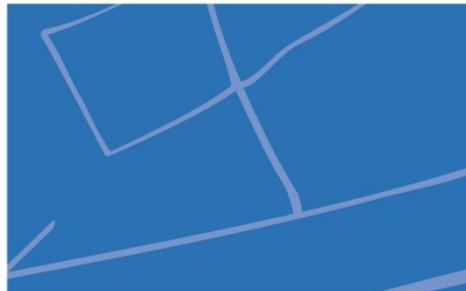




# Evaluation report

Partners' test of FAIRstart training program

kompetenceudvikling  
videndeling  
evaluering



fair start



Education and Culture DG

Lifelong Learning Programme

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## [Introduction]

This report provides the presentation and analyses of the pilot testing results of the FAIRstart Training Program.

The test has been carried out in the following 5 partner countries in the period July – August 2010:

- Turkey
- Romania
- Spain
- Italy
- Cyprus.

A comprehensive test program was developed for the organisation of the test and for partners' report of test results. The test program is presented in chapter 1 of this report.

The overall focus for the test of the FAIRstart program has been carried out in order:

- To identify the outcome of the training carried out in child care institutions in the test countries with a special focus on the material and the pedagogy used in the training.
- To achieve an understanding of organisational conditions for implementing new methods for good care taking in child care institutions with a special focus on the support of staffs training in terms of organisational and managerial resources and other means of support.

Partner 2 – ARGO Consultancy, by Mrs. Bodil Husted, Denmark, has been overall responsible for the organisation of the test, including development of test material.

Partner 6 – Die Berater, by Mrs. Elisabeth Frankus, Austria, has carried out the analyses of the quantitative data material.

This report is written by ARGO, Bodil Husted.

# 1. Data and methods for collection of data

## 1.1 The FAIRstart Training Programme

The FAIRstart Training Program is the primary product of the FAIRstart project, carried out in the partnership of 7 countries, together with the *Silent Partner*, *Seedlearn*, Switzerland in the project period 2008-2010. The project has been supported by the Leonardo da Vinci, Lifelong Learning Programme.

The FAIRstart training Program consists of a web based, training program – <http://FAIRstart.net/training>.

Within the overall frame of 15 training sessions, together with training material and a Handbook for the training instructor and the child care institution leader, the training program is available for free to be used for child care staffs' learning and development and change of child care practise in the child care institutions. Thus the training program aims at developing child care with a focus on both the organisational conditions and needs for change and for the staffs learning and development – each perspective in clear accordance with one another. This means that organisational change and development can not take place without staffs' competence development as well as staffs' competence development cannot take place without the recognition and acknowledgement of needs for change and development of the organisations.

Therefore the FAIRstart Training program is a program for the organisational and for the staffs learning and development. These two – inseparately – perspectives form the red thread of the training program.

The preparatory step for applying the FAIRstart training in a child care institution is the SBM<sup>1</sup> screening, carried out by the training instructor – who will typically be the daily leader of the child care staff – and by the manager of the child care institution. The results of the screening form the basis for focussing on the specific needs for development as well as the specific resources of the child care practise in the institution.

As an important part of the training program the instructors has been trained in a special instructors' training program.<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Referring to the Secure Base Model – the basic attachment theory for the FAIRstart training program

<sup>2</sup> The instructors training has been evaluated and is not part of this report. Evaluation reports for part 1 and part 2 of the Instructors training is annexed to the report as annex 3 and 4.

Within the project lifetime the instructors' training course has served additionally as for the identification of material to be developed as part of the FAIRstart training program, as the instructors - which were appointed by the child care institutions to be responsible for the pilot training of staff - were also involved as co-developers of photo- and video-material from their child care institution and to be uploaded as training material at the <http://FAIRstart.net/training>.

## 1.2 The organisation of pilot testing

As the pilot testing was carried out in child care institutions in 5 partner countries it was a challenge to develop a design for test and for reporting the test results which took into account various conditions, such as:

- Due to limited project resources it would not be possible for the evaluator to attend evaluation meetings with the instructors, managers and staff in five countries in order to carry out evaluation interviews.
- There was a need for assessment of results which reflected both the instructors,' the institution leaders' and the staffs' perspectives on the training,
- There was a need for a solid data material which covered both the quantitative and the qualitative perspectives of the pilot test results.

Due to these conditions a package of test material was developed, encompassing:

1. Time schedule for the overall test period
2. A test design for test of the FAIRstart training program
3. A questionnaire for the instructors' assessment of the training program
4. A questionnaire for the leaders' assessment of the FAIRstart training, carried out in the institution. This questionnaire had a specific focus on the organisational perspectives of FAIRstart training – aims & goals, planning and resources
5. An interview guide and material for instructors' group interview of staffs having participated in the test of the training program.
6. Questions for the group interview
7. A format for reporting results of group interview with the staff.

This pilot testing of the FAIRstart Training program comprised the following elements:

- The preliminary screening of child care practise in the child care institution carried out by leader and instructor and based on screening questions, The SBM score card. The aim of the screening was to provide a clear picture of areas in the child care practise that calls for specific attention and focus in the staffs training, from a pedagogical perspective and from an organisational perspective.
- The instructor's, the leader's and staffs' assessment of results and outcome.

In order to highlight the basic nature of the training programme it was stated in the test package that the FAIRstart Training focus combines staffs' achievement of child care theory with practical learning in staffs' own and well-known daily practise and that The FAIRstart program is not just about learning child care theory – it's about learning and understanding child care theory *and then* developing the everyday care practices.

Therefore the FAIRstart training has an explicit focus on involving the leader and staffs in awareness raising for maintaining a learning approach to practise.

This precondition was important to highlight in order to ensure the commitment of both staffs and managers and to ensure that test results would be reported within these two perspectives.

## 2. The five quality indicators

As part of the development of the FAIRstart Training programme, a set of quality indicators were identified as the quality assurance of the final product. As the FAIRstart training is based on the principles of a very simple model – easy accessible for – typically – low skilled staff – the usability according to the target group had to be considered carefully as well as the need for a low-cost training were foreseen as a prerequisite for the child care institutions' usage of the training.

Accordingly five quality indicators were defined to count as the success criteria of the training programme. The pilot testing was carried out with a special focus on these indicators which are as follows:

### **Accessibility**

Providing a net-based training program requires an easy access for the users when it comes to ICT facilities. Besides the content, the methods and the overall training arrangement must be easy accessible for all target groups involved – also in terms of clarity and understanding.

### **Recognisability**

The FAIRstart training program must mirror staffs' daily care giver practise and challenges. That's why the training material is illustrated with videos and photos from actual care giver practise. It is a basic principle for the training program that staffs should recognise their own practise, including resources, dilemmas and challenges in the training.

### **Involvement**

The FAIRstart training program is a practise learning program based on a very high degree of participants' active involvement. The didactic of the program is oriented towards the understanding that individuals very much profit from self- and group directed learning activities and not just from being taught by a professional.

### **Applicability**

The FAIRstart training program aims at changing and developing child care institutions' practise by offering easy accessible, recognisable and involving knowledge and methods for the staffs as well as for leaders, in order to improve conditions for the children's attachment and learning abilities. The question of the training program's applicability as to a permanent focus on learning and development of practise is crucial.

## **Flexibility**

Finally, the FAIRstart training program must be easy to use in each child care institution, no matter the institutions' resources, organisation and aims. It must be possible to apply the program to the specific identified needs and aims for training and development in each institution.

In the following chapters the results of pilot tests are presented and analysed with the inclusions of these five quality indicators.

### 3. Results of pilot testing

In the following the results are presented within this structure of the questionnaire prepared for instructors' and managers' assessment of the FAIRstart Training Program

#### 3.1 Presentation of results

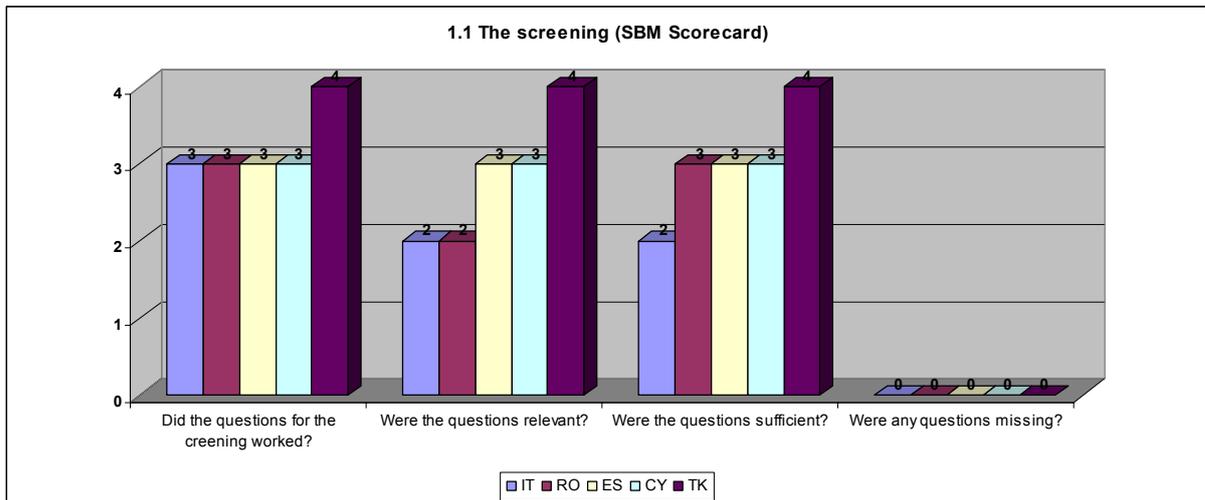
##### 3.1.1 Planning of the training

This part includes the questions concerning preparation of the training by:

