KEYCOMKIT - "Key Competences Kit for facing Lifelong Learning"

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Transferability Report

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1. Introduction

1.1. Project background

Today's people live in a complex social and political world. More than ever before, individuals want to plan their own lives, are expected to contribute actively to society, and must learn to adapt to all everyday life changes. Life long learning in its broadest sense, is the key to learning and understanding how to meet these challenges. Key competences for lifelong learning are a combination of knowledge, skills and attitudes crucial for human development, social inclusion, competitiveness and employability. They enlarge human choices, enhance adaptability to changing work and life conditions, make people more socially mobile, competitive and motivated.

Key competences play a particularly important role in empowering people vulnerable to unemployment and social exclusion. It is only half a problem that these people have low education, outdated or non marketable qualifications. In the majority of countries across the EU there is a variety of acceptable learning opportunities allowing to equip those who seek knowledge with right skills and qualifications. Vulnerable people, however, got trapped in a vicious circle of low education-insufficient self confidence-low motivation to learn. They often do not seek knowledge and doom themselves to poverty and social exclusion. Sufficient key competences may help them to break out of this circle and benefit from available learning and working opportunities.

T**he KeyCom Kit** project is aimed at empowering people at high risk of social exclusion by strengthening their key competences and, thus, building pathway through life long learning to sustainable income earning opportunities and meaningful life.

The direct project beneficiaries are: adults at high risk of social exclusion, (people with low basic skills and education; school drop-outs; the long term unemployed; people with disabilities; minorities, ex- convicts and other groups of population vulnerable to unemployment and poverty). Indirectly adult training providers will benefit from project outcomes (adult training centres, providers of training services (initial and continuous vocational training), tutors, teachers and managing staff of training institutions).

The main outcome of the project is inclusive, flexible training pathway to key competences. The pathway includes: the kit of didactic training modules on eight frame key competences for lifelong learning, methodology of blended learning, tools for external and internal training evaluation, Web portal as training on-line support and a media for exchanging information and disseminate the outcomes, products, news, links etc. The innovative training pathway addresses problems common for the majority of target beneficiaries such as- insufficient education, motivation to learn and lack of

cognitive abilities. It allows flexible learning in such a way that youth and adults can start, interrupt and re-start their own pathway in order to get a better improvement of the learning process.

According to the recommendations of the European Reference framework for the Member States and the Commission[1] the kit of training modules produced within KEYCOMKIT project defines the following key competences and describes the essential knowledge, skills and attitudes related to each of these:

Module 1 Communication in the mother tongue
Module 2 Communication in foreign languages
Module 3 Mathematical competence and basic competences in science and technology.
Module 4 Digital competence
Module 5 Learning to learn
Module 6 Social and civic competences.
Module 7 Sense of initiative and entrepreneurship
Module 8 Cultural awareness and expression

These key competences are all interdependent, and the emphasis in each case is on critical thinking, creativity, initiative, problem solving, risk management, decision taking. Each module covers one key competence, providing theory concepts, practical examples, activities, useful reference links, multimedia demo etc. Apart from enhancing the acquisition of key competences by vulnerable groups the training pathway provide a reference framework to support policy makers, education and training providers, employers in their efforts to make lifelong learning widely accessible and inclusive.

The composition of target group, models of training delivery and other testing conditions significantly differ from country to country that makes any cross-country comparisons methodologically inconsistent. This fact, however, does not reduce the value of obtained testing results, which qualitatively illustrate most important aspects of training delivery models functioning for different target groups.

This report constitutes the findings of the project. The main idea of the report is to demonstrate in practice how the training path works in different target groups and models of training delivery, reveal its advantages and disadvantages with the aim to help potential users of the project products to avoid possible mistakes and to benefit from product advantages.

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[1] A European reference framework for the Member States and the Commission

1.2. Partnerships

KeyCom Kit is a Grundtvig Project, Multilateral, Development of Innovation – framed in the Lifelong Learning Programme and managed by the Education, Audiovisual and Culture Executive Agency (EACEA). Project duration 2008 - 2010.

The project partnership:
Lead partner -The Foundation for Training, Qualification and Employment in the Metal Sector (Fundación Metal Asturias).(Spain);
Partners: Institute for Socio-scientific Consultancy – ISOB (Germany);
Institute for Vocational Advancement Upper Austria; (Austria);
Marie Curie Association (Bulgaria);
 Social Policy Unit (Lithuania);
Student Computer Art Society – SCAS (Bulgaria)
The University of Craiova –UCV (Romania).

2. Project Results and Achievements

## 2.1. Demographic data – overview of target group

Total number of target beneficiaries who took part in pilot training and testing is 108 people. The majority of them passed a complete training on all 8 key competence modules. Questionnaires on internal and external effectiveness, however, filled in 102 trainees (7 of 13 from Austria). The majority of trainees are from **Spain** - 60 people.

Target group by country
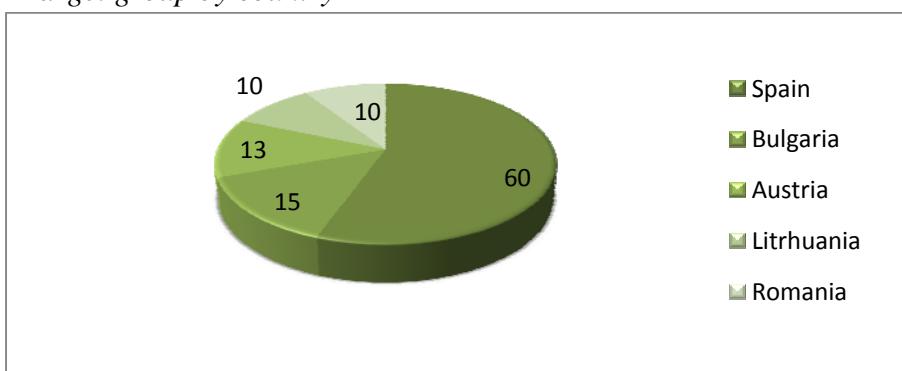
Target beneficiaries are people who particularly vulnerable to social exclusion because of the overlap of multiple factors such as: gender, age (younger than 25 and older than 55 years); lower education; absence of work experience; long term unemployment and disability. Women account for 59% of total number of target trainees.

Taget group by gender
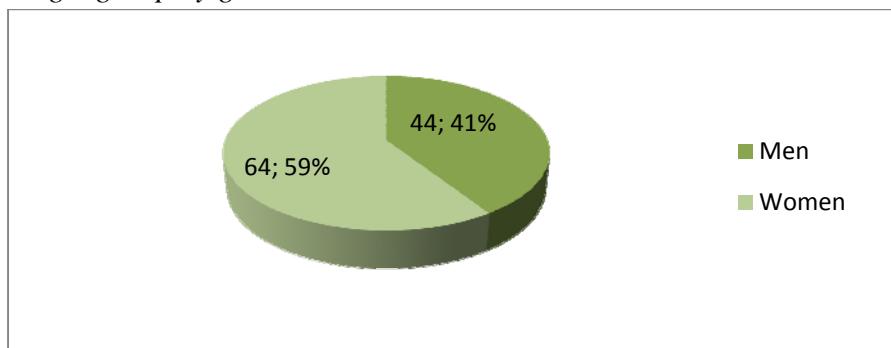
Two age groups most vulnerable to unemployment dominate among the target group: people aged between 16 and 25 account for 72% of all trainees and those older than 55 years account for 18% of all trainees.

Target group by age
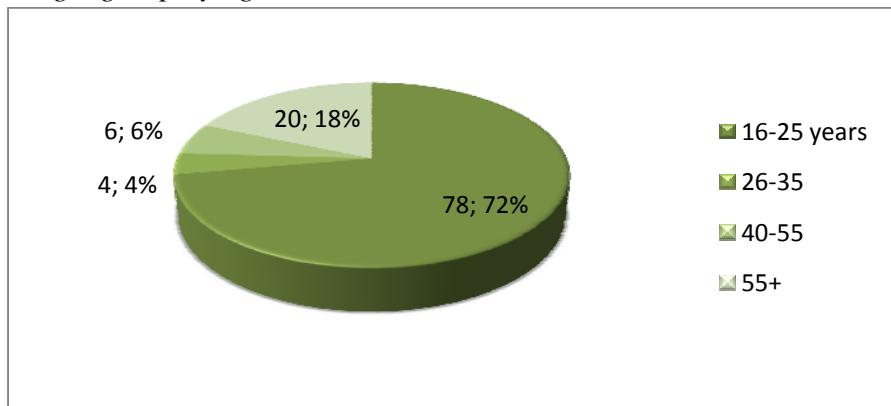
The absolute majority of trainees have insufficient education: 46% -ISCED 1 or lower and 52% - ISCED 2. Only 2% of trainees have reached ISCED level 3 education.

Target group by education
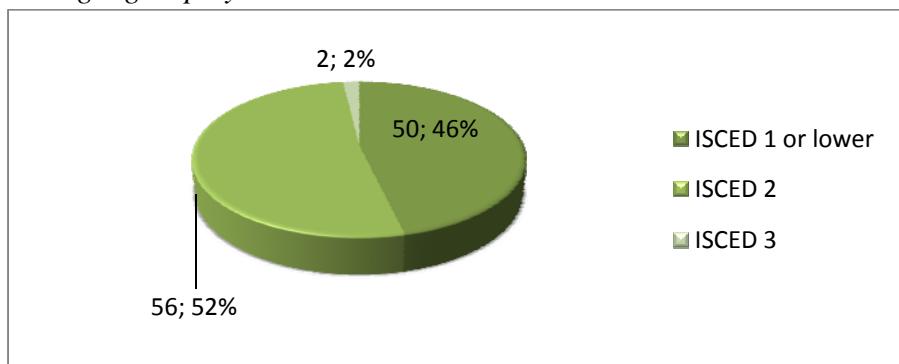
All trainees are unemployed. Only 9 people had no previous working experience the majority of the rest are long term unemployed who are without work for more that 12

months. It is difficult to classify target group according to the duration of unemployment more precisely because of lack of compatible data.

There are 15 trainees with disabilities. Ten of them from Workshop school "El Coto" (Spain). They are young people who suffer from slight physical and/or mentally disability. Five people are disabled unemployed from **Bulgaria**.

Only 16 target trainees (15%) had no previous experience of informal training of any kind before they started pilot training on key competences. The rest of trainees have attended different training programmes: computer skills; cooking, catering; foreign languages; driving; photography; secretary courses; music. Target beneficiaries from Spain attended courses of different nature and provided mainly by the city council through the informal programme so called "popular university".

Participants came into training from different local contexts. In **Spain** all trainees are registered as local residents (Gijón). They are participants of three workshops:
- Workshop school I "Innovative jobs". (25 people) – Group A;
- Workshop school II "Innovative jobs". (25 people)-– Group B;
- Workshop school "El Coto" (10 handicapped young people with minor physical and/or mental disabilities).

In **Lithuania** all ten trainees are inhabitants of two small settlements Pakalniai (5people) and Troskunai (5 people) with a status of deprived area. Although these people are unemployed by fact they do not hold official unemployment status. They are economically inactive people who are not registered with any employment authorities because they feel discouraged to find any job. Trainees were approached by training managers who are local residents and came into training virtually from home.

In **Austria** trainees lived in county Linz – Land, which means the surrounding areas of Linz in Upper Austria.]

In **Romania** the trainees come from the region of Oltenia – most of them are living near Craiova, in the Dolj County.

In **Bulgaria** trainees came from Sofia, Plovdiv, Simeonovgrad, Varna, Vratza, Vidin, Septemvri, Panaguirishte and Kostenetz .

Computer literacy

The level of computer literacy before the course varied from very low to basic and advanced among target groups.

In **Austria** all trainees were computer literate and knew how to use the internet, e-mail, text programmes, chat rooms, etc. Some even had an ECDL.

In **Spain** the target group is composed by young people (16-25 years old) with basic knowledge in digital competence but enough to participate in the e-learning course. They showed interest for blended learning methodology and online support because they are aware of the high offer of training courses provided via internet and the opportunities afforded.

In **Lithuania** all participants had basic computer literacy.

In **Romania**, only one trainee knew how to start a computer and how to send an e-mail since his daughter was working abroad and they had to communicate. He told us: *"I have a list of instructions in front of the computer – how to do that, how to do this, left by my daughter. I follow them strictly."* For the other participants, computer knowledge was at a very low level.

In **Bulgaria**, most users saw the computer for the first time in their life. Only few of the youngsters know how to use it for e-mail, chat but only in general. All participants received the material on paper copy (especially for those from rural areas who don't have good internet connection or computer in their homes).

2.2. Training delivery and organization

In this part of the report we will review approaches to training delivery motivation tactics and tools, application of methodology of blended learning and short term intervention in different contexts focusing on the following aspects and questions:

- **How the project and KeyCom Kit set of training modules on key competences were introduced to potential trainees?**
- **How learners were motivated to participate?**
- **How was the training organised? (Where, when, by whom, how long?)**
- **How many tutors have been used? What was the reason for one vs. multiple tutors and respective specific competences? How did this influence outcomes?**
- **How was the relationship between face-to face and online learning?**
- **How has contact between learners and tutors been organised during self-learning periods? (Skype, phone. Emails, other means?)**
- **What parts of the curriculum did participants like, what parts did they dislike? Have there been differences among participants groups?**
- **What has been new for them?**
- **How was the online portal used?**
- **Was it easy for them to use the online material?**
- **What factors encouraged, what factors discouraged the use of the online portal?**

One of the important points of the whole exercise is how the project and KeyCom Kit set of training modules on key competences were introduced to potential trainees.

