







REPORT: EVALUATION OF QUESTIONNAIRE SURVEY

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under close cooperation of the project team of the University of Graz

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1.4 Introduction

The online questionnaire requested feedback from participants on the implementation of further online training within the QUALIMENTARY project (2019-2021). The objectives were to evaluate the effectiveness of the educational program and develop recommendations for further use within this project output. The questionnaire was developed in the spring of 2021 by Dr Barbora Loudová Stralczynská and based upon a study of the project agreement and implementation of the project outcomes.

The questionnaire was translated from English into the five languages of the project countries and distributed among participants in the project partner countries before being completed online between May and July 2021.

2.4 General description of the sample of the online questionnaire

In total, 49 questionnaires were completed, and the number of respondents was relatively well balanced across individual language groups with the fewest respondents being from Slovenia (5) and Italy (3).

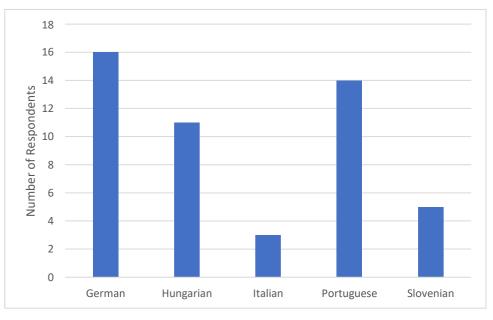


Fig. 1. Respondent Language

The respondents were a mixture of Early Childhood Educators (key practitioners with group responsibility) (40), Educational Support Workers (5) and Managers (kindergarten/nursery headteachers) (4). A total of 30 respondents worked in kindergartens, 16 worked in nurseries and 3 worked in an integrated pre-school facility with a 0-6 year age group (Fig. 2).

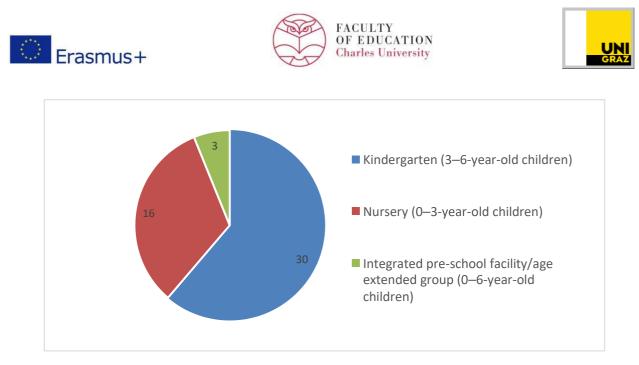


Fig. 2. Respondent Workplace

Participants in the questionnaire were also asked to state the length of their pedagogical experience. 87% of respondents had 6 or more years of experience and 26% of respondents had over 20 years and so the sample represents practitioners with a suitable length of pedagogical experience and interaction with children in ECEC institutions.

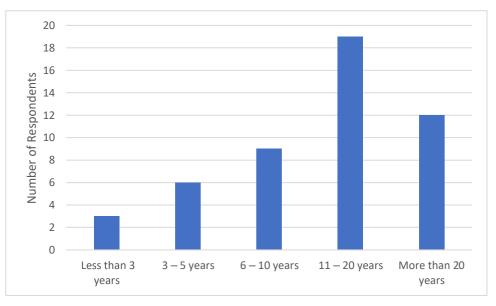


Fig. 3. Length of Pedagogical Experience

3.4 Evaluation of the questionnaire

The quantitative data of the online questionnaire is set out below. The training program consisted of diverse learning activities, live groups and individual coaching. The first part of the questionnaire focused on the experience of respondents when participating in 4 obligatory modules and a choice from optional modules.







3.1 **Participation in the obligatory and optional modules**

80% of respondents took part in the 4 obligatory modules and additionally, 20% of respondents (n=10) stated that they participated in more than 4 modules. The Hungarian participants were the most motivated with 7 out of 10 respondents completing the optional modules and with only one practitioner from Portugal completing the optional modules.

The respondents often stated that they were motivated to participate in additional modules because of their interest in the training topics and the contents of the modules. One Hungarian respondent stated that they were supporting the other Hungarian participants and so completed all the modules their colleagues chose, and another participant stated:

"The topics in the modules covered my professional interests and, in these areas, I hoped to gain new impetus and knowledge for my day-to-day work."

The participants took part in 279 (193 obligatory and 86 optional) modules in total. Although many respondents stated that they did not have enough time to complete the optional modules, 32% of the modules completed were optional modules. Fig. 4. (p. 6) shows the list of modules and number of respondents who participated in these modules as well as distinguishing between obligatory and optional modules.