- The SBM scorecard screening (instructor and manager) (table 1.1)
- The conclusion of the scorecard screening (table 1.2)
- Screening results as platform for the training (table 1.3)
- Cooperation with leader / manager on training (table 1.4)
- Planning of the training (Questionnaire for managers ) (table 2)

#### Tables

##### The screening (SBM Scorecard) (instructor)



The questions behind this table are:

- *Did the questions, prepared for the screening work as for the mapping of needs for pedagogical awareness and for changes?*
- *Did you find the questions relevant for your institution?*
- *Did you find the questions sufficient?*

- *Did you miss any questions?*

### **Instructors' answers**

Together the instructors express that questions worked as it helped putting a focus on inappropriateness in the work organisation seen from the perspective of children's needs. Though changes are often not easy, it helped keeping a focus on possible changes. The fact that these questions in the score card screening were raised contributed to actually 'daring' highlight unfavourable aspects in the daily work organisation. This does not mean that they first appeared to the instructor and manager by the screening, but having committed the institution to test the training program the need for coping it became obvious and 'legitimate'.

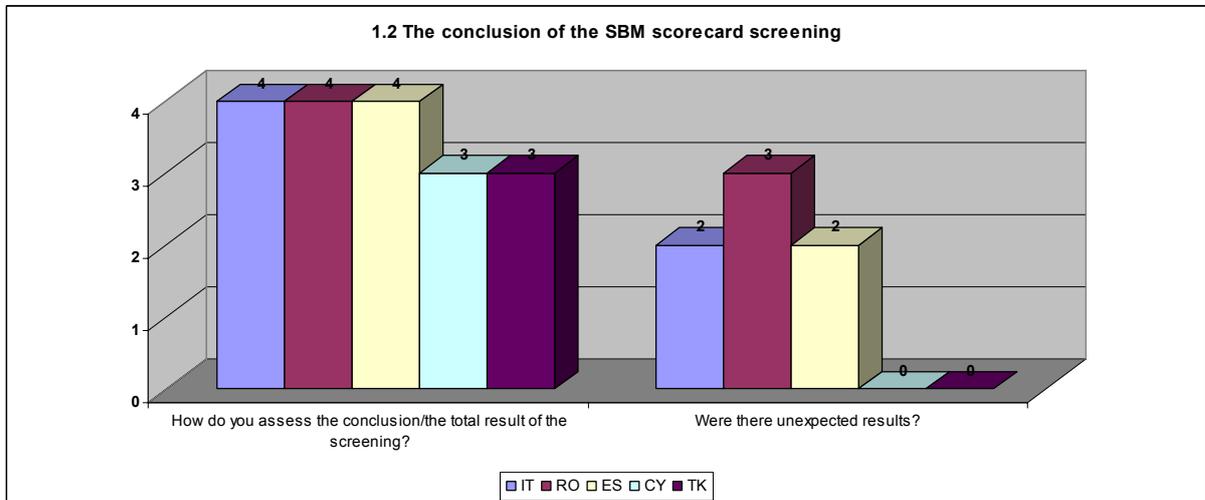
Some of the test institutions found the screening relevant and interesting but stated that it did not represent any new aspects for their child care practise as they had already been dealing with the same topics for some years. As such the screening more served as a confirmation that the institution is on the right track.

As for the aspect of *the sufficiency of questions* it was stated by some institutions that, though they found questions relevant and sufficient for the first step of development, there could be a need for including more long term questions in order to rethink the changes already done. So they stress the need for adding more flexibility into the scorecard screening model.

As the training program is also aimed at forming a flexible model in order to match the needs of development in each institution it should also be assessed if the scorecard fits with this aim. It should be noticed that – due to the focus on *testing the program* – the testing institutions took *all questions* in the scorecard into consideration; also the ones that did not fit completely with the normal activities of child care practise in the institution.

In spite of these reservations, the screening was valued as sufficient and relevant for the initial planning of training. There were no concrete suggestions for further questions.

## The conclusion of the SBM scorecard screening



The questions behind this table are:

- *How do you assess the conclusion / the total result of the screening?*
- *Were there surprising / unexpected results? / Which? In what way unexpected?*

### Instructors answers:

The scorecard screening both served as to highlight positive aspects related to the current caretaking institutions but also the fact that some problems in taking care of children still exist, for instance due to the insufficient knowledge regarding the methods to work with the child generated by a lack of the employees' training.

It was regarded a good way to show how the institution is working and which changes should be done in a mid-long term. Furthermore the assessment was that the screening is a good tool to make people begin to understand the context of the challenges they are facing in their child care jobs.

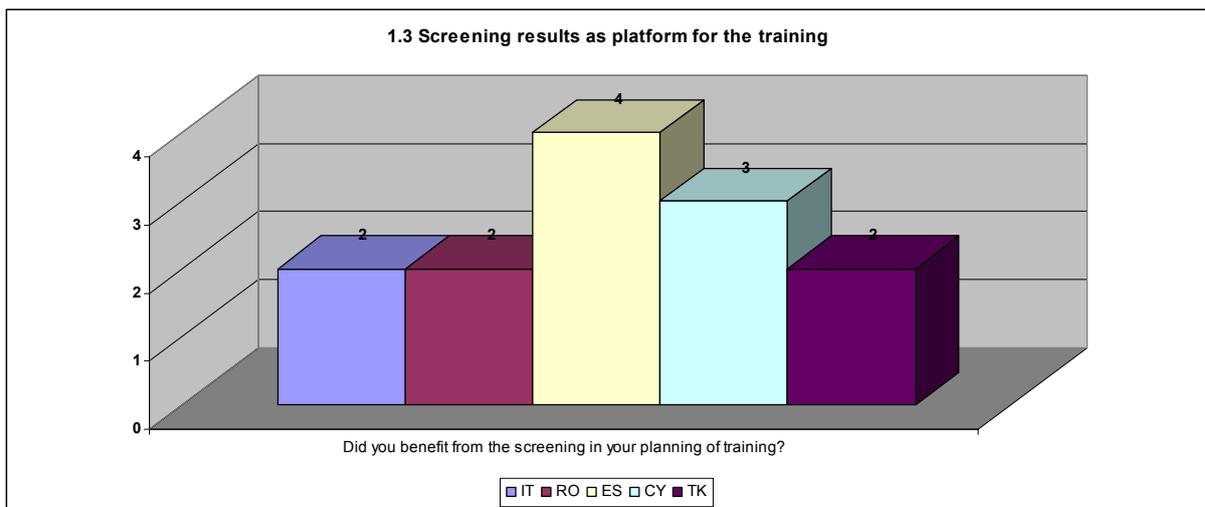
To the question if unexpected or surprising results appeared from the screening, one instructor answered, that in general results were not completely surprising but through the highlighting of the institutions ratio: employee – children, it became clear that this aspect is often forgotten in the daily routine. The same focus made another institution pay much more attention to the relational aspects in the care giving practise so that

"Some habits were quitted for the benefit of a more intense focus on the development of the children's need for exploration and on the social activities".

And finally some of the institutions felt that the scorecard questions were less relevant for their institution and child care practise, partly because of the small size of one institution, partly because

"Our institution already works on a good basis".