The way the project products were introduced to potential beneficiaries depends to a large extent on the where the target group came from. In **Spain and Austria** potential trainees were participants of different training programmes on informal education or labour market training. In **Romania, Bulgaria and Lithuania** potential trainees did not participate compactly in any training programme.

In **Spain**, both the project and the KeyCom Kit course were presented to the staff in charge of the training action as a first step due to their essential involvement during the piloting. Representatives of Fundación Metal organized a work session with the director of the Workshop schools (second chance school) and the tutors of the 3 schools developing activity in September 2010. The course was offered as a new didactic tool to be tested in the frame of its own training programmes and in directly relationship to the acquisition of the secondary school certification.

The methodology set in the project was suggested:

- Interactive e-learning through the web site and training platform of the project (www.keycompetenceskit.eu);
- Face to face tutoring – introduction meeting, interim meeting and testing and assessment of the skills obtained during the training and semiautonomous tutoring with periodical face to face contacts for people who needs more support during the training process.

After this presentation, the tutors of those groups with higher availability to follow the course make the introduction to the students in the classroom.

Potentially the participation could be higher but due to the high rates of renewal, the sample has been reduced balancing didactic resources (printed modules and computer/internet access) and own school scheduling.

In **Austria,** the training modules were part of a labour market measures conducted by BFI for young employed people looking for a job. The trainees were informed about the project by their trainers. It was agreed that one whole group would test the modules.

In **Romania**, trainers got in touch with the human resource managers and the trade union leaders in the industrial plants and factories near the city of Craiova. They talked to the people who got unemployed in the last period (24 months) and asked them if they wanted to follow some training courses, with no financial obligations. The people who

agreed to this proposal were gathered and were presented the project and the training modules.

In **Bulgaria** the project modules were promoted through online articles on web site for adult learners and also through radio announcements. During the Induction meeting the tutors were briefed on the structure and the content of the all modules. Then during a discussion between the learners and the tutors every learner identified which parts of the materials are more interesting for him/her.

Then the tutors presented the online e-learning platform and its features. They informed the learners where and how should completed the self-check tests for each module. After it the tutors provide to the learners the feedback forms and they completed them in Bulgarian language.

In **Lithuania**, where target group are inhabitants of deprived areas, outreach approach was used to introduce project and training opportunities to potential trainees. In settlements where target trainees live actively function community training centres. Managers of these centres are local residents who perfectly know everybody in the neighbourhood. So, mangers approached potential trainees informally in different places including local shop, post office, trainees' homes. They briefly informed potential trainees about new training opportunity and invited them to visit training centre where tutors introduced idea of the project and training modules in more detail.

Motivating trainees to learn

Important aspect of informal training is to motivate potential trainees to learn. Obviously, some target groups are more motivated to learn than others are. For example, younger people, particularly those who already study (Spain), or unemployed who participate in active labour market training (Austria), or even those who occasionally learned about KeyCom Kit via media and themselves contacted training providers (Bulgaria) were more motivated to improve their key competences than older that 55 years inactive and discouraged dwellers of deprived areas (Lithuania), or the unemployed who not necessarily participate in any training (Romania).

Anyway, effective approaches to motivating vulnerable to social exclusion people to learn may be useful for potential users of project products (local authorities, NGOs, employers).

In **Spain**, due to the nature of the workshop schools, the students are aware of the great chance to be trained for acquiring the second school certification as 80% of them don't have it (special agreement with the Education Ministry) and they were informed about the advantages of the study time and location self-managing. This combined program

provides students training in occupational jobs (with high demand) for increasing their labour placement. The combined programme consists of 2 phases: - the first one -the theoretical/practice training during 6 month in which the students receive a grant/scholarship (about 7 Euros/day) and – the second phase (since the sixth month to the end) there is professional agreement with the city council and the student/worker receives a salary (it is about the 75% of the minimum professional salary 633,30 Euros). So the financial motivation is also important. In addition Fundación Metal will issue certifications of the attendance and good progress of the KeyCom Kit course. The learners are highly motivated to participate in this course so they appreciate initiatives that may help them in their goal. At the same time they are being trained in occupational activities high demanded in the labour market. This participants are granted (not by the KeyCom Kit project) in the frame of the Public Employment Service of Asturias.

In **Austria**, the trainers revealed the benefits and advantages to potential trainees all participants were part of the labour market measures. Important point is that trainees received an allowance by the labour market service. It was agreed that one whole group would test the modules. Those participants who didn't want to participate at all were not forced of course but were concentrating on their job search.

In **Bulgaria** mostly of the trainees were motivated to take part of the training without any effort from the team of MCA since they found the article with our contacts on internet and also listen the frequently broadcasted project announcements by radio Vesselina. Then they contact the office of MCA and complete a simple form which presented their background information and declared their wish to take part of the KeyCom Kit training. Also the learners have the opportunity to call through Skype the tutors for additional support which was made on regular weekly basis. Then the learners became more motivate by receiving important support from the tutors not as teachers but as advisers. The less motivated trainees team of MCA motivated them by explaining the innovative methodological approach and content of the modules and its e-learning delivery which is the best way for achieving results. MCA supported and guided them during the whole process of training.

In **Romania**, trainers tried to convince the target group that this training is something they can benefit from, at no expenses. The opportunity should not be missed since everything is provided – all they had to do was to find some time and to be willing to participate in order to be more competent.

In **Lithuania** target beneficiaries are discouraged inactive people from deprived communities to attract these people with low motivation to learn into training is at the core of the project success. Contents of modules can be easily adapted to the needs of any target group, encouraging people to start and continue learning is a real challenge.

Very often potential trainees are people with low self esteem and obvious advantages of training not always motivate them to learn. In Lithuania team of ten trainees volunteered to study according to 8 modules each. Trainers motivated them into this exercise by explaining that they have a very important pioneering mission to test new training modules and that their opinions will be highly valuable for bringing more people in need into learning. All trainees confessed that nobody ever valued their opinion so much and eagerly accepted the proposal.

Big role in motivating potential trainees to learn played training managers, who are local, respected in a community people. Also, peer support from other community members (of the same social status) who successfully study at community training centres successfully functioning for two years (delivering similar modules on key competences) was important.

In actual fact, tutors, managers and people who already learn at training centre united their efforts in persuading trainees to start and continue learning. They used several methods: approached people where possible (shops, past offices, homes...); inviting them to come to the training centre and meet trainers and trainees; talking to family members of target group.

Apart from obvious benefits of training (higher qualifications) strong motivating factors to start learning – were free training; closeness to place of residence; opportunity to quit voluntarily at any moment.
Arguments that worked in persuading to start: – start training and you are free to drop out at any moment; those who share with you similar hardships learn with pleasure; it is not wise to decline any free of charge opportunity.

Arguments for continuing learning: now you see that you can; learning will reveal your hidden talents and help you to find better way how to earn money; you will easily improve your skills which you can apply not only in job finding but also in your everyday life; Indirect motivating factors was better status in a community.

Training location

Important factor of accessibility of informal adult training is choosing a right location for **training.** Location is important for the following reasons: availability of computers and the Internet; low transportation costs; convenience of training process (possibility to get advice...).

Flexible nature of modular training on key competences, effective online support gave an opportunity to carryout training in a wide variety of locations from computerised centres to homes of trainees.

In a computerised training centres or locations training took place in:

- **Austria** - training took place in a computerized training centre situated in Traun. The participants lived in surrounding areas. Their travel costs were covered by the labor market service.
- **Lithuania** - training took place in a computerised community training centres situated at a walking distance to trainees' place of residence.
- **Romania** - training took place in the University of Craiova, in one of the locations equipped with computers and Internet access. The transport was provided by the University of Craiova.
- **Spain and Bulgaria** training took place both in special locations and at home.

In **Spain**, most of the students take advantage of the internet connection and computer availability in the workshop school facilities but about 35% of the students continued the training path at home or in a community training centres (free). The profile of the target group is young people with basic knowledge in digital competences so this was not an obstacle.

In **Bulgaria** the face to face sessions took place – 2 in Plovdiv and one in Sofia (since they are users from that geographical area as well). The e-learning sessions and Skype session were facilitated from the learners' homes or some of them used a computer and internet from local municipality internet clubs.

Training process: timing, duration, guided and self learning

Duration of training sessions as well as application of blended teaching methodology are important aspects of training delivery. How methodology of blended learning y worked in different target groups is seen from relationship between face-to-face and self-learning including online sessions. Obviously younger, more digitally competent and having computers at home trainees benefited more from advantages of blended learning.

In **Spain** the training started at the end of September 2010 after the organization of an introductory meeting / work session with the director of the workshop schools and the tutors. The KeyCom Kit suggested methodology was discussed and adapted to the scheduled activity in the schools.

The face to face sessions took place 1 day per week (total 8 weeks) in the school classroom equipped with computers and internet connection. Trainees had a possibility to use the classroom computers beyond timetable and also they were informed about the teletraining centre net operating in the city.

At the beginning of each module, there was an introductory face-to face session, detailing knowledge, skills and attitudes are expected at the end of the module and their units, main concepts, type of relevant activities to do. The tutor also formulates questions for reflection. (Total average time: 1hour). A second face to face session was organized for doing group activities. These encouraged the students and the tutor can obtain information about the progress (qualitative aspects). Also the tutors and the students take advantage for formulating questions and doubts. The average duration of this second session is about 2 hours.

At the end of the KeyCom Kit course, Fundación Metal will issue a certification of attendance and achievement.

In **Austria** approximately 60% of the training was organised in face-to-face sessions, the rest (40%) of training was self-paced / online learning either on the online platform or using the print outs of the modules. The training was conducted in June / July and lasted for 4 weeks. At least two afternoons / week were reserved for face – to – face tutoring. The rest of the time was job search and self-paced / online learning. Total learning time was 80 hours (for 5 modules).

In **Lithuania** learning was organised by training centre managers in two computerised community training centres situated in a different small rural settlements (five trainees and teacher per centre).Although all trainees had basic computer skills, training started from module 4 to strengthen computer literacy. Further learning started from 1 to 8 modules. Training started in September and lasted for two and half months.

The schedule was -16 hours per module (4X4 hour lessons two times a week) with trainer (face to face) + 2 hours independent online work. At the beginning trainers proposed to spend at least 5 hours per module working online, but trainees were not ready and refused. Face to face training took approximately 95% of total training time; self paced/online learning respectively only 5%. Face to face sessions were full value guided training.

In **Romania** the self-paced learning (online learning) was not very popular among the trainees since they complained of lack of time and lack of appropriate means of learning – without a computer and an internet access the online learning has no real basis. Face to face training – 90%; online learning was possible only for 1 of them who had a computer at home (his son's).

Consequently, the face to face sessions were considered the only option for most of them (nine out of ten). The trainers succeeded in adapting the contents of the modules to the trainees' areas of interest - more activities in some of the modules, while others were less studied.

The training started in September and continued during the next two months, at the end of November being concluded. The University of Craiova provided free means of transport for the trainees to the university. The meetings were organized two times a

week, three hours a day, from 17.00 p.m. to 20.00 p.m. They received free materials and they had free access to computers within the university. The trainers were professors of the University of Craiova.

In **Bulgaria** the piloters preferred to learn independently in their homes or in local internet groups. Online distance learning in piloters' home or municipality internet clubs – approximately 120-130 hours in total. Additionally to that they like the three face2face meetings (12 hours in total) since the social contact with their peers are very important in order to increase the communication skills. After the midterm meeting the piloters communicate between each other through Skype and Facebook. The duration of the face to face meetings was 4 hours each. Face2face meetings: 3 meeting (12 hours); Skype meetings (bilaterally) – between 3-10 meetings for each piloter; online learning (independently) – between 120 – 160 hours).

Tutors and their roles

In **Spain** the course was introduced to 8 tutors, but after balancing material resources and the profile of the students, it was decided that the piloting will be guided by three tutors. One of the groups (10 handicapped people) tested just 1 module – Digital competence.

In **Austria** there were two tutors, who are very experienced in working with disadvantaged groups. One tutor had a Master's degree in education, the other was a trained secondary school teacher with a Master's degree in e-learning / educational management. Both tutors have been working in life-long-learning projects for disadvantaged groups for more than 10 years. They conducted the face-to-face sessions together in order to be able to concentrate on the individual learners. Mainly the contact between tutors and trainees during self learning was organized via e-mail. Informal questions also arose during the face to face sessions. Tutors take the opportunity to share some of the questions with the class. There was the possibility of e-mail and phone contacts during self learning.

In **Romania** five tutors dealt with the module training – all the tutors were experienced professors, who worked with this category of people, taking into account their age. All the tutors were involved in long distance learning.

