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KOZJANSKO



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A COMPARATIVE INTERNATIONAL ANALYSIS OF EDUCATIONAL NEEDS OF ADULT EDUCATORS IN KEY COMPETENCES IN SELECTED EUROPEAN COUNTRIES

July 2019



Erasmus+



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The views expressed in this publication are the opinions of the authors. Content presented in the publication do not present the official position of the European Union institutions.

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Neither part of the study can be used without the express written consent of the authors of the publication.

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Section 1: Introduction

The international strategic partnership project titled “Through culinary heritage to key competences” co-financed by European Union ERASMUS+ Programme (acronym: CUHEKO, also called “The Kitchen of Skills”) is aimed at developing e-learning courses for adult educators in the field of five of the main competences defined by the European Union: social, intercultural, digital, literacy and entrepreneurship. Professional development of trainers and educators seems crucial to providing good quality adult education and effective lifelong learning for individuals with deficiencies in one or more key competences. Therefore, tailor-made courses that address this issue can prove extremely valuable for trainers and educators who contribute to enhancing learner’s employment prospects, including self-employment, and help them sustain a satisfactory lifestyle and/or standard of living that allows for their full participation in all areas of social life. Yet, in order to train adults effectively, educators themselves must be confident in their work.

Although there is scholarly activity and research conducted in the field of lifelong learning, it seems that there are relatively few studies that focus on the key competences as specified by the Council of the European Union (2018). Certainly there is relatively little comprehensive and comparative research that would present the scale of the problem from a more global perspective. The available data and its subsequent analysis seems to be dated. Therefore, there is a great need for newer research that would firstly, present the current state of adult education in the area of key competences, and secondly, report on changes in the field since previous studies were conducted.

This study concerns the theme of needs of adult educators to effectively develop five competences in their adult learners. It presents a brief review of the topic and delivers the results of a mixed-methods study conducted by CUHEKO Project partners in the four participating countries: Poland, Finland, Slovenia and Cyprus.

Since there is relatively little research covering all key competences in the European Union, this study is unique in that it investigated an under researched topic of needs of adult educators. Furthermore, it explored all five key competences: literacy, digital competence, entrepreneurship, social skills and intercultural awareness in order to design bespoke e-learning courses of high educational value.



Section 2: Review

2.1 Introduction

In the times of rapid technological advancement, most aspects of social life undergo inevitable changes. Hence, individuals need relevant skills and competences to sustain a satisfactory lifestyle and/or standard of living that allows for their full participation in all areas of social life. In order to achieve this objective, individuals need to have relevant means of transition that can support them in maintaining and acquiring skills and competences that would enhance their employability. These, in turn, can be achieved through education, training and lifelong learning endeavours that should be distinguished by quality, inclusivity and relevance. Therefore, bespoke courses tailored to address deficiencies of particular skills and/or competences can prove advantageous in assisting individuals to enhance their employment prospects, including self-employment.

The aim of this review is to provide an overview of the current situation in terms of addressing competences deficiencies in adults. For the purposes of the international strategic partnership Project titled “Through culinary heritage to key competences” co-financed by European Union ERASMUS+ Programme (acronym: CUHEKO, also called “Kitchen of Skills”) and the proposed development of an educational e-learning courses for adult educators, this review considers five of the main competences defined by the European Union: social, intercultural, digital, literacy and entrepreneurship.

2.2 Adult Education and Key Competences

The term *lifelong learning* is understood as ‘all purposeful learning activity, from the cradle to the grave, that aims to improve knowledge and competencies for all individuals who wish to participate in learning activities’ (OECD, 2001: 2) and is a broader term than *adult education*. The latter is ‘a key phase in the continuum of lifelong learning’ and refers to ‘all forms of learning activity (whether informal, non-formal or formal)’ provided for adults ‘after [they] have left initial education’ (EC, 2015: 2). The *Strategic Framework for European Cooperation in Education and Training* (ET2020) adopted by the European Council in 2009 (CEU, 2009) proposed two main objectives: (1) personal, social and professional fulfilment of citizens and (2) sustainable economic prosperity and employability. In addition, ET2020 also identified four strategic objectives: (1) making lifelong learning and mobility a reality, (2) improving the quality and efficiency of education and training, (3) promoting equity, social cohesion and active citizenship and (4) enhancing creativity and innovation, including entrepreneurship, at all levels of education and training (CEU, 2009). Špolar and Holford (2014), however, point out that *lifelong learning* is mostly seen in relation to employability while the aspects of personal development and social cohesion seem to be cast aside.

In the Recommendation (CEU, 2018), the European Council proposed nine *key competences*, five of which are pertinent to this project. These include (1) literacy, (2) digital competence, (3) personal, social and learning to learn competence, (4) entrepreneurship and (5) cultural awareness and expression. Table 1 presents definitions and essential knowledge, skills and attitudes related to the five EU competences of the CUHEKO Project.

Table 1: Definitions and essential knowledge and skills for five key competences

Competence	Definition	Essential knowledge, skills and attitudes
Literacy	the ability to identify, understand, express, create, and interpret concepts, feelings, facts and opinions in both oral and written forms, using visual, sound/audio and digital materials across disciplines and contexts	<p>ability to communicate and connect effectively with others, in an appropriate and creative way • knowledge of reading and writing • sound understanding of written information • thus knowledge of vocabulary, functional grammar and the functions of language • an awareness of the main types of verbal interaction, a range of literary and non-literary texts, and the main features of different styles and registers of language • an awareness of the impact of language on others • a need to understand and use language in a positive and socially responsible manner</p> <p>attitude: positive towards literacy, a disposition to critical and constructive dialogue, an appreciation of aesthetic qualities and an interest in interaction with others</p>
Digital	involves confident, critical and responsible use of, and engagement with, digital technologies for learning, at work, and for participation in society	<p>information and data literacy, communication and collaboration • media literacy • digital content creation (including programming) • safety (including digital well-being and competences related to cybersecurity) • intellectual property related questions • problem solving • critical thinking • understand how digital technologies can support communication, creativity and innovation • being aware of their opportunities, limitations, effects and risks • understanding the general principles, mechanisms and logic underlying evolving digital technologies • knowledge of the basic function and use of different devices, software, and networks • ability to critically evaluate the validity, reliability and impact of information and data made available by digital means • being aware of the legal and ethical principles involved in engaging with digital technologies</p> <p>attitude: reflective and critical, yet curious, open-minded and forward-looking</p>
Personal, social and learning to learn	the ability to reflect upon oneself, effectively manage time and information, work with others in a constructive way, remain resilient and manage one's own learning and career	<p>ability to cope with uncertainty and complexity • learn to learn • support one's physical and emotional well-being to maintain physical and mental health, and to be able to lead a health-conscious, future-oriented life • empathize and manage conflict in an inclusive and supportive context • understanding the codes of conduct and rules of communication generally accepted in different societies and environments • identifying one's capacities • focus • dealing with complexity • critically reflecting and making decisions</p> <p>attitude: positive toward one's personal, social and physical well-being and learning throughout one's life, collaboration, assertiveness and integrity, respecting diversity of others and their needs and being prepared both to overcome prejudices and to compromise</p>
Entrepreneurship	the capacity to act upon opportunities and ideas, and to transform them into values for others	<p>creativity • critical thinking and problem solving • taking initiative • perseverance • awareness of different contexts and opportunities • sense of initiative and agency • pro-activity • being forward-looking • ability to work collaboratively in order to</p>

		<p>plan and manage projects that are of cultural, social or financial value</p> <p>attitude: characterised by a sense of initiative and agency, pro-activity, being forward-looking, courage and perseverance in achieving objectives. It includes a desire to motivate others and value their ideas, empathy and taking care of people and the world, and accepting responsibility taking ethical approaches throughout the process.</p>
<i>Cultural awareness and expression</i>	<p>having an understanding of and respect for how ideas and meaning are creatively expressed and communicated in different cultures and through a range of arts and other cultural forms. It involves being engaged in understanding, developing and expressing one's own ideas and sense of place or role in society in a variety of ways and contexts</p>	<p>knowledge of local, national, regional, European and global cultures and expressions • (including their) languages • heritage and traditions • cultural products • an understanding of how these expressions can influence each other as well as the ideas of the individual • understanding the different ways of communicating ideas between creator, participant and audience within written, printed and digital texts, theatre, film, dance, games, art and design, music, rituals, and architecture, as well as hybrid forms • an understanding of one's own developing identity and cultural heritage within a world of cultural diversity • how arts and other cultural forms can be a way to both view and shape the world •</p> <p>ability to express and interpret figurative and abstract ideas, experiences and emotions with empathy • ability to do so in a range of arts and other cultural forms • ability to identify and realise opportunities for personal, social or commercial value through the arts and other cultural forms • ability to engage in creative processes, both as an individual and collectively</p> <p>attitude: open towards and respecting diversity of cultural expression together with an ethical and responsible approach to intellectual and cultural ownership, a curiosity about the world, an openness to imagine new possibilities, and a willingness to participate in cultural experiences</p>

Source: CEU, 2018: 8-12

2.3 Deficit of Key Competences in Adult Learners

In terms of the deficit of competences among adult citizens/individuals, there are varying amounts of research. One of the most comprehensive studies, including most of European countries, was the Survey of Adult Skills, an outcome of the OECD Programme for the International Assessment of Adult Competences (PIAAC) conducted on adults aged 16-65 in 2012 and 2014-15. The study focused on 'key information processing skills'; hence it included literacy, numeracy and problem solving, examined against age, level of education and gender (OECD 2016a).

Figures 1 - 5 show clearly that out of the four countries participating in this project, Finland is above OECD average and above the remaining three countries regarding all three elements. In terms of literacy, in all four countries its level is directly relevant to the level of education, i.e. individuals reporting tertiary education exhibit the highest level of literacy. Similarly, numeracy and problem solving are also highest for individuals with a university degree (see Figures 1 and 2).

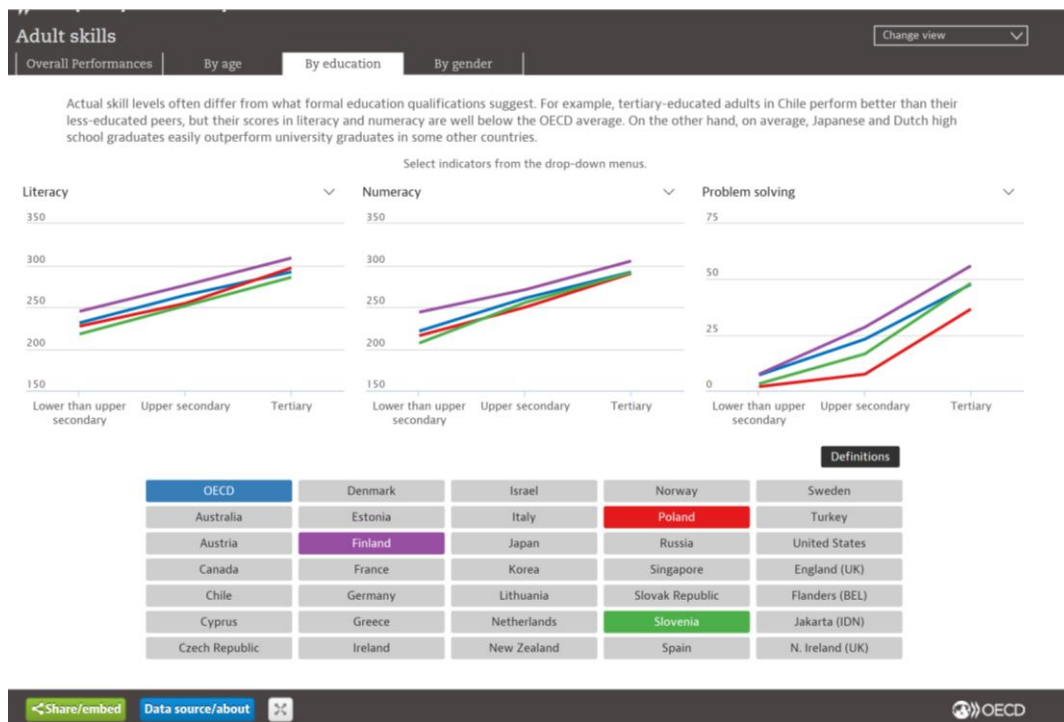


Figure 1: Literacy, numeracy and problem solving levels by education: Finland, Poland and Slovenia
Source: OECD (2016b)

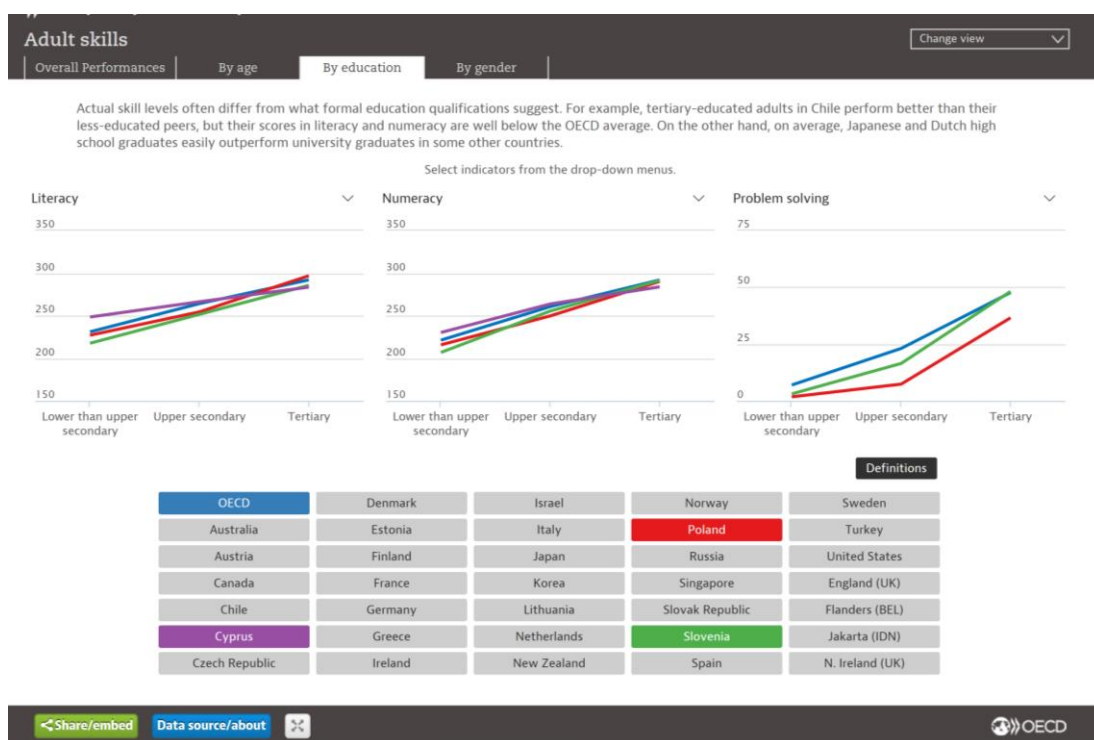


Figure 2: Literacy, numeracy and problem solving levels by education: Cyprus, Poland and Slovenia
Source: OECD (2016b)

Regarding age, this variable seems to be highest for all three aspects for younger individuals. This applies to all four countries; however, there is incomplete data for problem solving in Cyprus. This variable also seems to have a consistent downward trend in OECD and in individual countries (see Figure 2.3).

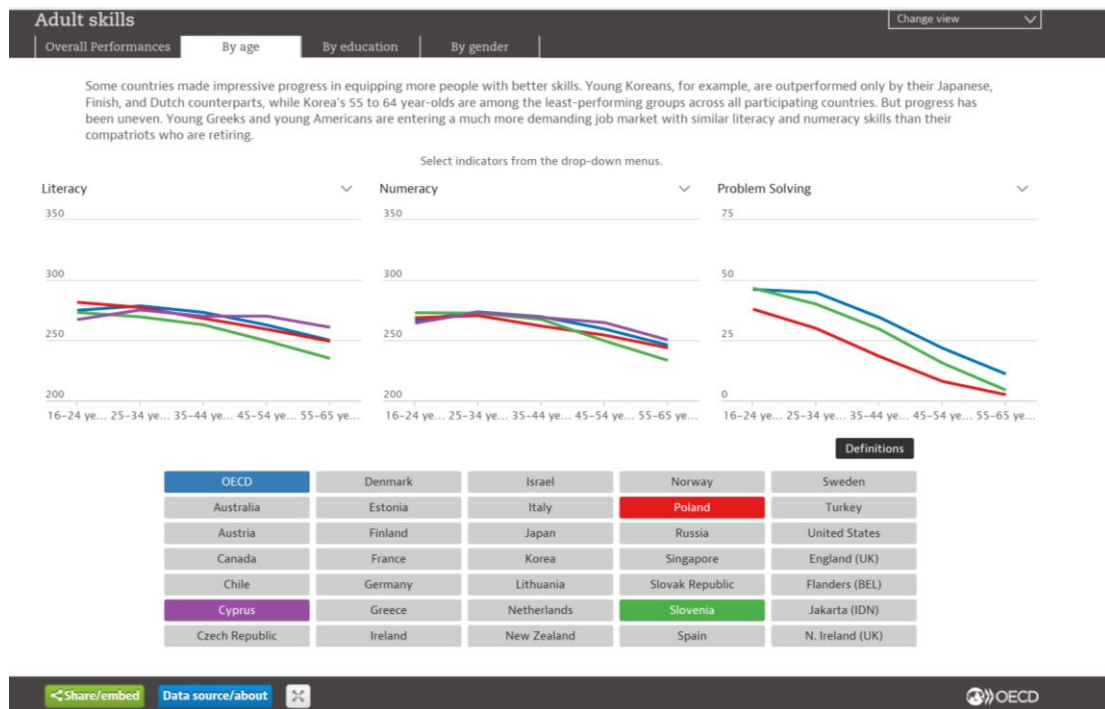


Figure 3: Literacy, numeracy and problem solving levels by age: Cyprus, Poland and Slovenia

Source: OECD (2016b)

Gender is the most varied variable for the three tested elements. It is interesting to observe that women exhibit higher levels of literacy than men and are above OECD average in Cyprus, Finland and Poland while Slovenia stays below the OECD average. As for numeracy, Poland is the only of the four countries where women exhibit the same level of numeracy as men. Cyprus, Finland and Slovenia as well as the OECD average show higher numeracy for men. In terms of problem solving, Slovenia is the only country where women have the same or slightly higher problem-solving abilities while Finland is the only country whose results are above the OECD average (see Figures 2.4 and 2.5).

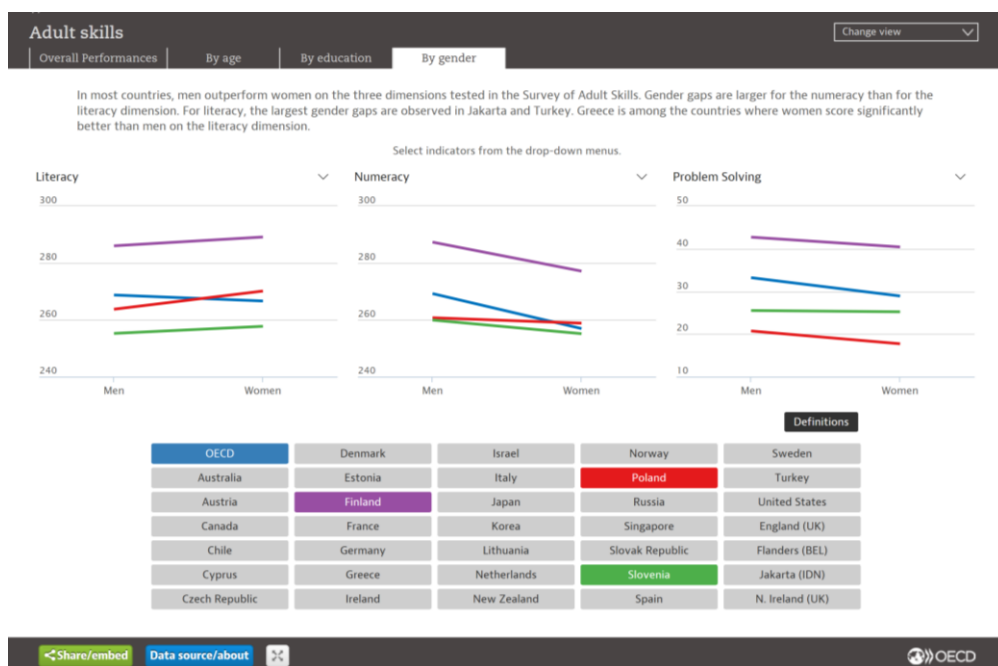


Figure 4: Literacy, numeracy and problem solving levels by gender: Finland, Poland and Slovenia

Source: OECD (2016b)

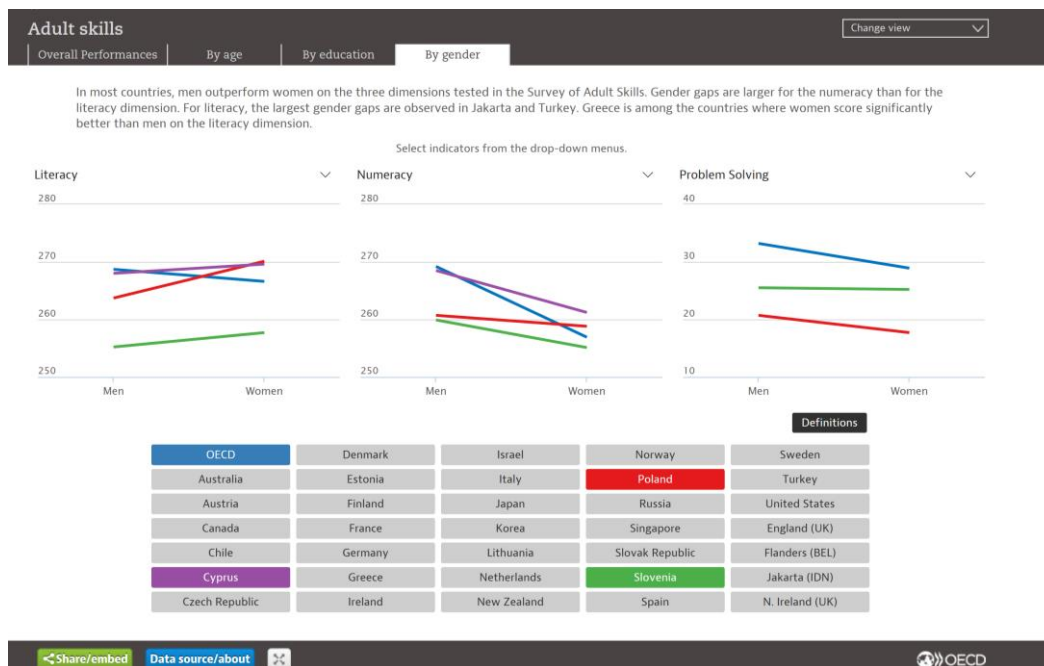


Figure 5: Literacy, numeracy and problem solving levels by gender: Cyprus, Poland and Slovenia

Source: OECD (2016b)

While literacy and numeracy seem to be well researched competences in terms of needs, **the other three competences seem to be overlooked**; however, the need for them is widely discussed in educational contexts. Problem solving, though, is not identified as a separate competence, but is seen as a skill necessary for a number of competences, e.g. entrepreneurship and digital competence (see Table 1). It is noteworthy, though, that many countries adopted a digitization strategy. This policy is usually titled *Digital COUNTRY 2020*, with the name of the country inserted into the title, E.g. *Digital Slovenia 2020*.

Table 2 below presents a compilation of example research available in each of the four participating countries.

Table 2: Research into Adult Education

Country	Skills and Competences Research	Example Studies
Cyprus	EU, Ministry of Education and Culture, European Center for the Development of Vocational Training,	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Reinforcing adult access to education and training: http://www.moec.gov.cy/aethee/imerides/2015_sun_ha/ll/final_report_info_day_24_09_15.pdf European Agenda of Adult Education: http://www.moec.gov.cy/aethee/engrafa_entypa/study_mapping_basic_skills.pdf European Center for the Development of Vocational Training: http://www.cedefop.europa.eu/files/4118_el.pdf Adult Education Survey: http://www.cystat.gov.cy/mof/cystat/statistics.nsf/All/634C7F6DABE08AF4C225765600305EDB/\$file/ADULT_EDUCATION_SURVEY-2016-EL-310118.pdf?OpenElement National Strategy of Lifelong Learning: http://www.dgepcd.gov.cy/dgepcd/dgepcd.nsf/499A1CB95981643FC2257C7D00486172/%24file/National%20LifeLong%20Learning%20Strategy%20in%20Greek.pdf The System of Professional Education and Training of Cyprus: Developing Skills and Pedagogical Innovation 2007: http://www.hrdauth.org.cy/images/media/assetfile/VocTrainingEdu2007_gr.pdf

Finland	OECD, EU, Finnish National Board of Education, Ministry of Education and Culture, Norden *there is no special research organisation below Ministry of Education and Culture or Finnish National Board of Education*	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Building skills for all: review from Finland: http://www.oecd.org/finland/Building-Skills-For-All-A-Review-of-Finland.pdf (ENG) Education, training and demand for labour in Finland 2025 (ENG) https://www.oph.fi/download/144754_Education_training_and_demand_for_labour_in_Finland_by_2025_2.pdf Työn murros ja elinikäinen oppiminen (Breaking of work and life-long learning) – clarified developing needs of LLL http://julkaisut.valtioneuvosto.fi/bitstream/handle/10024/160556/okm08.pdf Elinikäinen oppiminen, Pohjoismaiden tehokkaat strategiat https://books.google.fi/books?id=2xonyWXXcmcC&pg=PA9&lpg=PA9&dq=Aikuisten+taidot+yritt%C3%A4jyys&source=bl&ots=K65zJtdxVb&sig=ACfU3U3HhNUgqMTz0ZrR4oQojvQtSj5XCG&hl=fi&sa=X&ved=2ahUKewi98fDTs9ThAhXCxaYKHYSxBBgQ6AEwBHoECAkQAQ#v=onepage&q=Aikuisten%20taidot%20yritt%C3%A4jyys&f=false
Poland	FRSE, Polish National Foundation, Institute for Research in Education (Instytut Badań Edukacyjnych), Ministry of Education	Fundacja Rozwoju Systemu Edukacji (Foundation for the Development of Education System https://www.frse.org.pl/badania/ Edu-enthusiasts: http://eduentuzjasci.pl/badania/110-badanie/194-miedzynarodowe-badanie-kompetencji-osob-doroslych-piaac.html
Slovenia	University for Adult Education	Digital Slovenia 2020 – strategy of development of information society till 2020 Diana Volčjak <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Needs for development of digital skills in Slovenia – findings of researches The examination of educational offer Mihaela Žvegljč <ul style="list-style-type: none"> References and guidelines and legal bases for the preparation of the new program

2.4 Required Competences of Adult Educators (AEs)

There is a clear need to educate citizens/individual from a variety of backgrounds in terms of key competences, which deficiency levels vary across countries. In addition to that and with an aim to meet that objective, the European Union also recognises the need to professionally develop (PD) educators. Further to their recommendation, educators' competences can be enhanced through:

- (1) embedding competence-oriented approaches to education, training and learning in initial education and continuing professional development; (2) [...] support in developing competence-oriented approaches in specific contexts by staff exchanges and peer learning, and peer counselling [...] and through networks, collaboration and communities of practice; (3) assistance in creating innovative practices, taking part in research and making appropriate use of new technologies; and (4) guidance [...], access to centres of expertise, appropriate tools and materials [that] can enhance the quality of teaching and learning methods and practice.