### Screening results as platform for training



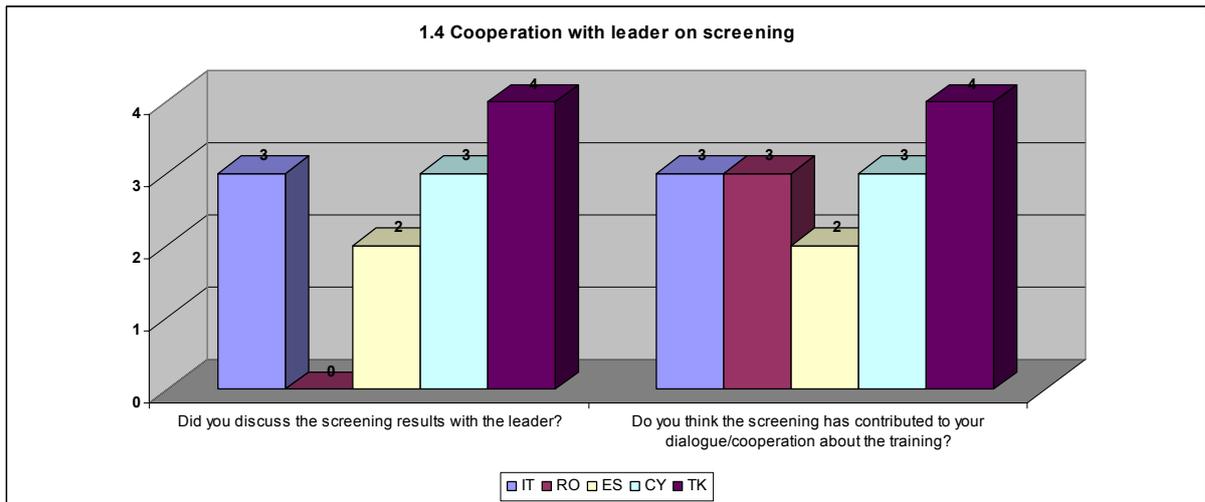
The question behind this table is:

- *If so, how did you benefit from this knowledge? How did you respond to it in your planning of training?*

### Instructors' answers

It varies among the institutions to what extent they have responded directly or indirectly to the results of the scorecard screening. For one of the institutions it is clearly expressed that they planned the training in accordance with the results. Others express that though the needs for development was clearly observed in the screening results it was also clear that some changes were not in the hands of the institution itself – like working conditions linked to labour markets agreements for the employees. These counts especially for working hours and shifts among employees – though it is acknowledged that these conditions have a clear influence of course on the relational aspects in the care giving practise. Nevertheless this screening result acted as an eye-opener for staffs and leader.

## Cooperation with leader on screening



The questions behind this table are:

- *Did you discuss the screening results with the leader?*
- *Do you think the screening has contributed to your dialogue / cooperation about the training?*

### Instructors' answers:

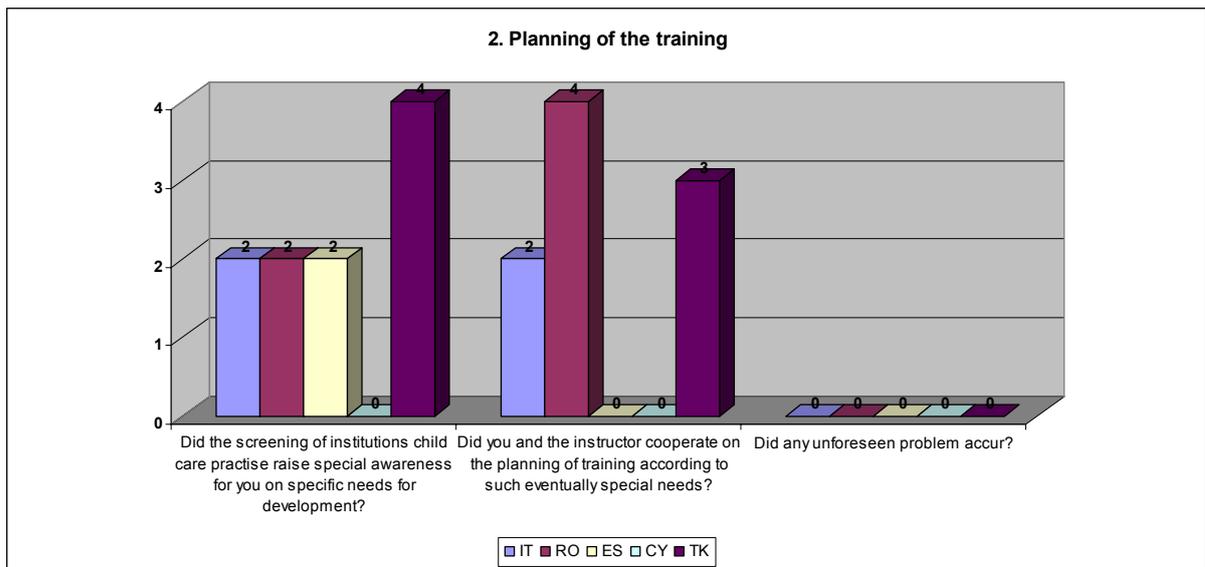
This is clearly the results, say the instructors from two institutions while a third one explains that this kind of communication is already in integral part of the practise in the institution. For two of the institutions the questions are not equally relevant because the instructor is also the institution leader.

Generally for the institutions it seems that the scorecard screening has contributed to a more active climate of debate in care giving issues – and especially about the training. One institution clearly expresses that

*"We managed to recognize and to present the valuable practices, but also the negative aspects of our work or those practices which we have considered to be not very important in the caretaking of the children. The participants have been sincere and open to discussions and they were happy to speak about some parts of their work".*

As quite a lot of questions concerning the initial planning of training were posed to the training instructors the leaders were asked a minor number of questions – also related to the planning. These were:

### Concerning Planning of the training



The questions behind this table are:

- *Did the screening of institutions child care practise raise special awareness for you on specific needs for development?*
- *Did you and the instructor cooperate on the planning of training according to such eventually special needs?*
- *Did any unforeseen problems occur?*

### Leaders' answers

It is clear that leaders have been less directly involved in the training than the instructors; and besides it has been the situation that for one institution the instructor and the leader is the same person, and for another institution – due to internal circumstances it was not possible for the leader to fill in the questionnaire in the period of testing the program in the institution.

In spite of these reservations to results of this part there are given valuable comments to the process, among others this answer:

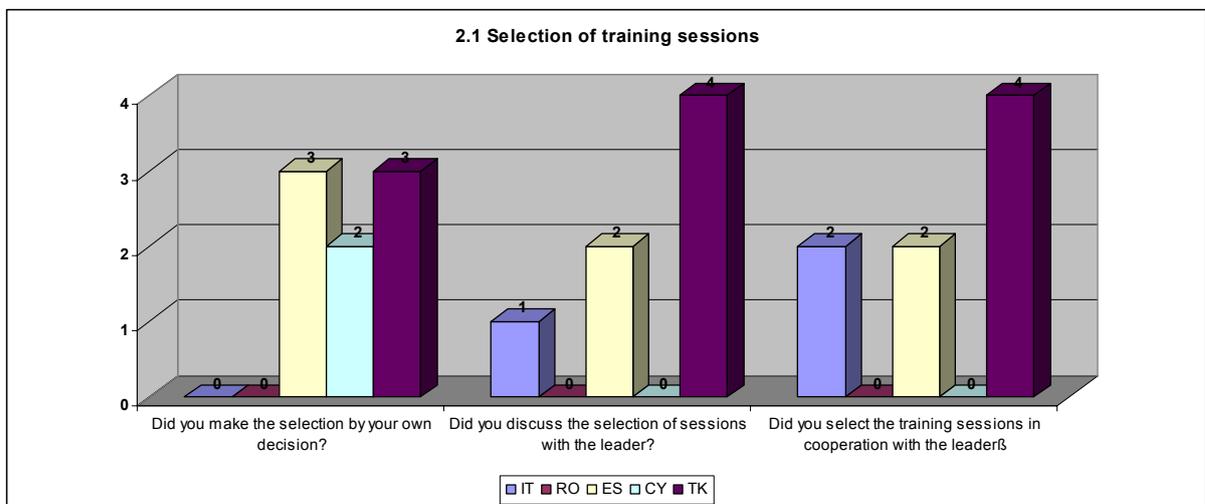
*"The initial evaluation of the care giving practices highlighted the fact that in their daily activities the educators focus mainly on the practical part and neglect or reduce the relational activities with the children. This is a consequence of the work*

load and of the lack of staff. The educational activity is based on individual or group activities and less on the exploration activities and team work”.

Only one leader answers that cooperation on the planning of training was made on the basis of the scorecard screening.

### 3.1.2 The training

#### Selection of training sessions



### **The questions behind this table are:**

- *Did you make the selection by your own decision?*
- *Did you discuss the selection of sessions with the leader?*
- *Did you select the training sessions in cooperation with the leader?*

### **Instructors' answers**

The question on selection of sessions were asked because it is an aspect of the training programme that it should be possible to use with flexibility, meaning that the institution can chose to plan an actual training process with only some of the sessions.

The answers show that this option has not been relevant for the institutions due the actual pilot testing. Hence 2 institutions decided to make the testing of the whole program whereas 3 other institutions decided to test only some sessions because their possibilities for testing were limited due to the summer holiday.

