyle gruplanmış ve analiz edilmiştir.

Bulgular

Alan araştırmasının bulguları, Örtenblad’ın (2004) bütünleşik öğrenen örgüt analizinde yer alan dört boyutta incelenmiş, bu boyutlara ilişkin mekanizmalar ve bu mekanizmaların nitelikleri tespit edilmiştir. İlk olarak “örgütsel öğrenme” boyutunda bulgular, gençlik kuruluşlarında sadece bireylerin değil, aynı

zamanda ekipler ve genel olarak örgütün de öğrenme ihtiyaçları konusunda yüksek derecede bilince sahip olduğunu göstermekte; kurumsal bir hafıza oluşturmak için bilginin kuruluştta depolanmasının ve kuruluşlarının fiili pratiklerinde kullanılmasının sağlandığı görülmektedir.

İkinci boyut olan “işte öğrenme” iki yönlü bir etkileşimle işlev görmektedir. Gençlik kuruluşları kendi faaliyetlerinden, ortaklarından ve hedef gruplarından öğrenmeye meyillidirler ve öğrendiklerini, örgütlerinin performansını iyileştirmek, kurumsal sorun çözüme kapasitelerini geliştirmek ve hedef gruplarının ihtiyaç ve taleplerine daha iyi yanıt vermek için kullanmaktadırlar.

“Öğrenme ortamı” boyutunda, görüşülen gençlik kuruluşlarının bireyler, ekipler ve kuruluşların kendileri için yapılandırılmış öğrenme etkinliklerine değer vererek “kolaylaştırılmış” ve “kolay ve doğal” bir öğrenme ortamı sağlamak için mekanizmalar geliştirdiği görülmektedir. Ayrıca, görüşülen gençlik kuruluşları sadece tartışma ve öğrenme etkinliklerinin hazırlanması için alanlar sağlamakla kalmamakta, aynı zamanda ekip üyelerine, onları öğrenme etkinliklerine katılmak için teşvik edecek şekilde, iş yükü açısından da esneklik sağlamaktadır.

Son olarak “öğrenme yapısı” boyutunda ise analiz, görüşülen gençlik kuruluşlarının esnek ve ademi merkezîyetçi öğrenme yapıları geliştirebildiğini ve bu yapıları işlerlik kazandırabildiğini göstermektedir. Böylesi bir esnekliğin en belirgin göstergesi, görüşülen gençlik kuruluşlarının istisnasız tümünde ekip bazlı yapıların varlığıdır.

Sonuç ve Değerlendirme

Örtenblad’ın (2004) öğrenen örgüt bütünlük modeline dayanarak gerçekleştirilen, Türkiye’deki gençlik kuruluşlarının Erasmus+ Programı kapsamında deneyimlediği öğrenme süreçlerinin analizi, öğrenen örgüte ait dört özelliğin varlığının yanı sıra, bu özelliklerin birbirlerini desteklemesi gerektiğini göstermektedir. Bu bağlamda gerçekleştirilen analiz, öğrenmeyi kolaylaştıran ve aynı zamanda birbirini destekleyen, üç faktöre işaret etmektedir. Öncelikle, gençlik çalışmalarının temel niteliklerinin desteğiyle, gençlik kuruluşları öğrenme konusunda hayli bilinçli görünmektedir. İkinci olarak, öğrenme fırsatları, ekip bazlı yapılarının ayrılmaz bir parçası olarak kabul edilmekte ve bu yapılar genellikle karar verme ve faaliyetlerin uygulanması için katılımcı mekanizmalardan faydalanmaktadır. Üçüncü olarak ise, görüşülen gençlik kuruluşlarında ekip yapılarının bulunması, örgütsel esnekliği artırma potansiyeli taşıyan öğrenme çıktıları ve pratiklerini artırıcı bir rol oynamaktadır. Bu çıktıların sağlanması anlamında, Erasmus+ Programı’nın gençlik alanındaki eğitim ve destek faaliyetlerinin gençlik kuruluşlarının öğrenen örgüte dönüşmesi için “kolaylaştırıcı” (Tuggle, 2016) mekanizmalardan biri olduğu gözlenebilmektedir. Dolayısıyla, Türkiye-AB ilişkilerinin yapıcı çıktılarından biri olan Erasmus+ Programı gibi destek girişimlerinin gençlik kuruluşlarının kapasitelerini ve gençlere hizmet etme potansiyellerini arttıracak şekilde öğrenen örgüt olarak gelişmelerine yardımcı olduğu iddia edilebilir.

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