Considering the number of the trainees (only ten), the tutors could concentrate on each of the trainees, thus encouraging all of them and developing a good communication.
The contact between tutors and trainees during self learning was mainly by phone since trainees could not use computers (they did not have one or they lacked the competence to work on it), so the phone was the best contact between the face to face sessions (all of them had mobile phones).

In **Lithuania** two tutors were engaged. Both tutors are professional psychologists by education, they teach at local college and in community training centres. Ability to

establish contact with trainees and encourage them to learn is crucial to successful training vs specific competences which are less relevant for teaching basics. During self learning sessions trainees were assisted by training managers. No regular contact with trainers was established.

In **Bulgaria** two competent and experiences with target group tutors were involved in the training of KeyCom Kit modules. During the face-to-face meetings for some exercises the piloters were divided into two groups by 7-8 participants each. This is very important in order to involve every piloter as much as possible in the training process. Especially for module 1, 2 and 8 the group sessions are very important and this organisation of the learning process was fruitful. Initially the idea of the project was to use the Forum as online media of contacts between learners and tutors. Trainees proffered to use free of charge SKYPE and VOIP (they know how to use them from module 4). Learners and tutors agreed to meet online two times a week for questions or comments.

Perceptions of training process by trainees

One of the main tasks of this piloting training is to know as much as possible about trainees' perceptions of modules contents, teaching methodology and impacts of training on personal development given its comparatively short duration. Reactions of trainees was very different depending on their background.

In **Spain**, the students at the first time expressed certain doubts about the possible gaps in communication student-tutor as for most of them the e-learning methodology was new regarding use although they knew this methodology for the process training-learning. So the tutors explained in detail the possibilities offered by the blended learning (flexible learning_ from place at any time, self-management of the learning, cheap cost, other multiple communication media _e-mail, skype, forum etc).

In **Lithuania** trainees were unable to formulate any opinion on module content or teaching methodology at the beginning. Later, when training gained its momentum it become clear that self learning is almost impossible. Trainees, however, positively valued face to face tutoring. The following are two most relevant reflections that help to answer both questions: how did students react and what was achieved during short time.

> I could have never imagined myself studying since I was twenty. Learning always associated with dull school lessons, always angry teacher, bad and good pupils and other unpleasant things. In my life I never need to seek knowledge for career. I worked in a collective farm, and did house work bringing up 3children. Now I am a subsistence

farmer. I need to find job for two reasons: increase income, get pension and health care insurance. So far, I can not tell how training will help me to find job.

I did not suppose that learning may be so interesting and seeking knowledge may be aimed not only at getting work but at being more happy and satisfied in life. I definitely will continue learning even if it will not help to find job.

56 years old woman, unemployed for 7 years

I had been working a driver for almost thirty years. Now I lost my job. To find work here is impossible. I feel cornered and agreed to try learning. Moreover, my neighbour, also unemployed, joined me. We started from computer literacy. I wrote my first e-mail message and send it my son who works in London. I did not like an idea to learn all modules, but step by step I get more involved. It is difficult to say which module is more useful, because nobody knows how life may turn. Now I am more interested in entrepreneurship skills and less in communication in foreign languages and mathematical competence. Training prompted me an idea to start small business fully utilising my competence as a driver. I plan to open small cargo delivery company...

55 years old man, unemployed for two years

In **Austria**, students' reactions were very mixed at the beginning of the training. Some of them were afraid by the amount of text in the modules. Some had problems with motivation because of recent negative experiences in formal schooling. The reactions during the training and shortly afterwards were quite good. They expressed the value of self-paced autonomous training – choosing what they wanted to learn when they wanted to learn it. They especially enjoyed / valued modules 1 (communication in mother tongue) and module 7 (entrepreneurship). Students talked in detail about key competences not only for life long learning but also about key issues for increasing employment chances. They all see the purpose of continuous learning in their lives. The introduction of e-learning was a very important concept for them, also getting used to self paced learning. They are very clear about and can express their learning needs. They learned a lot about entrepreneurship and developed plans for themselves. They improved their communication skills and their competences in application strategies.

In **Romania**, trainees asked all the material before training started in order to have a general idea on the modules. This fact may be ascribed to feelings of fear and curiosity characteristic of their age -55+). The number of pages impressed them negatively at the beginning, pretending that they are no longer young and their memory is not that good

like it used to be. Since the trainers induced a relaxed and comfortable way of learning, the reactions of the students were not negative. Most of them said that they would like to do only certain modules, not all of them, but they eventually accepted all (at least parts of some). Nevertheless, the idea of lifelong learning seemed quite interesting to participants. Although some of the trainees pretended that they were too old to learn a lot of new things, part of the information being considered useless, they agreed to this challenge. The training brought a ray of optimism in their life – certain trainees almost lost hope in getting a fixed job, at their age.

In **Bulgaria** the students initially were less motivated to study. They have a lot of prejudice regarding the opportunities for them to get a regular full time job after training. During the midterm meeting trainees become more enthusiastic to learn because the modules are very user friendly. The piloters felt much comfortable to be trained online (from their houses or local internet clubs) because it enables them to choose the time and the way to proceed with the training. The piloters know that during the 16 hours of training of each module they could learn only basic things regarding the theme of the modules. But this basic is the core of their potential continuation of lifelong learning. All of the piloters declared during the final feedback that they will try to improve the learned skills and knowledge through our initiatives.

Perceptions of curriculum

Preferences of trainees regarding curricula obviously depends on their background and on the fact that for many people this training was the first one after a long brake (decades for trainees 55+). It may be quite possible that if trainees will be asked later about the impact of modular training on their life they may change their opinion.

In **Spain** the majority of participants were especially fond of modules 2, 4, 7 and 8.
Module 2 _ Communication in foreign languages is seen as a tool for acquiring communication capacities abroad: messages, conversations and better opportunities for getting a job.
Module 4 _ Digital competence is considered an essential pillar/leverage to promote in the market labour. The profile of the group is young people with certain experience with ICT (computers, mobile phones, etc).
Module 7 – Sense of initiative and entrepreneurship. In spite of the young age, trainees appreciated this module because it provides knowledge how benefit from commercial projects and business initiatives. It is understandable because people are worried for their future in a country with one of the highest unemployment in Europe.
Module 8 - Cultural awareness and expression. Students enjoyed the module, they expressed the pleasant focus of the didactic units and the contents awaken their curiosity.

Most of the students use computers, they are not new for them but the new method was the capability to self-manage their time and their own preferences at any location.

In **Lithuania** all trainees were unanimous in their opinion that Communication in foreign languages was not relevant to them (*Module 2*). Although they positively evaluated module content, arguments against the module are: one can not learn foreign language during short period of time without intense communication practice; we see no way to apply this knowledge in our life;

Second group of modules less interesting for trainees were: mathematical competence (*Module 3*); Learning to learn (*Module 5*) and Cultural awareness and expression (*Module 8*). It does not mean that contents of these modules are not relevant or interesting, rather the range of interests of trainees matters.

Most attractive modules were digital competence (*Module 4*), communication in mother tongue (*Module 1*), Social competence (*Module 6*) and Sense of initiative and entrepreneurship (*Module 7*).

Trainees pointed out that new for them were to learn such things as how to communicate with others. Trainees did not know that one need is a special skill how to learn (*Module 5*). It was new to study in a group of people of the same age and that that teacher pays so much attention to each trainee.

In **Austria** trainees liked *Module 1* (communication in mother tongue), *Module 6* (social competence) and *Module 7* (entrepreneurship). Some didn't see the purpose in *Module 8* (cultural awareness and expression). They considered completely new self-paced learning and choosing the most important topics for themselves.

In **Romania** trainees were interested in the communication modules (mostly *Module 2*), *Module 4* (digital competence) and *Module 7* (entrepreneurship). They considered *Modules 5, 6, and 7* too complicated for them and *Module 8* was regarded as an optional reading, with no practical aim. University of Craiova tested all the modules, even if some parts of certain modules were rejected (*Modules 1, 3, 6, 8*). For most of trainees, *Module 4* was quite new and they really wanted to know more.

In **Bulgaria** trainees enjoyed mostly *Module 4*, *Module 2*, *Module 8* and *Module 7*. They were not so interested about *Module 3* and especially some parts of it were disliked by the trainees since they felt as a normal student, not as a lifelong learning student, which was their definition of what they are doing. The *Module 6* was not so attractive as well. The amount of the text and the units could be rearranged with more practical exercises in the future.

Online support to training

Online support to learning is an important component of KeyCom Kit modular training. Ability to use online materials by trainees during self learning sessions is a crucial prerequisite to effective application of blended learning methodology. The testing revealed that using online portal depends on a level of computer literacy, education and age of target group.

In target groups where computer literacy was higher and age younger (**Austria, Spain, Bulgaria**) online portal was used more intensely and played important role in the training process. In older and less computer literate groups (**Romania, Lithuania**) online information was virtually inaccessible to trainees. For this target group, however, the lack of digital skills and limited access to computer are not the main obstacles to self learning online. Poor cognitive skills reduce any possibility of effective self learning.

In **Spain**, during the introductory session, the students receive specific instructions for accessing the training online platform. As previous step all of them checked they email address (some of them received help to create a new email account). Although the platform is considered highly intuitive, the students were puzzled when they found a multilingual portal. The path to find the didactic kit was highlight. And in case of problems, they may contact with the tutor by e-mail. All of them have in addition hard copies of the modular kit. Comments received about the use of the platform indicated that instructions from the tutor make the navigation very easy. In each module the practical/theory workload ratio was 2/1 for the assimilation of concepts. At the end of each module, a self-assessment exercise is proposed so each student may evaluate the level of knowledge acquired. Some of the participants have no computer and/or internet connection at home, but they could use the computers installed in the classroom out the class timetable. And also they received information of the teletraining centres in the city. In addition, they also show interest for social aspects, social networks (some of them are already members of facebook, tuenti etc.). The potential to use online learning is directly linked to opportunity to improve employability: search of jobs via internet, improvement of opportunities in the job through qualification, teleworking / telecommuting.

In **Austria t**opics were introduced in face-to-face sessions, group discussions and partner work, which was conducted in the group. The online portal was used for individual learning and deepening of knowledge. The learners could decide for themselves in which areas they wanted to broaden their knowledge, on which aspects they wanted to focus on. The access to the material was easy. There were enough computers in the training centers, many of the students had computer / internet access at home as well. All learners got printouts of the modules in addition to that to be able take

notes and to be able to work independently of computer / internet access. They used them very intensively as well. The amount of unguided text in the online material frightened especially the weak readers in the group. This could be overcome by guidance from the tutors. Among the factors that encourage use of online information by trainees are: access to a computer and the internet by all trainees; support from tutors who showed what could be learned and suggested learning paths. Discouraging factors were the extensive reading materials and the fact that the training was carried out during summer time. Moreover the modules don't lead to a recognised certificate so outside motivation was not enhanced.

In **Bulgaria** during the induction meeting each trainee registered on the online platform. The tutors guided them with some hints how to use it and where to find the information. Also they negotiated the way to call them in order to resolve problems if any. The online portal was very convenient for those users who preferred to learn not in regular time – for example some trainees preferred to study during the evenings or night. So the portal enabled them to study when they want or when they were able to. Trainees didn't encountered difficulties with the online material. Some of them said that they used a paper in order to be sure about the answers for the test before inserting them into the online platform. All trainees can not afford to purchase computer equipment because of low income. Some of them used the old computers of their friends, children etc. or second hand computers. Those, who live in rural areas, used the municipality's computers from the local community centres or libraries. Somehow this discouraged them initially, since they know that the other peers had this opportunity in their homes, but finally they enjoyed the visits to those centres.

In **Romania** the training was based on face-to-face sessions and group activities. The online portal was a very new thing for the trainees and it was just introduced to them. The access to the online material was possible only in the University since they did not have computers at home (only one of them had a PC, but it was his son's and he did not know how to work with it). Therefore the trainers had to explain a lot of things by using the printed material. The access to Internet in the village regions is a very difficult for the target group. As one of the trainees said: "*it is very hard for me to go to an internet cafe, pay money for using a computer and stay there in front of the monitor, working with the online exercises and the kids next to me playing games and giggling at me. It is an embarrassing situation*". The trainees were taught to use the computer (basic knowledge) and curiosity encouraged them to develop this competence. They were discouraged by the difficulty in studying and learning more, taking into account that this training course offered no certificate. If there is a particular interest, which can prove vital to them, then online learning can have a chance.

In **Lithuania** the weakest point of the whole exercise with the target group (older inactive inhabitants of deprived areas) is self use of any online information. In actual fact, for people who had insufficient experience of informal training methodology of blended learning did not work. These people stopped learning on average 40 years ago. They worked low skill agricultural work and never experienced need for any learning. After collapse of collective farms target people become unemployed. All of them share strong stereotype that learning is for younger people and have underdeveloped cognitive skills. All online work was mainly initiated and guided by trainer or centre manager. Technically trainees were able to locate and follow not very complicated links. To understand what kind of information and for what purpose to use was difficult. Trainees were asked to share their opinion about independent online learning. Here are two most illustrative stories.

