



## EVALUATION OF THE AUDTRAIN PROJECT

The evaluation of the project includes four different measures, three questionnaires and a focus group. A pre-training form was sent to participants and returned completed before the training started. A post-training form (part 1) was handed out after the first part of the training and a second post-training form (part 2) was sent out a few weeks after the second part of the training was completed. The day of the closing session of the second part of the training participants were invited to take part in focus groups at the three sites.

### 1. Pre-training form

In total 31 participants (eleven from Estonia, eight from Latvia and twelve from Sweden) completed the pre-training form (four males and 27 females). Further three individuals participated in the first training but did not return their pre-training forms. The participants were on average 41,2 years (SD=10,8). There was a significant difference of the mean age across countries with a higher mean age among participants from Sweden (m=48,3, SD=9,9) compared to the participants from Estonia (m=36,8, SD=9,4) and Latvia (m=36,4, SD=8,4).

Participants reported different degrees of responsibility and frequency in relation to inspections of child/youth institutions. The majority reported that inspections/auditing was their main field of work. Another group responded that they periodically do audits or have a managing position in relation to staff performing inspections. A third group responded that they were in the stage to begin performing audits.

The majority of the participants had an academic training (bachelor degree or master degree). Most prevalent was a degree in social work. Other academic exams among participants were law, pedagogy and psychology. The educational background differed to some extent across countries with an exam in social work as more dominant in Sweden and a greater variation in Latvia with exams in pedagogy, law and psychology.

The majority of participants reported limited training to carry out audits other than brief introductions and shorter internal training. All Latvian participants reported having received the same training on risk of abuse in residential care.

Participants reported varied previous experience carrying out audits. Ranging from no experience to more than 20 years of experience. On average the participants had an experience of 3,8 years (SD=4,5) ranging from 0-25 years. The participants reported that they had been involved in on average 50 audits with one third who reported that they had been involved in more than 100 audits.

Participants were asked to identify particular problems in auditing. Different areas were mentioned one *focused on the child*; to catch the experience of the child, to document what the child says and give feedback to the child, to assess what a child tells in relation

to what adults tell, the interview technique talking with staff and children, safety, using the same standard for asylum-seeking children and lacking child perspective in the method.

Another focused on *methodology*; difficult to be sure that the right things are in demand, the legal issues, insufficient evidence, the right conclusion, the order of the interviews and complexity of the field combining practical issues and emotional aspects.

Participants were asked about further training needs that they had identified. Participants responded improve the legal framework and clarify legal conditions. Need for consensus on the auditing, agreement across inspectors to get high credibility. To increase the effectiveness of the auditing and improve the auditing model. How to conduct good interviews with the children and staff and to make conclusive analysis of the interview. To exchange experiences.

Participants were asked to score their expectations for Audtrain (from 0 - no expectations to 10 - high expectations). The mean expectation was high 8.1 (SD=1,4) with minor non-significant differences across countries. Participants commented on the expectations: interesting to be introduced to a new model, hope to improve practice and look forward to exchange of knowledge.

## 2. Post-training form 1.

After the four-day training participants responded rating (1-6) on a form focusing on the performance of the trainers, the interaction, the organization of the training, balance between theory and practice and the standard of the training materials. The participants (table 1) were highly satisfied with the training, the trainers, interaction and material across countries. Some significant differences were identified comparing the results from different countries, with Estonian participants being in general even more positive than Latvian and/or Swedish participants (item 1, 4, 5, 6 and 9). On one item (8) Estonian and Latvian participants reported significant higher scores than Swedish participants.

Table 1. Participants' responses on post-training form 1

Nr	Item	Total mean	Estonia mean	Latvia mean	Sweden mean
1	How well did the trainer perform in presenting the material?	4,9	5,6	4,8	4,5
2	How active have you been during the training session?	4,6	5,0	4,5	4,4
3	Have you been listened to?	5,5	5,7	5,6	5,2
4	How efficiently was the training organised?	4,8	5,8	4,3	4,5
5	How successful was the balance struck between theory and practice?	5,0	5,6	5,0	4,4
	How did you like the materials used during the				

	training?				
6	Transformation of legislation provisions into duties and responsibilities	4,6	5,1	4,1	5,0
7	Procedure and management	4,7	5,3	4,5	4,5
8	Interview techniques for use with children and with staff	4,6	5,4	4,8	3,8
9	Drafting report, describing non-conformities, follow-up	4,6	5,4	4,3	4,2

Participants were asked to give their comments on a number of topics. When asked about the *key learning of the training session* different topics were suggested. Across countries the concept of the system based audit were mentioned, different steps and order of the steps in the model and the focus on child rights. The Recommendation 5/2005 of European Council was mentioned as an important additional regulation for the work that they learned about. Another theme that was mentioned was the pleasant approach, to gain cooperation and have a belief that the institution audited wants to develop. Finally some participants reported feeling supported and that they received confidence in the work.