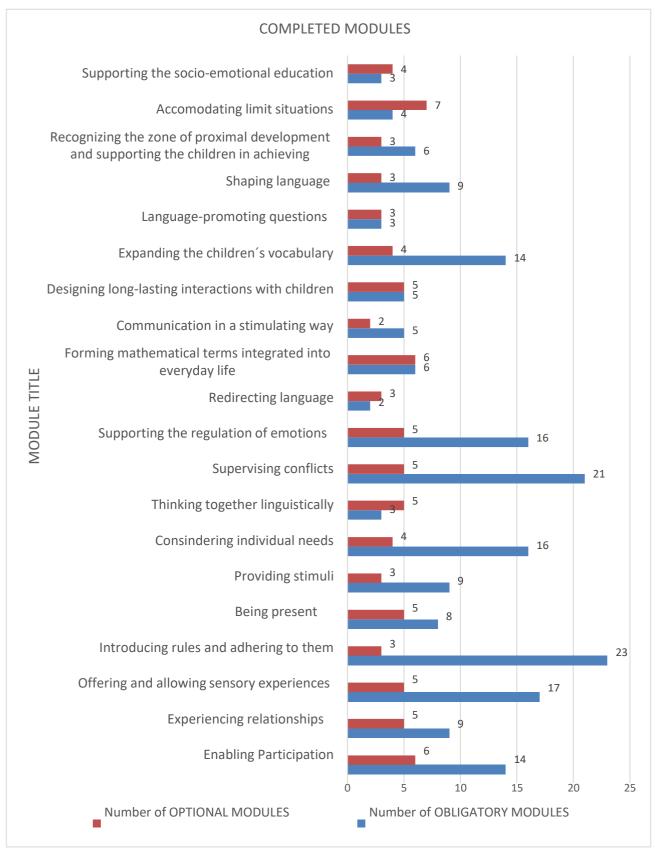
The most popular obligatory module was "Introducing rules and adhering to them" ($n_{obligatory}=23$), followed by "Supervising conflicts" ($n_{obligatory}=21$) then "Offering and allowing sensory experiences" ($n_{obligatory}=17$) and then "Considering individual needs" and "Supporting the regulation of emotions" ($n_{obligatory}=16$). This would indicate that the respondents often deal with the issues of conflict resolution, establishing rules with pre-school children and maintaining a balance between rules, order and the needs of children. This also corresponds to the results of the IO1 needs analysis and the evaluator's observations during the online meeting (see Report: Evaluation of the needs analysis, pp. 10-11).

Respondents were least often interested in language issues with only 8 choosing one of the three language modules as their obligatory module ("Thinking together linguistically" – $n_{obligatory}=3$, "Language-promoting questions" – $n_{obligatory}=3$, "Redirecting language" – $n_{obligatory}=2$). In the area of language however, respondents often chose an obligatory module focused on the development of children's vocabulary ("Expanding the children's vocabulary" – $n_{obligatory}=14$ or "Shaping language" – $n_{obligatory}=9$).

















3.2 Evaluation of the modules by respondents

The respondents assessed the completed modules by stating whether they increased their professional competency, and especially the quality of their interactions with children, by using a 4-point-scale (Agree / Rather Agree / Rather Disagree / Disagree). A total of 226 responses were very positive and considered the impact of the completed modules on their professional competency to be very high. According to 59 responses, the modules did not increase their professional competency while 13 respondents did not complete this question, 2 assessed only one module and 1 completed just two modules.

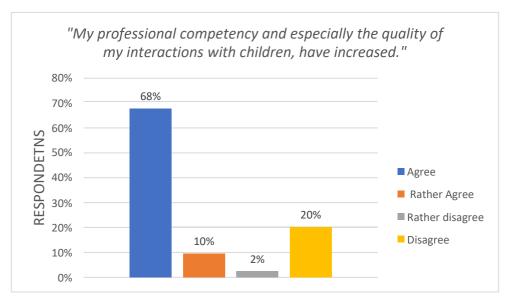
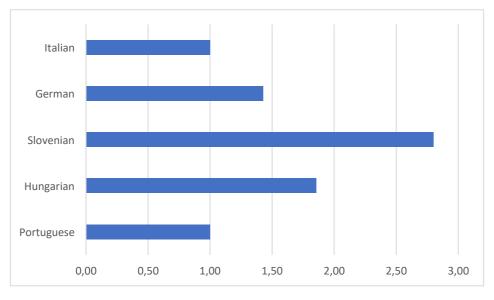
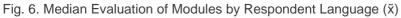


Fig. 5. Participant Evaluation of the Impact of Modules on Professional Competency.

For the evaluation of the contribution of the modules, the scale was given a value (Agree = 1, Rather Agree = 2; Rather disagree = 3; Disagree = 4) and the 292 answers were converted to numerical values before being processed. Each module had a nearly even amount of evaluations from the respondents (x 14,5; \tilde{x} =13,5).