CEU 2018: 13

Despite the recommendation, there seems to be relatively little focus on training educators of adults (see ESREA 2009). Nonetheless, there were attempts to establish minimum competence criteria that would serve as a basis for a training curriculum. Bernhardsson and Lattke (2009) provide an overview of the development of training of AEs and established criteria, tools and sets of competences, e.g. the AGADE (A Good Adult Educator in Europe) Project run in 2004-2006, the Q-Act (Qualifying the Actors in Adult and Continuing Education) run in 2007, the ALPINE (Adult Learning Professions in Europe) Project, the VINEPAC Project run in 2006-08 or the QF2TEACH Project. The latter aimed 'to develop a

research evidence-based competence model for adult learning facilitators in Europe' (Bernhardsson and Lattke, 2009: 19). A noteworthy programme was ERASMUS EMAE (European Master in Adult Education), a postgraduate degree programme that focussed on European issues and competences in the field of continuing education. It also addressed a problematic issue of AEs lacking a degree with a teaching qualification (Bernhardsson and Lattke, 2009).

Figures 6 – 8 present a variety of approaches to the expected criteria and qualifications of AEs in Europe. Jääger and Irons (2006 cited in Bernhardsson and Lattke 2009) established a set of minimum competences for AEs (see Fig. 6). VINEPAC presented a set of key competences of AEs (see Fig. 7). A Dutch desktop research resulted in a list of fields of activity within core competences (see Fig. 8).

Personal development area / ethic dimension self esteem tolerance responsibility communication skills empathy flexibility	Professional development area <i>Organising stage – knowledge dimension</i> Knowledge about how adults learn and understanding the psychology of adults Knowledge of methods in AE and learning Skills in preparing value-based (democratic and humanistic) programmes Planning and organisational skills Good knowledge of the subject <i>Performance stage – skills dimension</i> Ability to motivate for learning – before, during and after the learning process Development of learning environment in accordance with students' needs, focusing on self-directed learning Skills to activate learners <i>Evaluating stage – Organisational dimension</i> Skills in self-reflection and critical thinking Skills in evaluating and promoting self-evaluation in oneself and students
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Figure 6: Minimum competence criteria by Jääger and Irons (2006)

Source: Bernhardsson and Lattke (2009)

Knowledge o Initial knowledge of psycho-social profile of the adult o knowledge of the group characteristics o knowledge base in own content area Training/Management o Needs analysis o Preparation of training o Training programme delivery o Use of technology and resources (time, material, space, people) Assessment and Valorisation of learning o Develop work with learners to identify their needs, strengths and goals, and advices or refers them to appropriate programmes and levels of instruction o Use of assessment results on a regular basis to plan lessons, develop curricula, monitor progress towards objectives and goals and verify learning o Monitoring of learning beyond simple recall of information using a variety of assessment strategies o Structuring and facilitating ways for learners and peers to evaluate and give feedback on their learning and performance, through reflection and self-assessment o Guiding learners in the development and ongoing review of their educational plans o Use of qualitative methods to valorise the learners progress

Motivation and Counselling

- o Sharing information with learners and colleagues about additional learning resources, educational opportunities and options for accessing support services
- o Making referrals to appropriate resource when guidance and counselling needs are beyond own expertise
- o Guides learners in the development and ongoing review of their educational plans

Personal and Professional Development

- o Analysis of the needs and opportunities of professional development
- o Demonstrating interest for self-development

Open category (Any additional competencies considered relevant by the trainer/the evaluator)

Figure 7: Key competences of AEs in Europe (VINEPAC, Romanian Institute of Adult Education)

Source: Bernhardsson and Lattke (2009)

Learning needs assessment
Preparation of courses
Facilitation of learning
Monitoring and evaluation
Counselling and guidance
Programme development
Financial management
Human resource management
Overall management
Marketing and PR
Administrative support
ICT-support
Overarching activities

Figure 8: Core competences fields of activity

Source: Bernhardsson and Lattke (2009: 16)

Figure 9 shows the reference framework for competences, with a division into meta and generic ones. It seems to be the most comprehensive visual representation of a wide range of competences that AEs, whether in formal mainstream education providing qualifications or non-formal training ventures, need for everyday operation and work with adult learners and lifelong learning.

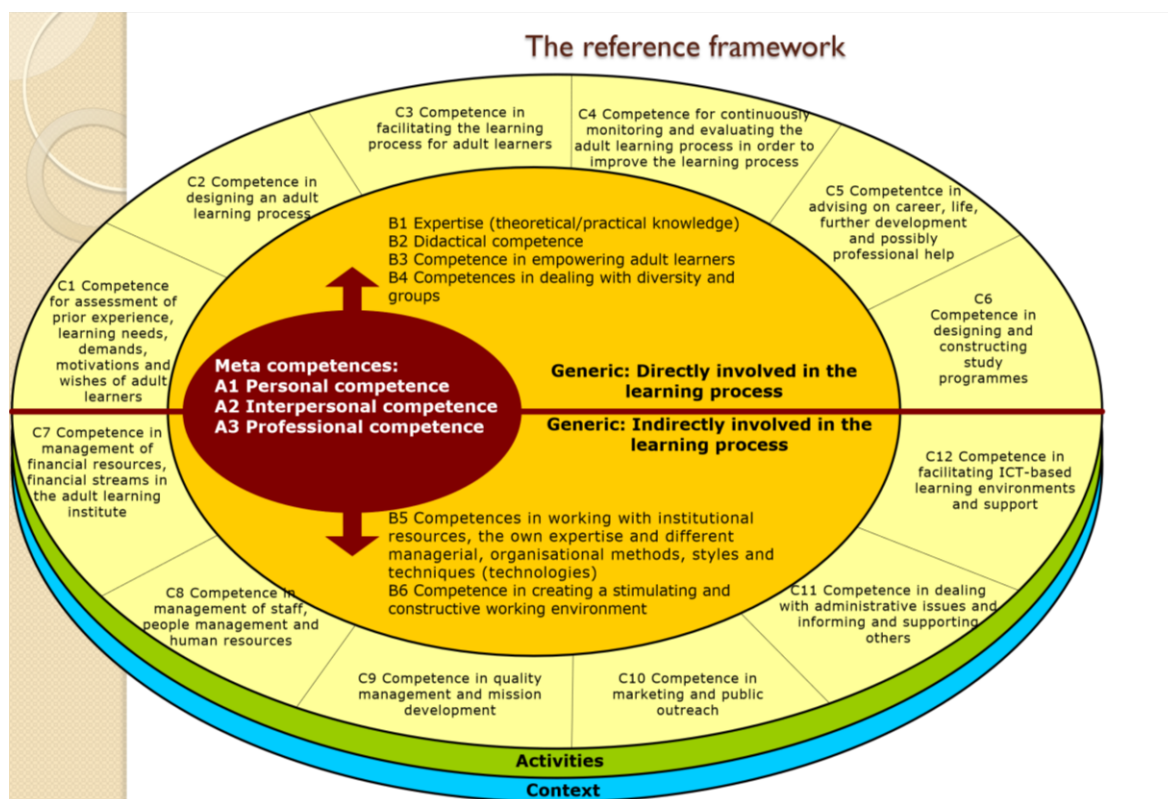


Figure 9: Competences framework for adult educators

Source: Osborne (2011)

It is noteworthy, though, that although the above-mentioned projects focused on competences required by AEs, their **needs** that would allow achieving those competences received relatively little attention in research and in non-academic publications on continuing education. Therefore, **CUHEKO** could **address this gap** within its field of interest. Furthermore, as can be seen from Figure 10, the skills and competences of AEs recommended by the European Commission do not vary significantly from the established competences for adult learners.

2.5 Provision and Availability of Adult Education and Training for Adult Educators

Among the four countries participating in the CUHEKO project, there are noticeable differences in terms of the availability and provision of adult education and training to adult educators. In all four countries, however, competences training is provided with employability and skills improvement in mind while information about skills level and deficiencies is mostly obtained from PIAAC and other EU and OECD publications.

Apart from motivation and time constraints of adults, an issue that may affect the type of training provision is the level of access to the internet. According to Eurostat (2017) data, the percentage of households with such access was at the following levels: Cyprus – 79%, Poland and Slovenia – 82%, and Finland – 94%, with EU28 average at the level of 87%.

It seems that there is relatively little availability of training courses for adult educators despite a provision of competences training courses for adults with competences deficiencies. Out of the four participating countries, Slovenia is the one where there is some focus on training of adult educators.

Cyprus

Adult education in Cyprus is primarily down to the Adult Education Centres, launched by the Ministry of Education and Culture and coordinated by the Primary Education Directorate. The programme aims to stimulate the lifelong learning process and its contexts, enhance social inclusion, active citizenship, personal development, competitiveness and employability. It aims to promote rise to new learning opportunities to adults, provide further acquisition of skills to the learners, develop their abilities, enrich their knowledge, facilitate their personal development and boost their employability. Yet their main focus is on skills rather than competences as the offered training focuses on a choice of vocational courses (81 different programs for the year 2018-2019). The types of activities and organisation of adult training include open, in-house and tailor-made seminars, online courses, blended learning courses, coaching sessions and university executive courses.

Finland

Since digital skills are seen in Finland as the ones that need improvement, there is a provision of training in literacy, digital literacy and mathematics. Adult education is provided both face to face and online while training can take the forms of courses, seminars, coaching sessions or peer group learning. There is also a provision of self-evaluation tools for individuals to self-assess basic skills. One example of an educational project is the TAIKOJA II project (see <https://taikoja.fi/>), which is an umbrella project for various adult training offers aimed at improving skills and competences the unemployed and/or individuals returning to working life. It is noteworthy that the assessment of adult training needs at the national level is often based on EU and OECD data and publications.

Poland

Due to very low level of key competences among adults in Poland and high demand for key competences training for adults, there is only some provision of training courses within local communities, mostly within the areas of ICT and languages dedicated for adults. These often have support from local governments and/or are co-financed from the EU social and regional funds. Therefore, many of digital skills competences enhancement training opportunities are dedicated to either more disadvantaged social groups or specified professions or age groups. Those courses are provided in the form of face-to-face workshops, classes or seminars. But still, there is no evidence of specialised education for adult educators in key competences available. One organisation active in the field of researching and developing adult education is the Foundation for the Development of Education System (see <https://www.frse.org.pl/en/>).

Slovenia

Adult education at the level of national projects is intense in Slovenia. Since in 2018 the country received a recommendation to 'increase employability of low-skilled and older workers through lifelong learning and activation measures' (Council of the European Union, 2018). It progresses with building a new system of knowledge and skills enhancement through lifelong learning (EC 2018). One of the current projects is MUNERA (see <https://erasmusu.com/en/pilar-munera-1030760>).

The most intense at the local level, however, there are LEADER projects and ones provided/ offered within the area of Adult Education at universities. Examples of training providers include:

RIC, Novo Mesto, University for Adult Education, Murska Sobota, Soča Valley Development Centre
University for Adult Education, Jesenice, Public Institution Cene Štupar – Center for Education, Ljubljana, Maribor Adult Education Center, SIMBIOZA – Intergeneration Center, Slovene University for Third Life Period.

The training /education for educators is provided by SIRSAE (Slovenian Institute of the Republic of Slovenia for Adult Education), which is partly financed from the European (EU) social fund and the Slovenian Ministry for Education, Science and Sport. The training is carried out by the operative program for executing the European cohesion policy for the years 2014-2020. The ultimate goal and specific focus of SIRSAE programmes is to improve skills and competences of working people and those involved in lifelong learning to a lesser degree.

2.6 Summary

There seems to be an observable necessity to explore the needs of adult educators who work in the area of the recommended competences. This will allow for the preparation of tailor-made courses, which in turn could contribute to enhanced quality of skills and competences trainings. This seems even more important due to observable slight disproportions in the focus on particular competences and also a slight imbalance in the needs analysis and provision of training. The provision of assistance and developmental opportunities to adult educators regarding the key competences can have direct and very positive effects on the enhancement of key competences across European societies.

Furthermore, the limited availability of research studies on competences and educators' needs seems problematic. There is relatively little research on the level of competences in the EU countries. Hence, many institutions in the field of educational research as well as the Ministry of Education rely on the 2011-2012 OECD PIAAC study, which focused only on literacy, numeracy and problem solving.

Furthermore, many aspects of social and work life have undergone inevitable changes since that data was obtained and published. Therefore, there is a clear need to verify PIAAC data locally, on national level, before any course can be designed.

Secondly, there is an observable deficiency of research on the needs of educators. The 2009 post-conference ESREA (European Society on Research in the Education of Adults) publication seems to be the most comprehensive available literature in that field.

Hence, it is apparent that newer data is needed to ensure the selection of a relevant methodology for the design of the planned courses for all five key competences included in the CUHEKO project.

Section 3: Methodology/Data Collection Methods

3.1 Introduction

This section describes data collection methods used to gather information used for the purposes of an analysis of the educational needs of trainers and educators of adults in the four participating countries of the CUHEKO project: Cyprus, Finland, Poland and Slovenia. Two type of data were collected, quantitative and qualitative, in the period between January and June 2019. The analysis of the collected material is presented in Section 4 of this Report.

3.2 Quantitative Data Collection

Quantitative data was collected through a questionnaire that was prepared in the English language and then the agreed version was translated to national languages and distributed in each of the four countries. The content consisted of 14 questions that allowed responses in the form of single choice answers, multiple choice, prioritizing or Likert scale as well as open questions.

The questionnaire also included open questions, responses to which were grouped into comparable categories of answers that allowed for quantified interpretation of the qualitative data. Open-ended questions enabled some reflection and more personalized responses in order to obtain more insightful opinions .The results and indicative trends have been based primarily on the information and data received from those collected, specialised questionnaires.

The questionnaire was available in an electronic form, through the survey platform Survey Gizmo, as well as in paper version. The questionnaires were translated into national languages of countries taking part in the project: Polish, Slovenian, Greek and Finnish. The dissemination of the questionnaire was conducted by each partner organisation through, among others: passing information to European and national organisations of Local Action Groups, contacting by email educators and their groups as well as universities, placing information about the study in social media, placing information on an educational platform, informing the European Association of Adult Educators about the study.

Table 3 presents the number of responses collected in each of the participating countries

Table 3: Number of questionnaire responses by country

Country	Number of Responses
Cyprus	30
Finland	40
Poland	60
Slovenia	40

The number of questionnaire responses was proportional and related to the population size of each of the participating countries. Therefore, larger counties, such as Poland, collected a higher number of questionnaires, while countries with smaller population, such as Cyprus, were delegated the task to collect a smaller number of questionnaires. The collected data was analysed and compared, with an aim to identify similarities, differences and needs of adult educators in each of the participating countries.

3.3 Qualitative Data Collection

Qualitative data was collected through structured interviews conducted in each of the participating countries. To obtain more insight into the issues tackled in the questionnaire, the interview questions were designed to generate more detailed responses regarding issues adult educators struggled with and their reported needs that would allow them to teach more effectively within the area of each of the five competences.

Qualitative research was held mainly in the form of one-to-one interviews with respondents. The interviews enriched the collected quantitative data and confirmed the discovered trends. It brought more detailed information on needs, reasons of behaviour, intentions and an in-depth understanding of problems and challenges adult educators face.

Table 4 presents the number of responses collected in each of the participating countries.

Table 4: Number of interviews by country

Country	Number of Interviews
Cyprus	3
Finland	3
Poland	6
Slovenia	4

The higher number of interviews in Poland and Slovenia was due to the higher number of quantitative responses and a larger population of those European Union Member States. The collected data was analysed and compared, with an aim to provide complementary details to the similarities, differences and needs of adult educators that surfaced in the quantitative data –questionnaires collected in each of the participating countries.

Section 4: Data from National Level Research

4.1 Introduction

This section presents questionnaire and interview data collected in the four countries participating in the CUHEKO Project: Cyprus, Finland, Poland and Slovenia. Apart from typical demographic data, i.e. age and gender, the respondents were approached to comment on the scope of their work, their professional experience, factors that influence the effectiveness of their teaching, challenges in teaching the specified competences, e-learning elements that are significant for improving their own competences and source they use to enhance their competence-specific knowledge.

4.2 Age of respondents

In terms of respondents' age, there were some similarities among the participating countries. Figure 10 shows that a majority of the respondents in all participating countries were of the 40-49 years old age group, while the two smallest groups of participants were the extreme age groups, i.e. participants younger than 30 years of age or older than 60 years of age. In total the two groups included only 11% of all respondents. The largest group, was the middle group of participants aged between 40-49 years. These respondents constituted 38% of all individuals participating in the study. The remaining two groups, 30-39 and 50-59 years, had similar proportions, i.e. 25% and 26% respectively.

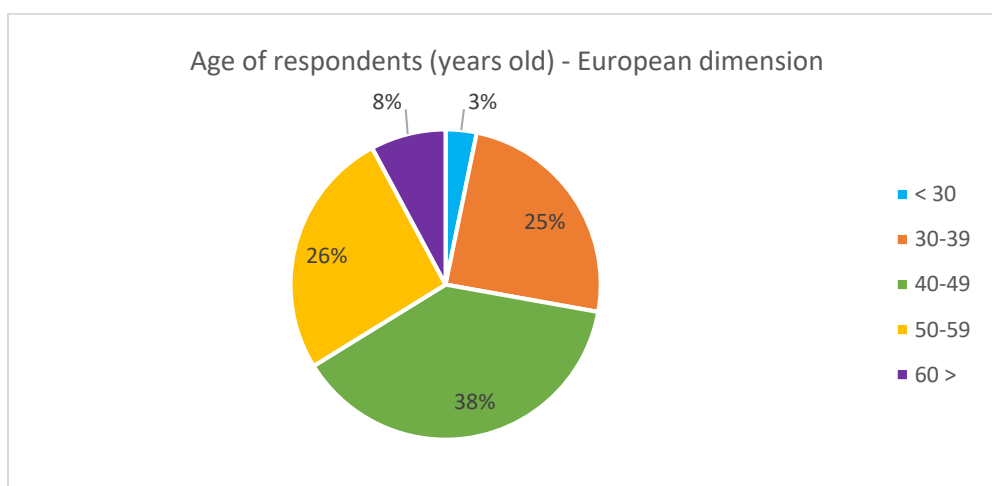


Figure 10: CUHEKO participants by age

In terms of age distribution by country (see Figure 11 and Table 5), there were observable some similarities and differences in all age groups. The largest group of the respondents in the CUHEKO participating countries was the 40-49 years age group. In Cyprus more than half of participants (53%) were placed in this group while Poland and Slovenia had the representation of this group at the level of 39% and 40% respectively. The only exception in this largest age group was Finland, for which this group constituted less than a quarter (22%) of all participants.

The second group in terms of the volume of responses was the 50-59 group; however, the national percentages varied considerably. While in Cyprus only 10% of all respondents declared this age, in Finland the number of participants between 50-59 years of age was four times higher (41%). In Slovenia a third of all participants was in their fifties while in Poland only a fifth of all participants declared this age group.

The two remaining groups with the smallest number of participants were not represented in every participating country. Younger participants were recruited only in Poland (6%) and in Cyprus (7%) while

respondents from the oldest group had the strongest representation in Finland (15%), with no respondents over 60 years of age in Slovenia. Poland and Cyprus collected data only from a small number of respondents at the age 60+. 6% and 10% respectively.

Table 5: CUHEKO participants by age by country

Age (years old)	PL	SLO	FI	CY	Total
< 30 years old	6%	0%	0%	7%	3%
30-39 years old	29%	28%	22%	20%	25%
40-49 years old	39%	40%	22%	53%	38%
50-59 years old	20%	33%	41%	10%	26%
60 > years old	6%	0%	15%	10%	8%

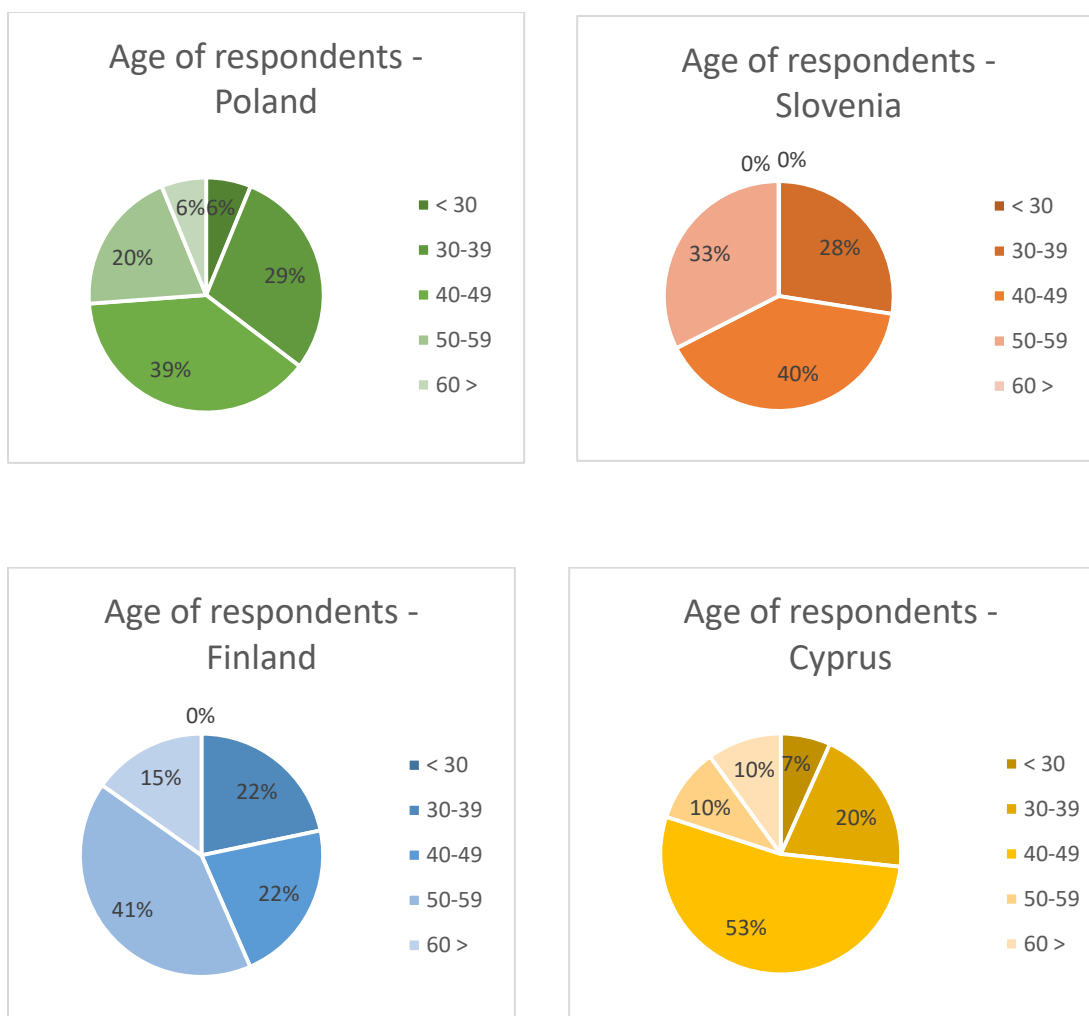


Figure 11: CUHEKO participants by age by country

4.3 Gender of respondents

The CUHEKO study gender distribution is in favor of female participants (65%), with men constituting only 35% of respondents (see Figure 12 and Table 6).

Figure 13 presents differences in gender distribution at the national level. Equal participation in the study occurred only in Cyprus, with Finland being close behind (54% women and 46% men). The largest proportion of female participants was observed in Slovenia (85%) while Poland recruited more than two thirds of female participants (69%). It is debatable though whether such participation reflects a higher number of women in education and training or females being more eager to participate in research studies.

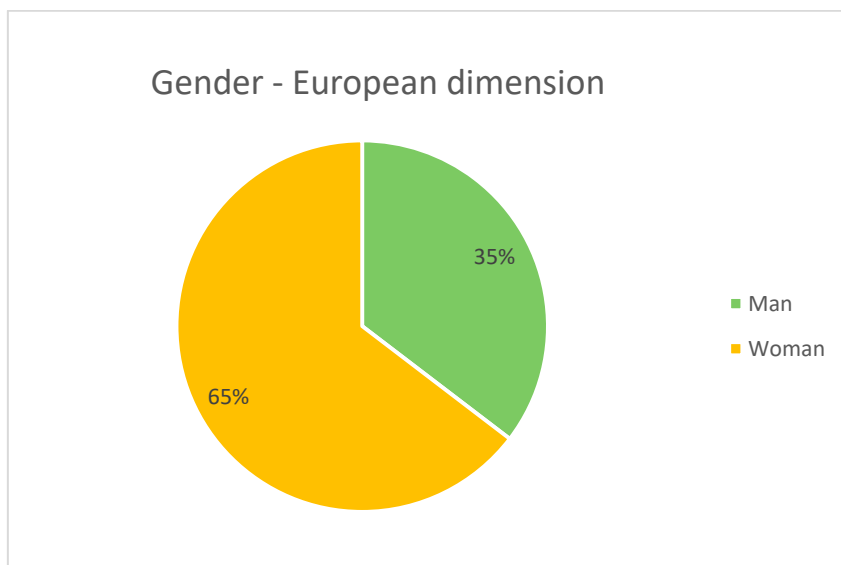
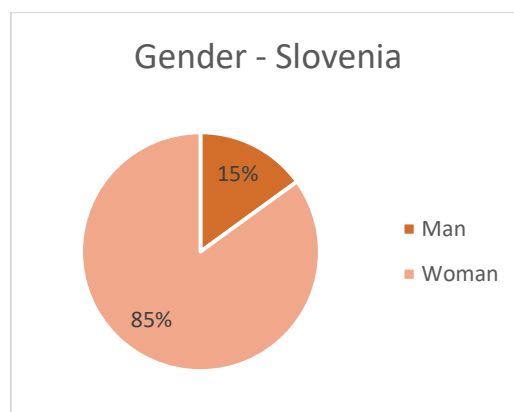
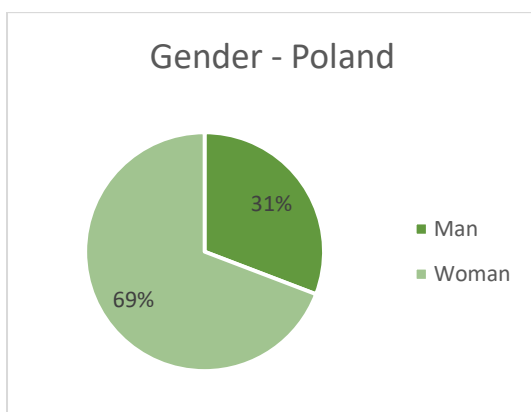


Figure 12: CUHEKO study gender distribution

Table 6: CUHEKO gender distribution

Gender	PL	SLO	FI	CY	Total
Man	31%	15%	46%	50%	35%
Woman	69%	85%	54%	50%	65%



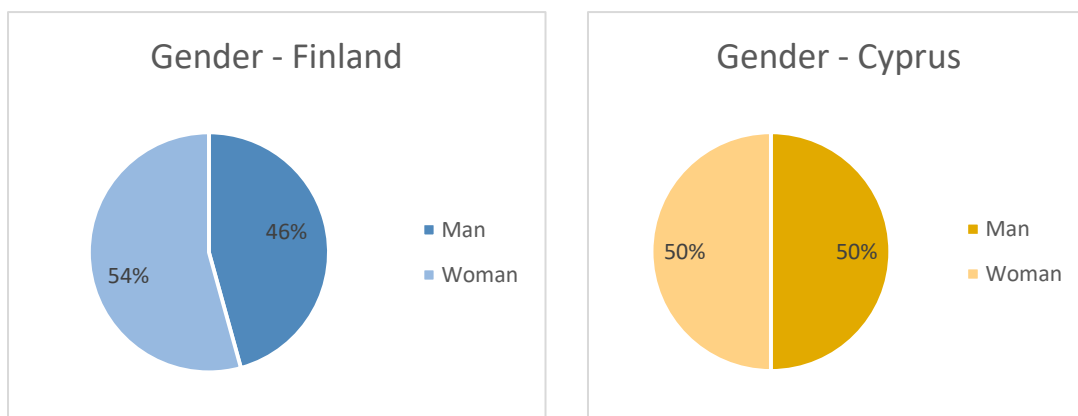


Figure 13: CUHEKO study gender distribution by country

4.4 Experience of respondents as practicing trainer/educator

Figure 14 and Table 7 clearly show that nearly half of all CUHEKO respondents had more than ten years of experience in training and educating adults, with a fifty-fifty distribution between those with 11-15 years of experience and those with 16-25 years in the profession of teaching adults. 21% of participants declared 6-10 years of professional practice. Less than a quarter of the respondents worked in adult training less than 5 years while about 6% of the participants had extensive professional experience of 26 years or more.