I started using computer for the first time in my life in April 2009 after passing computer literacy programme at this centre. My first exercise (guided by trainer) was writing CV and placing it in job search site. Independently I self used the Internet only once - seeking information about fishing. I did not like the process because I needed to look through a big volume of irrelevant information. For me learning online was good only after training with the teacher. I used to navigate the module online, find things that I understand, focusing on practical exercises and points of interest. Our teacher proposed us to get familiar with the new module online before starting guided learning. I tried module 5. Online learning was less engaging, like reading a textbook: No discussion, no questions. After guided training I had a general understanding about the subject of a module. Learning independently was like gathering facts which you later forget.

57 years old man, unemployed for 3 years, with previous learning experience (studied computer literacy, communication and business skills)

I did not like learning online without assistance. If I do not understand something I do not know how to proceed. I used a computer to copy learning materials on paper and then bring them home and read. Sometimes I asked my daughter to help me.

Key point is teachers' guidance. I am afraid, that without assistance from trainer I will not be able to learn further on my own. Access to computer or digital skills are not a problem. During times of independent work I fail to concentrate, missed pace and felt discouraged....

55 years old woman, unemployed for 5 years, no learning experience since school.

Although trainees have no PC and the Internet at home, it was not the main barrier to online training. Computers and the Internet are accessible for free at community training

centre (walking distance from home). Basic computer literacy of target trainees obviously does not allow them to feel free working online. But this also not the main discouraging factor. All trainees acknowledged that they would like to improve their computer literacy, but mainly for other than training online purposes (e- banking, using Skype, e-mail).

Underdeveloped cognitive abilities make self paced learning discouraging. It is simply not interesting for the target group to learn independently, they do not know how to do it. If they do not understand something they fail to formulate what exactly they need to know and find the answer on the Internet. Trainees who have learning experience worked online independently more time than those for whom this training was fist after they finished school. However, even so called independent online sessions were not completely independent, rather group working. There are five computers available and trainees often preferred to work together. They asked training manager for help, exchange advice between themselves...

For people with low education who are 50+ potential for online learning depends on the improvement of their cognitive skills. Cognitive abilities are more difficult to improve than computer literacy. Such an improvement may take place during the process of learning. The more people learn the stronger their cognitive abilities become. Need in independent online learning will arise if people will continue learning.

2.3 Successful stories

Here are two stories of successful KeyCom Kit participants' experiences in Bulgaria:

Case 1

"I am 32 years old married woman with one child and I live in the capital of Bulgaria - Sofia. I have been unemployed since 2006. Before then I worked at a call centre in a brewery factory in Sofia. Since the owners closed the brewery branch in Sofia I lost my job.

The additional learning is my priority since I want to be more competitive on the job market. I know that I should improve my skills and knowledge since I am graduated from a secondary school only due to my pregnancy and I lost the opportunity to continue my education. I am graduated from a mainstream school in a village near Sofia and actually all students from different age groups were at one and the same class so the learning level was very poor.

I discovered the KeyCom Kit project through an article in the web site of Network HV which I visit frequently in order to find useful information. I was very happy to know for such an initiative for production of modular e-learning system related to the key competences. Before that I had read an article in the local newspaper about the importance of the key competences nowadays and it said that they are very important for the success in the social inclusion and in the labour market realization. So I contacted the team of MCA and met their kind representative in Sofia in order to receive more information about the forthcoming training and how I could take part in it.

I was very much excited from the first meeting because I met new people who are in the same position as me. After the nice organised and fruitful meeting I continued the conversation with the other piloters and at the end of our training we are already good friends.

I was very interested to start my learning with Module 4 since for me the computer, internet and their usage into the daily activities is very important. Before this training I used my husband's computer only for games such as Solitaire. Now at the end of the training I am able to communicate with friends who are living in different places in Bulgaria or abroad. I use Skype for phone calls and chatting and also I explored Facebook where I found a lot of my classmates. The Module 1 is also very enjoyable and I think that I am improving my communicational skills every day. Since I was a student years ago, now the "Learning to learn" module makes me up-to-date with the new approaches how to progress with learning.

Nowadays everybody knows that Basic English is obligatory for the most of the job profiles. That's why I was very interested to start learning and speaking English. Of course Module 2 gave me the start with Basic English and now I am interested to continue with my lessons in a local language school. I thought if I improve my English then I will be able to work in the administration sector where the computer, communication skills and English are obligatory requirements.

I learned interesting things about how to set up a company from Module 7 and I also received additional support from the team of MCA about this issue.

I really like the opportunity to learn from my home at a convenient for me time. I really enjoyed the e-learning platform and it is very easy for me to explore it. At the end of the testing phase I completed all self-check tests and I am much more confident regarding my knowledge in the field of the key competences.

Actually I am very happy to say that at the end of the testing process I found on www.jobs.bg web site a suitable job for me – administrator in repository for second hand clothes. During the job interview the employer asked me about my computer competences and I had to do a test which I successfully passed. Also we talked for

about 10 minutes and he said that my communication skills were good for the job as a whole.

Honestly I am very happy that I took part in this KeyCom Kit training and although I am working now I would like to continue with the learning in the future. In this chain of thoughts I will really appreciate if the team of MCA will involve me in other learning initiatives as well. I would like to thanks very much to the team of MCA and the tutors who gave me support and guidance during the training process.

With my best regards,
S." [2]

Case 2

"My name is P. and I am 45 years old married woman. I live in Plovdiv and I have been unemployed since 2005. I worked as a chambermaid at a local factory which was closed due to bankrupt in 2005. I tried to find a job but all employers preferred to hire young people and they also had a prejudice against hiring Roma people as me but I do no give up and will continue looking for job opportunities. Also I have an idea to start my own small company for cleaning of offices and private homes since I have 10 years more to retire and I really feel that I am still able to work. For the period that I am unemployed my husband takes care about the family income.

I graduated from a secondary school for Roma minority in Plovdiv. Actually the level of the lessons was very low since we were mixed in one classroom no matter which course the students were. So therefore the teachers prepared lessons in general, not specified for the level of the students.

I married when I was a last year student in the secondary school and up to now I have 7 kids. The oldest one is 28 years old and the youngest one is 7 years old. Three of my kids are already married and I have 5 grandchildren. My husband works in the metallurgy sector so he gets very good salary which helps us to survive.

I found a leaflet of KeyCom Kit project in the local Labour office and I thought that it could be a good opportunity for me to get involved in such kind of training. Furthermore, I am deeply interested to learn more about computer and internet as well as about Entrepreneurship since as I told you before I have an idea to start my own company. So I contacted by phone the team of Marie Curie Association in order to

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[1] Translated into English by MCA staff.

receive more information about the training process and how I could take part in it. The kind guy explained me that I could visit their office and we could negotiate about that. In 2 days time I visited the office of MCA and I explained my situation and my wish to participate as a learner in the piloting phase. The staff of MCA invited me on 2nd of September 2010 for the first meeting.

I was very happy that the other people who were learners as me accepted me very well, as equal person, no matter that I came from the Roma minority. Usually people have a prejudice against us but here all participants accepted me very nice. We talked about our current situation as unemployed people and we shared some thoughts and ideas on what could be done in the future in order to find an appropriate job.
Since I don't have a computer at home I have an access to the local Roma centre which is equipped with computers that can be used free of charge. I also used the paper version of the modules.

I started the learning process with module 1, 4, and 5. Then I continued with module 7 which was the most interesting for me. I really enjoyed the group activities during the face2face meeting especially when we talked via Facebook; we spoke some English conversations during the role play games and I cannot miss to mention that I was very happy to participate also in the module 8' activities.

Now, at the end of the training process, I can contact via Skype many friends and relatives in Turkey. I learned some greetings and other phrases in English but I think I still should learn more in order to be able to have a normal conversation in English. Now I can say that the training as a whole was pretty interesting for me.

At the end of the training I was highly motivated to find an opportunity to set up a company. Since we made a role play during the training about the steps to set up a small-medium enterprise, now I know where to go for documents and support. First I visited the local office of the Ministry of Labour and Social affairs. There is a Governmental programme for long-term unemployed people who wish to start self-employed business or a company. The Bulgarian government supports financially the people who wish to set up a company during the first year only. Then this person is obliged to cover all their expenses for the second year using the income they made during the first year.

So now I am preparing the needed documents for that action and I hope my company for cleaning will be established at the beginning of December 2010.

I want to say "Thank you very much folks" to the team of MCA and especially to my tutors Silviya and Lalka for their very kind advice and support. I wish "Good luck" to the team of KeyCom Kit!"[3].

3. Internal and external effectiveness of blended training

KeyCom Kit aimed at addressing learning and development needs of a very 'complicated' target audience- people vulnerable to social exclusion having low education insufficient motivation to learn and underdeveloped cognitive skills. KeyCom Kit training path targets wider development needs of the individual, beyond transferring factual knowledge.

To be effective teaching, training and learning should be aligned with learner potential, individual learning styles, and wider life development needs.

A vital aspect of adult informal training evaluation is its effect on the person being evaluated.

Feedback is essential for people to know how they are progressing, and also, evaluation is crucial to the learner's confidence too. Since target group's commitment to learning relies so heavily on confidence and a belief that the learning is achievable, the way that tests and assessments are designed and managed, and results presented back to the learners, is a very important part of the learning and development process.

Evaluation is not just for the trainer or teacher or organisation or policy-makers - evaluation is absolutely vital for the learner too.

Therefore it is important to know how did participants react to testing whether? Has it been rather motivating or was it rather inducing fear and mobilised bad school memories?

In general all target trainees accepted testing positively irrespective of their age or education background.

In **Spain** and **Austria** target learners were participants of different training programmes, they were motivated to learn and to be tested.

In **Spain**, young people passed a selection testing to join the workshop school. They were satisfied with their inclusion in training programmes and the good training opportunities provided.

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[3] Translated into English by MCA staff.

In **Austria**, trainees did not test *Module 2* Communication in foreign languages, *Module 3* Mathematical competence and basic competences in science and technology and *Module 4* Digital competence because the level of their respective skills and knowledge matched or was higher than these modules provided.

The **Bulgaria**n trainees accepted testing positively after they were explained that it was not a formal examination but a self-evaluation aimed at helping them to reveal what knowledge they have acquired after completion of each module. The young people with education gaps preferred not to be treated as students, but much more to be guided and advised.

In **Romania**, most of trainees had nothing against testing, since they considered it a way to check if they learned something.

In **Lithuania** trainees were older people who stopped learning several decades ago accepted testing very positively because it was informal and learner friendly.

Effectiveness of KeyCom Kit training was assessed at two levels: external and internal according to the system of questionnaires based on the idea of "Kirkpatrick levels":

1. **Reaction** - What does the learner feel about the training?
2. **Learning** - What facts, knowledge, etc., did the learner gain? "What principles, facts, and techniques were understood and absorbed by the conferees?"
3. **Behaviours** - What skills did the learners develop, that, for example change their job search behaviour or decisions to learn further?
4. **Results of effectiveness** - What results were achieved in learner's opinion in wider sense beyond traditional academic achievements?

External efficiency is expressed in terms of satisfaction of individual aspirations achieved as a result of the training process in the frame of the following qualitative social objectives:

- Impact on lifelong learning;

- Empowerment;

- Employability

- Social mobility

Internal efficiency refers to perceptions of KeyCom Kit training path in the following frame of internal qualities:

- Contents;

- Teaching methods;

- Testing system

- Achieved results

Both external and internal effectiveness are presented as aggregated results for all trainees and all modules, except for group of ten trainees with disability which tested the module 4 Digital competence. It is valuable to consider opinions and attitudes of such a specific target group separately.

Although, not all trainees answered all questions and not all modules were tested (Austria) results are presented in a simple aggregated form on assumption that these results reflect main picture on qualitative perceptions of trainees meeting, therefore, the main objective of this pilot evaluation.

3.1. External effectiveness

Ninety two trainees took part in external evaluation and filled questionnaires.