The modules had a generally balanced rating, and their impact was predominantly very high (\bar{x} =1,79; \tilde{x} =1,08). The differences between the project countries can be seen by the different number of respondents from each language group (German n=14; Hungarian n=7; Portuguese n=8; Italian n=2 and Slovenian n=5). Excluding the Italian group there was at least one respondent in each language group who assessed the impact of the modules as low which heavily influenced the overall outcome of this evaluation.

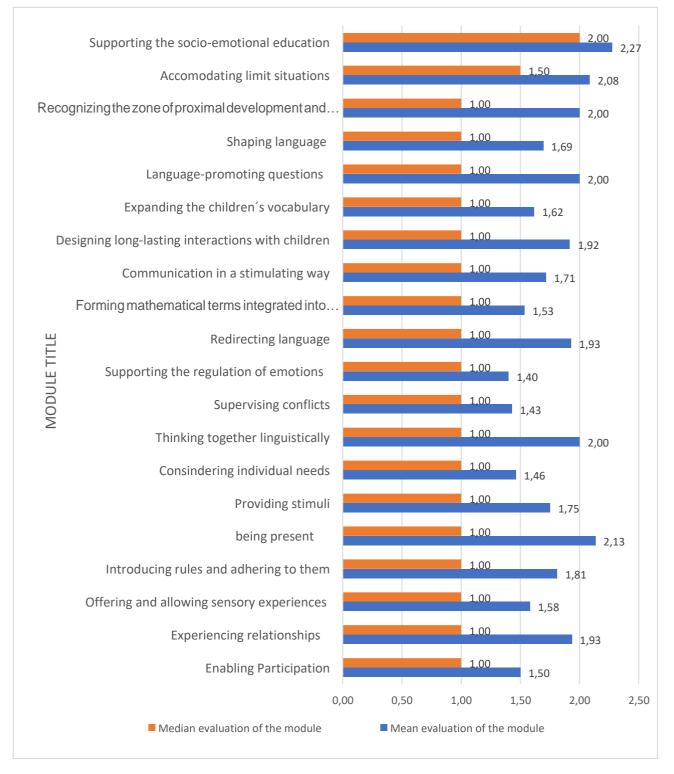


Fig. 7. The Impact of Modules on Professional Competency







3.3 **Completion time for each online module**

Each online module should have taken about 2 hours to complete and so the participants were asked if this corresponded to how long they worked on each module. 24% of respondents stated that this roughly corresponded to their work on each module however, 41% of participants usually needed more time to complete the modules and 31% needed varying amounts of time to complete different modules.

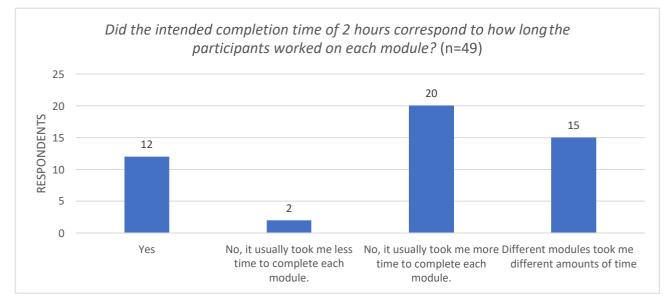


Fig. 8. Overview of Online Module Completion Time

3.4 Technical difficulties during the online training

The Qualimentary teaching program was conducted online which might have caused difficulties for some of the participants therefore, they were asked whether they faced any technical difficulties during the online training. A total of 15 respondents stated that they did not have any difficulties however, 34 respondents faced some technical difficulties during the online meetings. Some of the reasons for the difficulties were as follows:

- Challenges caused by the technical factors: difficulty accessing the website/platform, unstable internet connection, location of the tasks, complications with uploading of the tasks.
- Challenges caused by the supervisors: waiting time for feedback regarding technical difficulties.
- Challenges caused by the competency of participants: little computer knowledge, understanding the order of questions.
- Challenges caused by the language differences: translations problems.

Despite some challenges that the participants had to deal with, one respondent mentioned that the supervisor was *"always attentive to overcome the difficulties"*.







3.5 Evaluation of the quality of completed modules

The participants answered 11 questions concerning the content-quality of the modules. The rating scale and answers (n=535) were based upon the following numerical values (Agree = 1, Rather Agree = 2; Rather disagree = 3; Disagree = 4) and then statistically processed. 94% responses were very positive and considered the quality of the modules to be very high.