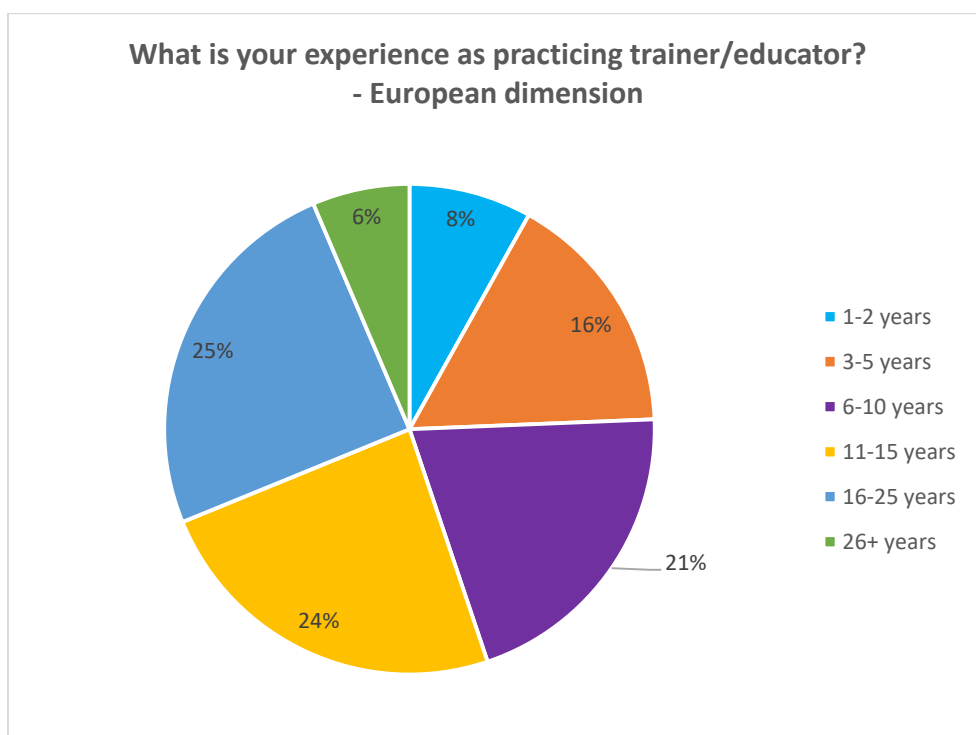


Figure 14: Experience in training adults in years

Table 7: Experience in training adults in years

What is your experience as practicing trainer/educator?	PL	SLO	FI	CY	Total
1-2 years	8%	13%	2%	10%	8%
3-5 years	20%	18%	11%	17%	16%
6-10 years	25%	20%	17%	20%	21%
11-15 years	26%	15%	35%	20%	24%
16-25 years	19%	30%	24%	27%	25%
26+ years	3%	5%	11%	7%	6%

The distribution of this feature varies among the four participating countries (Figure 15). The smallest group of respondents in all countries were respondents with at least 26 years of experience in training adults; yet, the value was very small for Poland (3%) and slightly higher for Slovenia (5%) and Cyprus (7%). In Finland, however, the rate was 11%. Respondents with shortest experience, i.e. 1-2 years were in minority as well. In Poland, Slovenia and Cyprus the values were oscillating around 10%, but in Finland this group was underrepresented (only 2%).

The two groups with the highest numbers of participants, i.e. 6-10 and 11-15 years of experience, varied across the countries as well. In Poland and in Cyprus they were represented in equal proportions, 25%-26% and 20% respectively. In Finland, however, the 11-15 years group constituted a third of respondents and was twice as large (35%) as the 6-10 years one (17%). In Slovenia, the disproportion was slightly smaller and the 6-10 years group gathered 20% of the participants while the 11-15 years group constituted about one sixth (15%) of Slovenian respondents.

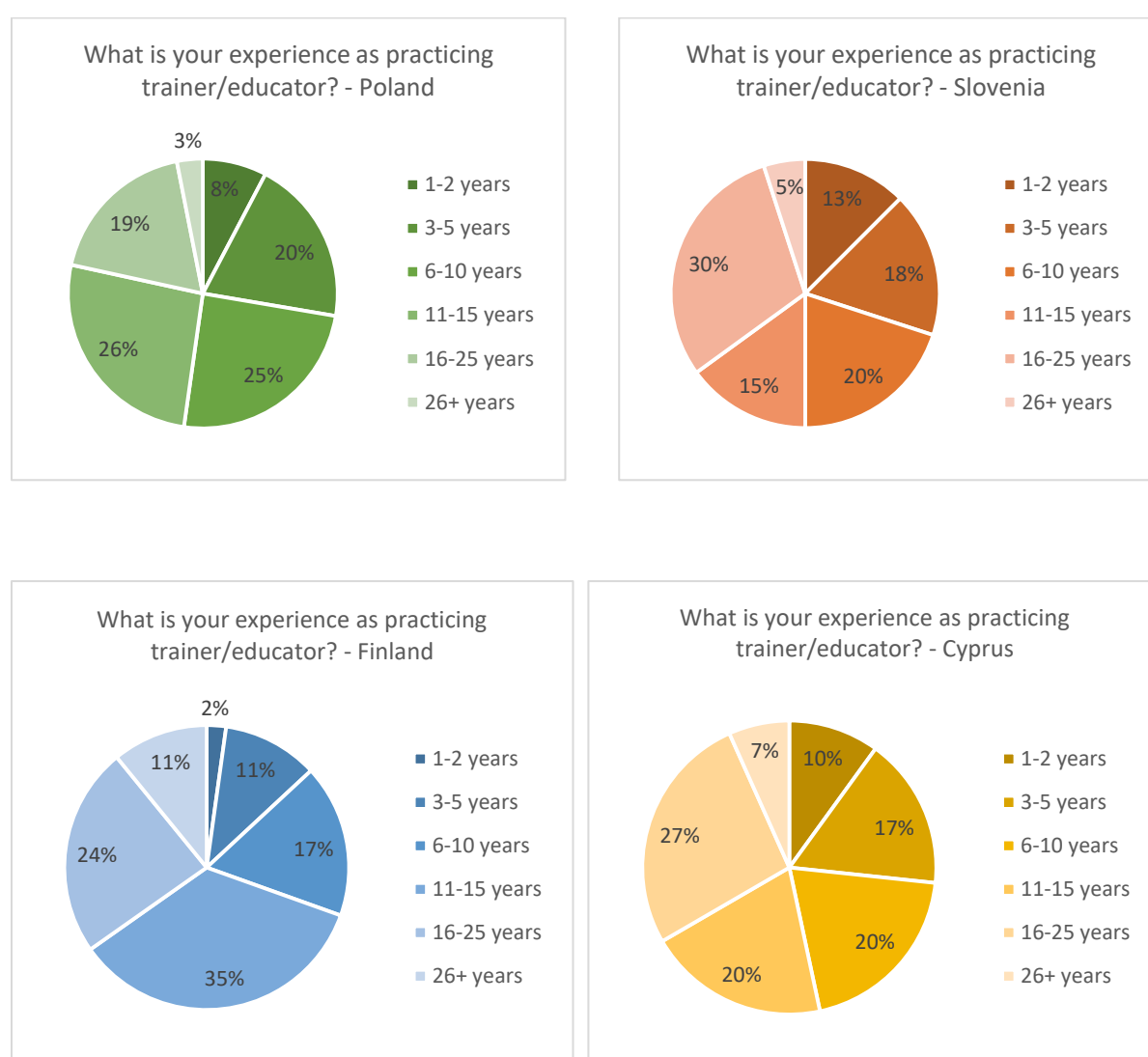


Figure 15: Experience in training adults in years by country

4.5 Scope of work of trainers/adult educators with key competences

Overall, as Figure 16 indicates, in the four participating countries half of the respondents deal with social and personal competences. Entrepreneurship training comes closely behind (circa 47%).

In general, training regarding other competences is reported at a much lower level. Citizenship and digital competences were mentioned by 22% of respondents, cultural awareness, STEM and literacy appeared in 16-18% of responses and multilingual competence scored below 10%.

Yet, there are some discrepancies as to which of the listed competences are in focus in each of the four participating countries. It needs to be emphasized that in each of the participating countries a different competence scored 0%, which may indicate that these are the perceived strengths of those societies. Similarly, the PIAAC study results clearly indicated that societies vary in their strengths and weaknesses.

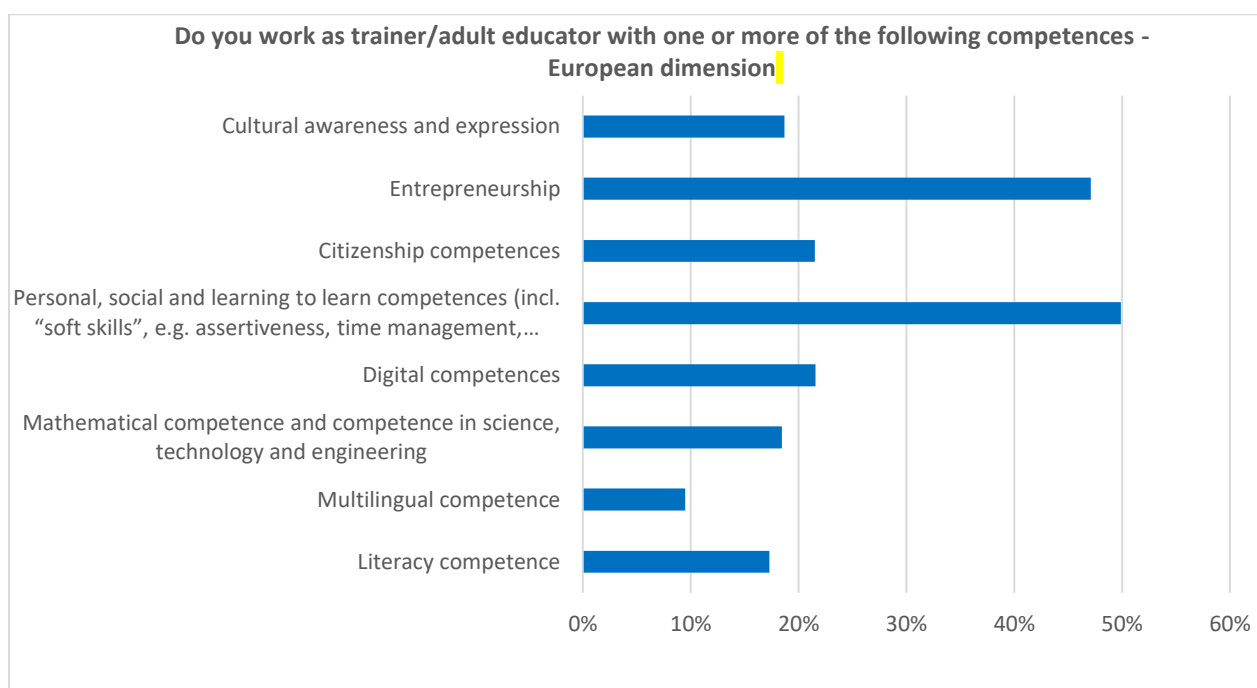


Figure 16: Areas of training – European dimension

In Poland (Figure 17), a vast majority of training is organized for three competences: (1) social and personal skills (over 65%), (2) entrepreneurship (over 55%) and citizenship (about 45%). Literacy was mentioned by about 20% of the respondents while cultural awareness, digital competence and STEM score between 7-12%. It is noteworthy, though, that multilingual competence was not mentioned by the survey respondents in Poland.

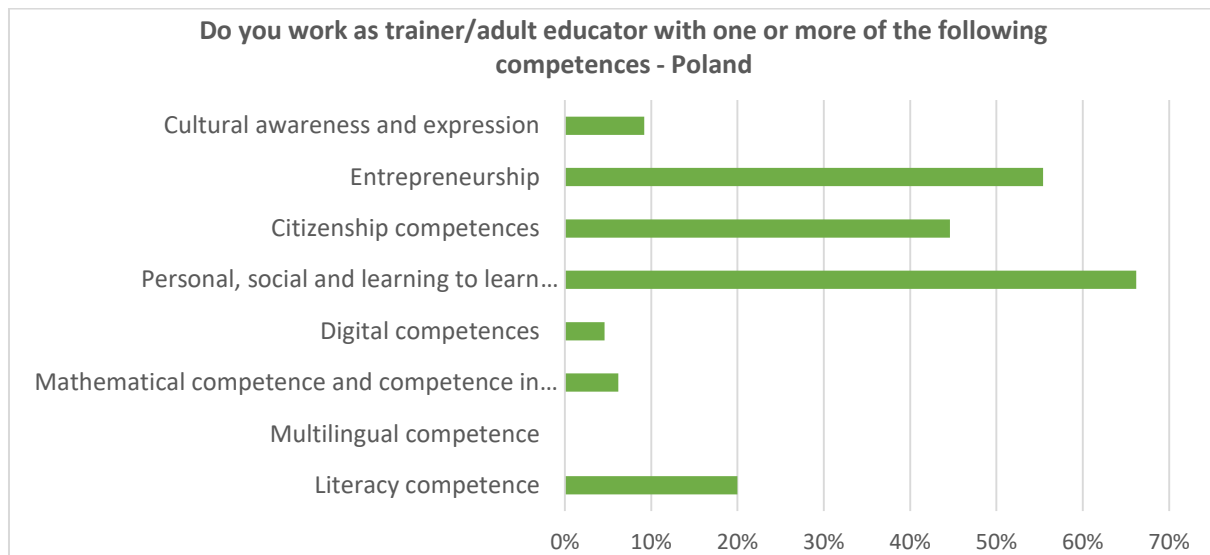


Figure 17: Areas of training in Poland

In Slovenia (Figure 18), the picture is slightly different, with entrepreneurship (about 55%), social and personal competence (40%) and cultural awareness (about 35%) being the most commonly reported areas of training. Digital competence (about 25%) was reported more frequently than in Poland and Cyprus, yet it is far below the level of Finland. The remaining four competences, i.e. citizenship, STEM, multilingualism and literacy, scored between 12-15%.

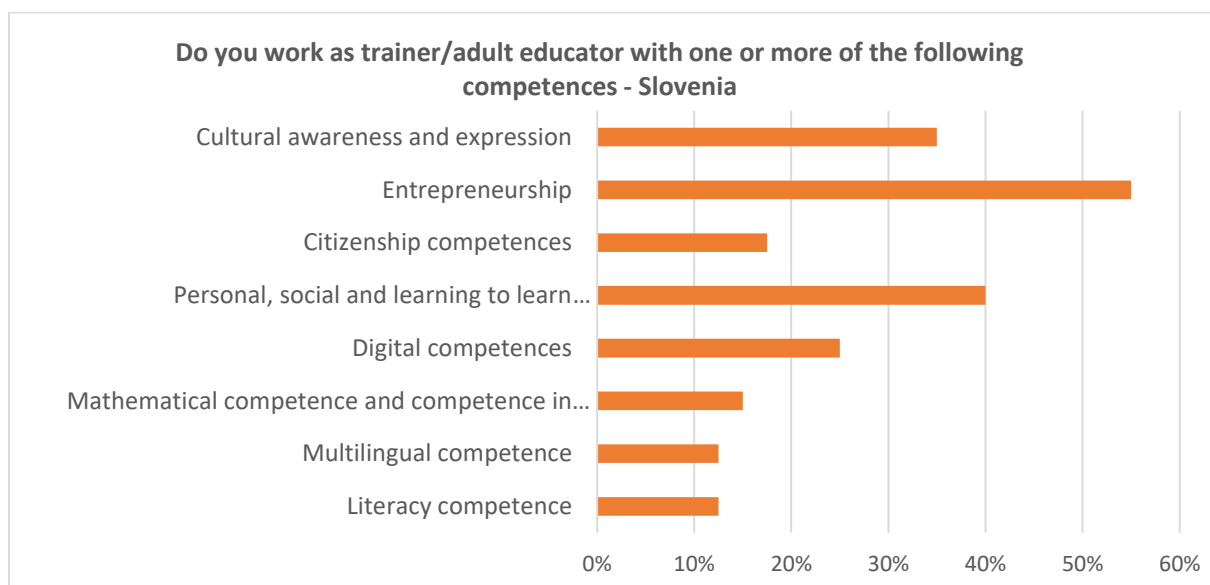


Figure 18: Areas of training in Slovenia

In Finland (Figure 19), the greatest emphasis is placed on social and personal competence (50%), digital competence (50%) and entrepreneurship (about 42%). STEM, unlike in the other countries, scores about a third of the Finnish responses while cultural awareness and citizenship about a quarter each.

Multilingual competence is mentioned by only about 8% of respondents. It is noteworthy that literacy does not appear among the trained competences in Finland at all.



Figure 19: Areas of training in Finland

In Cyprus (Figure 20), the following three competences achieve the greatest attention in terms of training: (1) social and personal competence (about 43%), (2) literacy (about 37%) and (3) entrepreneurship (about 36%). The remaining competences score between 5-20%, with citizenship not being mentioned at all.

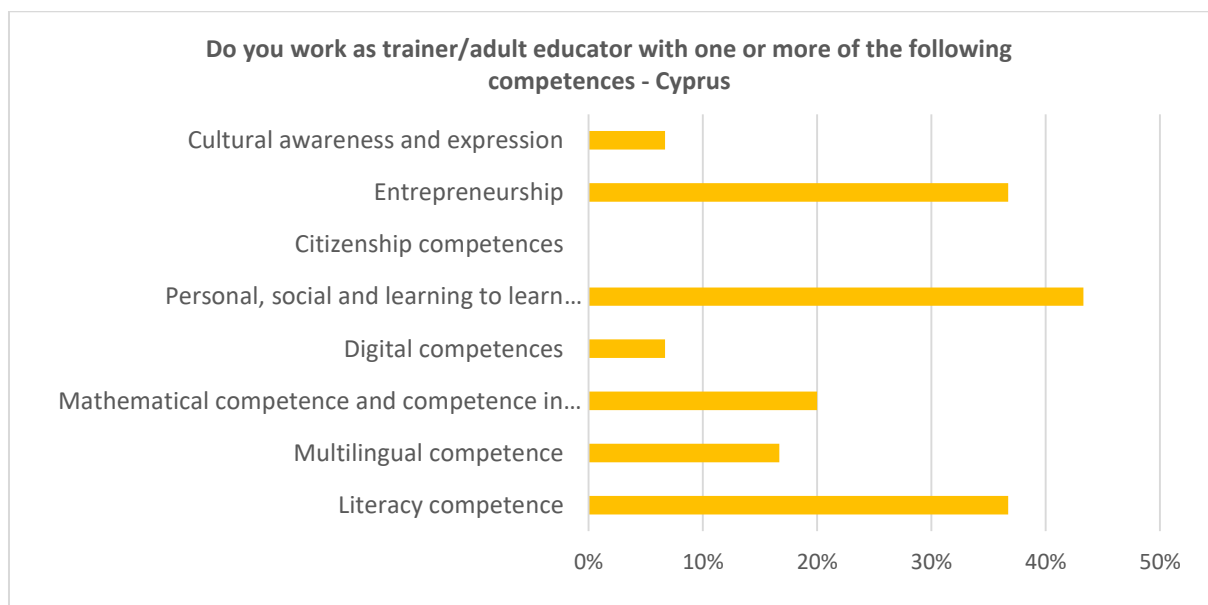


Figure 20: Areas of training in Cyprus

4.6 What educators/ trainers like most in their job

The question “what do you like in your job the most” was an open-ended question. Each respondent replied to the question freely. All collected responses were grouped and the categories are presented below.

For the CUHEKO respondents (Figure 21 and Table 8), working with people is the real advantage of being a trainer/ an educator. For nearly a third of the questionnaire participants (30%), impact their training has on learners is also important. 15% of the respondents also value their professional and personal development.

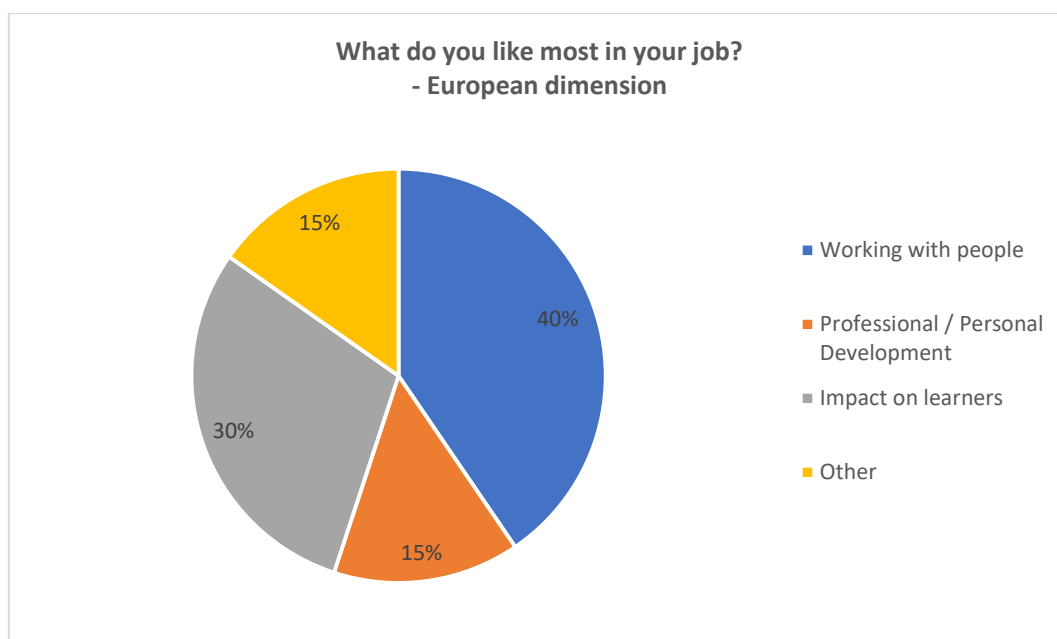


Figure 21: CUHEKO study – valued aspects of educating adults

Table 8: CUHEKO study – valued aspects of training adults

What do you like most in your job?	PL	SLO	FI	CY	Total
Working with people	62%	30%	31%	38%	40%
Professional / Personal Development	5%	15%	9%	29%	15%
Impact on learners	30%	35%	36%	18%	30%
Other	2%	20%	24%	15%	15%

Regarding the national picture (Figure 22), the most popular element of the job, i.e. working with people, seems to be by far most common in Poland (62%) while in other countries between 30-40% of the respondents found this element enjoyable. Interview participants also stated explicitly that the greatest satisfaction of their job is “working with people” (Poland), “contact with people” (Slovenia) or more precisely “people and their personalities” (Finland). Furthermore, a participant from Poland also added that it gives “joy and satisfaction that people learn how to realize their passions”.

The second most popular aspect, i.e. the impact on learners, is important for about a third of the participants in Poland, Slovenia and Finland while in Cyprus it reached only 18% of responses. Educators appreciate “the satisfaction of providing added value to others” (Cyprus) as they enjoy observing “how people learn autonomy” (Poland), “how students make progress” (Finland) and how educators’ effort “has an effect on learners’ progress in life” (Finland).

The results were reverse for the element of professional/personal development as a third of Cypriot educators preferred this aspect of their job while in the other countries only between 5% (Poland) and 15% (Slovenia) of the respondents chose it. This is also confirmed in the interviews as educators in Cyprus emphasised that they “have a continuous interest in understanding and providing tools for people to transform” because “constant learning and wishing to improve” allows them to “progress and grow as educators”. A participant from Poland also emphasized that educators’ training “should relate to the needs of their learners and impact the enhancement of their competences”.

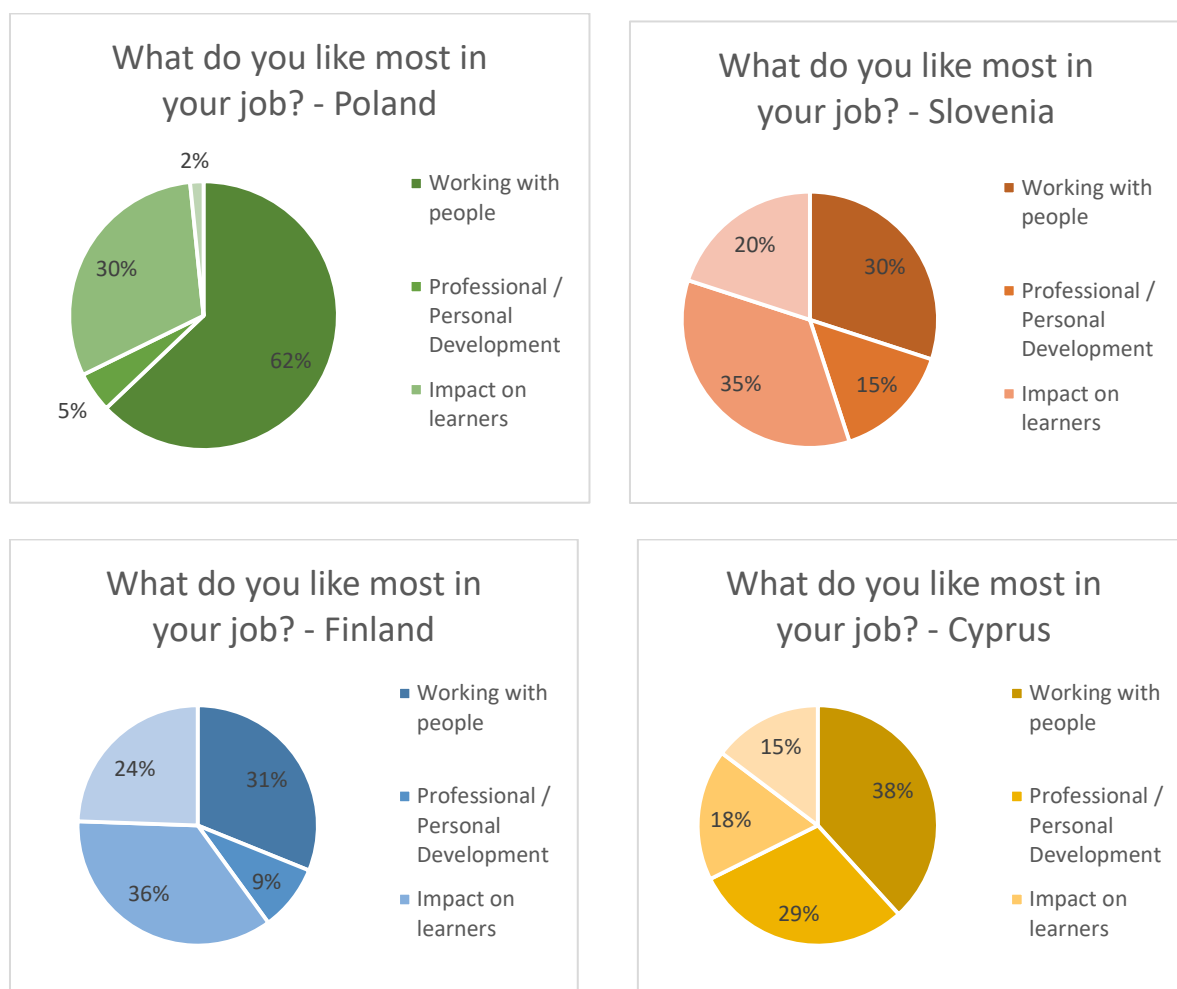


Figure 22: Valued elements of the job by country

4.7 Factors influencing/ affecting educators' teaching effectiveness

On the scale 1-9, learner's engagement (scores between 7 - 8) was the most influential factor for a majority of educators in all four countries. On the contrary, cultural awareness scored lowest, but still with a degree of significance (4.8 - 6.5). The effects of digital skills (5.75 – 6.75) were only slightly more important than stress and stressful environment (5.25 – 6.4). The availability of digital resources, however, differed and was seen as a greater impediment in Slovenia (6.6) and Cyprus (6.9) than in Poland (5.3) and Finland (4.8) (see Figure 23 and for national distribution Figures 24-27).