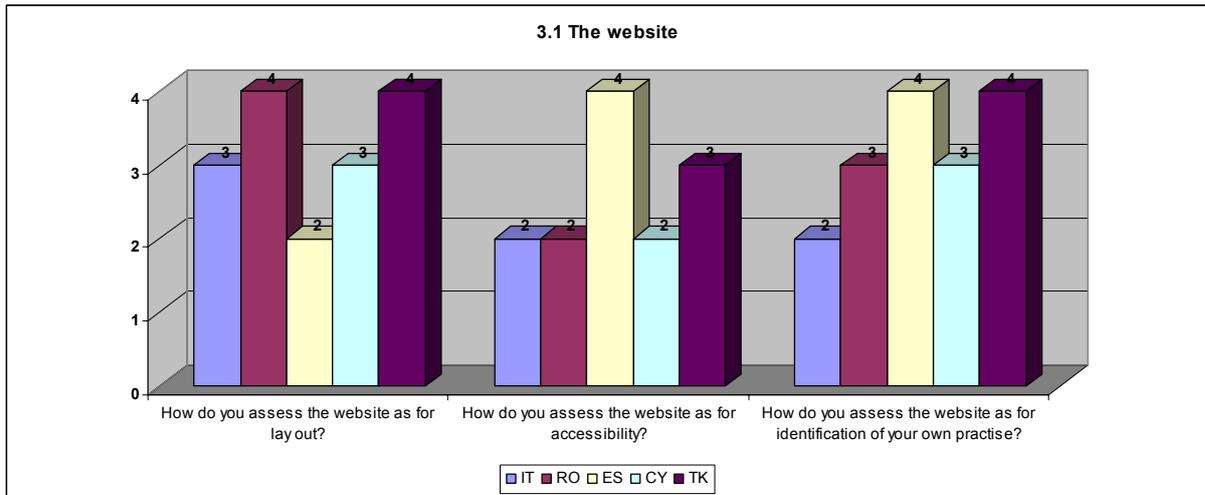
This means that the questions raised concerning selection of sessions are in reality not relevant for the situation of the pilot testing.

### **3.1.3 The training material**

It has been a special concern for the development of training material that it should be assessed easy accessible due to the target group staff and due to the resources of the child care institutions. For a web-based training programme such criteria might be a problem concerning exactly the ICT preconditions of staff together with the availability of IT equipment in the training. Therefore the questions – and the answers - regarding the web-site are extremely important.

Furthermore the training texts providing the basic theoretical knowledge and understanding of attachment theory and child care practise comprise a comprehensive material. In order to reach the target group the texts as content of training must be accessible for the staff.

## The web-site



The questions for this table are:

- *How do you assess the web-site <http://www.fairstart.net/training> as for layout?*
- *How do you assess the web-site <http://www.fairstart.net/training> as for accessibility?*
- *How do you assess the web-site <http://www.fairstart.net/training> as for identification of your own practise (especially the pictures and videos – could the staff identify with it? – did they see, that it was about their practise?).*

### Instructors' answers

In general it is the assessment of the web-site that it is easy to access. The layout is assessed positive and aesthetic whereas it has been a very concrete problematic in the pilot testing that not all material was available in each language version. This put an extra demand on the instructor who had to translate some of the missing material. But what is important for the assessment of the web-site is that no critical remarks are given to the structure and the manoeuvres within the web-site. Nevertheless one instructor points at difficulties concerning lack of equipment when training is based on the web-site:

*"It is very good, the only problem I see is when you don't have a place to project the movies in a big screen, to watch them in a PC is not comfortable if you try to make the training with it. Yes, people feels identified with all what they see, most when the videos are related to institutions."*

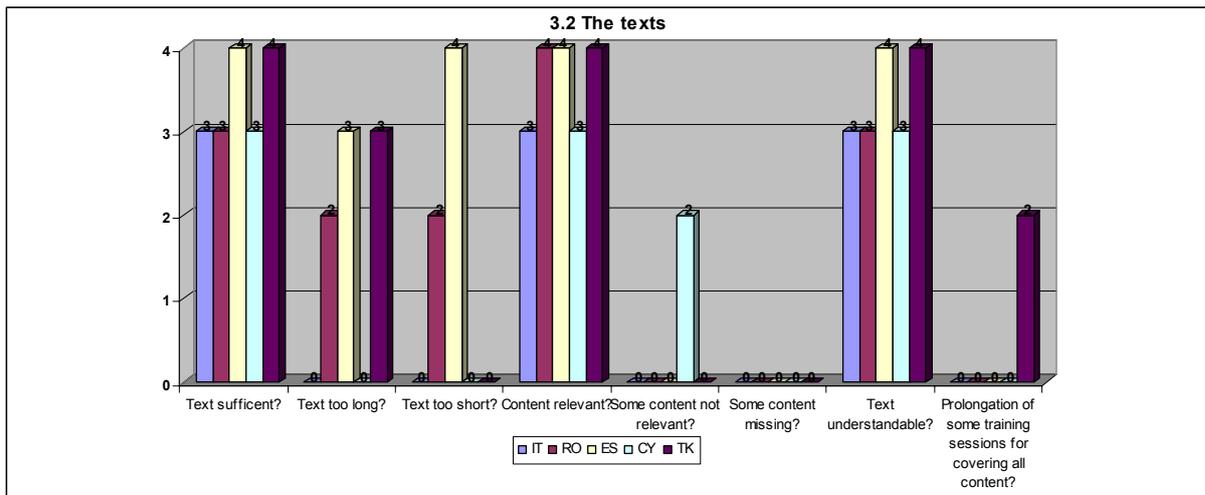
In general it is the impression of the evaluator that instructors have made an excellent effort to cope with such limitations and find alternative solutions.

When it comes to the assessment of the content of the web-site, especially the videos as part of the training material are assessed highly valuable as a pedagogic

tool and very suitable for supporting reflections and discussions among staff. Instructors express their surprise on the effectiveness of videos when it comes to reflection on ones own daily practise, as it is stated by this instructor:

*"I have identified images which proved that the foster families and the caretaking staff sometimes do not focus enough on the relational aspects and on the children's exploration behaviour. The video materials are a very good example of what caretaker should do and should not do, especially when working with little children".*

### The texts



The questions for this table are:

- How do you assess the texts in the training sessions as to length, level of understanding due to participants' preconditions: sufficient?
- How do you assess the texts in the training sessions as to length, level of understanding due to participants' preconditions: too long?
- How do you assess the texts in the training sessions as to length, level of understanding due to participants' preconditions: too short?
- Is the content relevant?
- Is there some content not relevant?
- Is there some content missing?
- Is the text understandable?
- Did you use the possibility of prolonging the training sessions in order to cover all the content of the training sessions?

All together the questions reflect the concern of finding the proper level of the theoretical content in the right balance with the preconditions of the target group

and their need for understanding and developing theory based child care practise on the basis of attachment theory.

### **Instructors' answers:**

The texts are assessed to be sufficient regarding length, level of understanding and relevance. No instructors express that they have met difficulties among the participants. One aspect regarding staffs preconditions is of course that the written material must satisfy staff with different preconditions – also when it comes to previous education and confidence with the theoretical content.

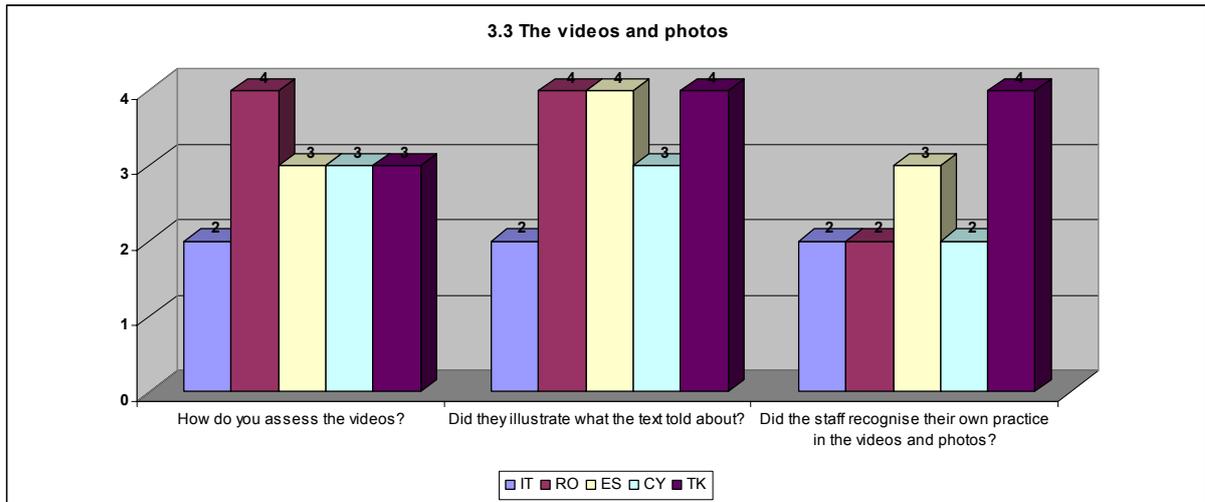
According to this aspect it is interesting to notice the remarks of one of the instructors, who states that for some staff the theory is well known whereas it is new for others. But the opposite difference in relation to practise also forms various preconditions in the group of staffs. So, while the content is new for some staff and therefore perhaps less challenging for staff with a higher level of education within child care professions, such groups of staff with less practise have highly benefited from watching videos about how to transform the known theory into child care practise. Hence the content fits a wider range of preconditions than actually foreseen.