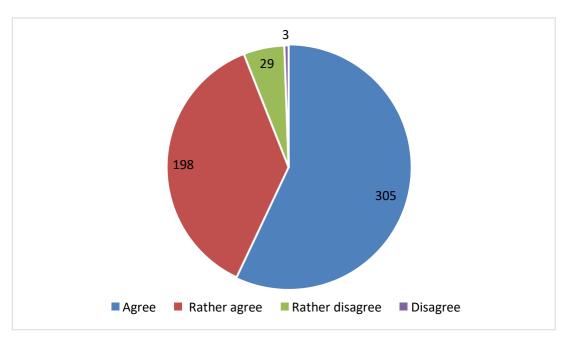


Fig. 9. Evaluation of the Quality of Completed Modules (n=535)







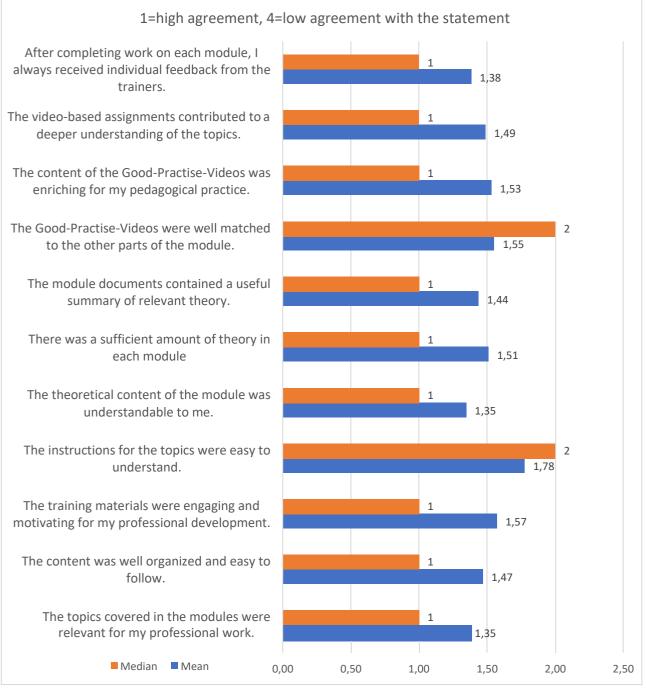


Fig. 10. Evaluation of Module Content and Quality by Question

There was a generally balanced rating across the modules and the quality of content was assessed to be very high overall (\overline{x} =1,49; \tilde{x} =1). The results confirm the satisfaction of respondents with te materials offered on the project platform however, some concerns were raised about the instructions for the topics within the modules, which confirm the findings in part 3.4 (p.9).

3.6 Use of the modules for developing pedagogical practice

Quantitative evaluation of the quality and impact of the modules for the course participants was supplemented by two open questions as follows:







3.6.1 How useful were the modules for your pedagogical practice?

This question focused on the impact of the modules especially in relation to the quality of interactions between educators and children. Most respondents stated that the content of the modules, their reflections on the good practice videos as well as the exchange of experiences with other course participants were the most beneficial for their pedagogical practice.

The following are some of the responses to this question:

"The module contained a useful summary of the relevant theory."

"The curriculum was attractive and motivating, contributing to my professional development. The content of the good practice videos enriched my pedagogical practice."

"They helped me to better understand the importance of interactions and at the same time reflect on the day-to-day at all levels."

"I notice that in everyday life I often become aware of the theory that I have read in many situations. I reflect on myself, my actions and my plans more consciously and have more understanding in some situations."

The modules supported reflection on individual practice and encouraged the participants to apply changes in their approaches to children. The respondents stated that they actively implemented new practices in their pre-school settings as well as supporting and deepening their experience. Additionally, it was reported that both the practitioners and the children "noticed the differences", and "improved the child-child and adult-child interactions".

Participants also appreciated that they were able to get acquainted with new and different forms of pedagogical work and achieved new knowledge (e.g. an expanded vocabulary). One respondent stated that "The discovery was the charm of working in small groups, which with me is not always possible due to the number of children in the classroom." And other respondents mentioned that they now "work on new goals". The modules encouraged them to change the group room, create various new ideas for play and possibilities. The modules introduced a changed picture of the child and enabled the participants to reflect upon daily activities with the children.

The participants were aware of the different socio-cultural-educational contexts in the partner countries. A few respondents from Hungary and Portugal mentioned that some activities or approaches were not fully suitable for their practice and this fact was noted in the original project proposal. Additionally, according to observations from the participants, the supervisors reflected these different ways of working in the online meetings with the participants and took account of individual situations.

3.6.2 What were the main effects of the modules on the development of your competency and pedagogical practice?

Respondents stated the important contribution that the modules made to their pedagogical practice. There was a repeated emphasis on self-reflection, interaction with other educators, cooperation







within teams as well as motivation for the educator to be present for children as shown in the following responses:

"I think I became more observant and more receptive to children's participation. Unfortunately, I still feel that there is a lot of emphasis on the rigorous fulfilment of routines and for the "beautiful".

"I reflect on myself much more often now and while reflecting, I can now see how I worked and acted before and how I act now. I also try to pass on what I have learned to my colleagues."