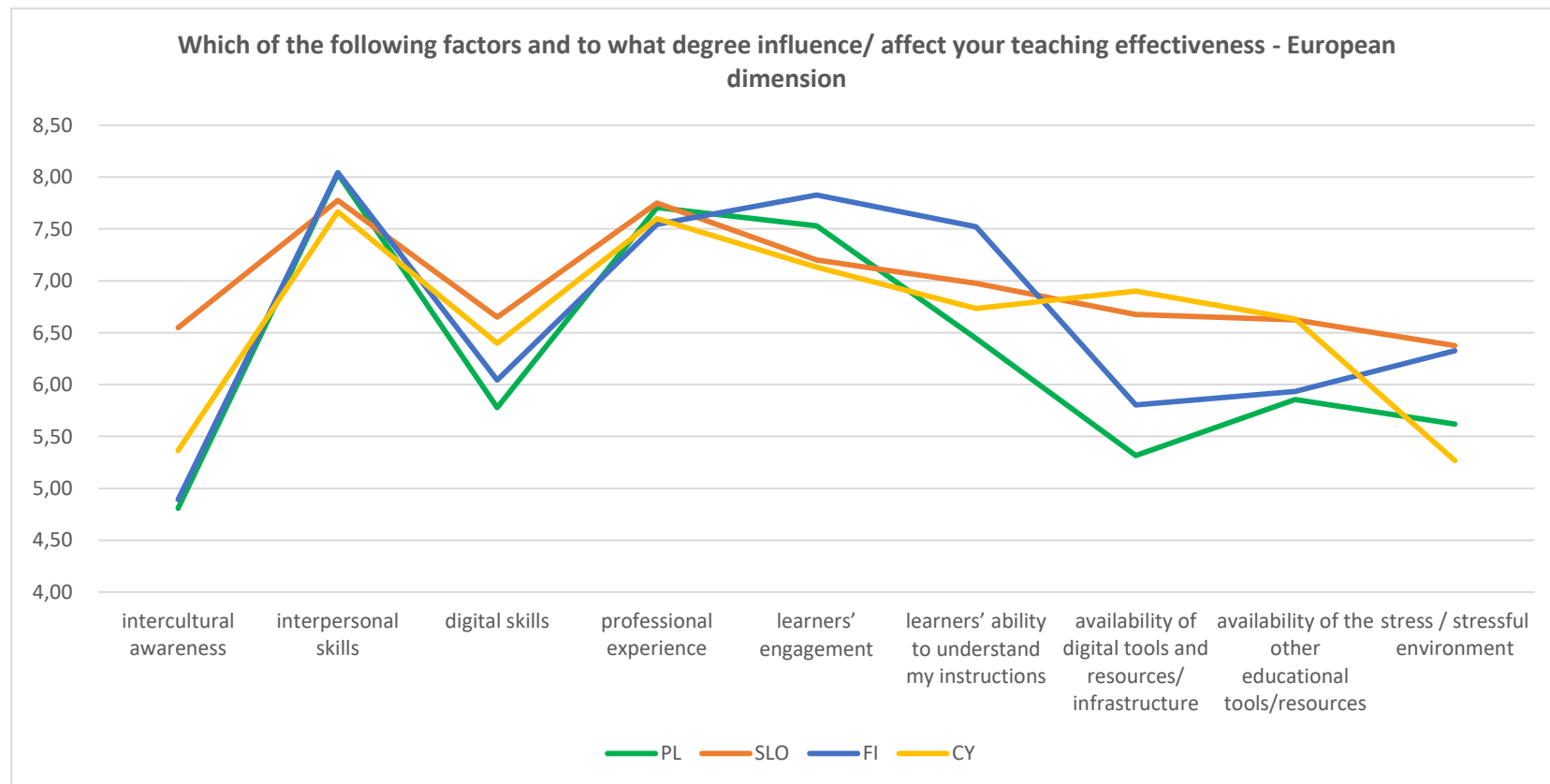


Figure 23: Factors affecting teaching effectiveness

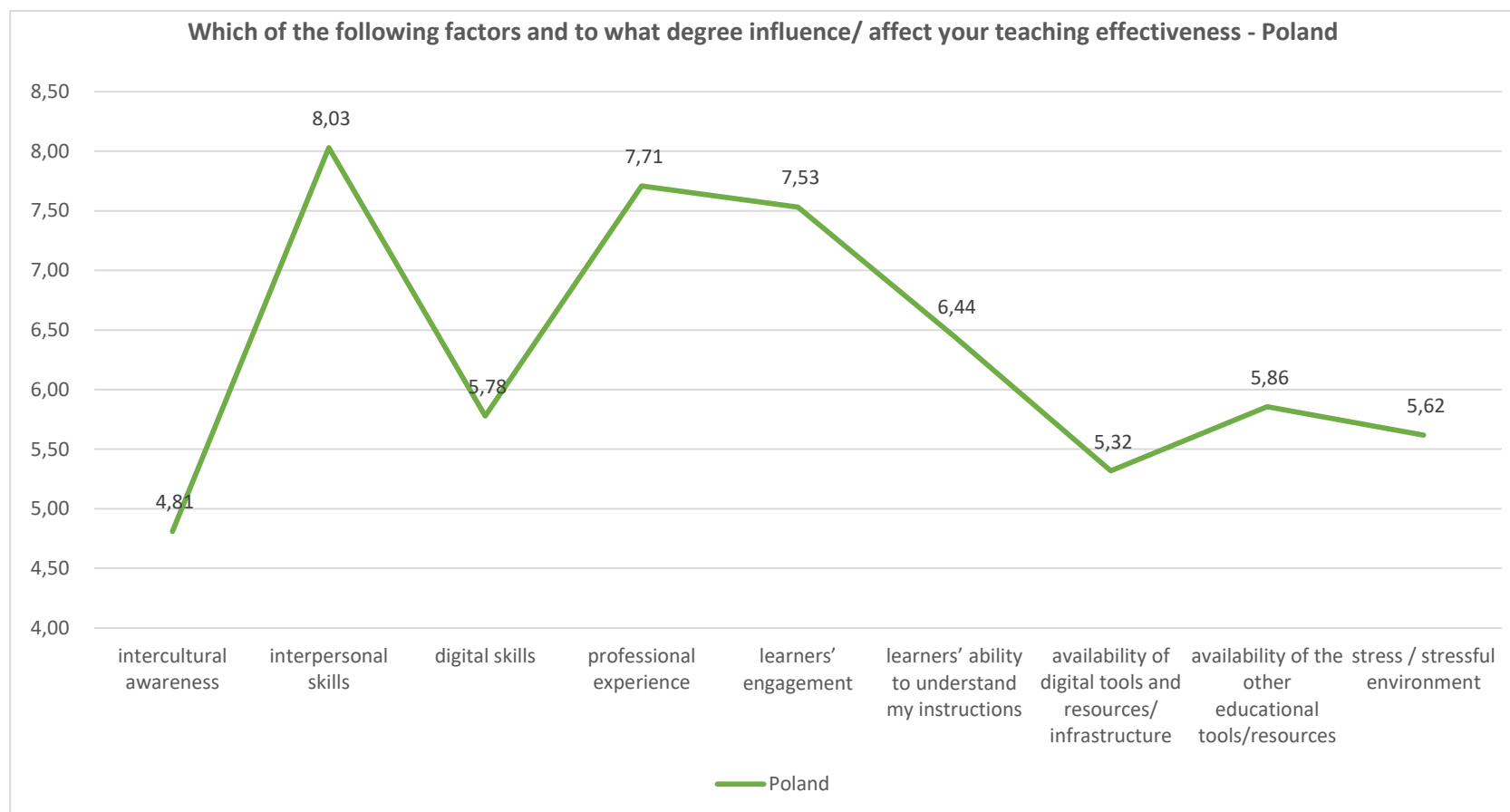


Figure 24: Factors affecting teaching effectiveness in Poland

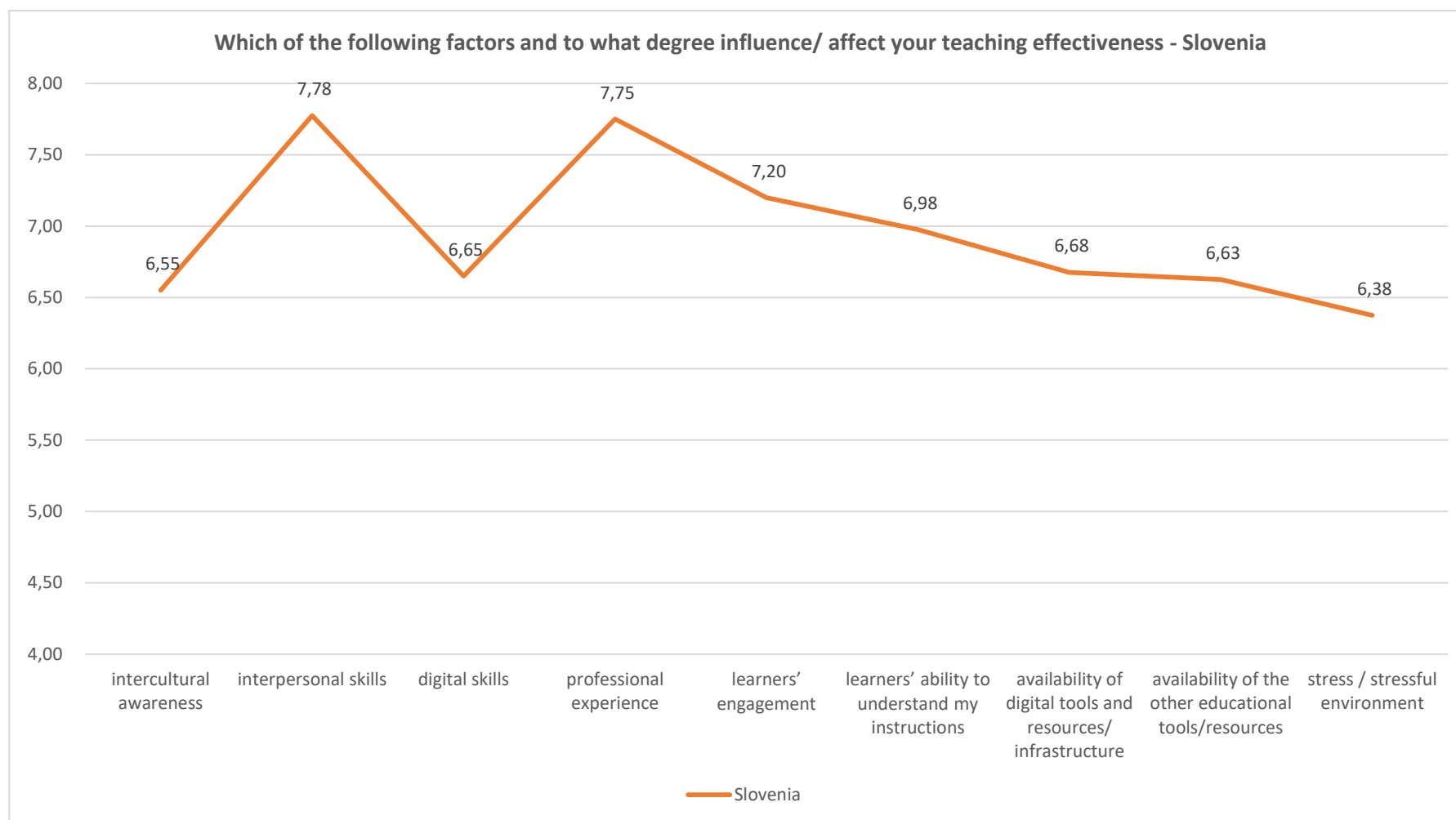


Figure 25: Factors affecting teaching effectiveness in Slovenia

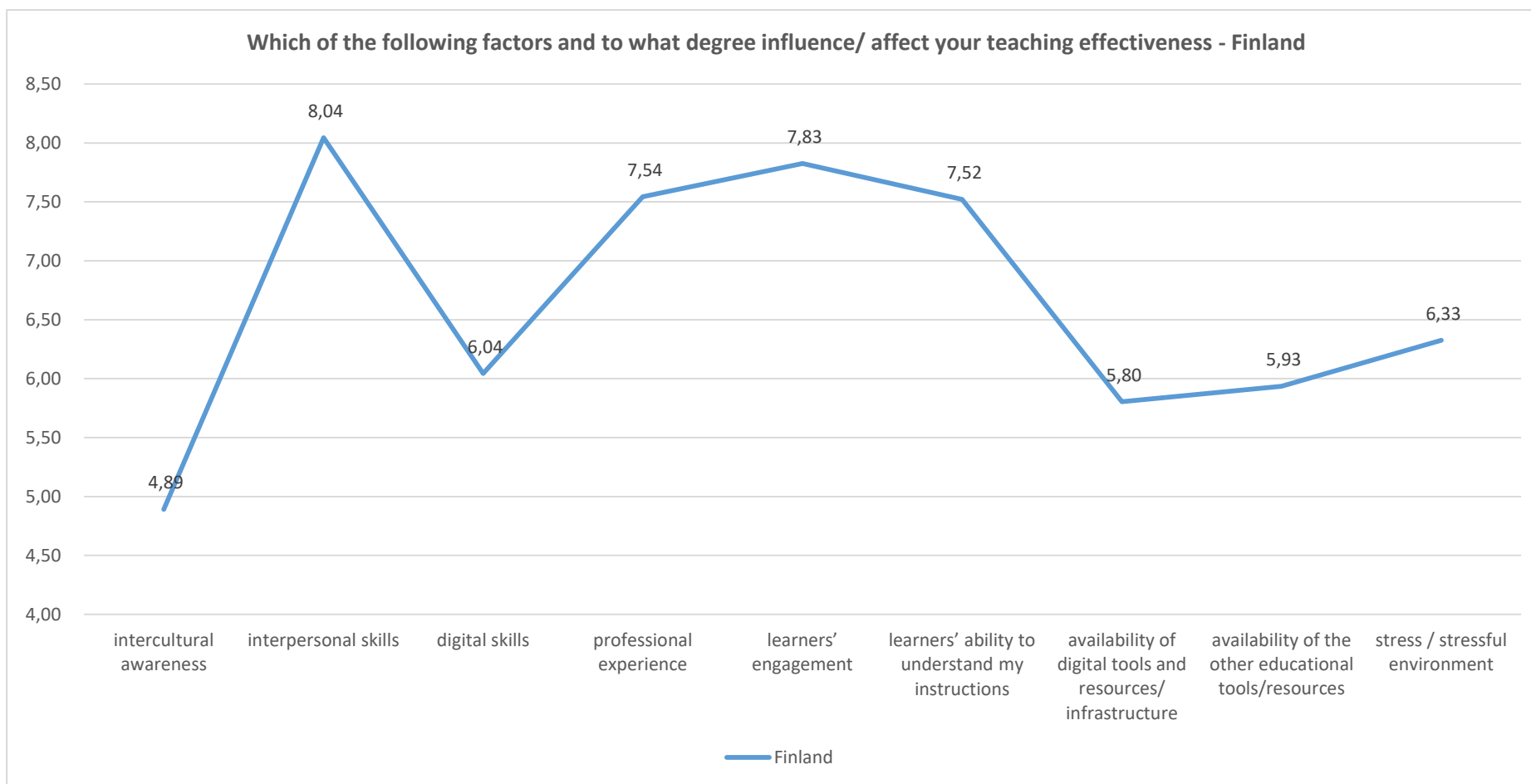


Figure 26: Factors affecting teaching effectiveness in Finland

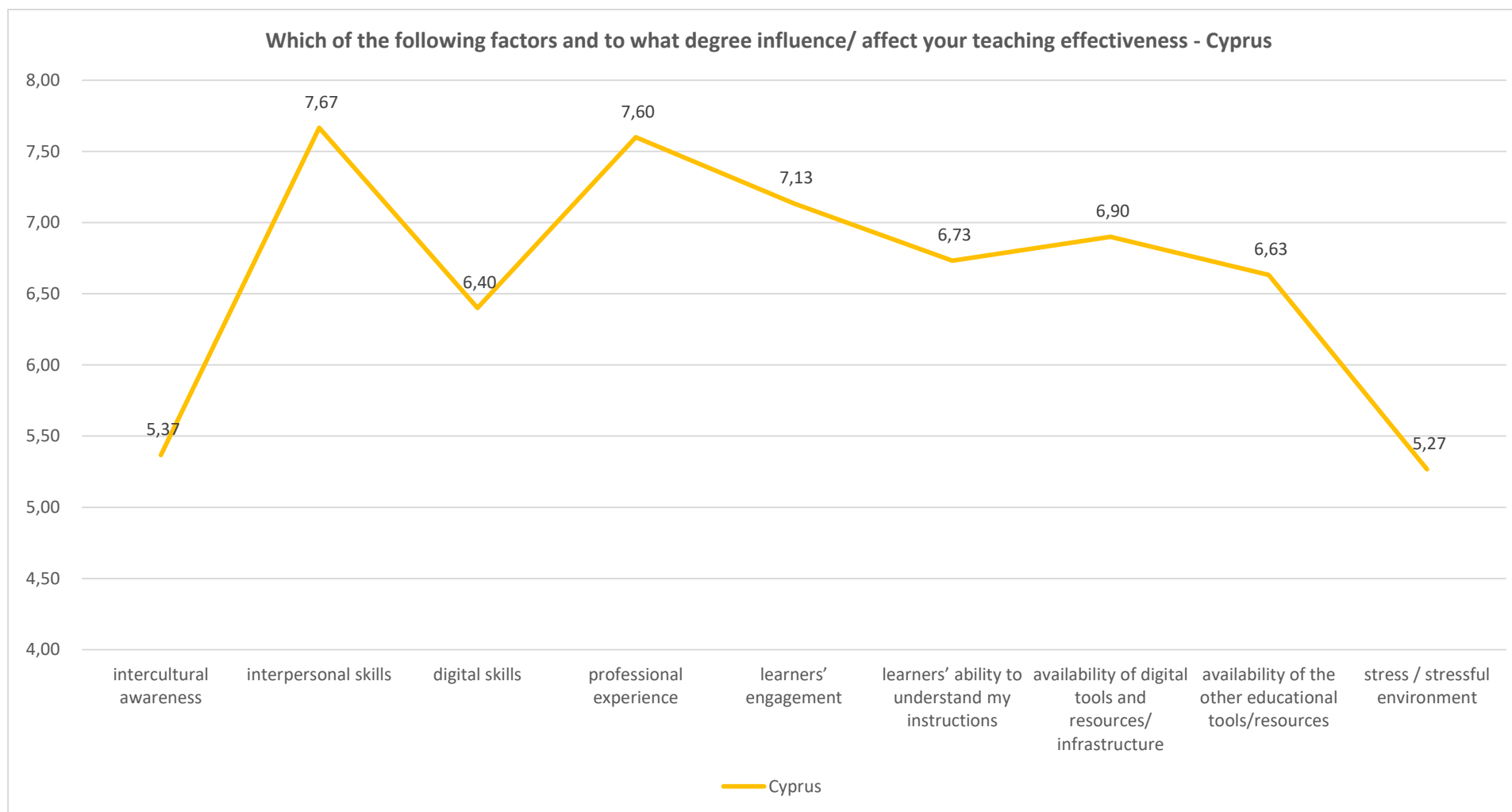


Figure 27: Factors affecting teaching effectiveness in Cyprus

4.8 Other factors that influence/ affect educators/trainers teaching of adults

The respondents also mentioned other factors that in their opinion affect the effectiveness of their teaching. This category generated an overall 37% response rate and pointed towards motivation and trainee's attitude as a significant challenge (23%). Other mentioned impediments that include the training venue and shortage of preparation time (12% each) as well as group composition (9%) and a lack of analysis of trainees' needs (7%). These results are similar to the findings of, for example, a Portuguese study by Santos (2009: 685), in which she reports insufficient preparation time or time management problems as well as trainees' 'lack of study habits'.

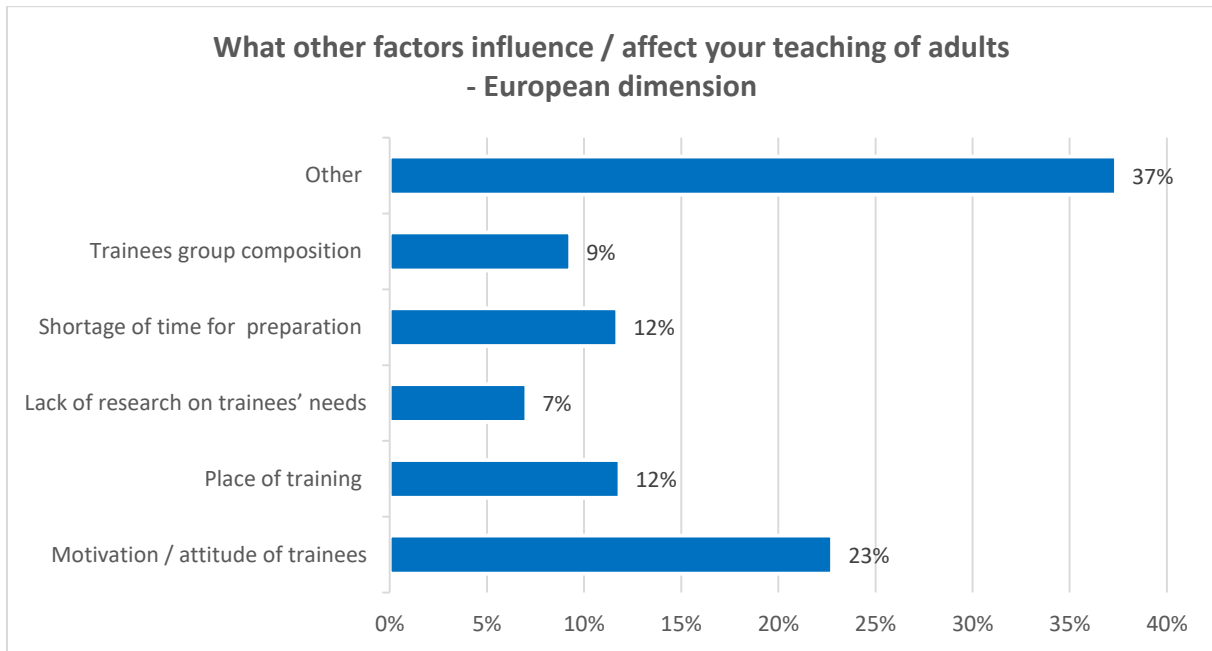


Figure 28: Other factors affecting teaching effectiveness

Among the respondents in Poland (Figure 29), other factors were mentioned by 28% of the participants, which was the lowest score among the four countries. Yet, the greatest challenge for educators in Poland seem to be motivation and attitude of trainees (26%). Training venue and lack of needs analysis were mentioned by 15% of participants (each) while group composition (9%) and limited preparation time (7%) were less significant.

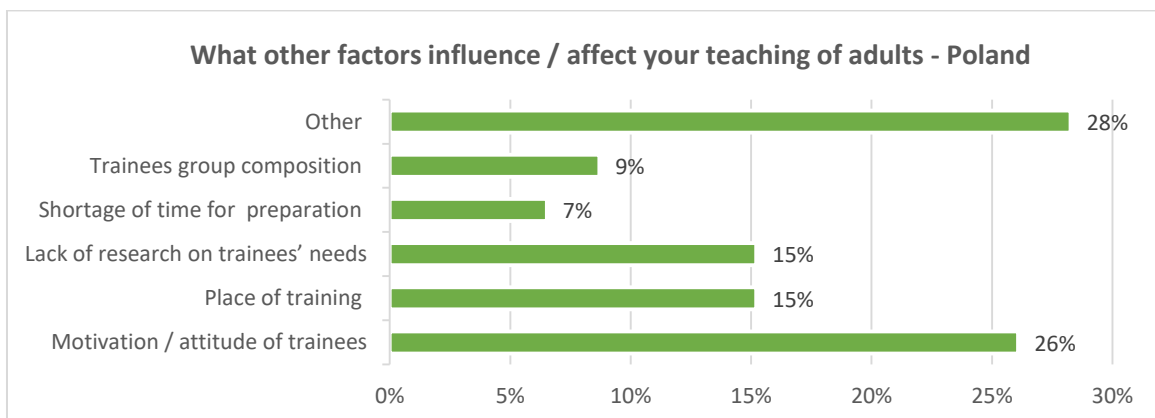


Figure 29: Other factors affecting teaching effectiveness in Poland

In Slovenia (Figure 30), other factors were indicated by 48% of the respondents. The biggest issues seemed to be a reported shortage of time for preparation (23%). This was followed by lack of needs

analysis (13%). Group composition (10%) and motivation (6%) were less significant while venue was not mentioned as a problem at all.

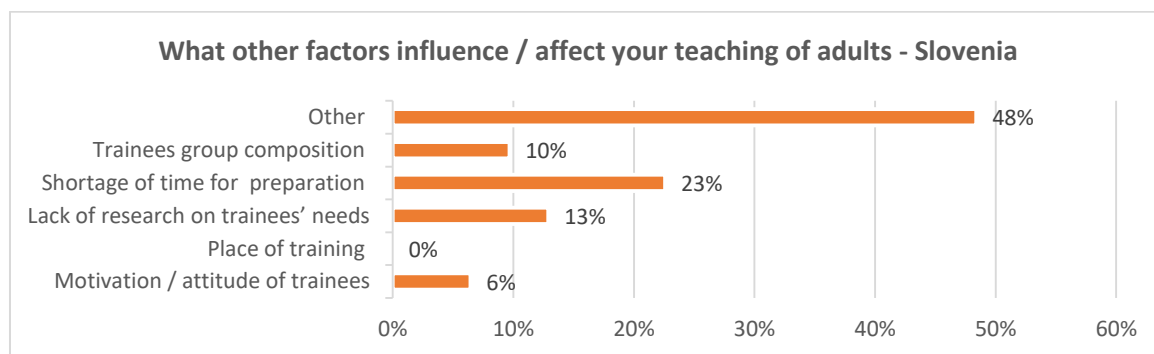


Figure 30: Other factors affecting teaching effectiveness in Slovenia

Among Finnish respondents (Figure 31), other factors were almost as important (31%) as in Slovenia and included elements such as 'learners' literacy skills' or 'teachers own attitude and mindset'. The second most emphasized was motivation, which was perceived as one of the biggest issues (28%). Venue was also seen as a potentially important obstacle (17%) while group composition and shortage of preparation time (11% each) were less significant. It is noteworthy that lack of needs analysis was not indicated in Finland at all.