One instructor points at the fact that some issues are presented several times – which could be achieved as reasonable concerning degree of difficulty.

Relevance of the texts are assessed positively and assumed as very appropriate for supporting reflection and discussion among participants.

Finally about the possibility of prolonging training sessions if needed, it is expressed by the instructors, that this has not been used, mostly because the anticipated length of 2 hours is estimated as the maximum length according to content and staffs. For especially one group of staffs the situation was that they had to attend the training after their daily work. This made the instructor decide that next time – due to similar conditions – the training should be planned with more time between the sessions. It is the experience of the instructor that a training session should not exceed 2 hours – 2½ hour.

## The videos and photos



The questions behind this table are:

- *How do you assess the videos?*
- *Did they illustrate what the text told about?*
- *Did the staff recognise their own practise in the videos and photos?*

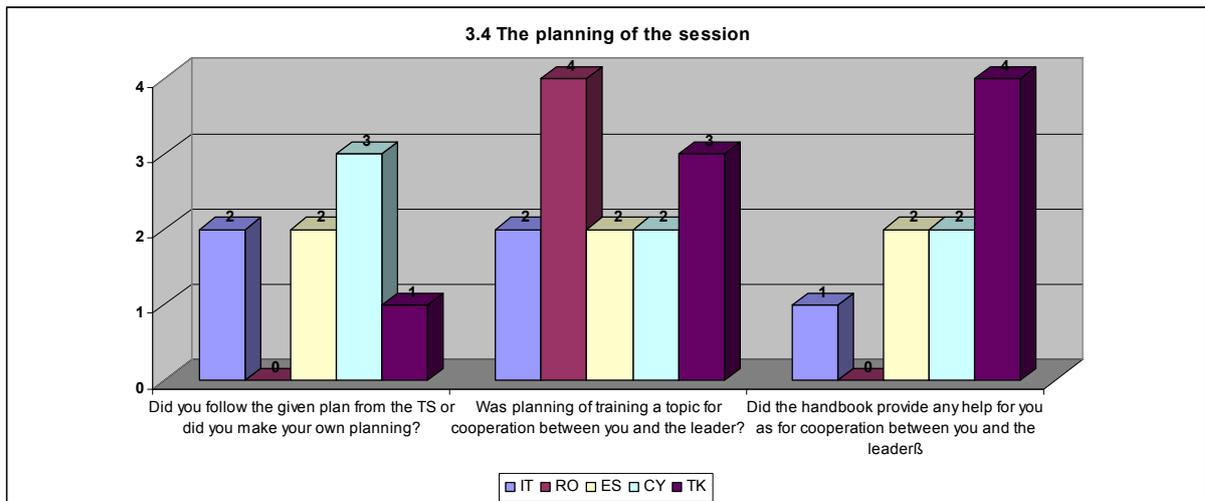
### Instructors' answers:

The videos and photos reflects the basic idea in the training didactic that staff should be able to recognise their own child care practise in this type of material in order to support reflection on practise.

There are given both positive and negative remarks to this material. One instructor assesses in general the videos as interesting and relevant though some of them are unnecessarily repetitive and with a message which is not always quite clear. This instructor recommends an adjustment and improvement of some of the material in order to benefit optimal from the pedagogic advantages of the type of material.

Other remarks assess the material positive which counts especially for the possibility of repeating a focus on a given issue – for instance relations aspects in the care giver practise. Such advantages are: supportive for reflections and discussions. Supporting staffs comprehension of theory. Inspiration from other child care practises than one's own. The last mentioned aspect also means that 100 % recognisability of the presented practise is not necessarily the expectation of staffs and instructor. Finally an instructor emphasises the effect of staffs watching a video with excellent practise and noticing that they do the same in their practise. But to the opposite situation it is also said that videos might illustrate negative practise and hence the instructor must be aware of explaining this in order to provide misunderstandings. This underlines the importance of being very clear about the message in the video and its connection to the theory being taught.

## The planning of the session



The questions behind this table are:

- *When planning the training did you then follow the planning, given by the training sessions or did you make your own planning?*
- *Was planning of training a topic for cooperation between you and the leader?*
- *Did the Handbook provide any help for you as for cooperation between you and the leader?*

This group of questions – together with the group of questions below - concern the planning of each session and the instructors' assessment of the material being available for them when they plan the session. Two types of material is available for this purpose: methods and tools described as suggestions for each session, and guidance and inspiration in the Handbook. The Handbook is written for both the instructor and the leader of the institution with various focuses depending on the issue.

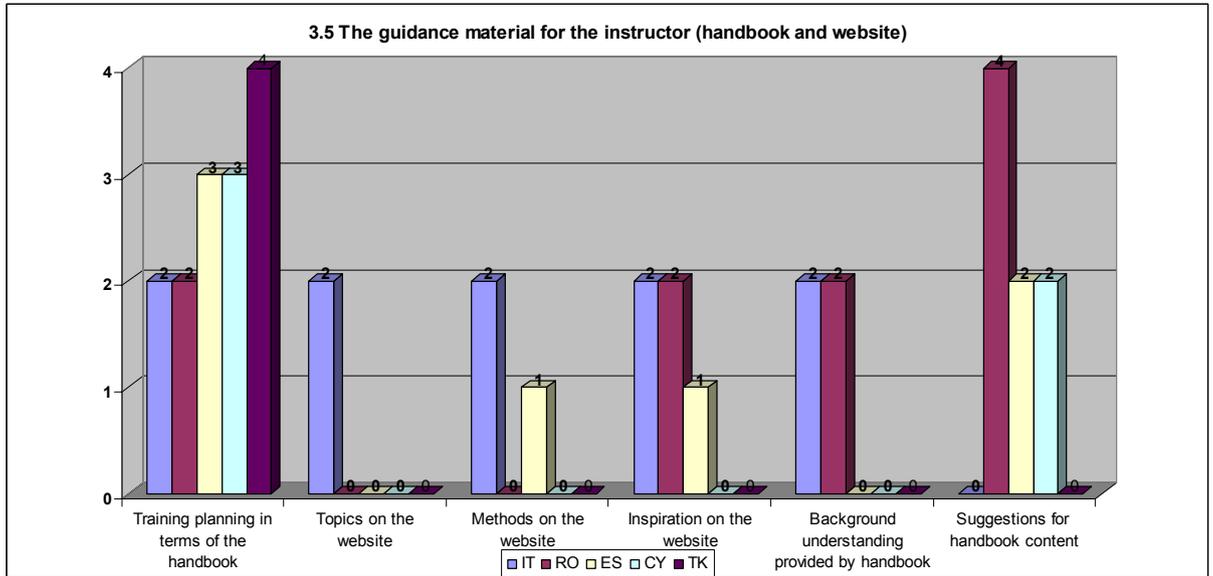
It seems that instructors are using the suggested planning of each session as an inspiration for the actual planning which must always take into consideration the requirements of the daily work tasks. Moreover instructor and leader cooperate on the planning as this might involve the overall planning of work tasks. But the assessments also express that the suggested planning of each training session is welcomed as inspiration – as well as it is also more or less directly copied.

For the cooperation of instructor and leader the issue of information is a frequent mentioned issue as it is foreseen that the leader – by highlighting the importance of staffs training – adds an important value to the training activity.

During the period of pilot training the Handbook was only available in English. Though all instructors have good competences in the language it seems that they did not use the Handbook very much. There are no clear indications in the

answered questionnaires whether this means that the Handbook did not meet the requirements of instructors and leaders or it means that the guidance material integrated in the sessions were sufficient.