*Skills* that participants reported receiving during the training was how to prepare together with a colleague and make a plan for the audit, improved techniques to interview and communicate, an increased ability to evaluate the results and to identify non-conformities in order to help the institution to improve. To think of the system rather than on a certain incident.

The majority of participants across countries responded on *how to apply the knowledge* that they will use the model in their practice or use part of the model. Further the Swedish participants commented that they would try to influence the National Board of Health and Welfare to use the model as a standard.

*Obstacles that can be identified when applying the knowledge* participants raised issues like lack of cooperation and time, working as a single auditor, resistance of change of procedures. The present guidelines and practice could be hinder as well as the lack of legitimacy as the model has not been central approved within the organization.

In general participants agreed that *the objectives of the training were achieved* and that the general impression was positive or very positive. The participants across countries commented that the training was well organized, a good balance between lectures and group work, good premises and a good atmosphere for learning. Participants across countries commented however that translations of the training material could be improved as well as in which order the material was presented. Participants were asked *in what way the training supported their professional development and confidence*. The responses focused on practicing interview techniques, to communicate non-conformities, adapting international legal regulations, the approach that we all “sit at the same side of the table” and that we have the same interests as those being audited.



Finally in this form participants were asked *if the training method was relevant or they like to recommend other methods for dissemination the knowledge*. Participants across countries responded that the training method was good, that it worked out well with a

Themes	Sub-themes
The system based model	Overall usefulness Child perspective Collaboration with the institution <sup>3.</sup> Obstacles
Implementation	Approval by national authorities Transference to colleagues

mix of theory and practice, including role-plays.

Focus groups. When the training was completed, participants took part in focus groups to talk further about the

usefulness of systems based auditing. We choose to use the focus group method, as we wanted to collect information from several individuals at the same time. Furthermore, we thought that the group dynamics could enrich the answers in this context. One focus group was run in Estonia (8 participants), one in Latvia (6 participants) and two groups in Sweden (7 vs. 8 participants). The focus group leader was a person involved as a partner or employed within the partner organization of the project. The Estonian and Swedish groups were recorded and transcribed and included in the presented analysis. The theme for the groups was the *Usefulness of system based Audit* with a number of sub questions targeting potential for change, utility of the model and legal framework. Obstacles that could hinder implementation and if children’s rights will be more underlined by the system based audit.

The topics raised in the focus groups were organized in two themes *the system based model* and *implementation*. Sub themes are presented in table 2. The summarized results with representative quotes for each sub-theme are presented in following text. Reference to which of the three focus groups, the quote comes from is indicated within brackets (Estonia, Sweden 1 and Sweden 2).

Table 2. Themes and sub-themes identified across focus groups

*The system based model*

Participants in all focus groups agreed on the *overall usefulness* of the system based model. The model as a possible improvement of the models presently in practice:

*...actually I believe that most of my colleagues would be happy with this and think you do a better job ... then raising children's voices in this, I think it is most plus in this really... (Sweden 1)*

*what I gain is that I have a better basis, I get to work more professionally with this method, I think with the regular method I sometimes got a comment, yes, but you just seem to tick your questions ... (Sweden 1)*

*This method is exciting, I think because we've been interviewing each one individually and it becomes a bit like a puzzle, a piece from one staff member to another part from another staff member and then pieces are put together and it gets into a bigger picture, a good picture, maybe a bit more of an overall picture then. (Sweden 2)*

*The child perspective.* The focus groups did all agree that the child perspective is strengthened in the model. The legal regulations that was part of the framework as well as the suggested practice where the audit started by interviewing the children

*...former experience has heavily relied on legislation while Audtrain will add on child's perspective. Meaning that you will read the Convention of Child's Rights and focus your ideas around a child. (Estonia)*

*... it raises the children's' voices more clearly... so that we really can include what the child says. I think sometimes... we loose the child's information sometimes, we have not really taken care of it ...(Sweden 1)*