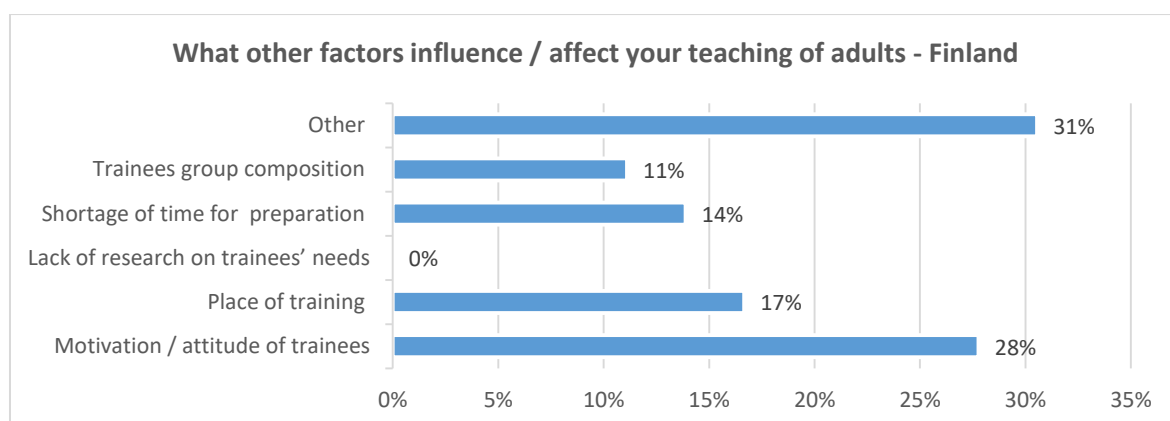


Figure 31: Other factors affecting teaching effectiveness in Finland

Similarly, in Cyprus (Figure 32), other factors that can have an impact on teaching effectiveness were important for 42% of the respondents and included elements such as 'educator's ability to understand the emotional state of the learners to adjust [their] training [methods] accordingly'. Also in Cyprus motivation was by far the most problematic issue (31%), followed by venue (15%). The other elements were of lower (group composition - 8% and shortage of preparation time - 4%) or no significance (lack of needs analysis - 0%).

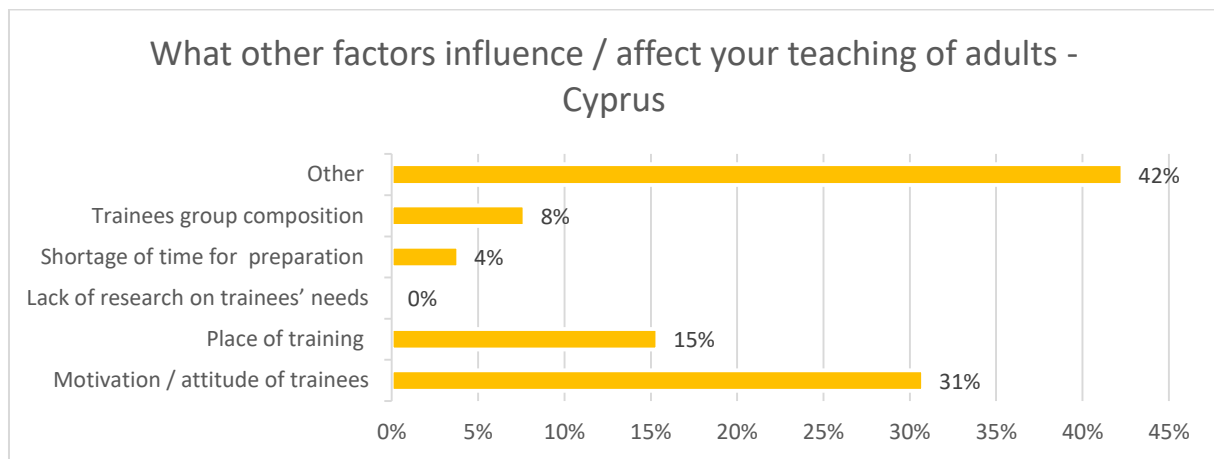


Figure 32: Other factors affecting teaching effectiveness in Cyprus

4.9 What was the biggest challenge in teaching digital competences to adults

The question “*What was the biggest challenge in teaching digital competences to adults*” was an open-ended and not compulsory question. Since it referred to a particular competence, it can be expected that only those respondents for whom digital competence is within their scope of teaching provided answers. All collected responses have been grouped and are presented below.

Among all the responses (Figure 33), varied skills level of trainees (37%) seems significant across the four participating countries, with the highest scores of 44% in Poland (Figure 34) and Finland (Figure 36). In Cyprus (Figure 37), this element was perceived as a challenge by a third of the respondents while in Slovenia (Figure 35) only 17% of the respondents agreed with this. Interviewees also emphasised that a great challenge is “the variability of groups” and “varied levels of knowledge” (Finland).

The second important aspect within challenges was fear of using technology, which scored highest in Poland (33%). In Slovenia (25%) and Cyprus (25%), this element was of lower significance while in Finland (11%) it seemed even less important. Some of the interviewed educators stated explicitly that “the biggest challenge was to get through the fear of digital stuff” and “how to use the internet”, which was eventually managed “by slow and transparent presentation of the matter” (Slovenia). Furthermore, as explained by an interviewee from Finland, the age of learners is an issue as those “over 50 years of age face many challenges in digitality and they might not have basic skills at all” (Finland, original lexis).

Regarding the third challenge in teaching digital competences, i.e. insufficient technical infrastructure, it seems to be most problematic in Cyprus (25%) while in Finland (15%), Poland (11%) and Slovenia (8%) infrastructure is an issue for a minority of respondents. It seems, however, that poor infrastructure can be an issue in “the countryside where you don’t have digital tools” (Finland) and therefore educators “must start with printed materials” (Finland). Among other aspects that can affect training within the area of digital competence, the respondents mentioned such issues as learner’s lack of motivation, slow learning of trainees and rapid changes to applications and software, which can be problematic for both trainers and trainees.

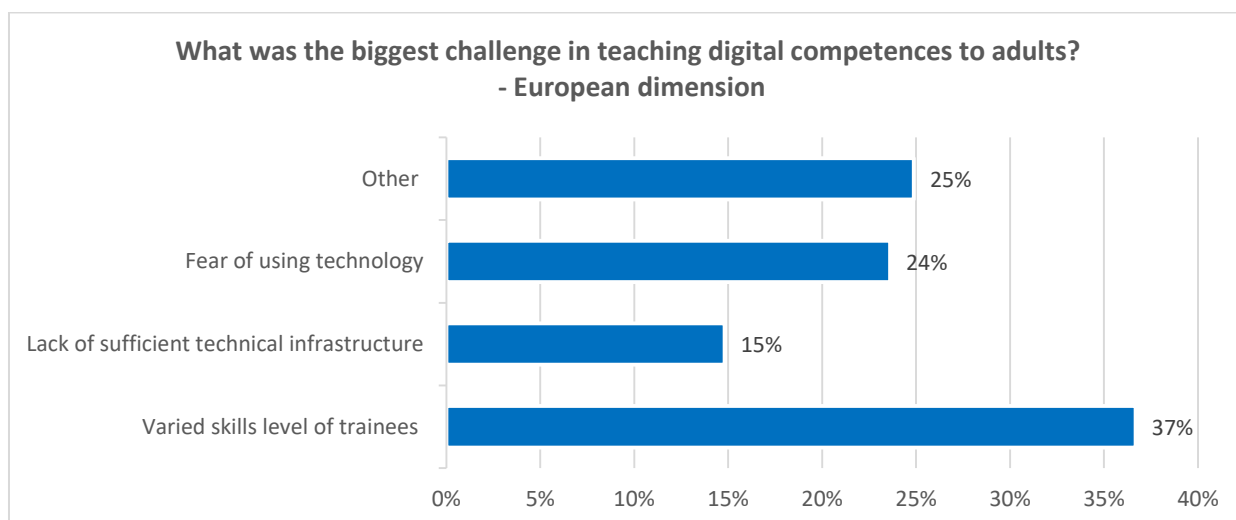


Figure 33: Greatest challenge in teaching digital competences

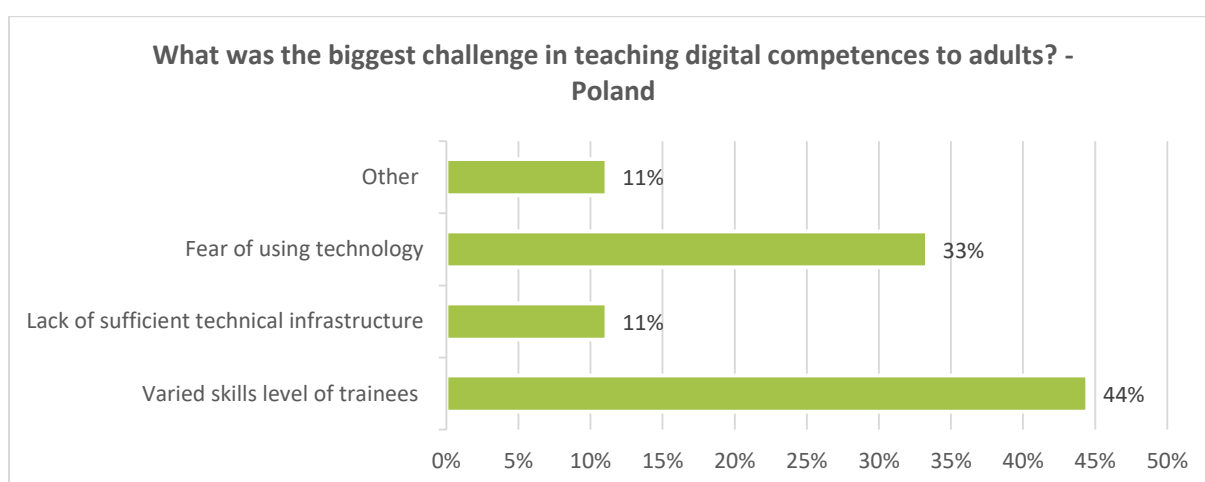


Figure 34: Greatest challenge in teaching digital competences in Poland

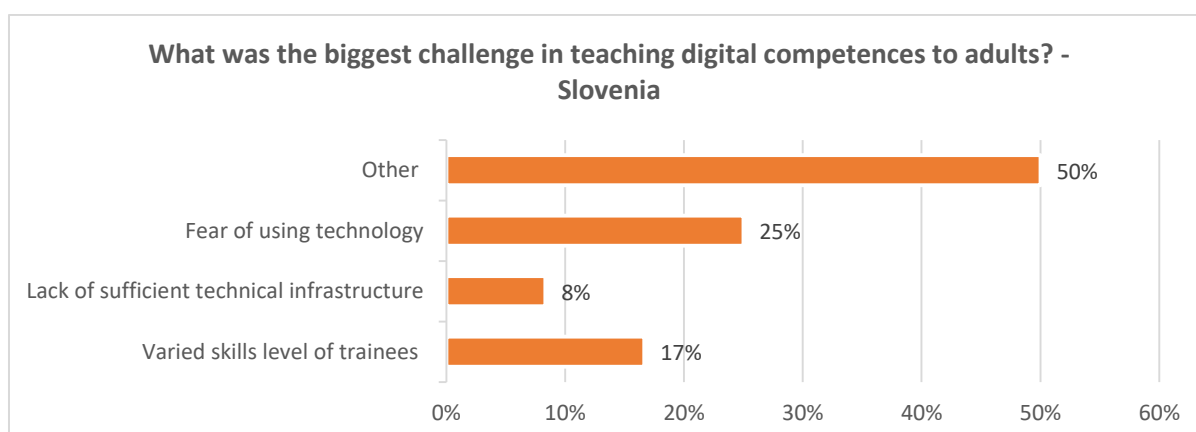


Figure 35: Greatest challenge in teaching digital competences in Slovenia

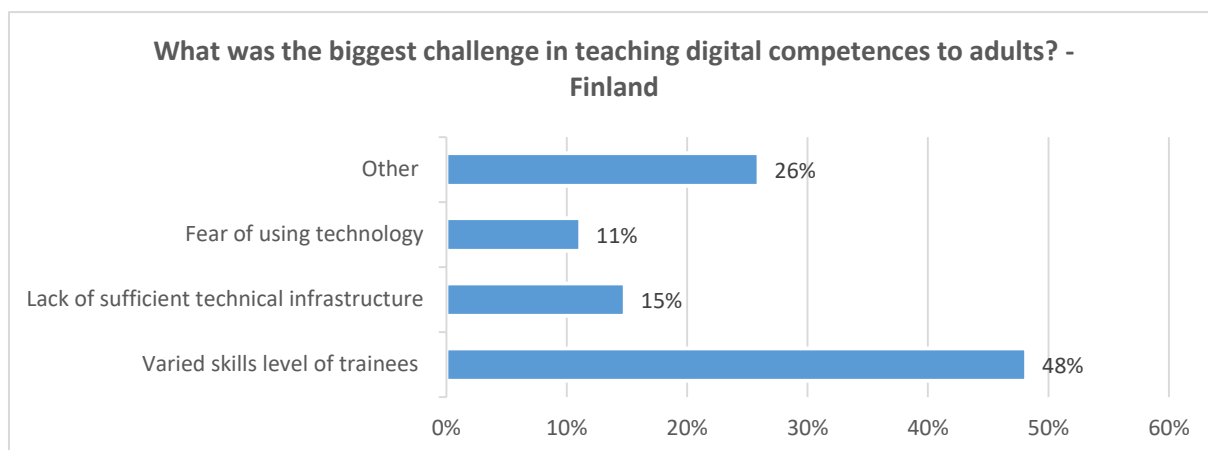


Figure 36: Greatest challenge in teaching digital competences in Finland

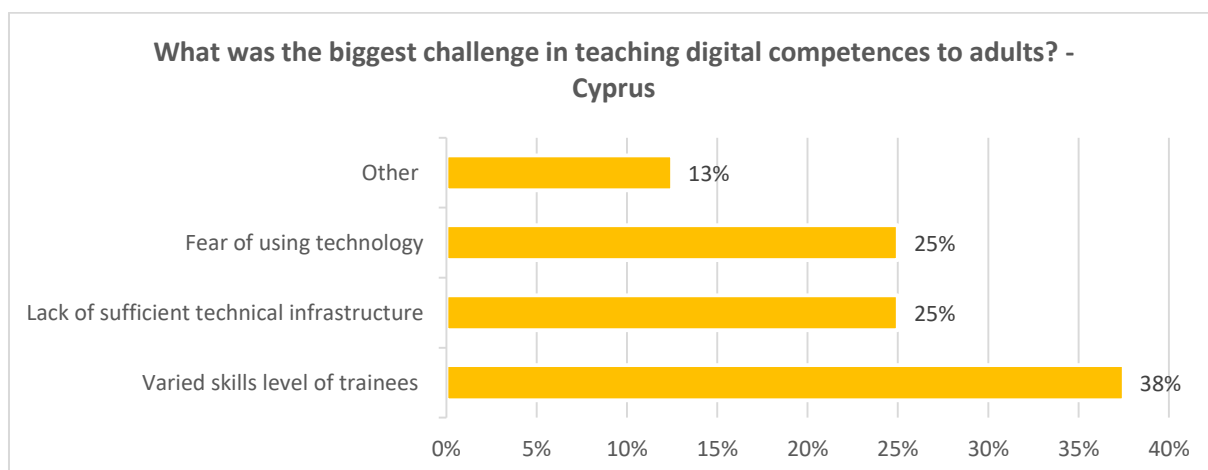


Figure 37: Greatest challenge in teaching digital competences in Cyprus

4.10 What was the biggest challenge in teaching entrepreneurship to adults

The question “What was the biggest challenge in teaching entrepreneurship to adults? How did you manage this challenge? How would you deal with the same situation in the future?” was an open-ended and not compulsory one. Since it referred to a particular competence, it can be expected that only those respondents for whom entrepreneurship is within their scope of teaching provided answers. All collected responses have been grouped and are presented below.

The important challenge in teaching entrepreneurship indicated by the respondents is presenting business concepts to learners in an understandable manner (24 %). Low self-confidence of trainees and a lack of understanding of training goals were mentioned by about a fifth of the respondents (19% and 22% respectively).

In the overall picture of challenges in teaching entrepreneurship (Figure 38), the main focus is on smaller issues in the category ‘other’ (35%). Some respondents mentioned that that an observable lack of interest of the trainees who ‘were forced to attend the seminar [by] their managers’ (Cyprus) as well as ‘learners’ bad attitude and lack of motivation’ (Finland) could be problematic. Cultural differences and unrealistic visions of entrepreneurship were also specified as impediments to effective training in that field.

As per country, Figures 39 - 42 depict that the most common category of ‘other’ scored very high in Finland (47%) and moderately high in Poland (38%), Cyprus (25%) and Slovenia (31%). Low self-confidence of trainees seemed to be an issue in Poland (33%) but was less problematic in Finland (11%), Cyprus (17%) and Slovenia (15%). Lack of understanding of training goals appeared to be a more significant issue in Poland (29%) and Cyprus (42%) while only 11% of Finnish and 8% of Slovenian educators found it challenging. However, presenting business concepts in an understandable manner was seriously problematic in Slovenia (46%), but not problematic at all (0%) in Poland and Finland. In Cyprus this issue was reported by 17 % of the respondents.

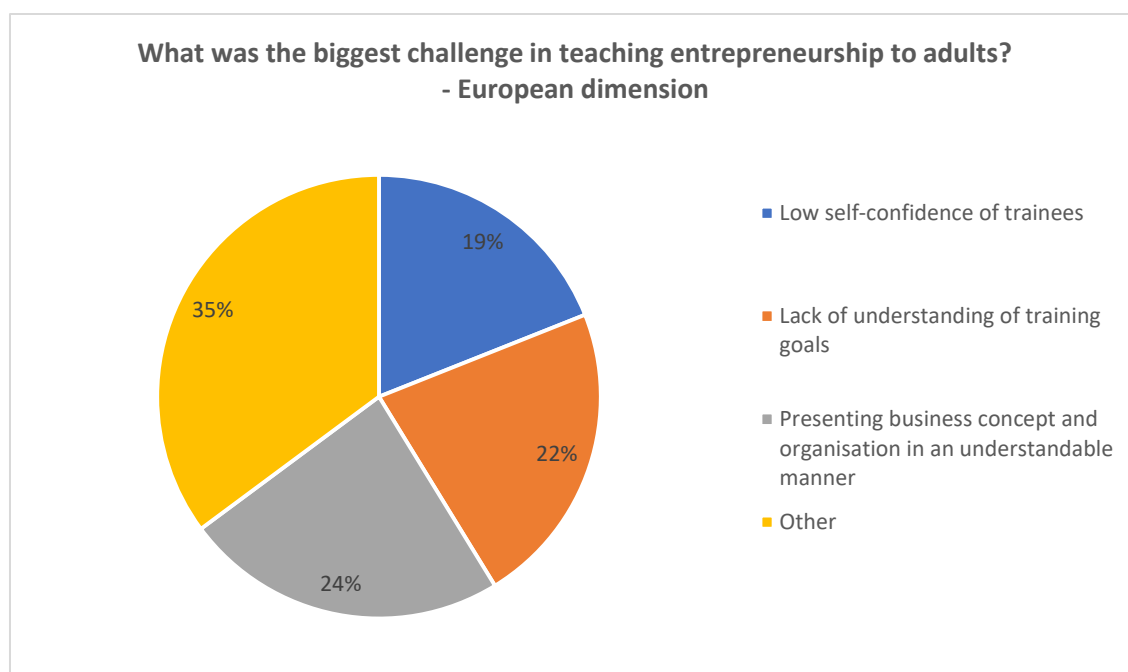


Figure 38: Greatest challenge in teaching entrepreneurship

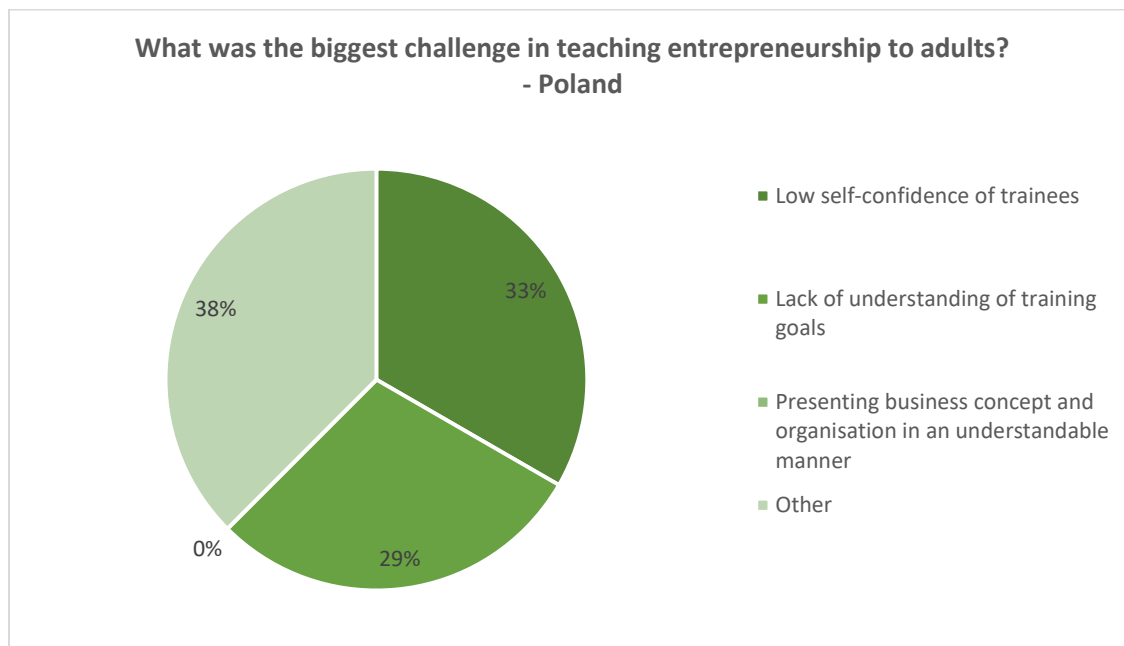


Figure 39: Greatest challenge in teaching entrepreneurship in Poland

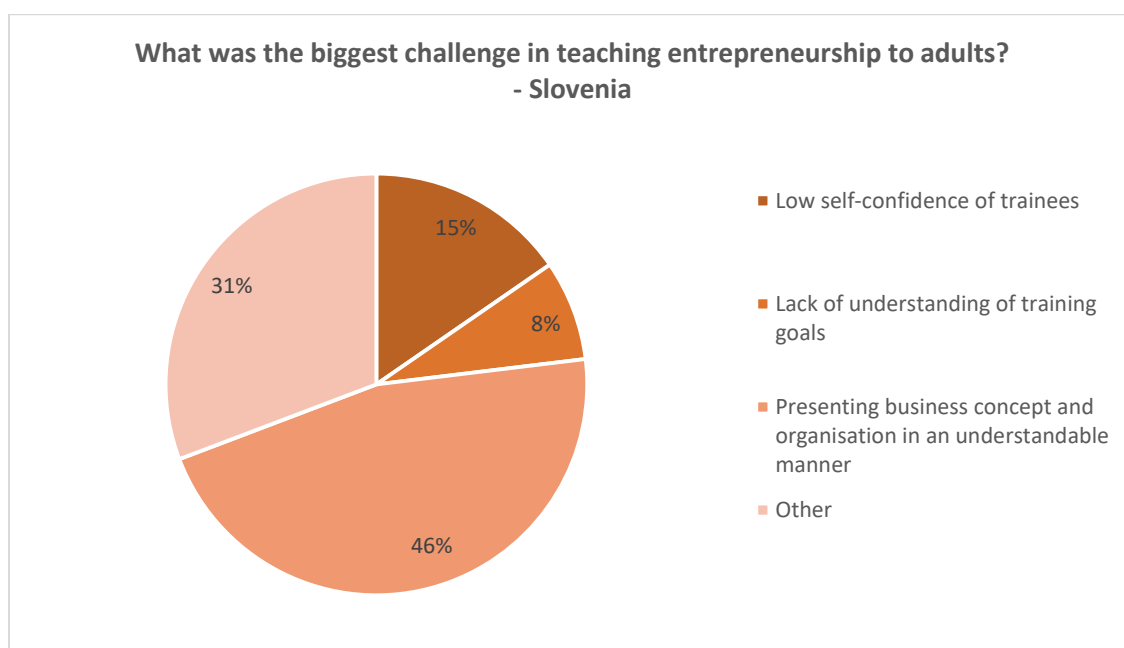


Figure 40: Greatest challenge in teaching entrepreneurship in Slovenia

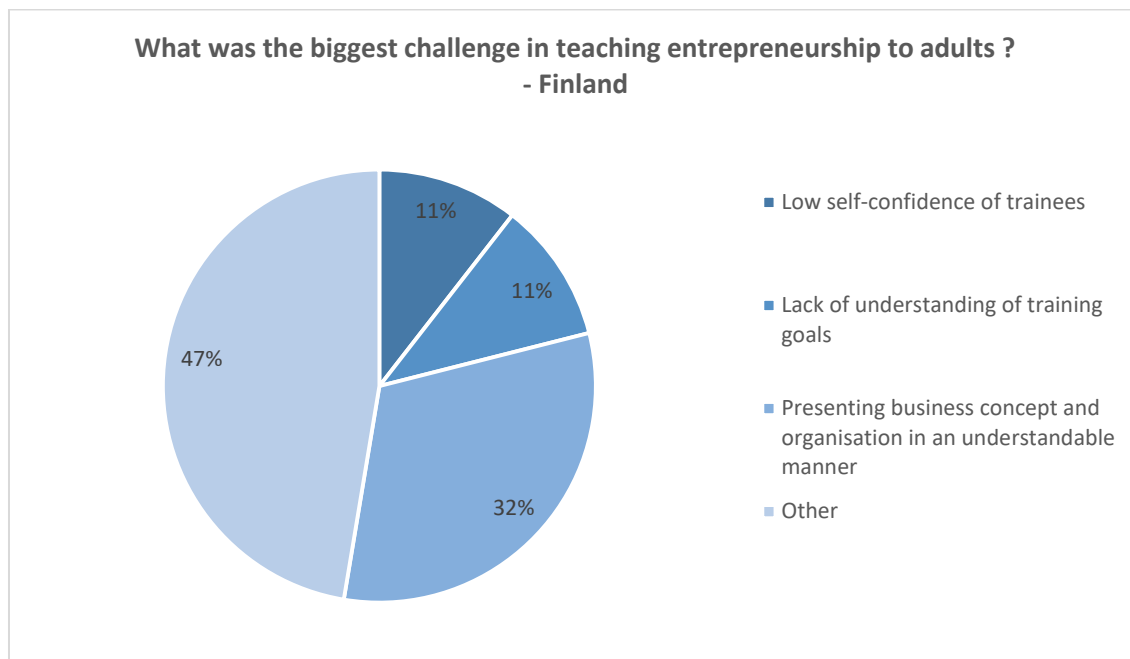


Figure 41: Greatest challenge in teaching entrepreneurship in Finland

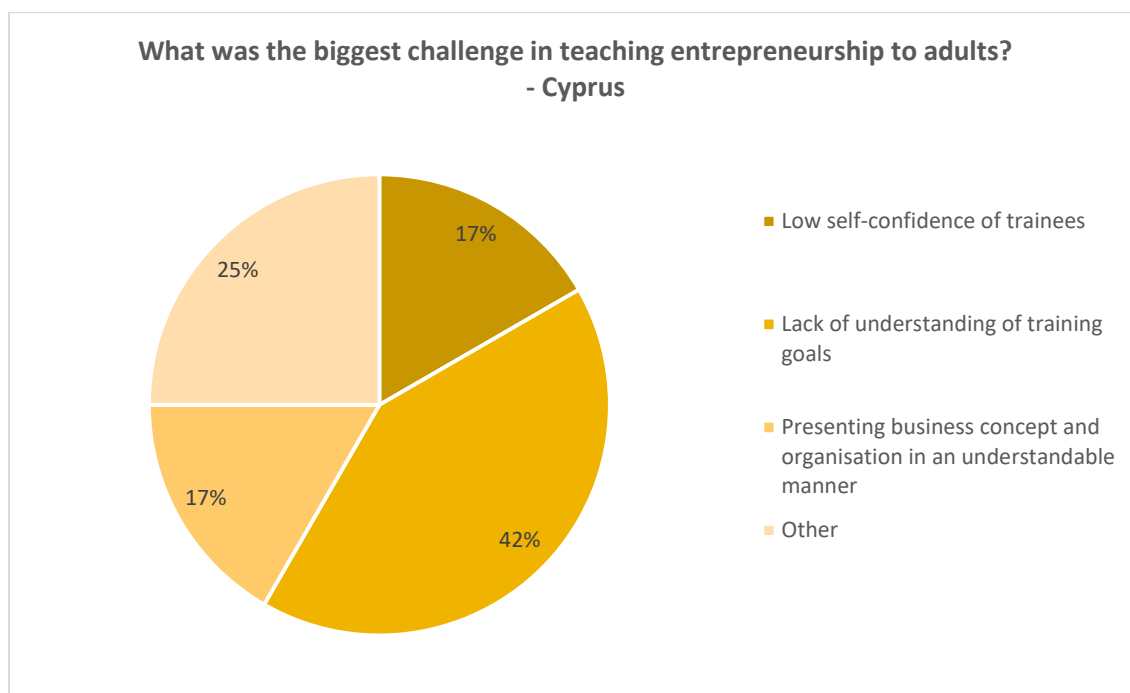


Figure 42: Greatest challenge in teaching entrepreneurship in Cyprus

4.11 What was the biggest challenge in teaching literacy to adults

The question “*What was the biggest challenge in teaching **literacy** to adults? How did you manage this challenge? How would you deal with the same situation in the future?*” was an open-ended and not compulsory question. Since it referred to a particular competence, it can be expected that only those respondents for whom literacy is within their scope of teaching provided answers. All collected responses have been grouped and are presented below.