### The guidance material for the instructor



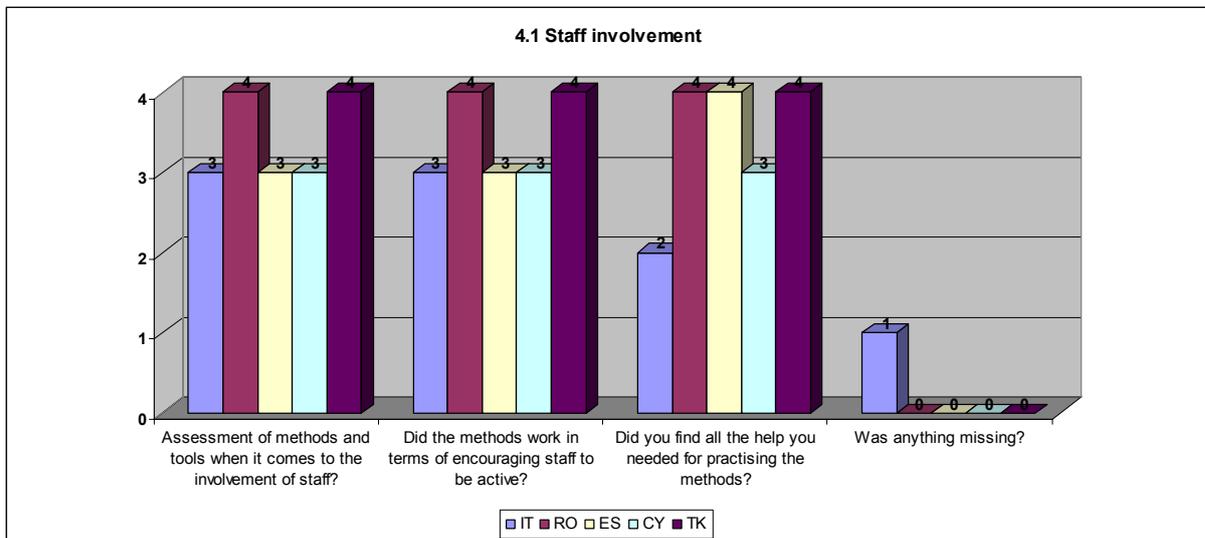
The questions behind this table are:

- *Did you feel safe and well guided in your planning of training / teaching in terms of the Handbook?*
- *In terms of the web-site - did you miss any kind of guidance regarding topics/methods/inspiration/background understanding provided by the handbook?*

Instructors' assessments are represented as an integral part of the question above (the planning of the session).

## 3.1.4 Training methods

### Staff's involvement



The questions behind this table are:

- *How do you assess the methods and tools when it comes to the active involvement of staff?*
- *Did the methods work – in terms of encouraging staff to be active?*
- *Which methods would you use again?*
- *Were there any methods that did not work well in terms of staffs' active involvement? Which? Why did they not work?*
- *Did you find all the help you needed for practising the methods?*
- *Was anything missing?*

Staffs' involvement is defined as one of the basic pedagogic aims of the training didactic. Therefore the instructors' assessment of this aspect is considered extremely important.

#### **Instructors' answers:**

One instructor says: *"The discussions and the group activities were the most appreciated moments by the participants. These moments offered the opportunity to express their opinions, to share information and to speak about their activity"*.

And another instructor assesses that:

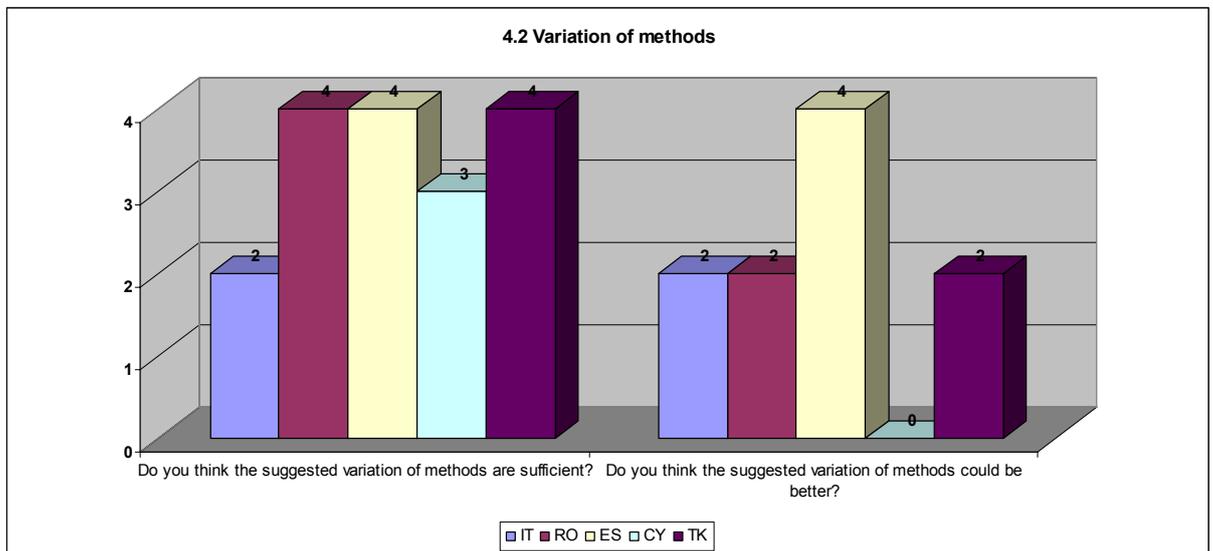
*"In general it is a good method, easy to learn and quite easy to understand, but it requires some time to feel secure to teach it. It depends on the ability of the trainer to make people interested in the subject and to motivate them. Of*

*course motivations of people are not always the same and it could be difficult to implement without cooperation in all levels”.*

It is also the general impression that the suggested methods work well in order to encourage staffs to take active part in discussions. Though – in spite of this positive experience – an instructor reflects upon the risk of being less focussed on actually *how* to make change of practise come happen; how to come from the enthusiastic discussions to the more difficult transfer of theory into daily practise.

Some of the methods are assessed as highly valuable pedagogic methods, especially the method of making staff video-record their daily practise. Besides the methods of group interviews were similarly stressed as a valuable method.

### Variation of methods



The questions behind this table are:

- *Do you think the variation of methods – group work, question for the individual staff, games, evaluation methods - suggested in the training sessions are sufficient?*
- *Do you think the variation of methods – group work, question for the individual staff, games, evaluation methods - suggested in the training sessions could be better?*

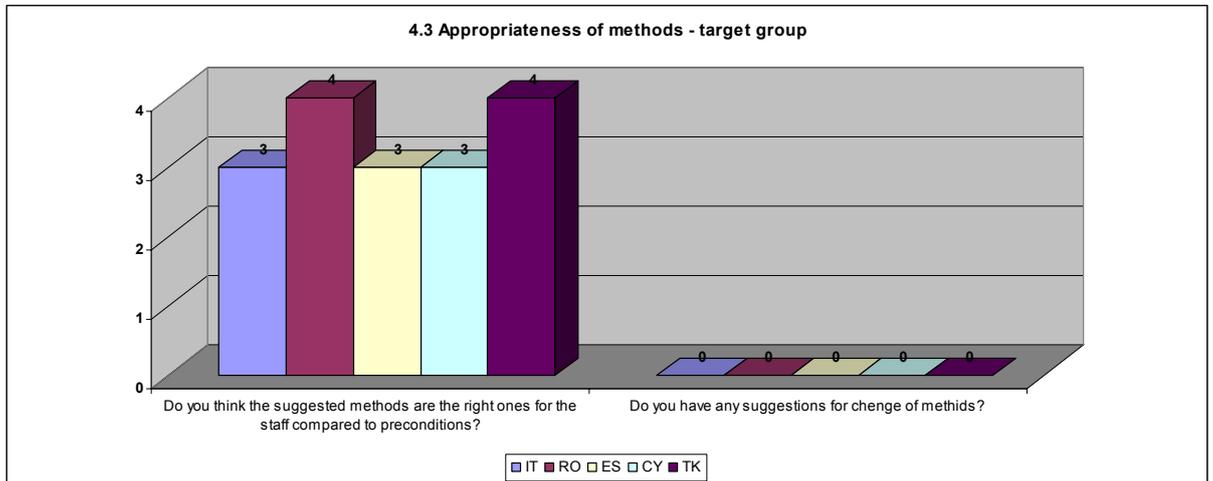
In addition to the assessment of methods for staffs’ active involvement in the training the instructors were also asked to consider the variation of methods.

The instructors express their satisfaction with the variety of methods and there seems not to be a need for more methods. As one instructor states:

*“If more activities (as in number or duration) will be run, it will mean more time for one session and this could displease the participant who attends the course”.*

Though satisfied with the variation of methods, one instructor adds her positive experience with role-plays, which she used with great success. The role-plays were written by her on the basis of stories from daily practise told by staff.