Impact on lifelong learning
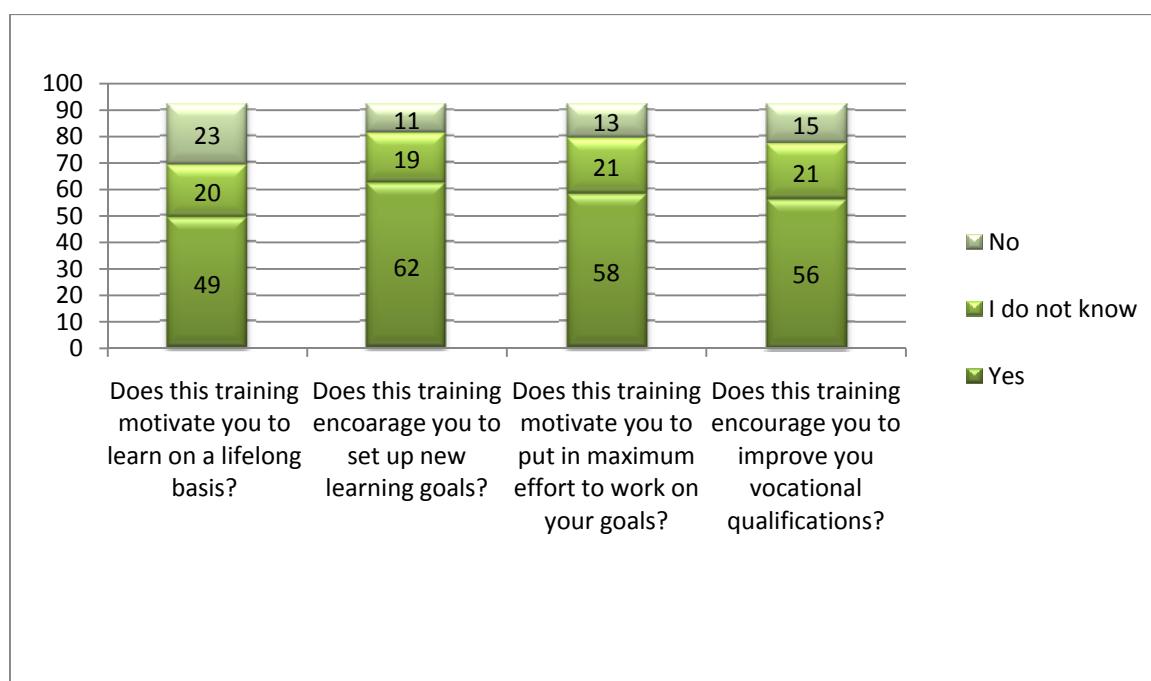
Generally training had positive impact on lifelong learning, the majority of respondents agreed that KeyCom Kit encouraged them to set new learning goals and put meaningful efforts to achieve them.

The majority of respondents (53%) feel that training motivates them to continue learning. The fact that 22% have no answer to this question does not mean that respondents will not proceed with training. It is normal that people with lower education over a short period of KeyCom Kit training intervention experience difficulties in

expressing their opinions regarding such a complicated issues like impacts on lifelong learning, empowerment and other.

Even more respondents (67%) agreed that training encouraged them to formulate new learning goals and put effort to reach them (63%). Training prompted to 61% of trainees to improve or change their vocation.

KeyCom Kit made a significant positive impact on trainees' employability. They felt themselves more competitive and confident in the labour market because training improved occupation awareness. And when people realise what they are (could be) they become more motivated to seek job or career.

Employability
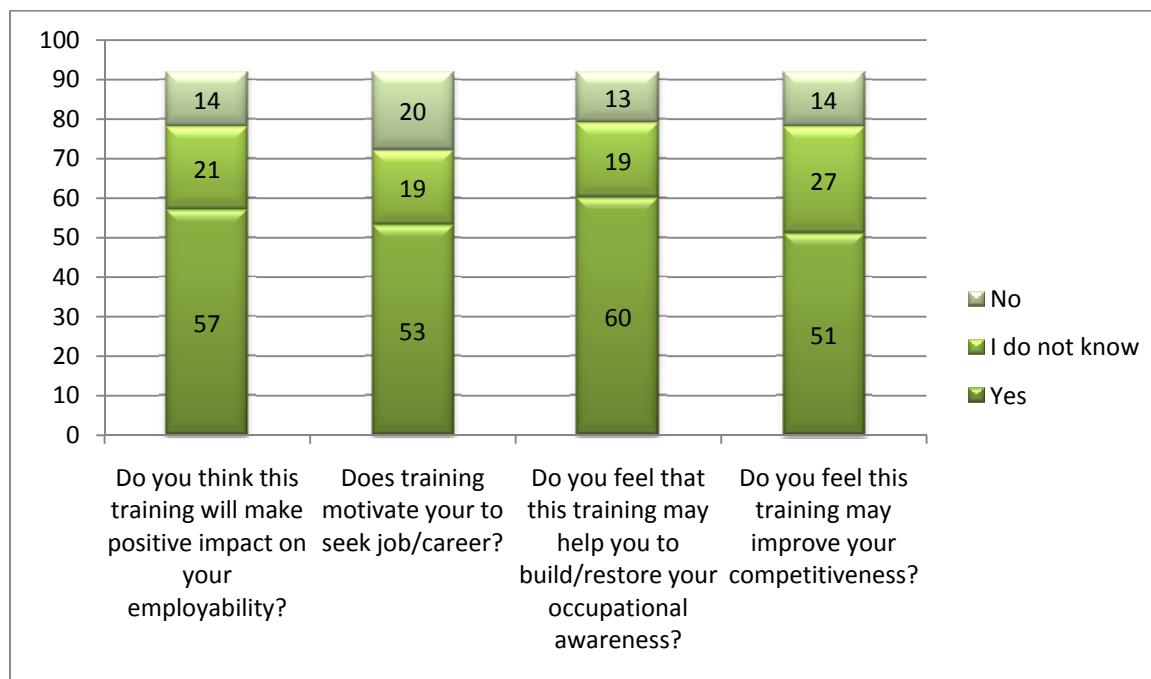
65% of all respondents thought that training helped them to restore their occupational awareness; 58% of respondents that they become more motivated to seek career of job. Generally, 62% of trainees feel that their employability improved as a result of KeyCom Kit training and 55% think that they become more competitive in the labour market.

One of important goals of key competences is strengthening empowerment of trainees expressed in enhancing ability and will to participate in community life, making social communication more rich and fruitful.

Empowerment
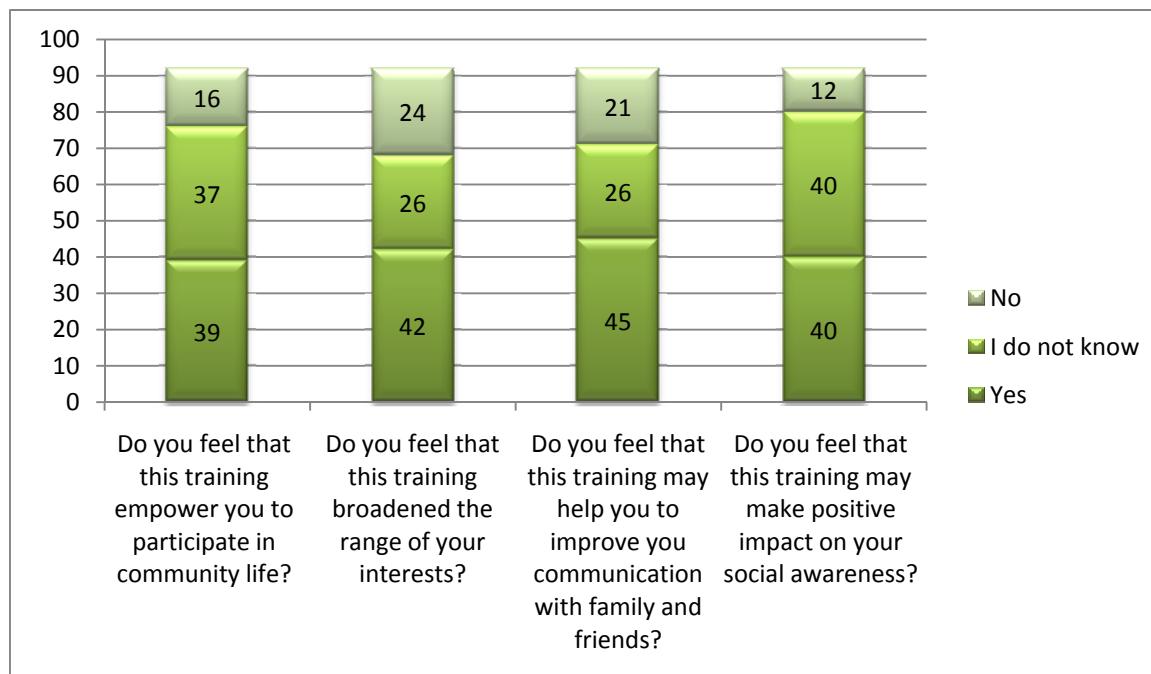
Assess the impact of training (particularly the short one) on ones empowerment is much more complicated than, for example on lifelong learning or employability. Individual communication and attitudes to participation in social life are complicated areas of human life that could not be easily changed under the influence of training itself - many other factor matters.

Nevertheless, the results of impacts of KeyCom Kit training on empowerment of trainees are impressive - many trainees positively evaluated impact of training on their social awareness. Although the proportion of those who have no answers to questions is relatively high (between 28% and 43%) relatively fewer trainees think that training did not empower them (between 13% and 26%).

42% of respondents think, that training empower them to participate in community life; 46% - that training broadened their interests; 49% - that training improved communication with families and friends and 43% - that they feel more socially aware after training.

The block of questions on social mobility allows to double check some answers to key questions from other sections: impacts on lifelong learning; employability, and empowerment.

Social mobility
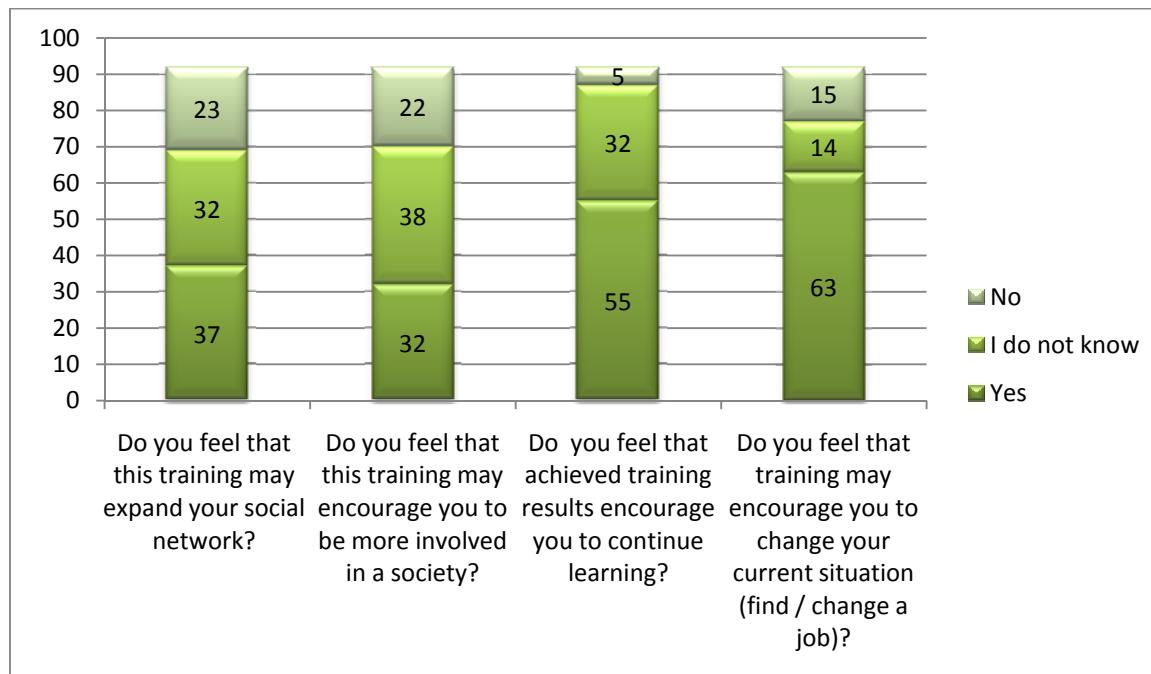
Answer to question on social mobility showed that trainees understood key questions from other sections correctly and that their answers reflect their attitudes.

60% of respondents confirmed that training had positive impact on lifelong learning and encouraged them to continue to learn. 68% thought that training definitely will encourage them to change their current situation to the better and to seek or change job. Between 35% and 40% of respondents acknowledge that training will have positive impact on their involvement in a society and expand their social network.

Results of evaluation of external effectiveness among the disabled trainees (**Spain**) who tested *Module 4* Digital competence persuasively show how important teaching key competence to people with disabilities.

Impact on lifelong learning
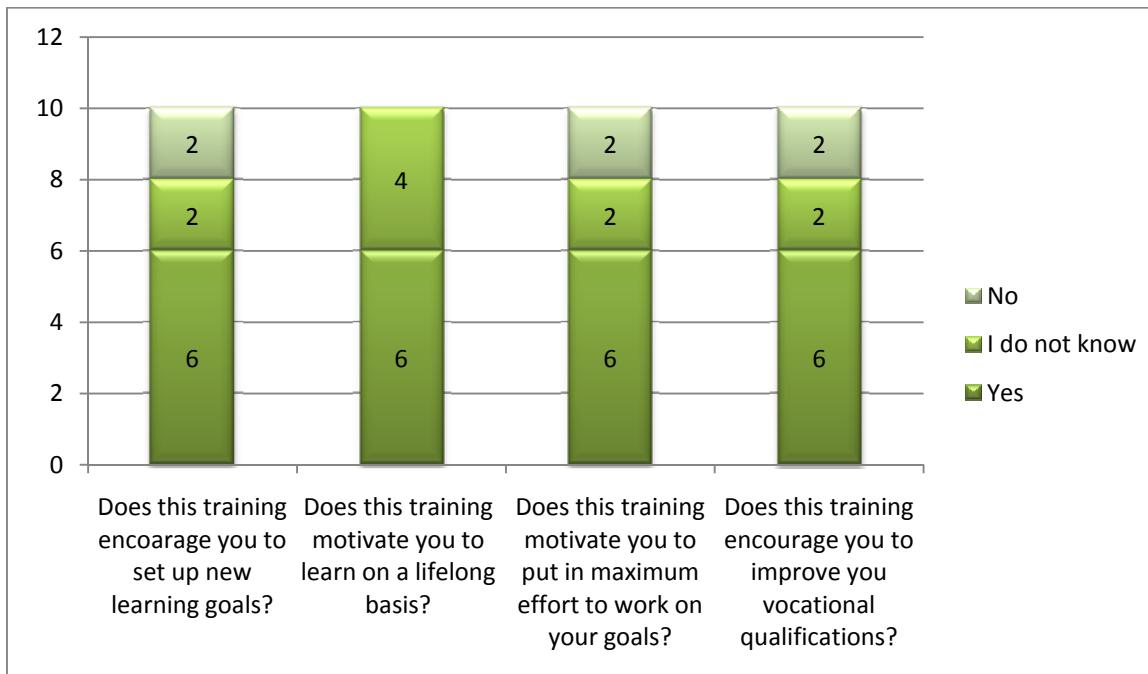
The majority of trainees (6 from 10) positively valued impact of training on digital literacy on their decision to set new learning goals and continue to put efforts to reach them.