The scores seem to be reverse for the categories of the lack of toolkits and examples as it seems to be a severe challenge in Poland (42%) and Slovenia (60%) and less of an issue in Finland (25%) and Cyprus (17%). Interestingly, lack of group homogeneity is problematic mainly in Cyprus (17%) and for a quarter of the respondents in Poland while in Finland and Slovenia it seems to be non-existent.

The category ‘other’ was the most frequently one chosen for challenges in teaching literacy (54%), with Cyprus (67%) and Finland (57%) having the highest rates and Slovenia (40%) and Poland (33%) the lowest ones (Figures 43 – 47). Among the uncategorised responses, ‘lack of time’, ‘lack of interest resulting in the waste of time’ and ‘discipline issues’ were mentioned by the respondents.

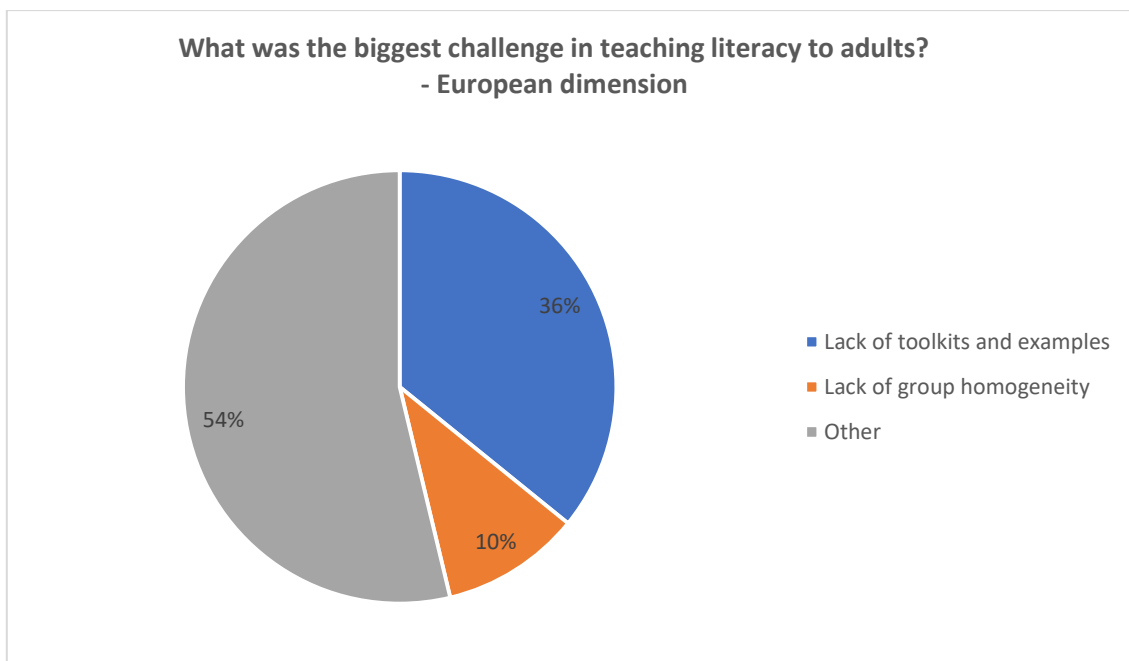


Figure 43: Greatest challenge in teaching literacy

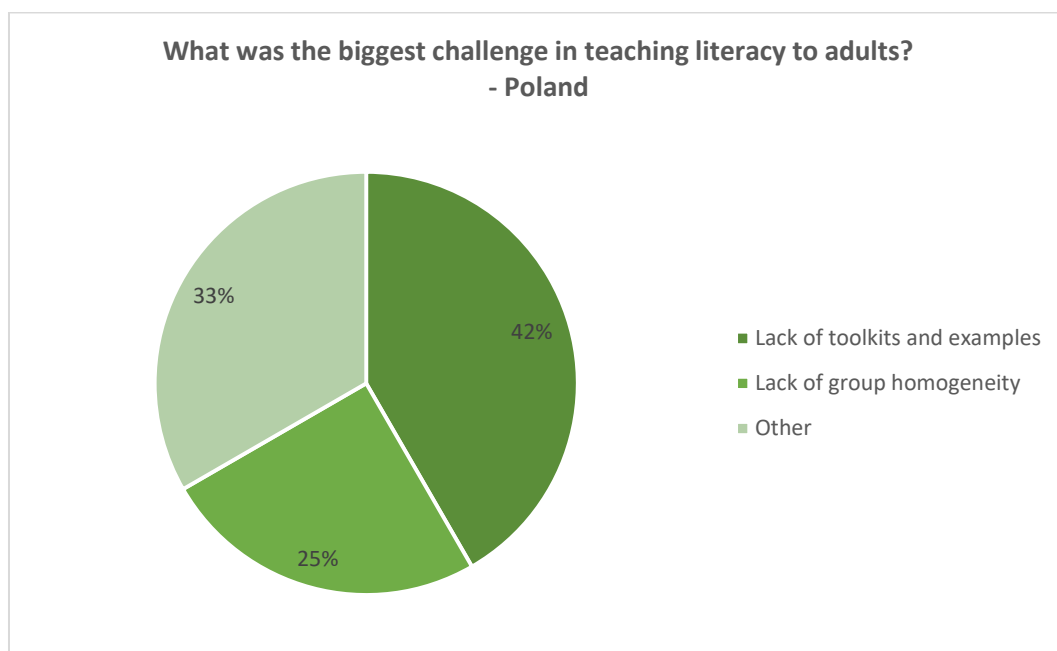


Figure 44: Greatest challenge in teaching literacy in Poland

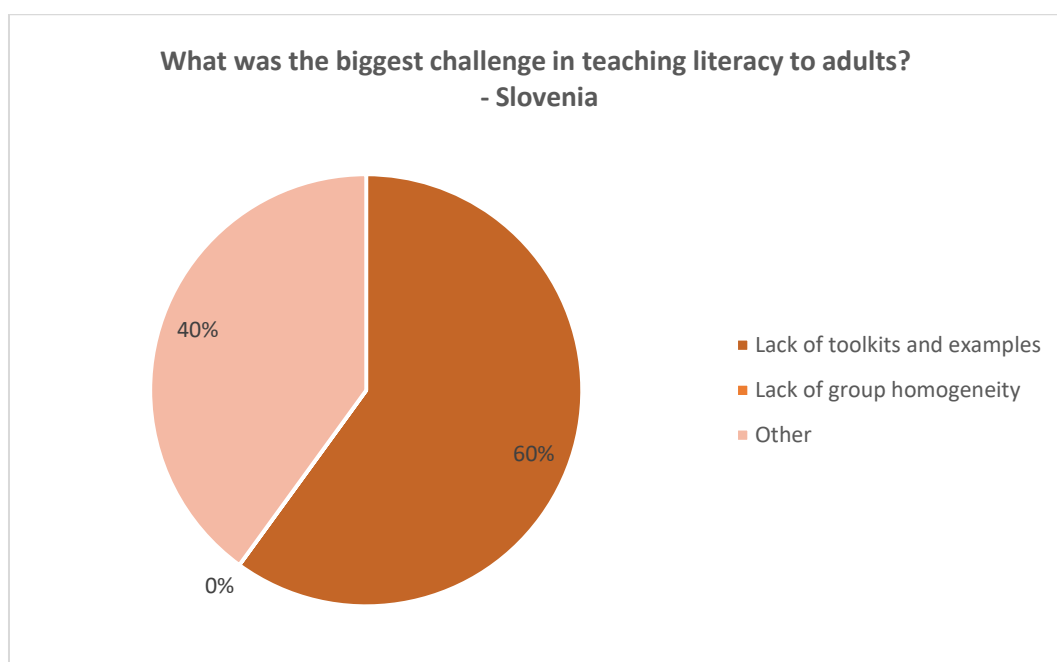


Figure 45: Greatest challenge in teaching literacy in Slovenia

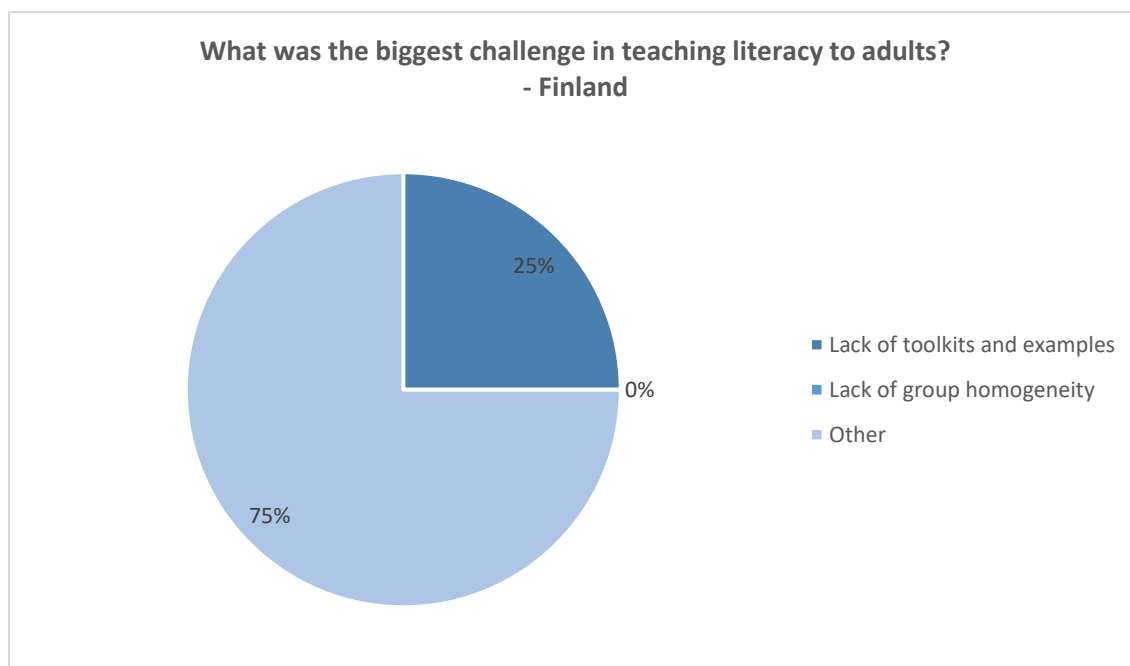


Figure 46: Greatest challenge in teaching literacy in Finland

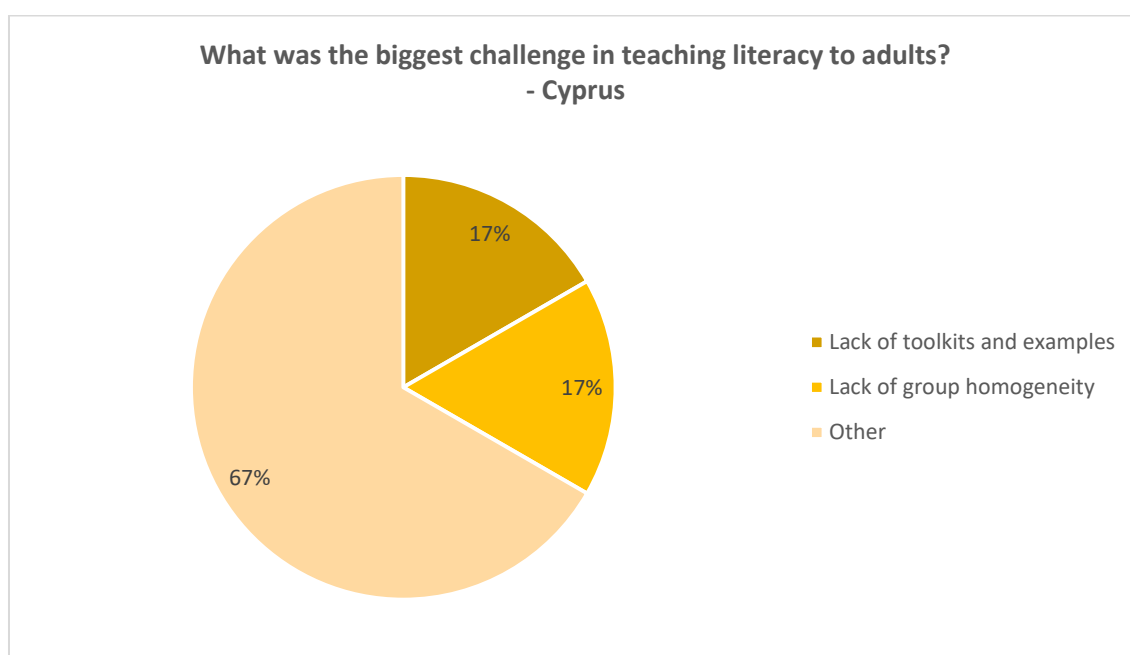


Figure 47: Greatest challenge in teaching literacy in Cyprus

4.12 What was the biggest challenge in teaching social skills

The question “What was the biggest challenge in teaching **social skills** (e.g. interpersonal communication or soft skills) to adults? How did you manage this challenge? How would you deal with the same situation in the future?” was an open-ended and not compulsory question. Since it referred to a particular competence, it can be expected that only those respondents for whom social skills are within their scope of teaching provided answers. All collected responses have been grouped and are presented below.

Figure 48 shows that for challenges in teaching social skills, the category ‘other’ is the largest one for all four countries, with the highest rates for Cyprus (78%) and Slovenia (69%) and slightly lower ones for Finland (53%) and Poland (32%). Among additional elements, as problematic the respondents also mentioned, for example, ‘making relevant references to real life examples or case studies’, ‘use of too many metaphors’, ‘inspiring members’, learners’ skewed self-perception of their own social skills, ‘mental health issues’, learners’ unpreparedness to take feedback on their own behaviour, or cultural differences (with reference to teaching immigrants). Some respondents indicated in the category of ‘other’ the need for conducting good needs analysis, they stated that “Often clients ask for an education that does not meet their real needs, which can only be managed with good needs analysis” (Cyprus). Yet, three of more prominent challenges have almost the same weighting in the overall picture: (1) lack of motivation of trainees (16%), low self-confidence of trainees (12%) and (3) different personalities within a group (14%).

Regarding the national distribution (Figures 49 – 52), there are observable discrepancies among the four countries. While different personalities and low self-confidence of trainees do not worry educators in Cyprus at all, the same elements rate respectively for Poland – 14% and 27%, for Slovenia – 8% and 15% and for Finland – 33% and 7%. While in Finland personality clash has been raised as an issue, in Poland there is a similar situation regarding trainees’ low self-confidence. The latter also equals the rating of trainees’ lack of motivation in Poland and is relatively close to Cyprus (22%). In Slovenia (8%) and in Finland (7%) lack of motivation was not seen as a major challenge.

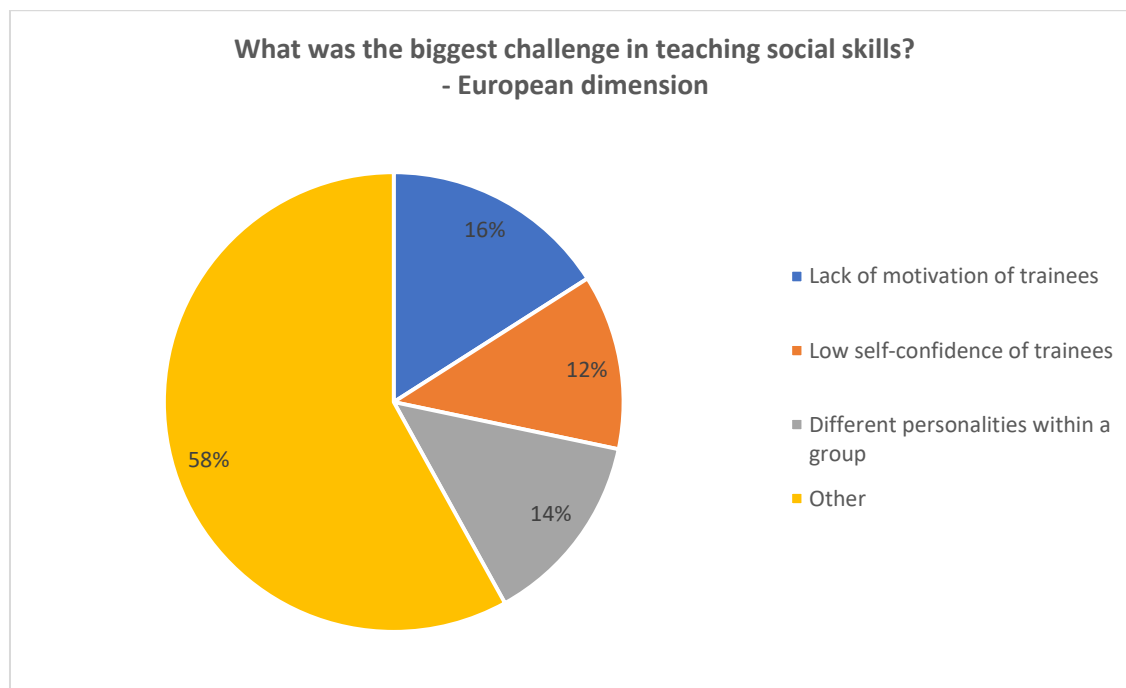


Figure 48: Greatest challenge in teaching social skills

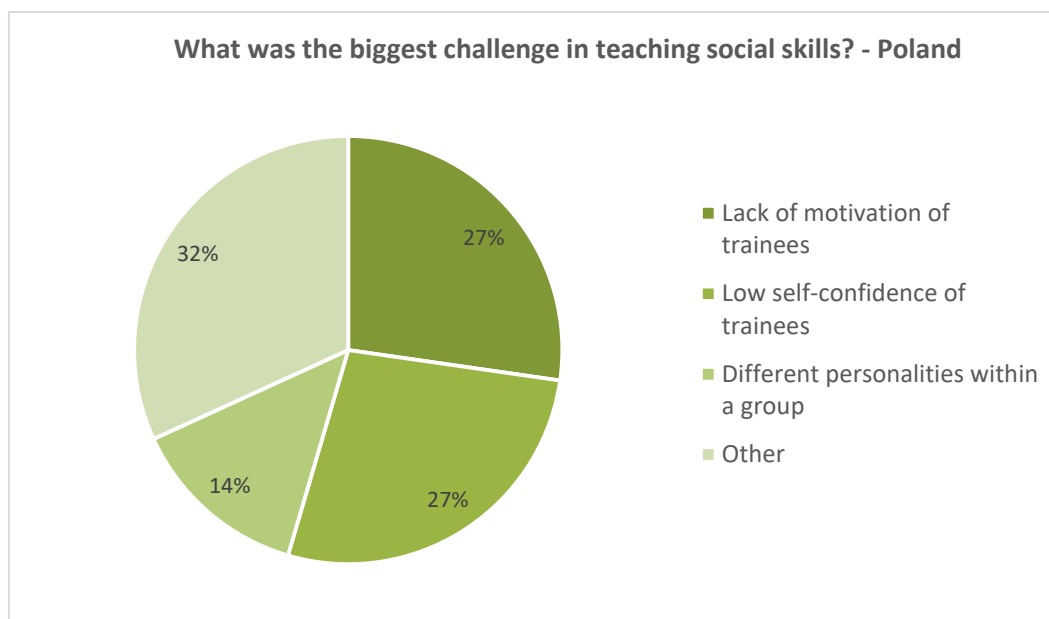


Figure 49: Greatest challenge in teaching social skills in Poland

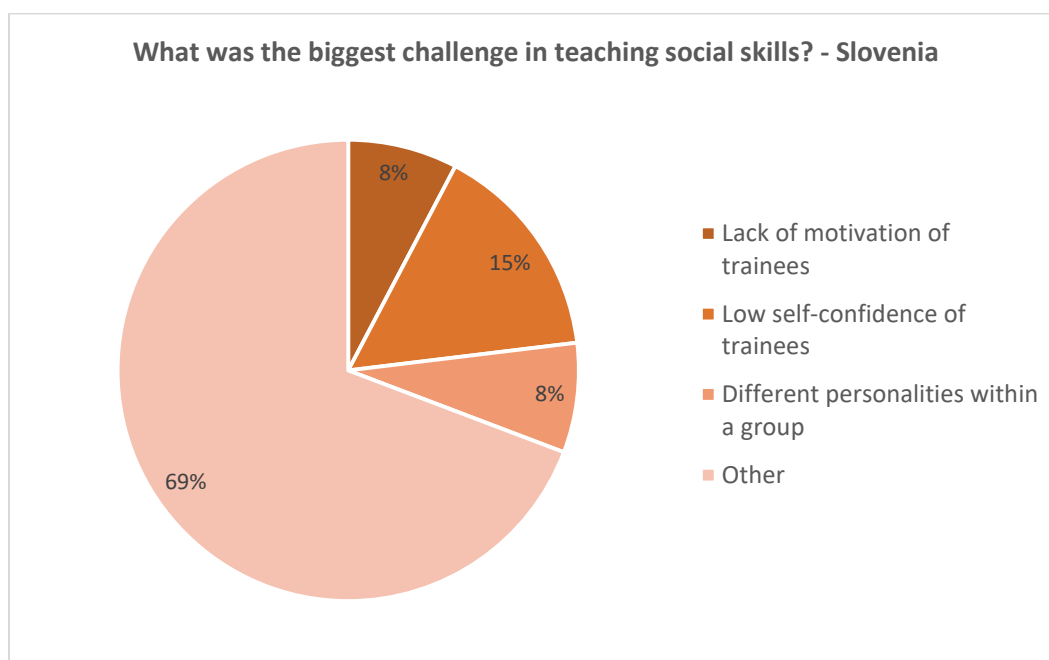


Figure 50: Greatest challenge in teaching social skills in Slovenia

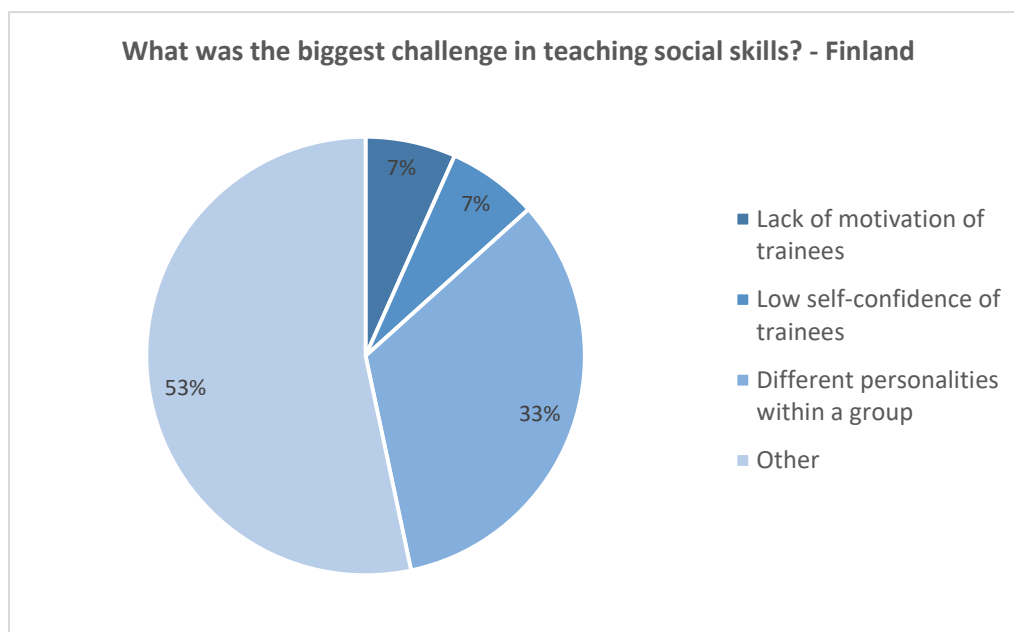


Figure 51: Greatest challenge in teaching social skills in Finland

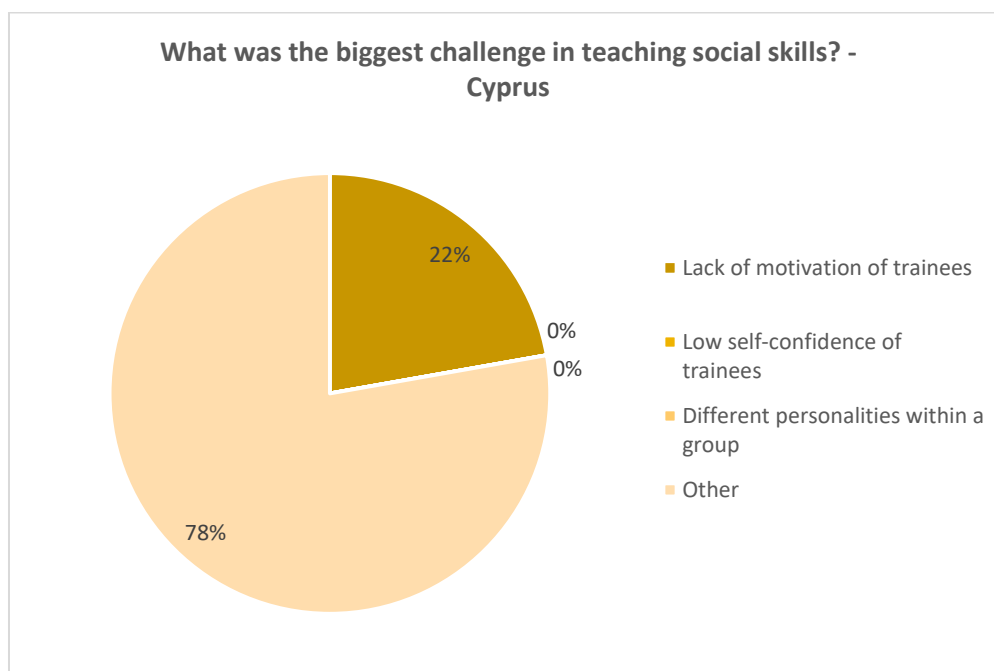


Figure 52: Greatest challenge in teaching social skills in Cyprus

4.13 What was the biggest challenge in enhancing intercultural awareness in adults

The question “What was the biggest challenge in enhancing **intercultural awareness** to adults? How did you manage this challenge? How would you deal with the same situation in the future?” was an open and not compulsory question. Since it referred to a particular competence, it can be expected that only those respondents for whom intercultural awareness is within their scope of teaching provided answers. All collected responses have been grouped and are presented below.