*...there's a value in talking to children first, we see the institution for an inspection and we talk to kids first... in itself is a value. It marks something that I think is essential. (Sweden 2)*

The focus groups did all highlight increased *collaboration with the institutions* as an improved approach. This was experienced as a shift from previous models of auditing across the focus groups

*.. I also think it's very appealing to agree and reach consensus as well and I think it's things that you have learned in other programs that it's factor of success as well and it is quite natural in itself ... (Sweden 1)*

*we have the same interests as the institution we inspect... There's no one who does not agree with that in some way... I think that we may have in common and that is a very good thought... also that we can convince the institutions of the need for change is the meaning of supervision ... I also think it is very good. Then you have got far... (Sweden 2)*

*The purpose is to give the children better lives in child care institutions and the manager and staff of the institutions should have the same goal and if we make them understand that audit can give them some external ideas, a pair of fresh eyes, and the purpose is to help the children, not have someone crucified. Maybe this will also contribute to better co-operation. (Estonia)*

One *obstacle* discussed in all focus groups was the time consumption of various steps in the model. The groups all believed that the method initially would be more time consuming but some thought that the time required would be reduced when the method has been established.

*If it takes more time, then more people is needed... it can't be ignored because you are so excited by other part of this, you need to see the full picture...(Sweden 2)*

*this is definitely more time consuming than just looking at papers... (Estonia)*

*I'm not sure that this way of interviewing takes more time ... I'm not sure for a group interview, which can easily take two hours. You can fit quite a few other interviews in that time ... (Sweden 1)*

### *Implementation*

*The approval by national authorities* was discussed in the focus groups. For the Swedish participants it was a concern and created uncertainty that the National Board of Health and Welfare had not clearly approved using the model in the future. The model was more clearly empowered by Estonian authorities

*I do believe that the fact of the Estonian Social Welfare Work Association and the Ministry of Social Affairs being involved in the project together shows their readiness (Estonia)*

*..if we will use the method, it will be very strange to have it in both ways ... anyway they have to say that now we are going to practice this model or we will continue the old way. For now we have made it as a test ... but then it has to be that either this model that will applied or not ... otherwise, I think we will be lost... (Sweden 2)*

Participants had a lot of thoughts around the *transference of the model to colleagues*. The participants expressed that colleagues need to be introduced and trained in the method

*... then it's the next step... when we have passed the training and perhaps are enthusiastic and so on and want to share with colleagues, that was no on this trip ... they maybe does not say it's exciting. It could be a risk that you need to be aware of... we have to put time on that...(Sweden 1)*

*how do we get ideas for better implementation of this specific model, will there be a follow-up project and training for trainers or should we assume that this will be regulated by the Child Protection Act and focus on internal control. This would also be an option. We need sustainability. (Estonia)*

*Has to be approved by our colleagues who have not experienced this training and by the management... (Sweden 2)*

4. Post-training form (part 2).

Participants were asked to individually answer eight questions about their overall impressions of the training and the knowledge they received. The items concerned key messages, training material, the learning in relation to their professional practice and the transfer of knowledge. Unfortunately, only a small group (less than half) of the participants responded to the questionnaire, despite reminders.

The *key messages that participants recalled* from the training was similar across countries and can be grouped in three themes; the need for careful preparation before carrying out the audit, the first step of the audit is to interview children, to cooperate with staff and achieve consistency in assessments. Participants perceived the training material as useful or very useful. Participants reported that they *used the system based model* to make one or two audits as suggested before the follow-up training. The training has *influenced the professional practice* of many of the responding participants. Stimulating to get to know another model, an opportunity to reflect on their own work and a change in approach of the institutions. Further some participants reported having changed their practice in how to interview children and staff.

Finally it is of interest to explore the experience of an institution being object of system based audits. It was not possible to include that kind of data from institutions of the three countries in this report. However participants has received positive comments. From an interview of a Swedish institution this quote has been picked out:

*...the inspectors found out that the young people felt that we did not listen to their complaints on meals, rooms and activities ... we thought we listened. But it was a signal... that we need to be more clear and attentive with each one of the teenagers. Now if someone is unhappy with something, we take it more seriously and they see that we listen and ask further about what might be the alternative...*



*...it was a great difference compared with previous inspections. The attitude was different, they showed trust and respect. They showed much confidence. It was very positive and they conveyed the sense that they wanted to do a good job.*