Good results gave questions on employability. Although, only 4 people think that training will improve their chances to get and retain job, the majority think that it will motivate them to seek job/career (6); to build/restore occupational awareness (7); and to be more competitive (6). The fact, that fewer people think that they will become more employable as a result of training, may be ascribed to the perception of disability as a barrier to employment which can not easily be reduced by any training.

Employability
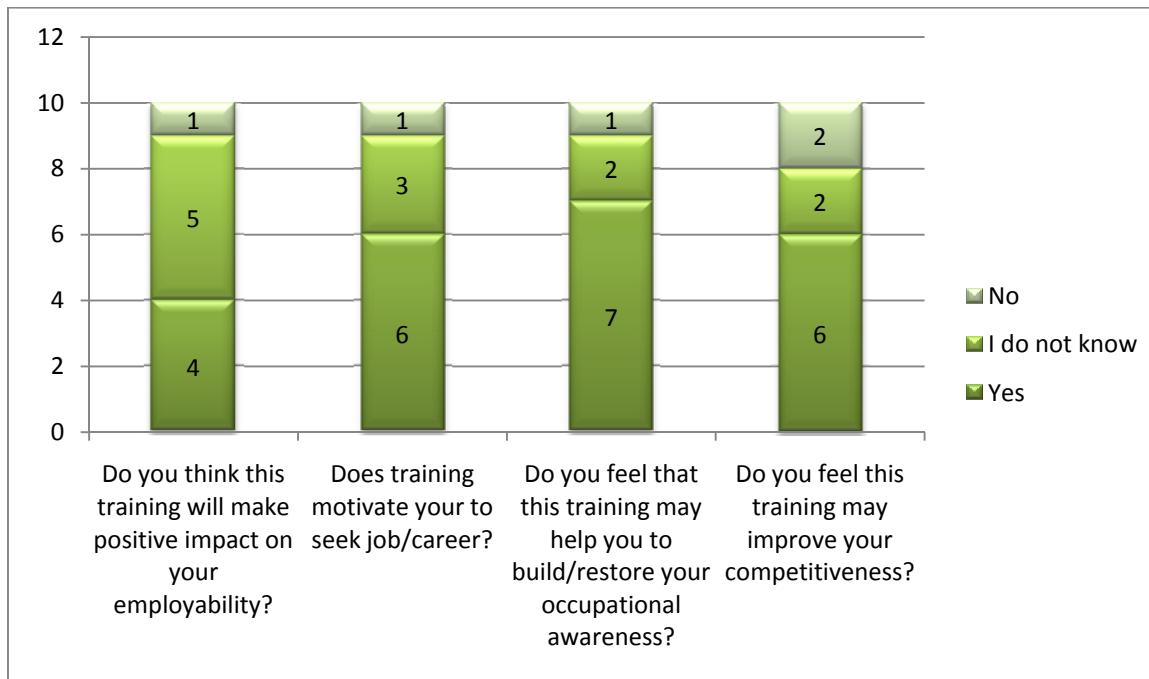
Impact of training on empowerment was not unanimous. Majority of respondents feel, that computer literacy may empower them to take part in a community life (6 people); half of trainees thought, that training will their communication with friends and make them more socially aware.

Empowerment
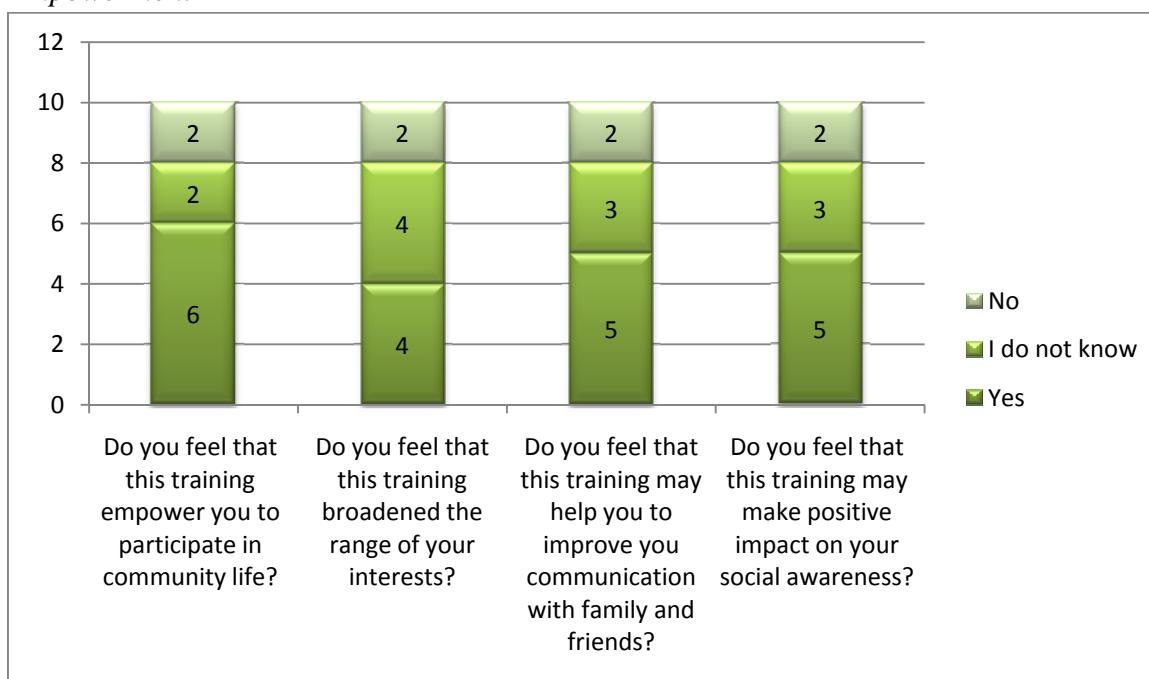
Questions on social mobility revealed that people with disabilities tend to ascribe less influence to training as catalyst of change than other target groups do. Only 4 people of

ten think that training may encourage them to change their situation and broaden interests.

Social mobility
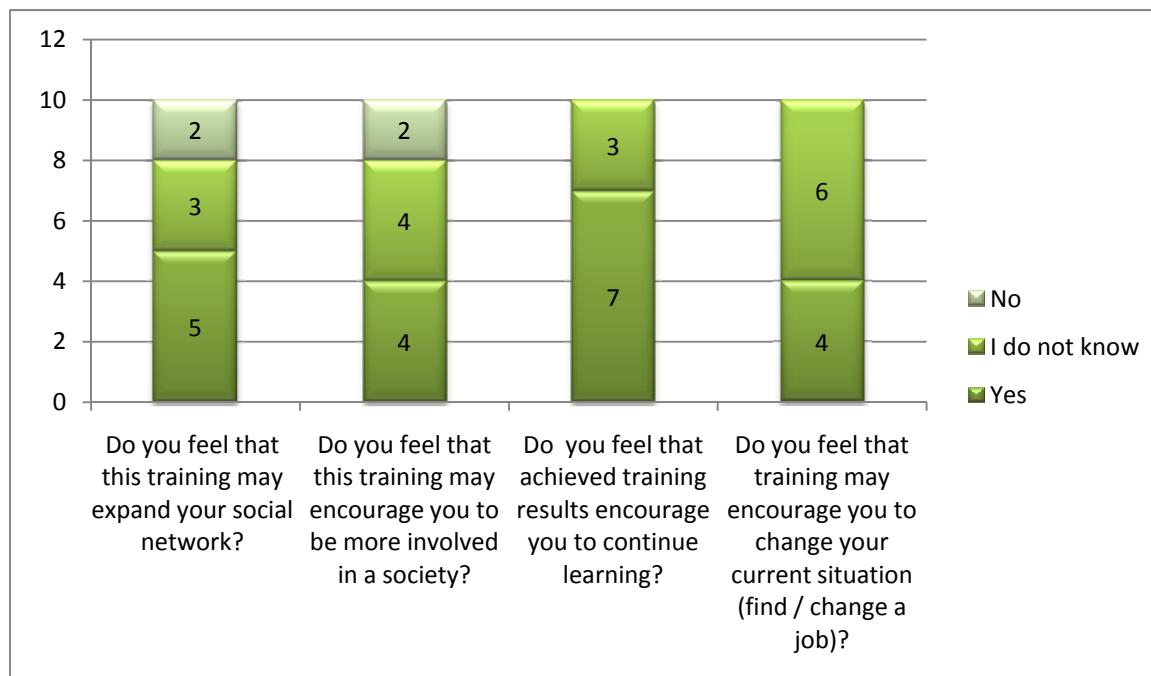
Acknowledgement by the majority of trainees (7) that training will encourage their further learning revels how important access to life long learning for people with disabilities. In actual fact, learning for many of them may be the only way to social inclusion and meaningful life.

3.2. Internal effectiveness

In evaluation of internal training effectiveness the number of respondents varies by question, because some respondents answered not all questions.

Evaluation of internal effectiveness answers to the questions how teaching contents, methods methodology and online support, from the one side, meet trainees expectations and capabilities and, from the other side, how they contribute to lifelong learning goals.

Contents
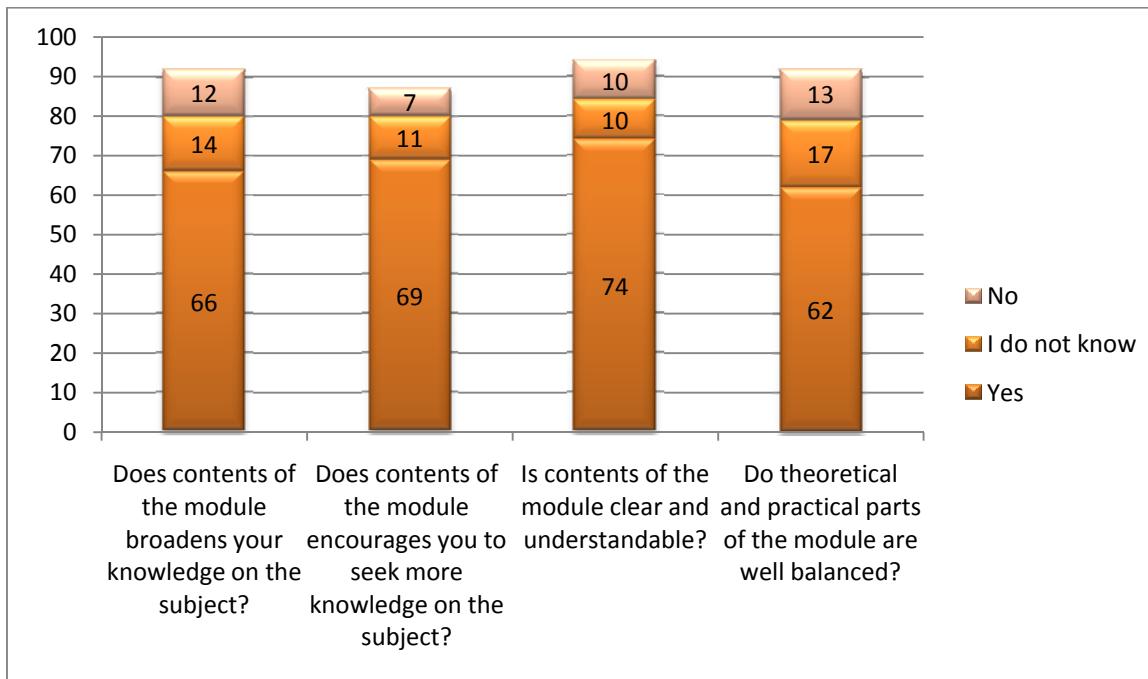
Generally, the vast majority of trainees were of opinion that contents of modules, which they learn, broadens knowledge on the subject (72%), encourages to seek more knowledge on the subject (79%), is clear and understandable (79%) and that practical and theoretical parts of training was well balanced (67%).