In the case of challenges in teaching intercultural awareness (Figure 53) aspects indicated by the respondents in the four countries include: (1) stereotypes and negative attitudes (28 %) and (2) limited knowledge of other cultures (27 %). The first one seems to be a rather serious impediment in Poland (43%) while Slovenia, Cyprus and Finland have it reported by about a quarter of the respondents. In terms of limited knowledge of other cultures, it is the second highest challenge in Finland (33%) and Poland (29%), while in Slovenia and Cyprus (15%) it was seen as an impediment by a fifth and nearly a sixth (15%) of the respondents respectively (Figures 54 - 57).

In the case of intercultural awareness, the category of ‘other’ constituted 46% of the answers, including elements such as: ‘educators/ teachers’ own skills would need improvement’, ‘teachers’ lack of language skills’ (with reference to learners’ first languages), or having to compromise in many situations. These responses, out of all competences, most strongly emphasise the need for professional development among trainers and educators in this field.

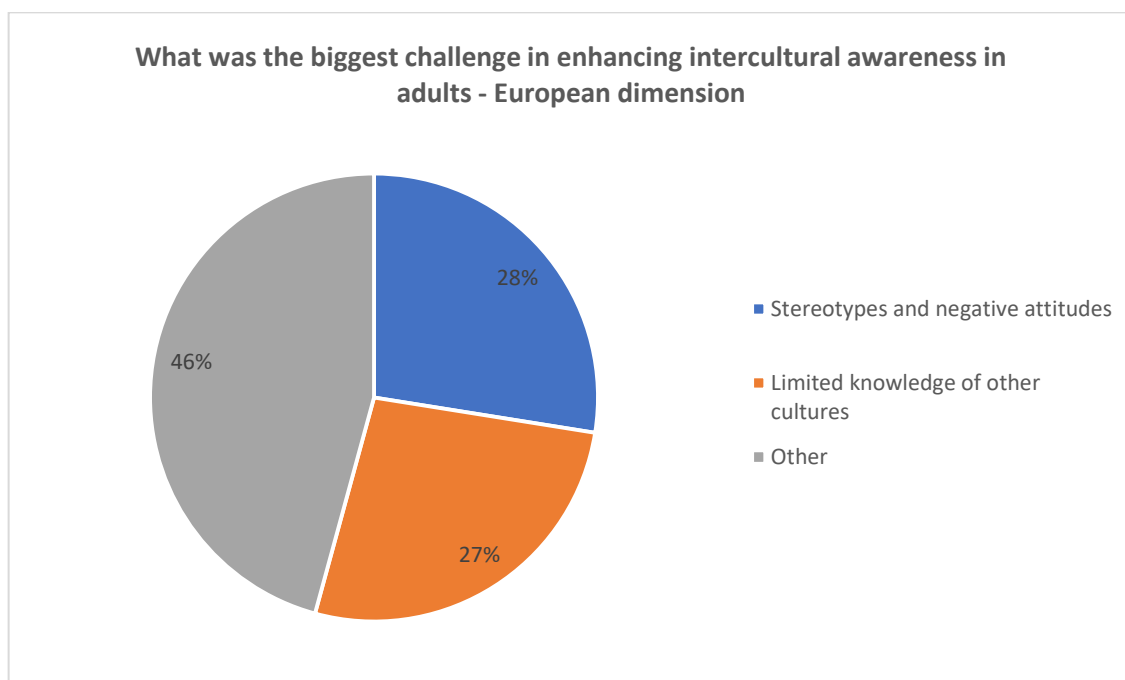


Figure 53: Greatest challenge in enhancing intercultural awareness

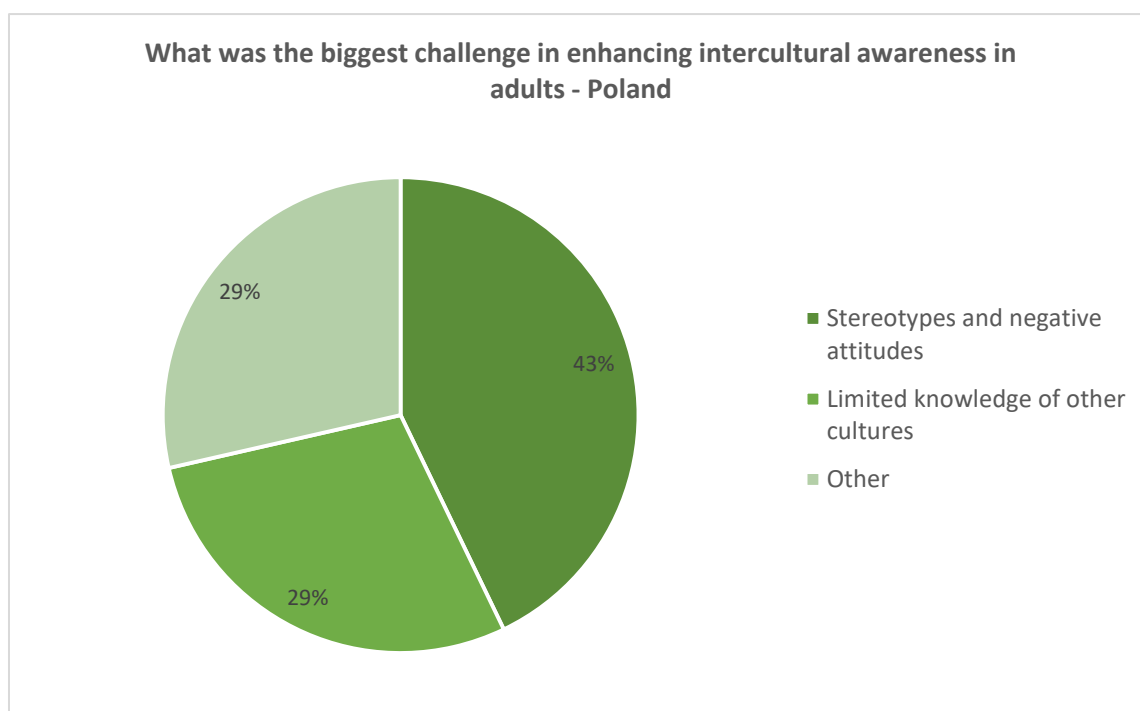


Figure 54: Greatest challenge in enhancing intercultural awareness in Poland

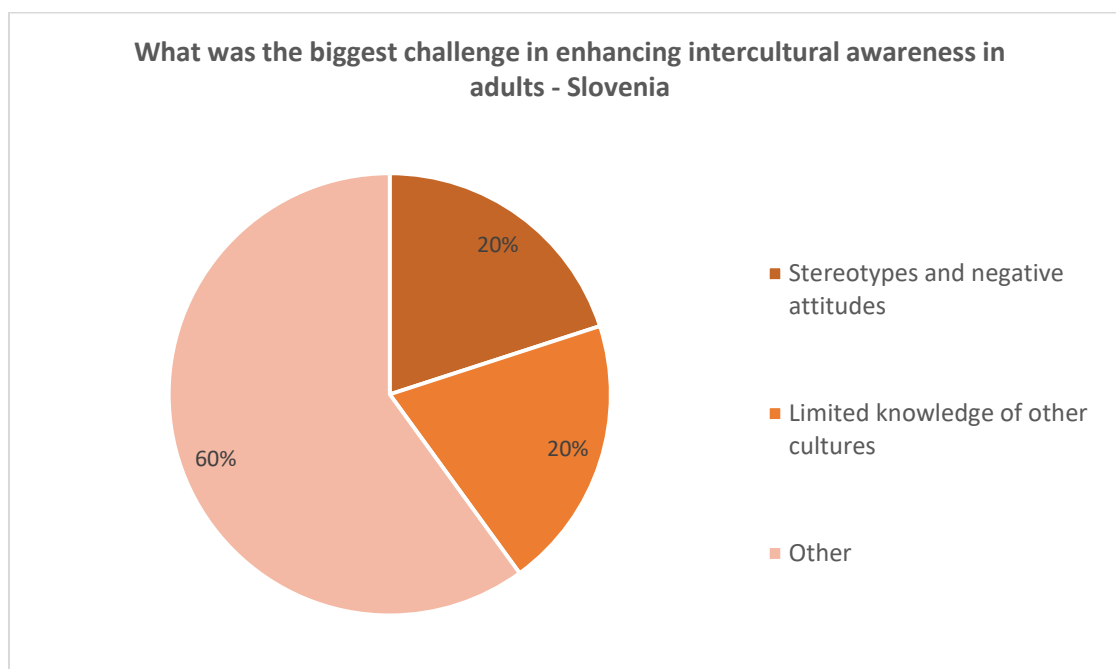


Figure 55: Greatest challenge in enhancing intercultural awareness in Slovenia

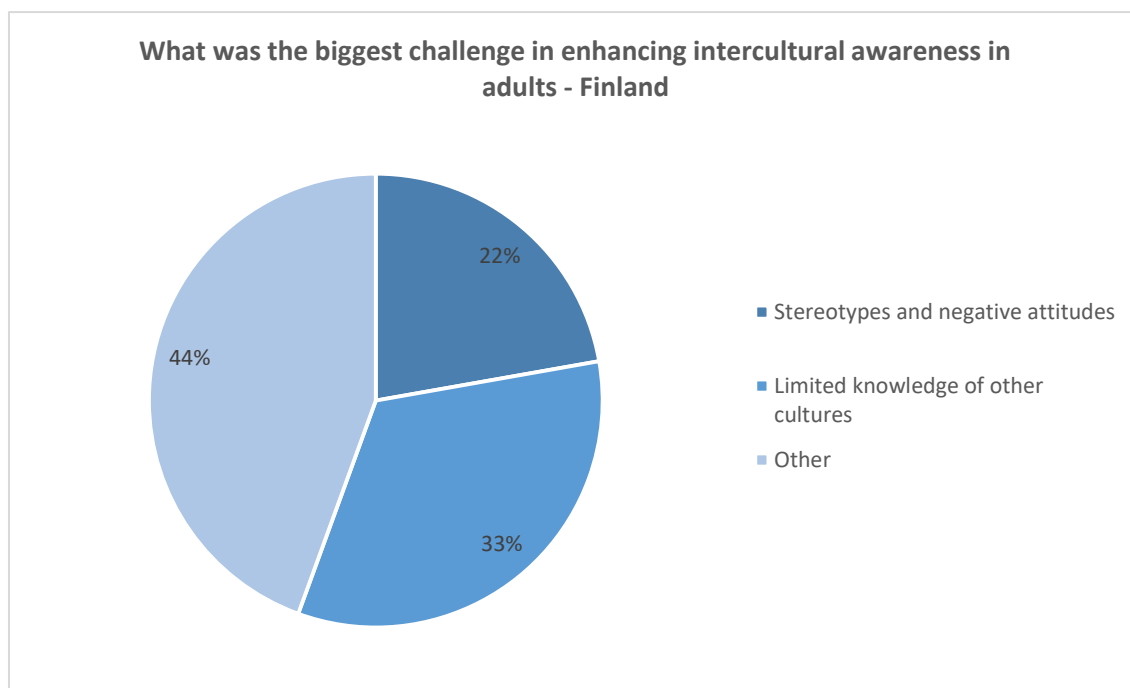


Figure 56: Greatest challenge in enhancing intercultural awareness in Finland

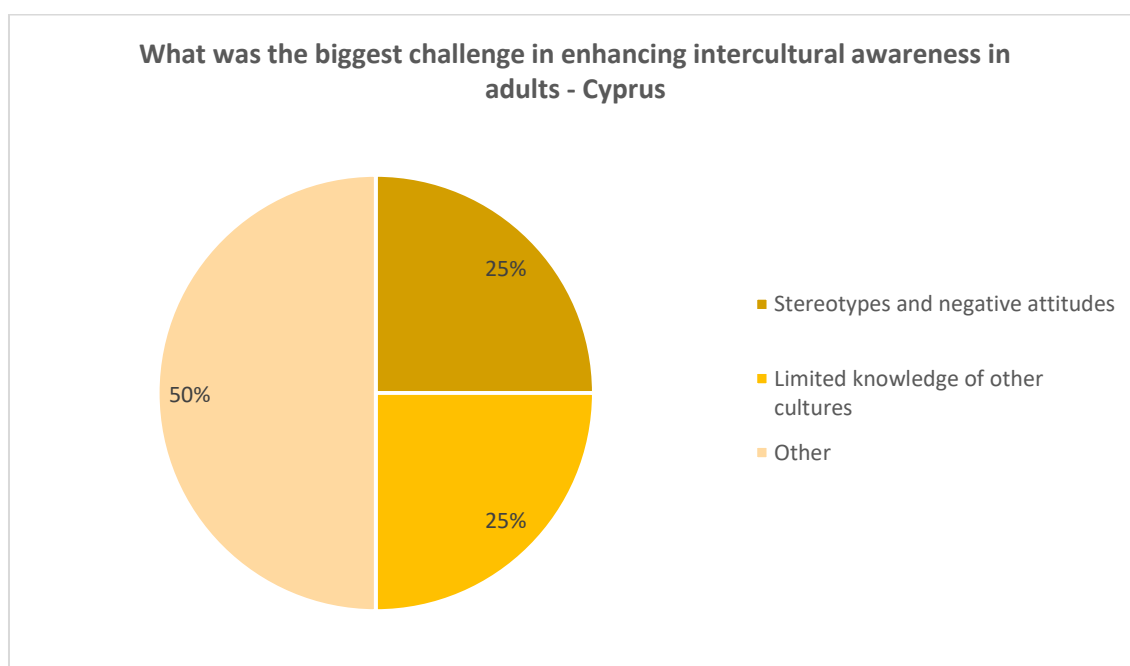


Figure 57: Greatest challenge in enhancing intercultural awareness in Cyprus

4.14 Elements important for educators in e-learning to enhance their selected/identified competence(s) and their own learning

This question was a multiple choice one, with options of assigning values between 1 and 9, where 1 meant not important at all and 9 meant very important.

Overall, as Figure 58 and Table 9 indicate, trainers and educators in the four participating countries are in favour of enhancing their own skills and competences in e-learning courses through the usage of mainly visual tools such as videos and pictures. Respondent also paid attention to on-line presentations available via Internet.

Printed materials, links to relevant websites and sample materials are also important for the professional development of participating educators in the four countries. The less important in educational development through e-learning are discussion fora as well as test and quizzes. Detailed data from each of the four countries is presented in Figures 59 - 62.

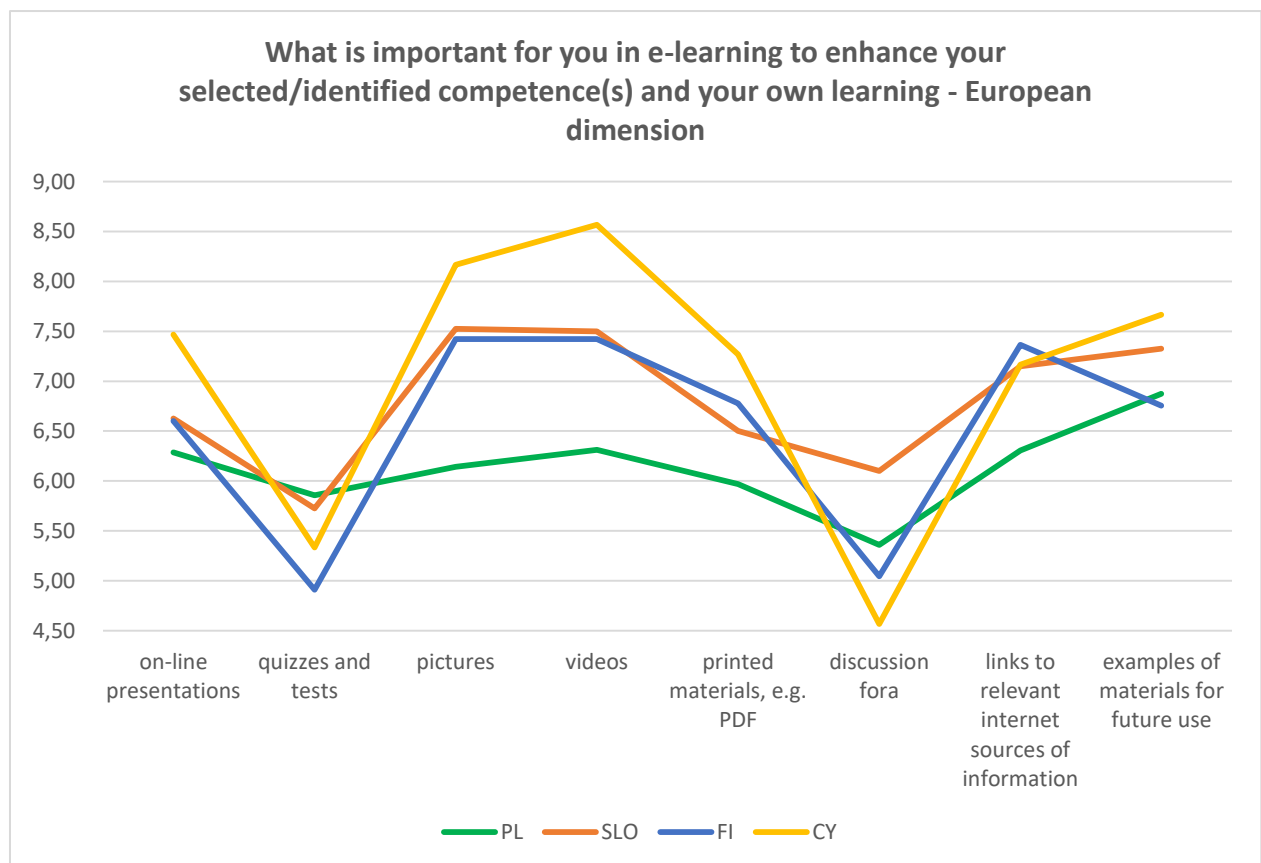


Figure 58: Enhancing competences through e-learning

Table 9: CUHEKO study – enhancing competences through e-learning

What is important for you in e-learning to enhance your selected/identified competence(s) and your own learning (multiple choice)	PL	SLO	FI	CY	Total
On-line presentations	6,29	6,63	6,60	7,47	6,74
Quizzes and tests	5,85	5,73	4,91	5,33	5,46
Pictures	6,14	7,53	7,42	8,17	7,31
Videos	6,31	7,50	7,42	8,57	7,45
Printed materials, e.g. PDF	5,97	6,50	6,78	7,27	6,63
Discussion fora	5,36	6,10	5,04	4,57	5,27
Links to relevant internet sources of information	6,31	7,15	7,36	7,17	7,00
Examples of materials for future use	6,87	7,33	6,76	7,67	7,16