"Take the time to reflect and let it flow into the teamwork."

For many respondents, the modules meant repeating theoretical knowledge and gaining reawareness and a deepening understanding of the issues and one respondent stated:

"I have noticed that I already do and use a lot of these things, and that the last observation was a great support to me to do well."

Several respondents also mentioned re-sensitisation to children, their needs and activities:

"I liked to see the way they interact with children and develop skills with simple everyday things."

"The awakening to small details that sometimes go unnoticed."

"Give children the opportunity to participate in everyday group life, promote independence, enable sensory exploration through new games and ideas."

Other respondents stated that they felt empowered, more confident in their pedagogical work and also much more aware of things that they have not noticed before, for example:

"I feel more competent at a professional level, and I better understand different situations in my practice."

As with the previous question, some respondents were aware of local differences in the pre-school provision in other project countries. The high number of children was mentioned several times as an obstacle to the full application of the approaches presented in the modules.

"We have seen that they work with much fewer children in foreign institutions. We often have to think about how we can give all children enough time and attention."

The answers of the respondents also demonstrated their willingness to pass on the acquired knowledge to colleagues however, it was mentioned that this was not always fully possible and that more support was needed.

"I find it more difficult to pass this knowledge on to my colleagues who did not take part in Qualimentary. For this, I would like significantly more support and professional support by the management staff and those responsible for pedagogy for long-term sustainable implementation and quality assurance."

The responses of the participants can be considered to be generally positive, as they show the importance of increased competency that the participants have gained during the training program.







4. Evaluation of the online meetings

The next part of the questionnaire was an evaluation of the online meetings.

4.1 Duration of online meetings

Each online meeting was expected to take 2 hours and the respondents were asked whether this corresponded to the actual time spent on the meetings. 56% of respondents stated that 2 hours corresponded to the time spent for each online meeting and a quarter of participants (23%) said that the online meetings took them longer than 2 hours and nine respondents chose the option 'Different meetings took different amounts of time'.

In summary, the time allowance for online meetings mostly corresponded to the time specified in the project agreement and (with one exception) all the respondents made full use of the allocated time or needed more time for online meetings.

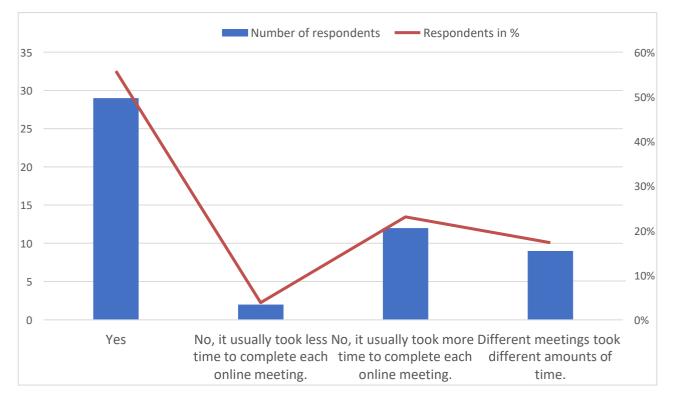


Fig. 11. Duration of Online Meetings (time allocation of 2 hours)

4.2 Participation in obligatory and optional modules

One half of all respondents (n=49) took part in the 4 obligatory modules, additionally 23 respondents stated that they participated in more than 4 modules. One respondent supported other participants in the training and also participated in the 4 Hungarian and 4 German online meetings and more online meetings were offered at the request of participants who stated the following reasons for attending the optional meetings:

- Questions and doubts about the content of the modules.
- Technical meetings.







- Individual assistance.
- Debate on modules, visualisation of videos, discussion of ideas, learning, sharing of personal experiences, etc.

4.3 Evaluation of the quality of online meetings

The participants were asked to answer 9 questions concerning the content-quality of the online meetings. The rating scale and answers were based upon the following numerical values (Agree = 1, Rather Agree = 2; Rather disagree = 3; Disagree = 4) and then statistically processed.

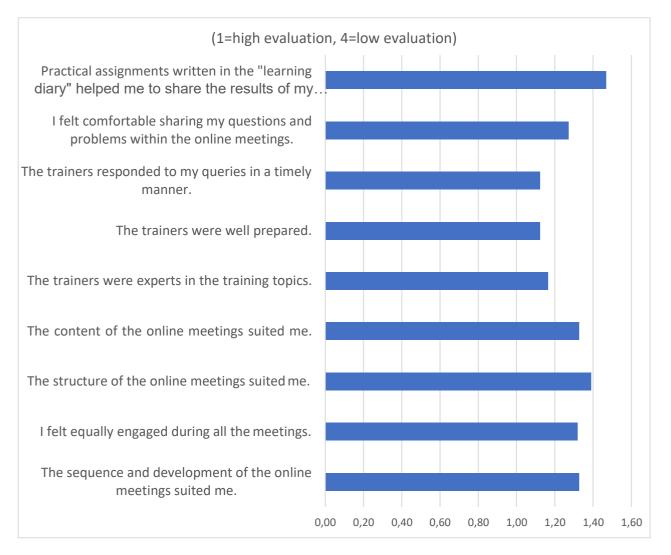


Fig. 12. Evaluation of the Content Quality of Online Meetings

The online meetings had a generally balanced rating, and the content and quality of the process were assessed highly overall (\bar{x} =1,28; \tilde{x} =1,32) confirming that the respondents were very satisfied with the online meetings.