Teaching methods
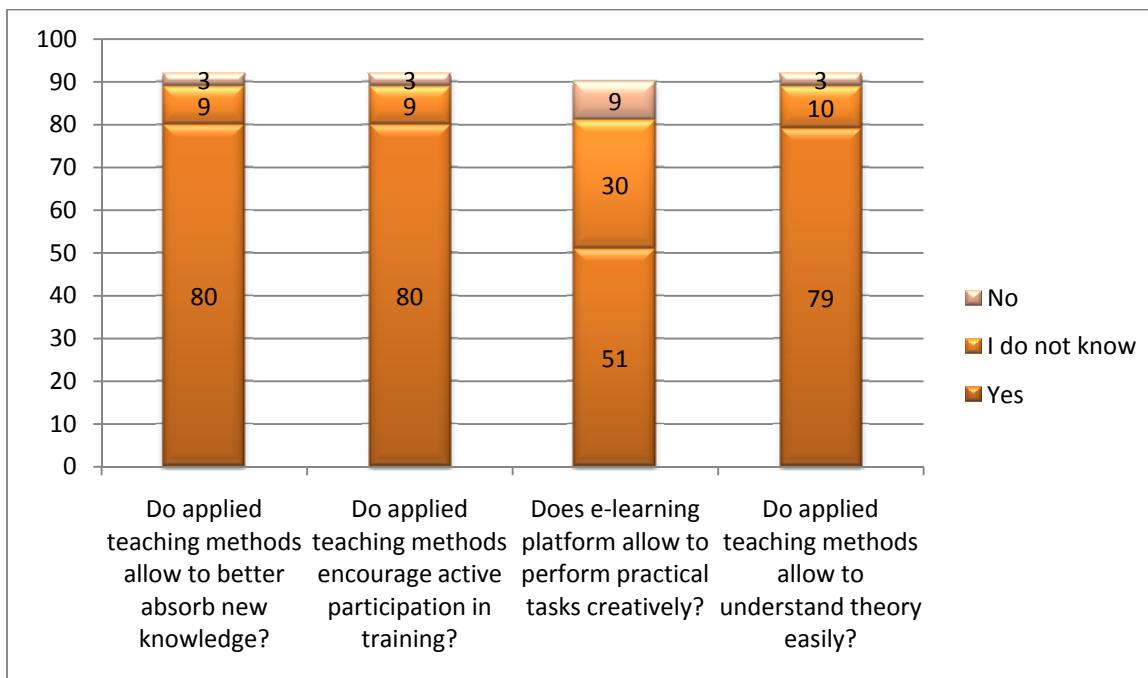
Regarding teaching methods assessments may be confusing because in actual fact different target groups were exposed to different teaching methods under the same 'title'. If trainees from **Spain** and **Austria** studied according to blended learning

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methodology, in **Lithuania** and **Romania**, blended learning was substituted by face to face learning. Responses of trainees illustrate this inconsistency.

Absolute majority of trainees agree that teaching methods allow to better absorb knowledge, understand theory and encourage active participation in learning process. At the same time noticeably fewer people think that e-learning platform was effective in creative performing practical tasks. This assessment does not mean that e-learning platform lack effectiveness, simply for many trainees it was either inaccessible or difficult to use because of lack of cognitive skills and computer literacy.

Answers to the questions on testing system revealed that for the majority of respondents testing was trainee –friendly. For overwhelming majority of respondents (89%) tests were understandable and corresponded to module contents (91%). Fewer respondents were able to evaluate whether testing allowed to assess theoretical and practical knowledge. It may be ascribed to the fact that for people with gaps in education it may difficult to evaluate the extent to which testing allow to assess theoretical and practical knowledge.

Testing system
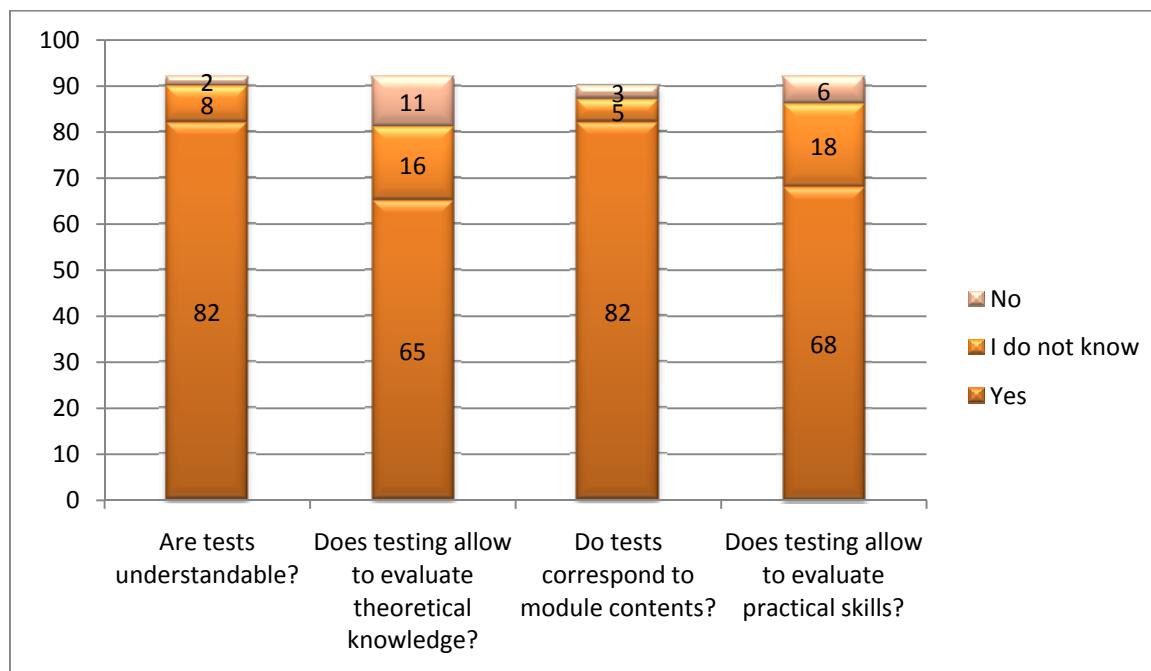
Unlike formal academic training where results can be formalised in terms of grades and other performance measures, in informal adult training, particularly for mixed target groups, often results are matter of individual perception. Each trainee came into training with her/his own understanding of what results they expect to achieve. Often modest from academic point of view training results may mean a real breakthrough for trainees vulnerable to social exclusion.

In assessing achieved results trainees were asked about their expected results and perceived achievements.

Results
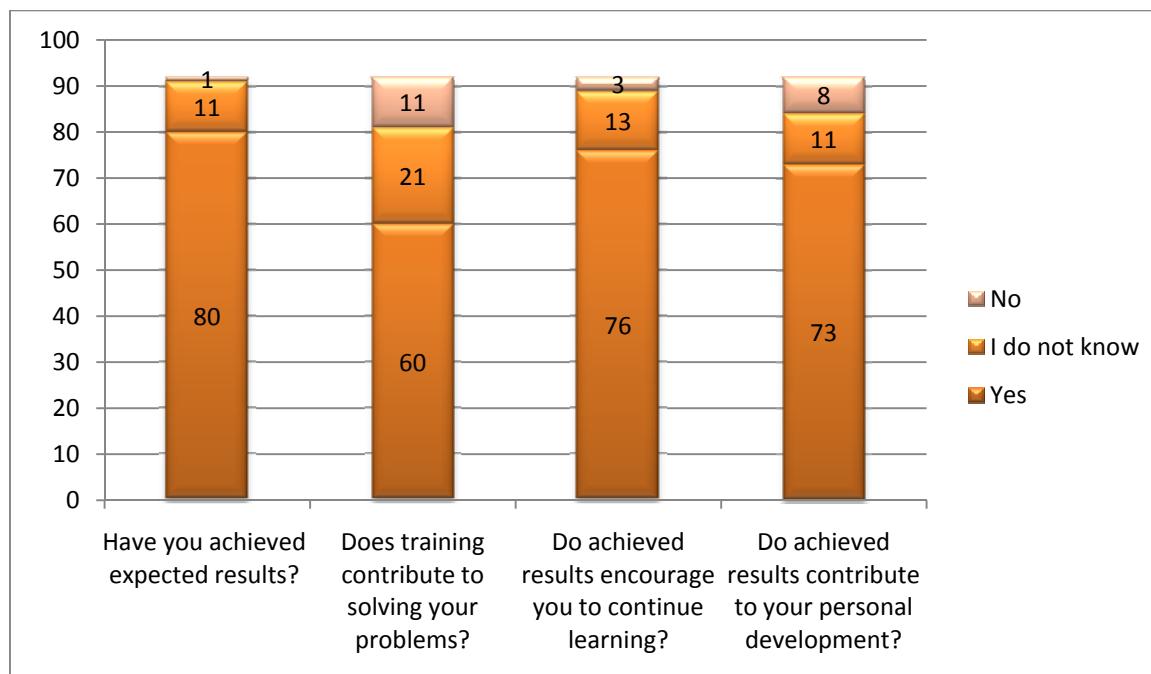
Most important achievement of KeyCom Kit training path is that the absolute majority of target group think that they have reached expected results (87%) and that this achievement encourage them to go further and continue learning (83%). 82% of respondents think that achieved results contribute to their personal development. Fewer respondents think that training contribute to solving their personal problems. It is quite obvious that people who belong to groups exposed to multiply social risks may face problems that can not be easily addressed by any training.

Opinions of trainees with disabilities on training content, teaching methods and testing system are quite similar to other target groups. The majority of respondents positively value them. Perception of achieved results differs.