### Appropriateness of methods in relation to target groups



The questions behind this table are:

- *Do you think the methods suggested in the training sessions are the right ones for the staff – compared to pre-conditions?*

#### Instructors' answers:

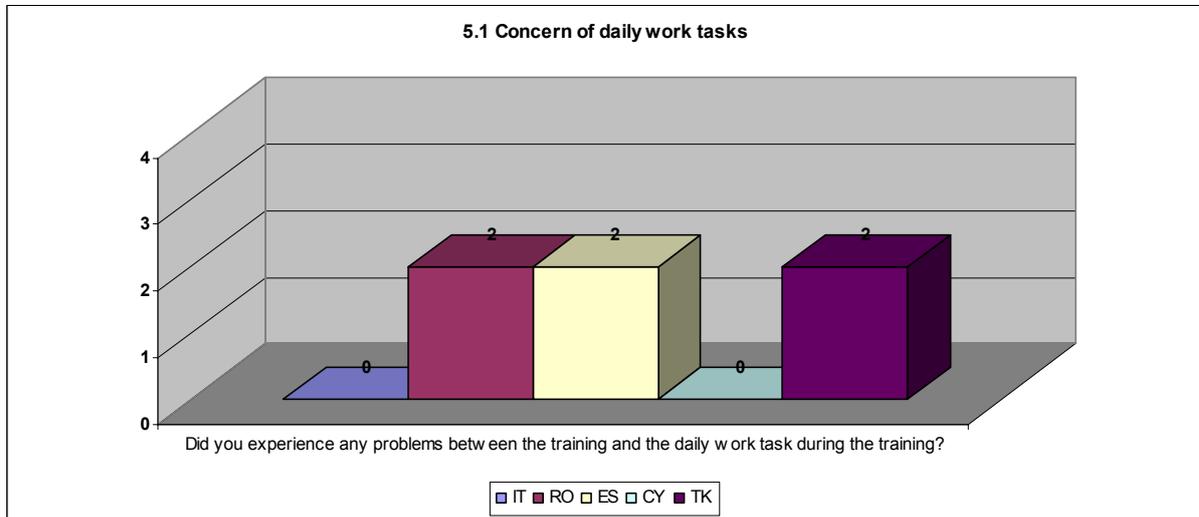
The methods are good for staffs and appropriate also for the differences in staffs' preconditions. One of the instructors explain that the active and involving methods both provides excellent opportunities for experienced employees

*"To add words to their practise" whereas the newer employees are trained in reflecting their theoretical knowledge to practise".*

The methods support the discussion among the two groups.

### 3.1.5 Practical planning in respect for daily work tasks

#### Concern of daily work tasks



The question behind this table is:

- *Did you experience any problems between the training and the daily work tasks during the training?*

It must be foreseen as a prerequisite for the planning of training that daily work planning must be taken into consideration when staffs are occupied with training.

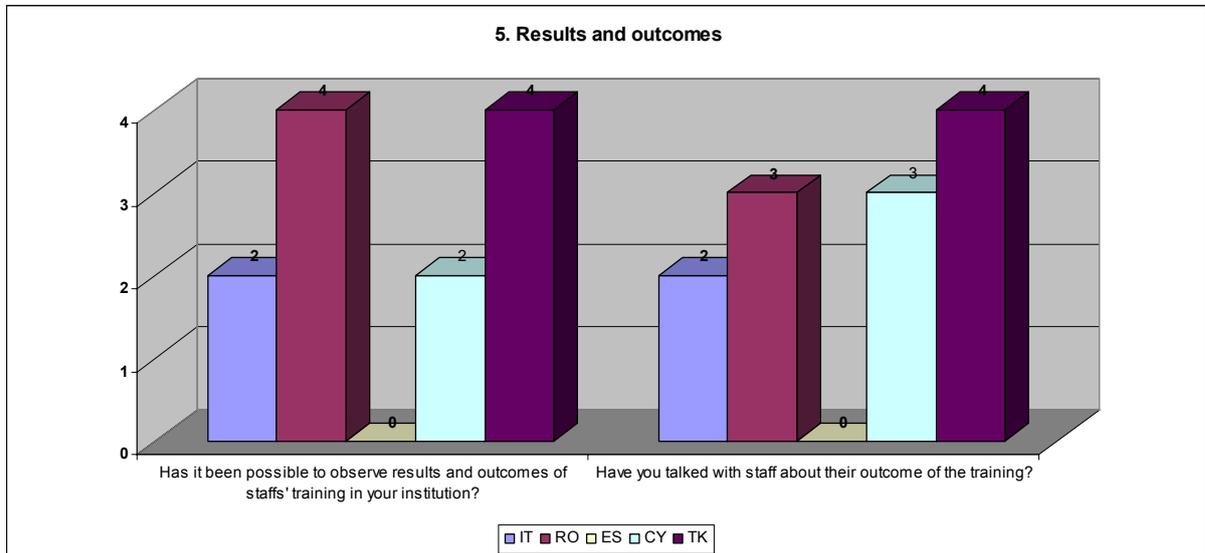
Due to the special situation of pilot testing within the short period of one month – which coincided with summer holiday for some of the institutions – it is remarkable that staffs’ great enthusiasm with the training overshadowed the practical problems. It is important to underline that in several institutions’ pilot testing of the program staffs attended the training after the daily work – in their spare time!

### 3.1.6 Results and outcomes

This last point in the questionnaires is of course of extremely interest for the overall estimation of the FAIRstart Training program. The question has been asked to the managers in a questionnaire for this group<sup>3</sup>, whereas more detailed questions concerning outcome has been asked to the staffs in the prepared frame for group interviews, carried out by the instructors. Staffs answers – together with the

<sup>3</sup> As the testing took place during the summer holiday period for some countries, the Spanish institution manager was not able to fill in the questionnaire in due time. This is why the table 5, shows “0” for ES.

instructors – are reported in the report format, included in the test material, and provided for this purpose.



The questions behind this table are:

- *Has it been possible to observe results and outcome of staffs' training in your institution – perhaps you have observed changes in staffs' daily practise?*
- *Have you talked with staff about their outcome of training?*

**The managers express:**

*"The participants have appreciated a lot the information received and they try to improve or change their work methods. They are proud of their results and they focus more on the relation with the children".*

Another manager states that the staffs obviously operate on a solid basis, provided by the FAIRstart training program.

Visible changes are observed in the child care practise, declares a manager, though unfortunately not further described in the answer.

One manager also expresses the satisfaction with the discussions he has had with the staff group on outcome. He declares:

*"Yes, I have and I am glad that this course has had such an effect on their work. Everyone is trying to adapt their work based on the information received during the training course".*

### **Instructors and staffs assess results and outcome as:**

A deeper understanding of relational aspects of child care practise as well as the importance of good relations within the group of staffs and between the individual staff member and the leader:

#### **Staffs:**

*"The most successful outcome was the raising awareness of relations between the caregiver and the child; between the caregiver and the caregiver; between the caregiver and the leader".*

*"Our leader has told us that he believes in us and that this new reconstruction will affect us in a positive way. This means, that for us, we are a large team and nobody allows the other to go out of this chain".*

#### **Instructors about staffs' outcome:**

*"The staffs are proud of their results and they focus more on the relation with the children".*

*Training must continue. It is a way to ensure that we keep on using good practise".*

*"We certainly upgraded and enhanced our cooperation between staff members by increasing dialogue and participation".*

## 3.2 Assessment of results

On the basis of the detailed presentation of results, based on the quantitative data and the accompanying assessments by instructors and managers, this chapter is focussed on evaluator's overall assessment of results.

The assessment will be based on a cross-thematic analysis with the inclusion of two dimensions:

### a. The vertical dimension

By the 5 quality indicators:

- Accessibility of training program
- Recognisability in training material
- Involvement in the change of practise
- Applicability to staffs' practise
- Flexibility in the utility of Fairstart training program

And

### b. The horizontal dimension

By 3 perspectives:

- The instructors' perspective (pedagogic / didactic)
- The managers' perspective (organisational / staff development)
- Staffs' perspective (individual and group oriented learning and development).

#### 3.2.1 Accessibility

For the assessment of the quality indicator *Accessibility*, the elements, Planning of training / SMB Scorecard screening and Training material form the background.

##### *The planning of training*

From a combined leader- and instructor perspective, the assessments are that the material is easy to access – in term of Web-site usability – and easy to use. Having filled in the entire groups of questions and afterwards calculated the results in terms of points given pr. answer, the conclusion provided is clearly understandable

– which counts for the identification of needs for development as well as for the confirmation of existing good practise in the institutions' childcare practise.

Furthermore it is stated from the two perspectives that the result of the screening / the conclusion forms a solid basis for dialogue and cooperation between leader and instructor. It is highly valued that the screening result provides a common focus for the development plan that they are preparing as the next step in the process.

Finally, it is the assessment that the method of score card screening contributes significantly to providing the material for focused information to staff about the training.

The last aspect is especially important as the focused information to staff ensures credibility to the training effort together with a high degree of motivation for staffs' engagement in the training. It is of great importance for the staffs that training is given high priority in the institution and not least when the leader directly expresses his or her appreciation with staffs' motivation for training and development.

A few quotations from the reports demonstrate the accessibility of the training elements assessed:

*"The screening highlighted the fact in their daily activities that focus is mainly on the practical tasks while the relational activities with the children tend to be neglected or reduced".*

*(for the information) "We highlighted the importance of working based on the same principles".*

*"It helped us reflecting on our relationship with our hosted children to improve our care services. It has also encouraged us to involve the whole staff in the phase of identification and planning of the care centre aims."*

To the last quotation it is important to underline that the use of the screening material ends up giving inspiration to involve the entire staff group in a strategic development effort with the identification of aims and goals. This example underlines the positive assessment of accessibility of the material for planning the training.