4.4 Effect of online meetings on the development of pedagogical practice

Quantitative evaluation of the quality and impact of the online meetings was supplemented by one open question, which focused on the effects of the online meetings on the development of







competency and pedagogical practice of the participants.

Respondents mentioned very similar topics as in the evaluation of modules. In addition, the online meetings allowed them to jointly reflect on topics and exchange views and experiences. When online, participants could share their questions with others, and they also appreciated the discussion and exchange of knowledge and experience with staff from other professional institutions.

The online meetings allowed joint reflection, sharing, dialogue and questioning which facilitated independent work on the modules and the respondents also stated that their professional horizons had broadened. Respondents mentioned several positive effects such as:

"More individual involvement with children, understanding, group planning, etc."

"A greater appreciation of my professional practice. Introduction of new methodologies and activities in my practices."

"I boldly shared my questions, experiences, opinions and problems on the topic with others. We exchanged our thoughts; it encouraged me to rethink my position."

"Reflection and discussion about practices is very important to be able to respond better and better to children's needs. It is also a way for us to update ourselves."

"I listened to all the participants in the training with joy and interest. Each had interesting experiences and good examples from practice. I learned a lot from the conversations."

"Being in the German group was also a good practice in terms of language."

Only one respondent mentioned that the online meetings tended to have less impact on the practice however, the reason was that the respondent had already received the answers within the modules. The following quotation represents many of the statements describing positive effects of the online meetings on the competency and pedagogical practice of the participants:

"The insights have influenced me by reminding myself many times that I am the one who has to think maturely and responsibly in a situation that children are really not to blame for their behaviour. I need to trace the source of their problems and work to help solve them."

5. Evaluation of individual coaching

The following part focuses on the evaluation of individual coaching at the pre-school facilities of the participants. In the original project plan, 2 individual coaching meetings of 8 hours each were designed for the spring of 2021. In total, 39 participants completed the individual coaching according to the plan however, 10 participants completed this part of the project under a different arrangement (1x online, 1x in person). In most cases, the duration of the individual coaching was shortened due to circumstances caused by the covid-19 pandemic situation in Europe or due to the personal circumstances of some participants.

5.1 Effects of individual coaching on the development of pedagogical practice

The respondents mentioned very similar effects as for the online meetings. Individual coaching meetings allowed a more personalised exchange of ideas and a deeper reflection with the trainer on







the topics. The respondents highlighted that individual coaching allowed them to share different points of view and materials and provided further stimuli for their pedagogical work. For many respondents, the individual coaching meetings affirmed their practice approach as can be seen by the following comments:

"Positive feedback has strengthened my professional work and I can build on this feedback in my further work."

"I understand little things that happen in my practice that I didn't value, and, in the end, they were there and after reflecting they stood out."

The respondents mentioned the following effects on their competency and pedagogical practice:

- Self-confidence, more competence.
- More involvement in individual tasks with children, reinforced the awareness of the value of the child.
- Authentic dialogue with colleagues.
- Exchange of experience, new ideas, solutions.

The participants could discuss strengths and weaknesses of their practice in a safe environment and learn from deep reflection. The respondents appreciated that the mentors were very good professionals as indicated in the comment *"I could turn to him with any problems or questions, he was my help."* The following response represents many of the statements describing the positive effects of individual coaching on the competency and pedagogical practice of the participants:

"I took most of the individual coaching away with me, I did a lot of things unconsciously and therefore I didn't even notice them in my own reflection. It was great to get a glimpse from the outside. It helped me a lot personally."

6. Evaluation of the self-evaluation tool

The following part focuses on the experience of the participants with the self-evaluation tool that they completed at the end of the QUALIMENTARY-training. The respondents were required to indicate their overall level of agreement with statements about the self-evaluation tool listed below. The rating scale and answers were based upon the following numerical values (Agree = 1, Rather Agree = 2; Rather disagree = 3; Disagree = 4) and then statistically processed.

In total, 91% of respondents assessed the self-evaluation tool as helpful, showing new areas of development and supporting reflection on their practice. Overall, the quality of the self-evaluation tool was assessed as very high (\overline{x} =1,60; \tilde{x} =1,5).