Contents
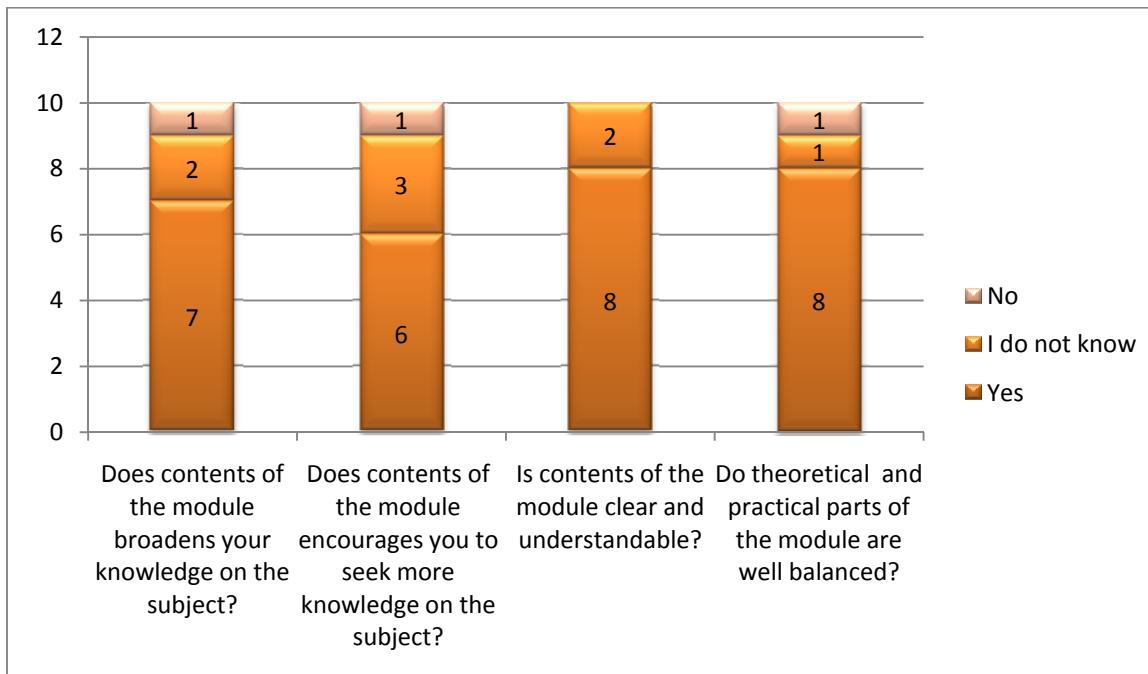
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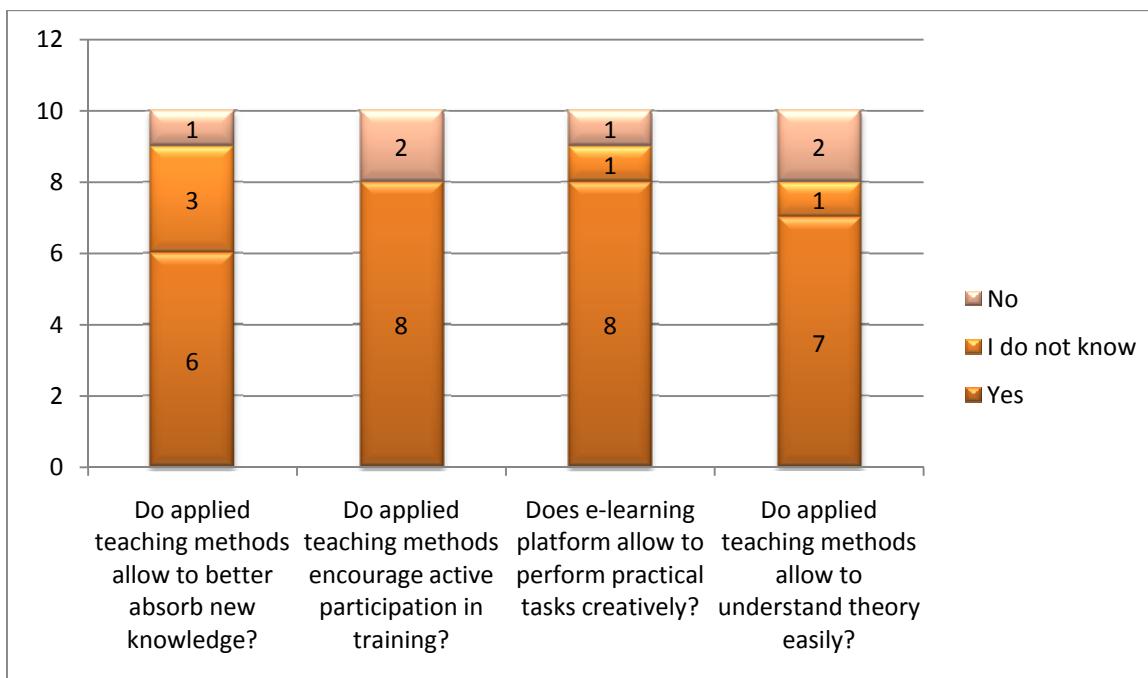
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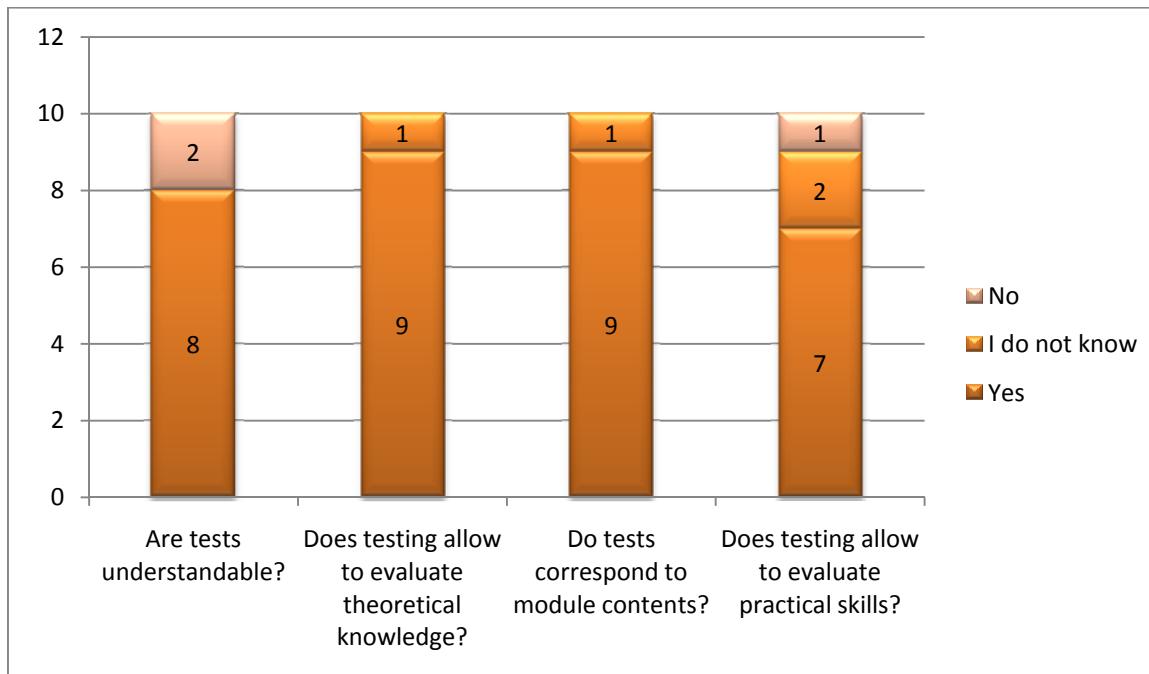
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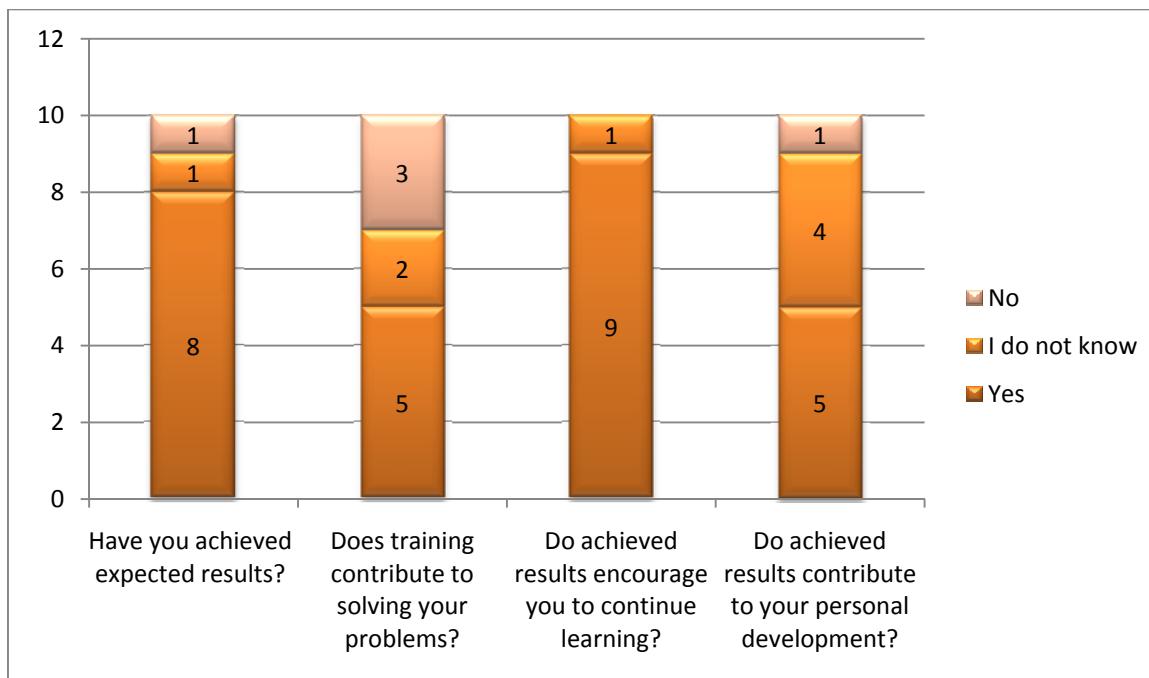
Absolute majority of trainees agree that they achieved their results (8) and they will continue learning (9). However much less people think that training contribute to solving their problems (5) and contribute to personal development (5). People with disabilities face very specific problems and naturally it may seem to them that training not always can help solve them. However, these group of trainees passed only one module on Digital competence may be if these people will continue to learn their opinion regarding impact of training on personal development and problem solving may change.

4. Conclusions and Recommendations

Lessons learnt from pilot application n of training path KeyCom Kit to selected target groups using different models of training delivery in Spain, Austria, Bulgaria, Romania and Lithuania allow for conclusions and recommendations that can be useful for transferring training path concept, contents and methodology to different learning contexts.

In general, training path developed by KeyCom Kit project has met its main goal of empowering people at high risk of social exclusion by strengthening their key competences. The majority of trainees after training intend to continue learning, seek vocation, career or job. They feel more confident, competitive and socially mobile as a result of this piloting training.

Blended learning and use of online support were effective for younger trainees with higher computer skills. For target groups of older ages, particularly for those who stopped learning decades ago, methodology of blended learning had limited effect. These categories of trainees insufficiently used online support not only because of poor access to computers but also due to underdeveloped cognitive skills which made any self learning discouraging. Apart from making computer accessible (public access points) no less important is f*ocused improving of cognitive abilities of trainees. Essential prerequisite to wider application of blended training methodology is* encouraging the trainees to work independently and creating a website with information of different levels, depending on the categories of users.

Curriculum, in general, corresponds to the needs and aspirations of the majority of trainees. Its theoretical and practical parts are well balanced, template is attractive. It is virtually impossible to meet learning needs of trainees with essentially different capabilities and aspirations. However, making training modules easily adjustable to different learning needs by trainees themselves will increase potential for transfer of training modules to wider target groups. It can be achieved by organising each didactic unit as a combination of subunits of different complexity supported by guided links and pathways between sub-units and didactic units. Parts of modules may be delivered as a role play games. Also, useful improvement in curriculum may be making module contents more interactive. Improve the interactivity of the modules with multimedia applications or simple simulators and games. This has been specially recommended for those modules considered more complex for example, the mathematical competence module. Adaptation of the modules according to different occupations (specific examples, practical/real applications) will enrich and make easy the learning.

Popularisation of KeyCom Kit training path and dissemination of good practices among potential target groups via the Internet and mass media had also limited impact on older less educated inactive target groups which, in fact, are in acute need of such training. Outreach approach and community support gave good results and allow to attract into training process most discouraged and inactive people. Outreach approach, however, is costly and has clear limitations as it targets selected and limited audience. Successful transfer of training path will depend on innovative *motivation and dissemination tools* (advertising benefits of informal training via NGOs; disseminating good practice by organising inter-community events).

Approaches to training delivery and motivation tools should be differentiated according to the needs of target beneficiaries. Delivery models that gave good results for younger and more educated trainees who already participate in other forms of adult learning can have little effect on less motivated to learn older target groups. At the core of KeyCom Kit successful transfer is flexible, adjusted to the needs of beneficiaries training delivery models.

The following strengths and weaknesses of training delivering models were revealed by different target groups.

In **Spain** tutors and trainees focused on curricula and indicated the following strengths:
- high practical workload
- attractive template, no boring materials in spite the amount of didactic units.

The weakness is related of the contents of certain modules. Some suggestions and comments received in this regards indicate the option to select material as complementary or optional (at least for the piloting purposes).

In **Austria** strengths of training delivery considered: accessibility (training took place in well familiar to trainees training centre), flexibility (tailoring the training towards the needs of our target group), motivational values (the motivation to continue learning grew), self-paced learning / online learning (participants got to know self-learning methods and their advantages and are encouraged to continue using them)

The main weakness was short time of training. Tutors need more time to demonstrate self-learning methods and to train reading skills of participants.

In **Lithuania** tutors and trainees revealed the following strengths of training delivery through community based training centres: *universal accessibility* (free of charge, good location) ; *encouraging atmosphere* (all trainees are of a similar social status and abilities); *empowerment* (apart from improving skills trainees have more opportunities to widen social links and strengthen their position in a community).

Weaknesses: *green house conditions* (trainees need to make minimal effort to learn; they are surrounded by familiar people; duration of training is flexible and adjusted to

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their needs - in the end trainees may not be prepared to continue learning outside their training centre); *narrow range of motivation tools* (outreach); *disproportionately big role of face to face learning*.

In **Romania** trainers and tutors indicated strengths similar to those named by Lithuanian participants:
- free access (to modules, to computers, to learning)
- friendly environment - the trainees had almost the same social status and skills
- all the modules allowed the trainees to enlarge their knowledge horizon, and thus have a better understanding of the social and economic system.

Weaknesses Romanian participants in training consider:
- dependence of trainees on face to face learning because of the lack of personal computers ;
- the trainees said that some of the modules (*Module 2* and *Module 4*) needed more time because they found them quite interesting, while the other modules were more or less boring.

In Bulgaria MCA has contacts with Adult Training centres around South part of Bulgaria. They received the modules at the same time when the training was started. Their feedback is very positive about the 8 modules. They commented that for the future development is good to provide additional section for *Module 2* for those users who wish to continue with their training in English. The *Module 3* was commented too – the training managers said that units 4-7 should be provided as additional (optional) information. They agreed on the methodology for providing the training namely semiautonomous tutoring with midterm face to face tutoring. The volume of the modules in general is good but some parts of *Modules 3, 6* and *7* could be provided as optional information.

Training participants emphasised the following potential for adapting KeyCom Kit training to the needs of other target groups:

- modules can be re-designed for people with different disabilities (Bulgaria);

- all the modules can be used for those who want to work abroad since the structure and the contents of the modules are easy to understand and to adapt to different learning needs (Romania);

- The transference of the didactic materials is clearly viewed in the scope of the functioning workshop schools in the region as well as other adult training centres. Also there is an interest from the second chance school of the city Gijon. Some of the modules (*Module 2*, *Module 4* and *Module 5*) are being used as reference in the frame of the Transnational Cooperation Project of the European Social Fund:

"Knitting Nets against the Scholar Failure and the Social Exclusion - winner network.(Spain). The piloting process was externalized, that is, Fundación Metal didn't organize a special course but the testing was performed through Workshop schools developing occupational training in the city of Gijón. This ensures a higher dissemination and exploitation of the course and the project multiplying the interest from other Workshop schools and adult training centres of the region. Identification of the workshop schools and other organizations managers/tutors provided through the respective questionnaires.

The most important thing, that the KeyCom Kit project has made a huge difference to the lives of some of the individuals who have accessed the project. Case studies presented in this report demonstrate how important lifelong learning can be to changing the lives of some people and how much value it can have to all involved.