### *The training material*

Accessibility must also be measured in terms of the training material. Here counts primarily the staffs' perspective.

The assessments are here expressed by an overall satisfaction with the material, especially the video-material. The content of training is assessed highly relevant and also appropriate as to staffs' preconditions. Finally methods are valued as interesting and inspiring, especially the group work, discussions and role-plays.

It is important to expose the double function of the video material, which both provides inspiration for discussions and group work and as a method to video-record – and observe – one's own practise.

It is the assessment of the evaluator that instructors and staffs have managed to extent the usage of the material and methods in new ways. Hence the pilot testing in itself has provided interesting results for further development of the material.

### *Quotations*

*"The videos are more valid and effective than photos; they are more direct and complete".*

*"Watching the videos helped the participants understand the texts".*

From a learning perspective it is interesting to notice that the video material supports and enhances the understanding of the theoretical texts, they ensure reflection and increase group dynamics – which would probably not be the case if texts were provided without videos of practise.

### **3.2.2 Recognisability**

It is an important aspect of the training program that staffs, wherever the program is applied – are able "to recognise" themselves in the videos and photos from child care practise. This does not necessarily mean 100 % recognition. But the material should mirror known aspects of childcare in the sense that these principles are recognised and acknowledged as examples of realistic child care. These examples need not be pure positive or ideal. On the contrary, also negative examples of childcare are provided in the material in order to illustrate problematics referring to the theory being learned in the training. So another aspect of the quality indicator *recognisability* could also be that material should be presented in a form that motivates participants *to relate* to it – either in a positive or a negative sense.

Assessing the material according to this quality indicator implies the assessment of the screening and the training material.

Here it is made clear in the evaluation reports that screening material supports the identification of needs for development of practise. It helps as well to identify the good practise – the identification of special resources in the institutions' childcare practise. This is equally important in a process of development that resources are exposed as the solid basis for further improvement.

The material supports a common understanding of the effort to be worked on; which means that aims and strategy for the development effort are made clear for instructor and leader in common.

Being able to recognise the authentic situation of the institutions' needs for development is clearly relying on the requirement of recognisability. If screening and training material do not live up to this requirement, the basis for development will weaken the development process.

*Quotations below demonstrate that the material offers recognisability:*

*"We managed to recognise and to present the valuable practises, but also the negative aspects of our work or those practises which we have considered to be not very important in the caregiving for children. The participants have been sincere and open to discussions and they were happy to speak about parts of their work".*

*"The comparison and sharing of our professional life with the reality of other countries (watched in the videos) were inspiring".*

It is interesting to notice how screening and identification of weak points in the caregiving practise forms a legitimate and common basis for open-minded dialogues, because the problem is identified as a common problem and is so to say removed from the individual domain. Hereafter it has become possible to cope with the problematic in order to find good solutions.

The last of the above quotations also underlines that there is a risk by anticipating the quality indicator *recognisability too narrow*. You can easily relate to other caregiving practises without necessarily recognising the practise concretely.

### **3.2.3 Involvement**

Involvement has had a double sense in the FAIRstart project as instructors and staffs have been involved as co-developers of video training material in order to ensure the authenticity and recognisability of the material. It has been an important aim that the material should help participants to realise, that "this is about my practise"

The other aspect of involvement counts for the training and the use of involving methods. Here *involvement* is a pedagogic precondition for learning – and for applying what has been learnt to practise.

Therefore the suggested training methods have been selected and used for the purpose of promoting individual and group learning in the institution.

The methods are interactive as they support individual learning and common reflection, they support innovativeness among staff and they enhance the co-responsibility for change among leader and staffs.

In order to success with these aims the training methods must reflect that relations in learning processes are equal and not hierarchic!

*Quotations from staff demonstrate some of these effects:*

*"We were exited when we came across with the solutions for the desperations we felt before, for instance: how will I talk with this child? Why does this child behave like this, etc".*

- And from the instructor's perspective:

*"The staffs were anxious about the practices. They were worried about making mistakes and being misperceived as insufficient. I tried to motivate them by telling them that they are the most knowledgeable people in this profession".*

The first example illustrates the enthusiasm and feeling of success having come to the solution of a problem. The staffs have not only achieved new knowledge – they have also proved the ability to apply the knowledge in a reflective and innovative way.

The second example shows how staffs, at the beginning of training and development processes, can be marked by a feeling of being exposed and being vulnerable. Here the instructor acts wise and appropriate to staffs' worry and she recognises them as to their professionalism. By doing so, the instructor invites them in for an equal learning-situation

### **3.2.4 Applicability**

The most crucial parameter for success of the training program is if the staffs and the organisation – after having followed the training – are capable of applying the new qualifications into daily practise in order to further develop qualifications to competences and in order to develop and to change practise?

The questions to be asked are:

*"Is the learning outcome valid and solid when it comes to changing of habits and daily routines?"*

*"Is the organisation and the management ready to support the application of staffs' new competences? And not least:*

*"Is there a plan – or aims – in the organisation for continuing learning and development?"*

*Quotations from staffs' perspective:*

*"We found that the balance between our daily work and relation tasks was very important because it is a constant problem which we encounter frequently. Now we got more knowledge about what we could do for this. Also we are preparing a new plan together with our leader."*

This example demonstrates how there is a continuity from knowledge, reflection, new competences and concrete action for development. Even more this new plan is elaborated in a cooperation of staffs and leader, which provides a high potential for stability and validity in the development process.

And another example:

*"We created a family-like group and we are continuing in a positive way. This affects the children we are dealing with and each other positively".*

This example shows that the new practise has a direct positive affect on the children – and moreover – on staffs' joy of work!

*Quotations from instructors' perspective:*

*"The staffs have shown interest in the training and have gained some new knowledge and overall encouragement to keep on "a training track" as an important factor of their mission and their work".*

*"The fact that every participant tried to improve wrong work methods, to put in practise the information received, to work according to the good practise they have seen and especially the fact that they realised that the way to work brought more satisfaction both to them and to the children".*

*(The most successful outcome was..) That the staffs agreed on what is good practise in working with children."*

### **3.2.5 Flexibility**

It has been an aim to develop the FAIRstart training program to be used also in a flexible way in order to:

- Cope with specific identified needs
- To support continuing training and development
- To administer in a busy daily childcare practise.

For the assessment of this quality indicator it is important to stress that the special situation of a pilot testing have not fully provide the possibilities of using the program according to a measurement on flexibility.

Some institutions chose to test the entire program while other institutions had to – for more pragmatic reasons: summer holiday; lack of staffs – to test only a selected number of training sessions.

Still in their reports, instructors have considered the aspects of flexibility, for instance to the question of how they made the planning of the training?

*Quotations:*

*"We have inserted the planning, suggested in the training sessions as an integration in our daily work and practises, but the actual implementation of the program has been characterized by a wide range of flexibility as it has had to be adjusted following the typical unforeseen events of our work."*

*"Not all the staffs were trained the same day".*

*"The staffs accepted to attend training in spite of being actually on vacation" (!)*

Reading the evaluation reports there is no doubt that staffs have shown a great motivation for the training.

It is the evaluator's assessment that exactly for the evaluation of the quality indicator flexibility, it will depend on more test results to assess if flexibility of the program works.

## 4. Perspectives on further development

This final chapter provides an additional perspective on the potentials for the further development of the FAIRstart Training Program.

The assessment of the training program has been carried out within the focus of assessing the training program's potentials for supporting learning and development – not only at the individual staff member and the staff groups' level – but also on the organisational level.

It should be clear that this program pays special attention to the support of organisational learning and development processes with the purpose of improvement of practise.

Thus the initial score card screening by instructor and leader provides – in a systematic form – a clear and balanced picture of the actual situation in the institutions' practise, focussing on both resources and weaknesses / needs for improvement and development.

The overall evaluation highlights outcome of the pilot testing, measured according to the five identified quality indicators for the success of the training program's applicability in 5 childcare institutions.

The result of the test and the evaluation of the pilot testing demonstrates that aims and success criteria of the FAIRstart Training Program has been reached to a wide extent.

Though, some suggestions for further development should also be added to this evaluation:

The evaluation has clarified needs for minor adjustments and further production of material within the existing structure of the training program.

As for the applicability of the learning model, including individual, group and organisational learning and development, it is the recommendation of the evaluator that a further systematic work in transfer to practise is carried out in forms of an adjusted learning model focussing more operational on the systematic of organisational learning. Furthermore supporting methods and tools for the transfer of the model to a wider range of childcare institutions and to other countries should be produced.

This requires an additional didactic work on learning methods as well as the production of pedagogic methods and tools for the self-directed learning and evaluation in organisations, aiming at initiating development processes.

## **Annexes**

### **Annex 1. Test program**

### **Annex 2. Quantitative data presentation**

### **Annex 3: Evaluation of instructors' training, part 1, September 2009**

### **Annex 4: Evaluation of instructors' training, part 2, March 2010**