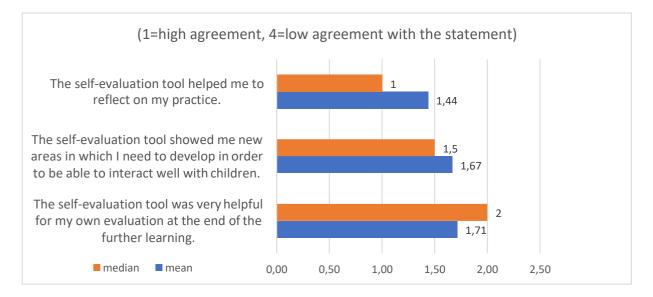


Fig. 13. Evaluation of the Self-Evaluation Tool

6.1 Effects of the self-evaluation tool on pedagogical practice

Respondents again affirmed the importance of the self-evaluation tool by stating that they could reflect on their practice, return to some issues and look at their practice from other perspectives.

"It helped me to be able to evaluate myself more realistically, he also showed me areas where I still have room for improvement, resp. helped develop my reflective ability."

The participants mentioned the following effects on their competency and pedagogical practice:

"develop to be able to communicate well with children"

"I was able to share my feelings on a particular module, although somewhere I also disagreed with the answer. In many places however, the answer was of great help to me, and additional explanation helped me to understand the answer and the meaning."

"I had to think through my techniques, which I do instinctively, routine for days for the benefit of the kids."

The respondents mostly assessed the self-evaluation tool positively and appreciated the impact and function of the tool and there were also certain recommendations and reflections as follows:

"I found the points to be rated very good and I will take many with me. Only in the evaluation did I find it not helpful because it was not specifically tailored to me, as I had to click on all points in each category because the system would otherwise assume it was not fully answered."

"In the self-evaluation I rather missed the nuances. The system automatically checked answers that would not have been checked in this way. Especially in everyday pedagogy there is not just yes / no / maybe / rather yes or rather no. Rather, there are nuances that depend on e.g. personal circumstances, equipment, premises, team and management culture, attitude (personal, team, management etc.)."

All but two respondents rated the self-evaluation tool positively in many respects.







7. Overall evaluation of QUALIMENTARY-training

The respondents were asked to indicate their overall level of agreement with the statements listed below. The rating scale and answers were based upon the following numerical values (Agree = 1, Rather Agree = 2; Rather disagree = 3; Disagree = 4) and then statistically processed.

In total, 94% of respondents assessed QUALIMENTARY-training positively.

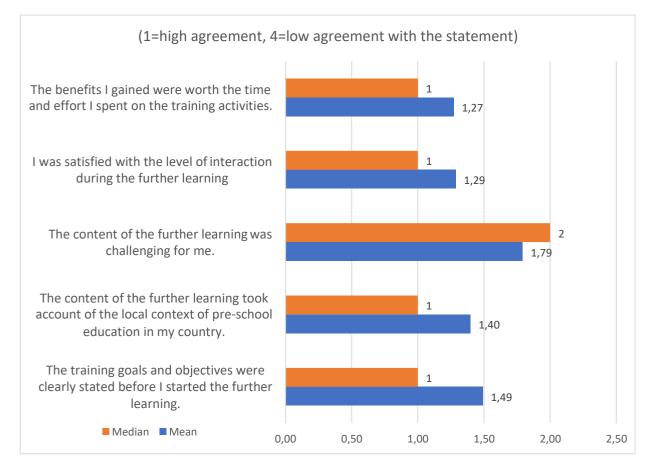


Fig. 14. Overall evaluation of QUALIMENTARY-training

7.1 What did respondents like about QUALIMENTARY-training?

The respondents mainly highlighted the quality of the online modules, meetings and individual coaching as indicated by the following statement:

"Because of the benefits gained, it was worth spending time and effort on training."

Concerning the modules, respondents appreciated:

- Videos with good practice examples from another institutions, practitioners and their methods.
- The choice of diverse topics covering many areas from pre-school practice for example:

" I was able to deal with educational topics for which there is not much time in everyday life."







Concerning the online meetings, respondents appreciated:

- Reformulation of educational strategies and theories.
- Sharing and gaining new experiences.
- Discussing implementation of new practices and ideas.
- Professional analysis of the videos.
- Expert discussions with trainers.
- Opportunity to practice (understand) the language.
- Mutual consultations, discussion with project participants from another countries for example:
 "we have helped each other and given new impulses" and "to reflect and live together".
- Effective communication, flexible scheduling, small and active groups.

Concerning the individual coaching, respondents appreciated:

- Feedback from the coach, expert consultations, and reflections.
- New and interesting insights.

7.2 Would respondents recommend QUALIMENTARY- training to a colleague?

Overall, 47 out of 49 respondents would recommend the QUALIMENTARY-training to other colleagues as two respondents did not answer this question. One respondent suggested that some changes could be made however they did not provide further details about this. In summary, a very large majority of respondents stated that they would recommend the course to other colleagues.