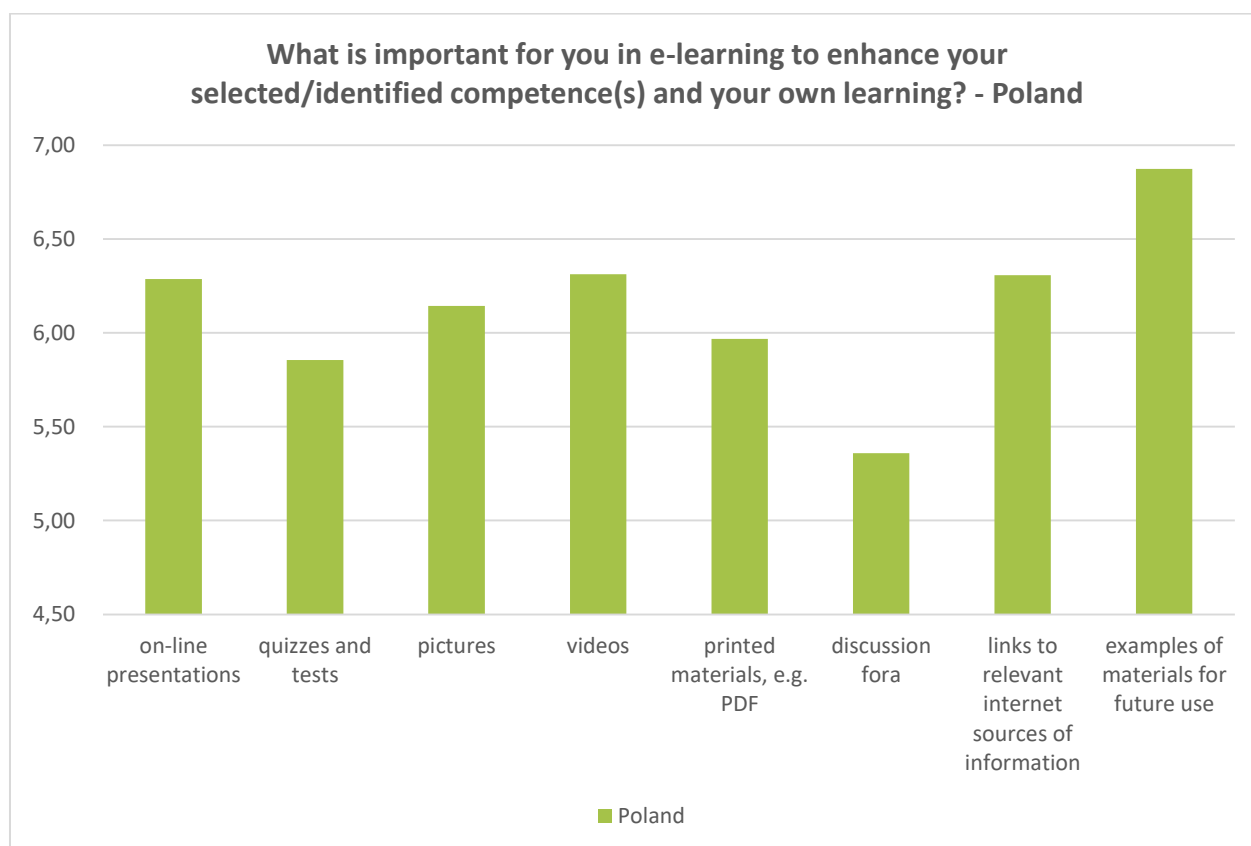


Figure 59: Enhancing educators' skills and competences in Poland

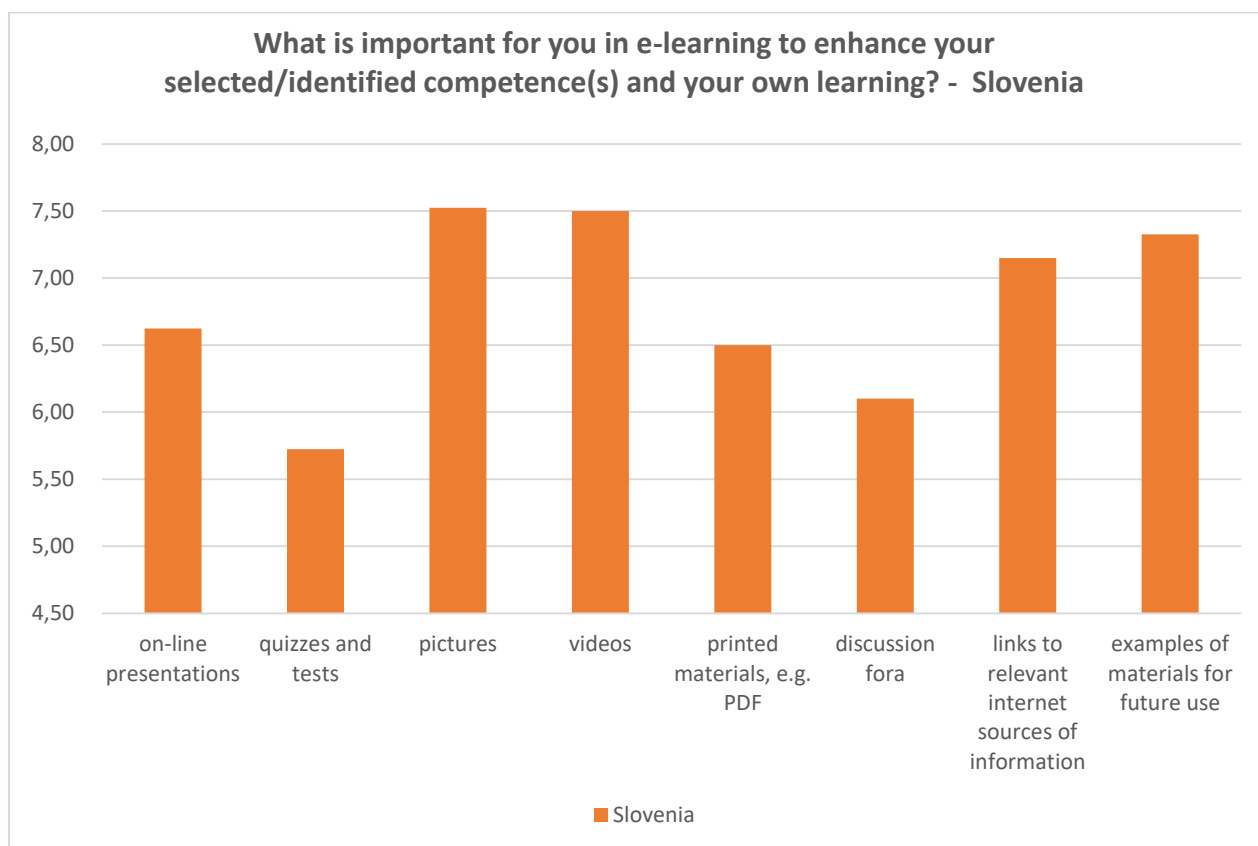


Figure 60: Enhancing educators' skills and competences in Slovenia

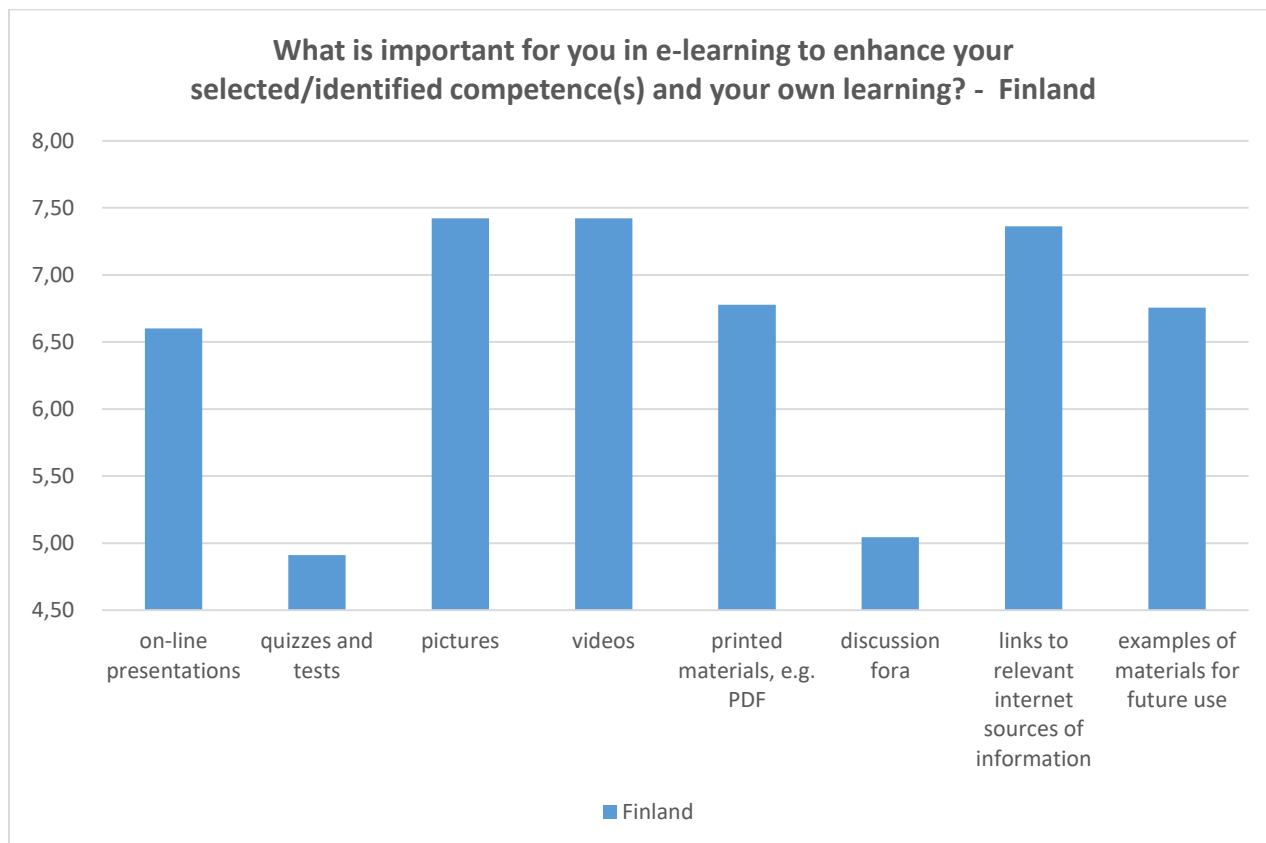


Figure 61: Enhancing educators' skills and competences in Finland

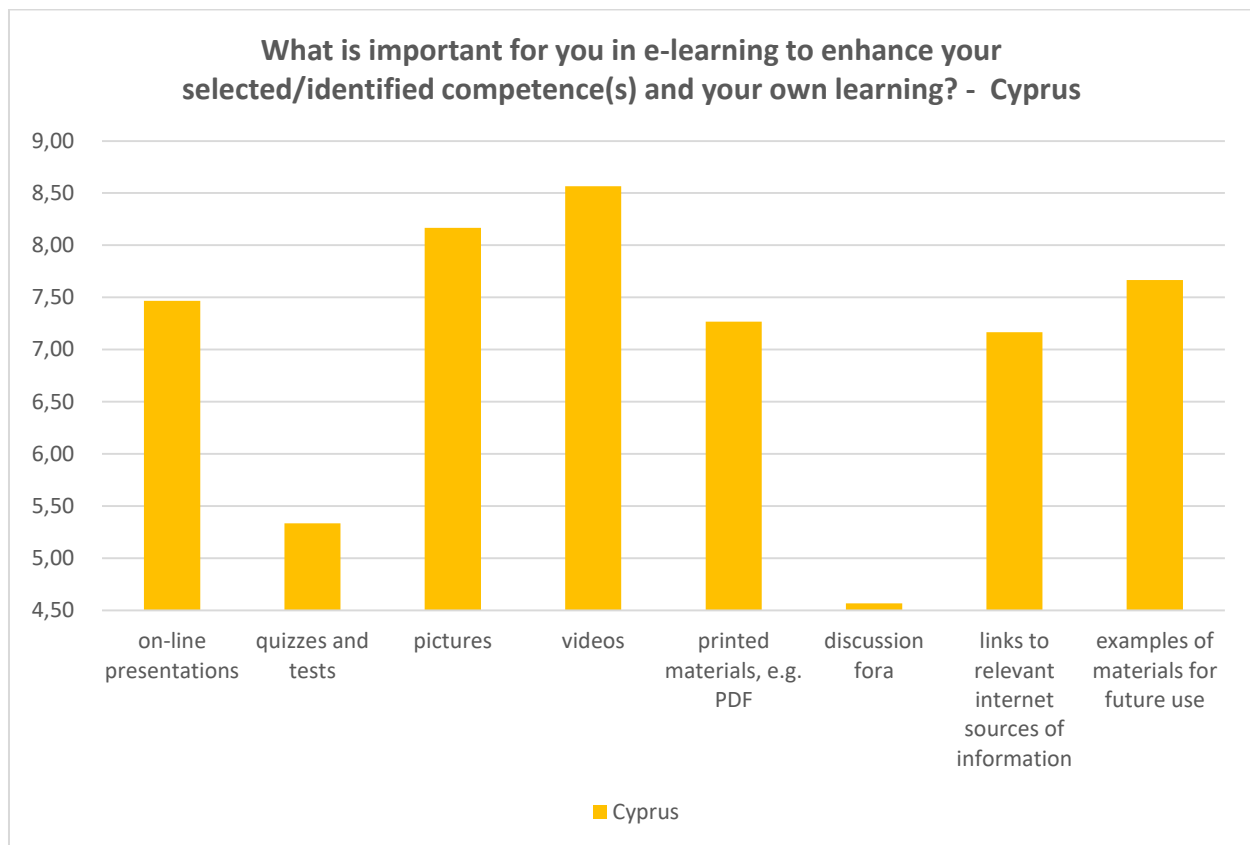


Figure 62: Enhancing educators' skills and competences in Cyprus

4.15 Sources educators use to stay updated, to find new, interesting and/or required information

With regard to sources and channels of information for educators and trainers they use for finding information, a vast majority of the respondents in the four countries identified attending training and workshops (83%) as the main form of looking for information as well as professional development (see Figures 63 - 67). The second source of information includes professional blogs and websites (73%).

As the third and fourth most important source of finding new information respondents indicated scientific publications (65%), Internet fora and social media (64%) and attending conferences. About 52% of the respondents use You-tube or vlogs in order to remain up-to-date with the developments in their field and only 13% use podcast.

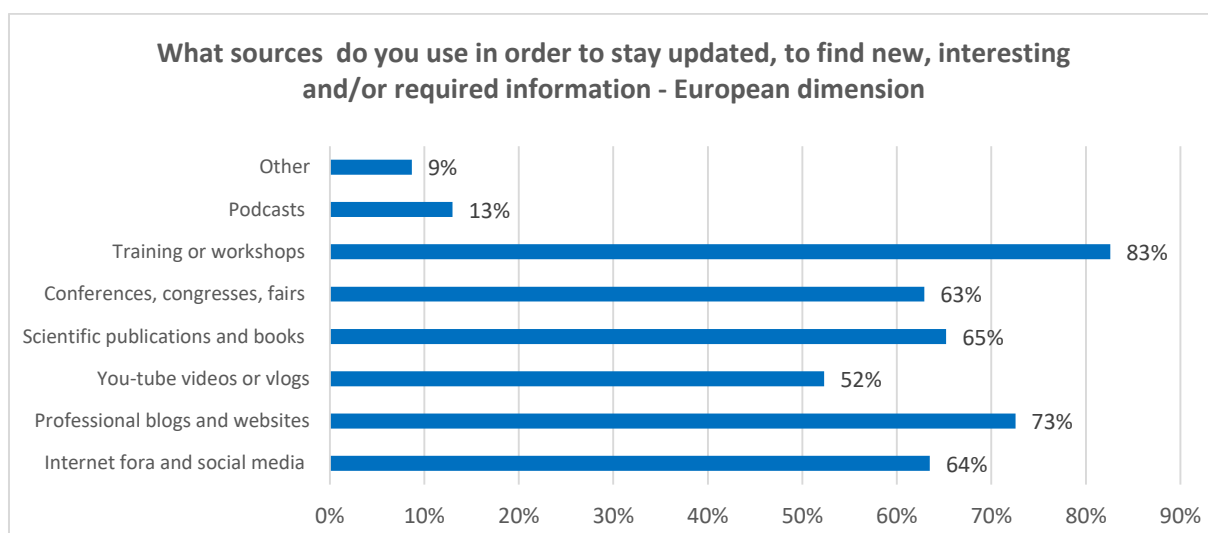


Figure 63: Sources of professional information

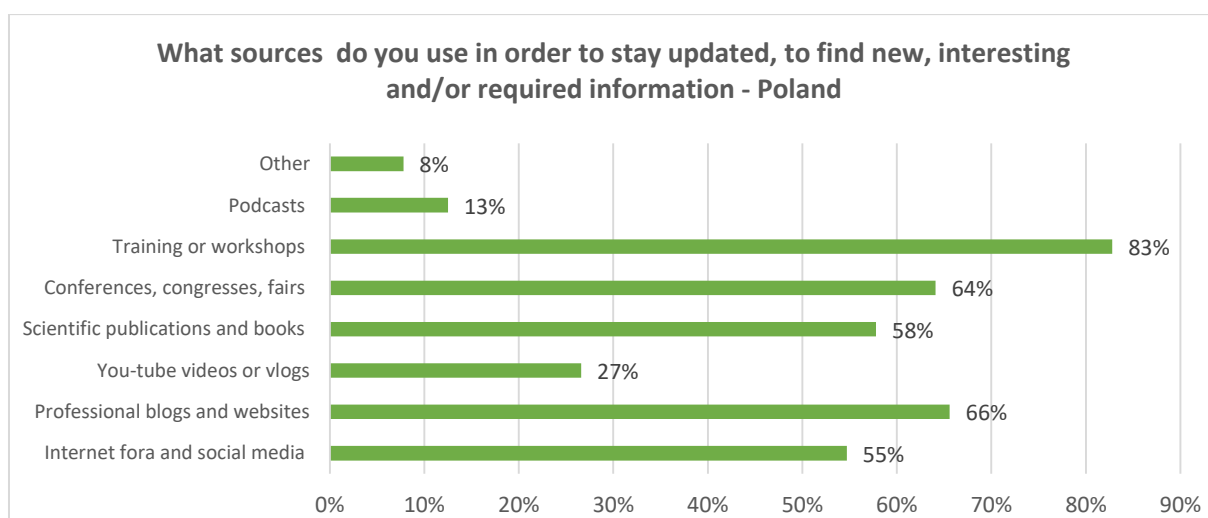


Figure 64: Sources of professional information in Poland

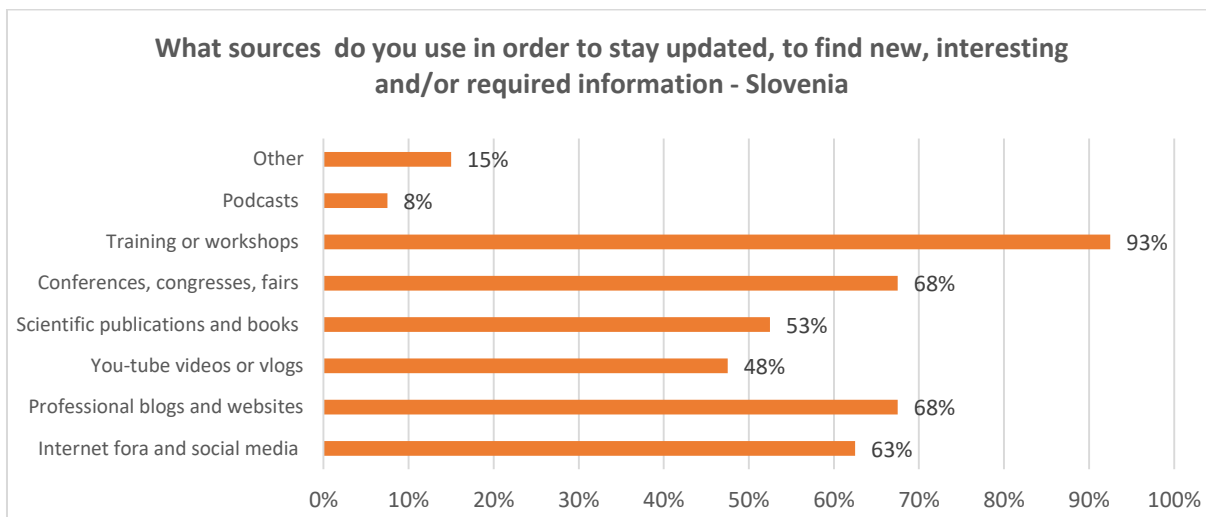


Figure 65: Sources of professional information in Slovenia

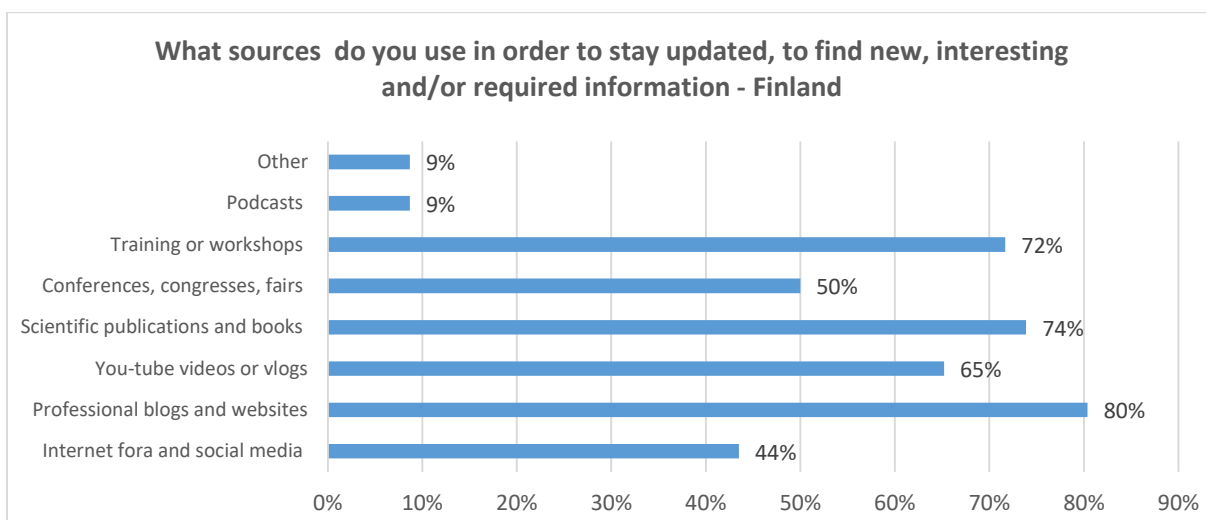


Figure 66: Sources of professional information in Finland

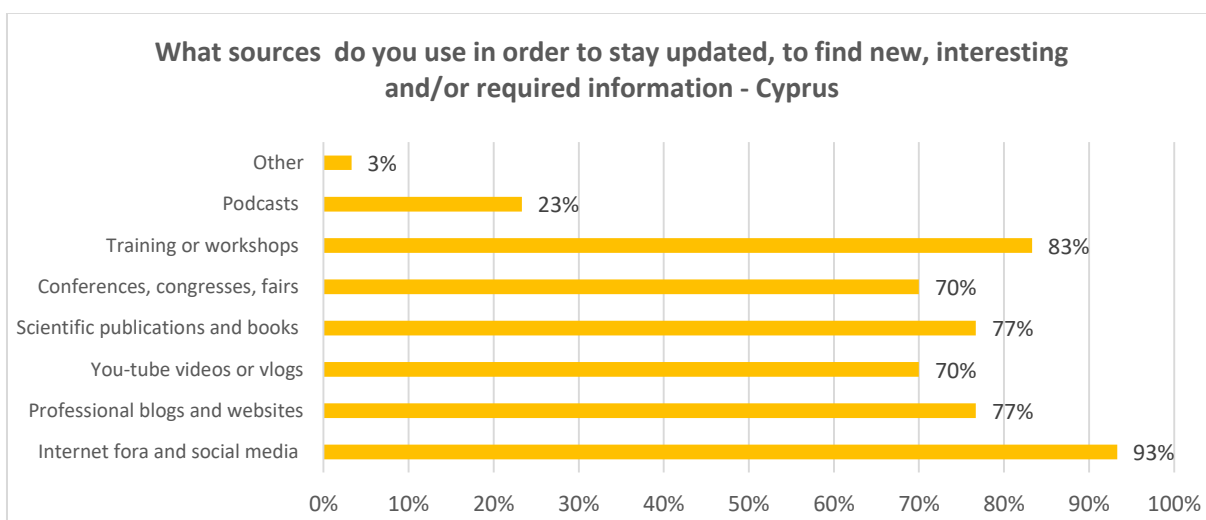


Figure 67: Sources of professional information in Cyprus

4.16 Summary

The results of the CUHEKO study that utilized quantitative and qualitative methods of data collection in the four participating countries (Poland, Finland, Slovenia and Cyprus) clearly indicate the need to provide further professional support for trainers of the five key competences (digital, entrepreneurship, literacy, social skills and intercultural awareness). In that respect, the respondents explicitly mentioned that they would appreciate further training and/or professional development in the competence(s) they teach.. From the data collected, it is also evident that e-learning is a frequently taken form of training. Hence, developing a e-learning courses that would provide further training to Adult Educators (AEs) within the competences they teach is an awaited solution-, from the analysis of the trends in each of the participating countries, there surfaces a more general picture of the needs of adult educators.

The participating adult educators most value in their profession contact with people, which is an important motivation factor in their work; yet, they frequently complain about the experienced low levels of motivation and/or engagement among their trainees and learners. It is therefore important that the CUHEKO planned courses include elements that will, on the one hand, enhance educators' competences and, on the other, provide them with ideas for transformative and motivating teaching that will have a consistently positive impact on their learners. This includes the above-mentioned interpersonal skills as well as educational tools and methods which is applicable to the development of the course for teaching social skills as well as to courses in the other four competences. Furthermore, since the respondents also emphasise other elements that affect the effectiveness of their work, the CUHEKO training courses may include, within their tools and mechanisms, practical elements that will enrich the educators' repertoire of solutions for issues such as e.g. motivating learners, approaching issues related to group composition or even adjusting the venue to create a more learner-friendly atmosphere.

Regarding individual competences, each of the CUHEKO training courses shall also address competence-specific challenges separately, in addition to the common problems identified by the participants. Although for digital competences it may be difficult to alleviate the issues of insufficient technical infrastructure, the training course may include tools or information on coping mechanisms. Similarly, for fear of using technology and varied-skills groups, educators need to be trained how to find and apply possible solutions in those, individualised cases.

With entrepreneurship, there is a clear need to provide guidance to educators on how to explain training goals and/or clarify subject knowledge in an understandable manner. Such practical applications may be further supported by tools that will equip educators with mechanisms or coping with low self-esteem of their trainees, which refers to the above-mentioned soft skills.

As for the literacy competence, the CUHEKO courses need to focus on generating interest and motivation among learners; hence, educators need to be provided with a set of tools that will either enable them to deal with or enhance their coping strategies for motivating learners, working with less homogenous groups and incorporating relevant real-life examples to illustrate their teaching.

Finally, the course aimed at developing educators' effectiveness in providing intercultural training needs to be oriented at the enhancement of their own intercultural awareness and knowledge of other cultures as well as include a challenging task of providing trainers with strategies for dealing with stereotypes about and potential prejudice against other cultures. To address the latter, the CUHEKO training course may also include elements of communicative competence to target the respondents' comments on trainers' lack of first language skills.

The last two significant elements of the results of the CUHEKO study refer to important e-learning elements and educators' sources of professional development. As for the first aspect, the respondents value e-learning as an educational form of self-professional development. In e-learning it is important, in all countries, to utilize materials, such as pictures, videos or online presentations, available in the Internet. This is an indication of some of the types of materials that the e-learning courses dedicated to that group may incorporate. The courses should equip trainers with knowledge how to search for, create and/or adapt materials for the purposes of their individual learners.

The above view seems to be in line with the respondents' high preference for training and workshops attendance as a form of professional development in which educators can enhance their skills rather than receive ready-to-use materials. The respondents from all participating countries stated that an important channel of accessing professional information includes also internet websites and professional blogs, which clearly indicates the usage of digital educational tools by this group. This approach may facilitate the dissemination of e-learning courses dedicated to that professional group. It is noteworthy that the respondents also highly emphasized the use of social media as a form of knowledge enhancement, which can be important for the development of the CUHEKO training courses as well as for their promotion and dissemination to reach a broader group of trainers and educators of competences.

Overall, the CUHEKO study has generated a range of useful data for the development of e-courses for adult educators and trainers of five competences: digital competence, entrepreneurship, literacy, social skills and intercultural awareness. The quantitative and qualitative data provide a more in-depth understanding of the needs of educators and challenges they face at work, which will serve as a basis for the development of CUHEKO bespoke courses.

5. Concluding Remarks

Training is an essential aspect of the development of competences which are necessary for individuals to sustain a satisfactory standard of living and fully participate in all areas of social life. In order to provide learners with quality training, educators must be confident in their work. Therefore, professional development and professional assistance are of high significance to them. Then, in order to provide high quality training for educators, their needs and challenges were identified in order to prepare for the production and delivery of bespoke courses tailored to address deficiencies of particular competences. There seems to be relatively little research or exploration in the area of educators' needs and research on the level of competences across EU Member States seems to be inconsistent. While there is more focus on literacy and problem solving, possibly in relation to the OECD PIAAC study, other competences receive unequal attention in EU countries. The availability, provision and forms of competences training courses for individuals varies among countries and the offer for competences training for adult educators seems to be even more fragmented.

The results of the CUHEKO study of educational needs and challenges of adult educators in the four participating countries (Poland, Finland, Slovenia and Cyprus) clearly show that a provision of e-learning courses in key competences is of high demand and could be very effective in addressing the shortage of such training. The observed needs for professional development concern all competences and includes not only example materials, but first and foremost the enhancement of skills in that trainers and educators explicitly express their needs to be equipped with tools and coping mechanisms in a variety of situations and contexts..

Furthermore, e-learning as a form of training seems an ideal solution as a vast majority of trainers are familiar with using web-based resources, which can be accessed with hardly any time or place restrictions. This further responds to the time issue, which is often reported by trainers as an impediment to their effective teaching. The convenience of e-courses certainly contributes to the enhancement of trainers' competences, which is highly likely to transform into a higher quality of their teaching. Although there are inevitable differences among the four countries, the discrepancies do not disable a more linear approach to course development, which could then be applicable on the European level – among other Member States of the EU.

Finally, the CUHEKO Project could possibly work towards presenting their analysis and study results and output or sample materials at the PIAAC Conference in Rome in January 2020, which may have a valuable input into the dissemination of the project results and delivery of knowledge on educational needs in key competences to a wider European audience.

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Appendix A

Country profiles as presented in PIAAC (OECD 2016b); however, information on Cyprus seems available only in the country.

Cyprus

- In Cyprus, 11% of adults have low literacy skills and 15% have low numeracy skills.
- 1 in 4 Cypriots does not have experience or basic computer knowledge.
- Linguistic and mathematical skills are moderate.
- In Cyprus, the percentage of the population with only elementary education is much high than the European average, 11.2% and 6.5% respectively. So is the percentage of the population with a university degree – in 2012 37% and 26% respectively.

Finland

Adult skills (Survey of Adult Skills, PIAAC, 2012)

- In Finland, **the mean proficiency score of 16-65 year-olds in literacy is significantly above the average** of the OECD countries participating in the Survey of Adult Skills (PIAAC). **In numeracy, the mean proficiency score is significantly above the average.**
- In Finland, **the young adult population (25-34 year-olds) scores at 309 in literacy**, compared to 279 on average in the OECD countries participating in the Survey. **In numeracy, they score at 302** (274 in average). In both domains, younger adults score higher than their older counterparts (55-65 year-olds).
- In Finland, **8.7% of the adult population (16-65 year-olds) report no prior experience with computers or lack very basic computer skills. In contrast, 41.6% of the adult population score at the highest levels in problem solving in technology-rich environments.**
- In Finland, **10.6% of the adults score at the lowest levels in literacy and 12.8% score low in numeracy.**

Poland

Adult skills (Survey of Adult Skills, PIAAC, 2012)

- In Poland, **the mean proficiency score of 16-65 year-olds in literacy is around the average** of the OECD countries participating in the Survey of Adult Skills (PIAAC). **In numeracy, the mean proficiency score is significantly below the average.**
- In Poland, **the young adult population (25-34 year-olds) scores at 277 in literacy**, compared to 279 on average in the OECD countries participating in the Survey. **In numeracy, they score at 270** (274 in average). In both domains, younger adults score higher than their older counterparts (55-65 year-olds).
- In Poland, **26% of the adult population (16-65 year-olds) report no prior experience with computers or lack very basic computer skills. In contrast, 19.2% of the adult population score at the highest levels in problem solving in technology-rich environments.**
- In Poland, **18.8% of the adults score at the lowest levels in literacy and 23.5% score low in numeracy.**

Slovenia

Adult skills (Survey of Adult Skills, PIAAC, 2015)

- In Slovenia, **the mean proficiency score of 16-65 year-olds in literacy is significantly below the average** of the OECD countries participating in the Survey of Adult Skills (PIAAC). **In numeracy, the mean proficiency score is significantly below the average.**
- In Slovenia, **the young adult population (25-34 year-olds) scores at 269 in literacy**, compared to 279 on average in the OECD countries participating in the Survey. **In numeracy, they score at 273** (274 in average). In both domains, younger adults score higher than their older counterparts (55-65 year-olds).

- In Slovenia, **18.4% of the adult population (16-65 year-olds) report no prior experience with computers or lack very basic computer skills. In contrast, 25.4% of the adult population score at the highest levels in problem solving in technology-rich environments.**
- In Slovenia, **24.9% of the adults score at the lowest levels in literacy and 25.8% score low in numeracy.**





KITCHEN OF SKILLS