7.3 How would respondents change their practice as a result of QUALIMENTARY-training?

Many respondents stated that participating in the project meant for them, above all, a confirmation of their practice and a re-emphasis of the pedagogical approach that they had been aiming for:

"I will not change the practice, but keep working on it, constantly rethinking it, incorporating ideas. I really internalise new insights and knowledge."

"My colleague and I speak and reflect a lot about the modules."

Respondents stated that the project motivated them to improve their practice, to try to implement new methods and to consistently develop interactions with children and to cooperate more intentionally within the pedagogical team:

"Yes. I am reminded of the good practice of my colleagues. I try to incorporate it into my own work."

"I put into practice the tools and strategies worked throughout the training."







"More conscious perception of individual pedagogical areas."

Many respondents stated that the international dimension of the project and the sharing of experience across borders were important to them:

"I got ideas on how to handle certain situations in other countries."

Some participants also named specific areas that were affected by their participation in the project:

"to reflect more on the quality of adult/child interactions and to rethink some strategies."

"Be more available and attentive to interactions."

"Take into account the individuality of the children, keep an eye on their age, and constantly exchange ideas with colleagues about individual development steps, room design and materials."

"supporting and planning with the children."

"A more conscious practice with knowledge about situations."

"We regularly change the group structure, the game materials and our actions.".

"Work more calmly and try to adapt to the given circumstances."

Some participants mentioned that only partially implementation of the strategies and methods from the project is possible within financial, spatial and personal conditions in their pre-school facilities:

"Taking into account our working environment, it will be a little difficult to apply...we can try to adjust some ideas." (Portuguese and Hungarian respondents)

"You always need an overall structure so that such an important project doesn't fizzle out and come to nothing."

The respondents also showed an awareness that they would need to participate in the project more than once for the changes to be really embedded. However, the respondents highlighted that they wanted to try to implement high-quality pedagogical strategies from the project (despite not always favourable conditions as e.g., poor staffing ratio):

"Let my colleagues participate and implement changes together. I want to implement everything I have learned and take with me in my practice and pass it on to my colleagues."

7.4 What aspects of the training could be improved?

Many respondents had no suggestions for improvement, some mentioned that they would like personal meetings or more personal contact within the training program. Some respondents struggled with communication in English and the translated documents or instructions for participants. Respondents also had a number of technical problems associated with the connection and complexity of the platform. Therefore, the implementation of training for participants on how to







work in similar project environments would be among the recommendations for improvement.

The following is an overview of the suggestions made in relation to the modules and their content, the online meetings and the self-evaluation tool:

Modules:

- Easier access to the platform.
- More logical order of modules on the platform.
- Proper formulation and translation of some questions.
- More space for responses and involvement of individual experiences in modules; access and validation of responses.
- "A little more communication and a little less writing."
- Estimated time for individual work on the modules longer than 2 hours.
- In addition to the training videos from day nurseries it was suggested that some from kindergartens would be useful to add to the content.
- Extension of the theoretical areas in the module content.

Online meetings:

- More exchange on modules with colleagues who have worked on the same module.
- One respondent suggested shorter online meetings.
- Organisation according to the opening hours of the institutions in all participating countries.

Self-evaluation tool:

- "Answers in the self-evaluation questionnaire only allowed "" black or white ""."
- Reformulation of answers to question 6. "Accessibility and diversity of materials"

The following comments from two respondents are representative of many of the other comments in the final summary comments section:

"This training was very enriching on a professional and personal level; the sharing of different experiences and realities helped me to reflect on my practices and to question them. The support and guidance of the trainer was essential for the success of the training."

"It was instructive and helpful. I would be happy to get involved in any other such training."

8. Summary

QUALIMENTARY-training was assessed positively by 94% of respondents who highlighted the quality of the online modules, meetings as well as the individual coaching. Many respondents felt they needed more time than was allocated to complete the online modules. Some respondents faced technical difficulties such as understanding the order of questions, waiting for technical support, and understanding some instructions in different languages. More details about ways to address these issues and specific recommendations for the future can be provided if required.

However, respondents considered the module content, the videos and their reflections and exchanges of







experiences with other course participants to be very beneficial for their pedagogical practice. Many indicated that the individual coaching allowed them to share different points of view as well as materials and provided further stimuli for their pedagogical work. Most respondents indicated that the project motivated them to improve their practice, to implement and apply new methods, to develop their interactions with children and to cooperate more within the pedagogical team.

Finally, the quality of the self-evaluation tool was assessed very highly with respondents stating that the tool was helpful in showing them new areas for development and in supporting their reflection on practice. Overall, 96% of respondents would recommend QUALIMENTARY-training to other colleagues.
