STEAM BOSS

boosting soft skills

Evaluation with VET system

National Report_ITALY | January 2026

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1. Introduction

This report forms part of the wider framework of initiatives promoted by the STEAM Bo.SS – STEAM Boosting Soft Skills european project, which aims to strengthen the development of transversal and soft skills through the STEAM Approach methodology. This document aims to provide an in-depth analysis of the impact of the training received by the Italian trainers involved in the project, with a particular focus on the implementation of the STEAM approach, the development of transversal skills and the role of collaboration with the industrial sector.

In an educational, training and professional context characterised by rapid and continuous change, it is increasingly necessary to understand how teachers and trainers integrate new methodologies into their practice, what impact this has on students, and how relationships between training institutions and companies can contribute to make learning more effective and relevant to the reality of work.

The primary objective of the survey is to measure the extent to which the training received has influenced training, with particular reference to the implementation of the STEAM approach. This analysis makes it possible to verify whether the training content offered has been effectively integrated into daily practice, whether it has generated significant methodological change, and in which areas these innovations are most evident.

A second objective concerns the assessment of the impact of soft skills on teaching after training. Soft skills, such as communication, proactivity, flexibility and problem-solving, are now essential elements for students' personal and professional growth. The report therefore investigates the level of awareness developed by teachers/trainers regarding their importance and the extent to which these skills are promoted, observed and developed in classroom activities after training.

Finally, the survey aims to assess the role of collaboration between VET institutions and companies, considered a strategic lever for making training more dynamic, practical and aligned with the needs of the labour market. Understanding how trainers perceive the value of such partnerships and whether training has encouraged greater openness to cooperation with the labour market makes it possible to measure the potential of training-companies synergies as a tool for improving the employability of young people and supporting local development.

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2. Teacher/Trainer Profile

The trainers who responded to the questionnaire for Italy have a wide range of professional experience: from those with 4–7 years of training experience to those with over 30 years of experience, indicating the presence of consolidated skills and long-standing involvement in educational and training contexts. All of them are trainers for VET institutions and are involved in courses aimed at young people and adults in transition to work, while the subject areas range from self-empowerment to soft skills, from communication to educational tutoring, from technological integration to digital publishing and generative artificial intelligence.

Participation in activities or training courses related to the project is also diverse (question 2 – "*Which training activity/activities did you participate in?*"). Trainers indicated their involvement in different types of initiatives, contributing to various phases of the STEAM Bo.SS project, including MOOCs, training camps, train the trainer activities and pilot projects.

Taken together, these data outline a professional community composed of trainers with solid skills and a strong focus on continuous growth, motivated to integrate new training and methodological approaches.

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3. STEAM approach implementation

The analysis of the responses provided by trainers in the section dedicated to the implementation of the STEAM approach shows a consistent picture: all trainers involved state that they have introduced activities based on the STEAM approach into their training practices. Question 3 ("*To what extent has training in the STEAM approach influenced your teaching methodology?*") highlights the strong impact of the STEAM approach on the teaching methodology of the trainers surveyed: most of them attribute a "*very much*" or "*quite a lot*" significant impact to this training, recognising a concrete and significant change in the way they plan and organise their lessons.

Alongside quantitative data, several qualitative elements emerge that provide a deeper understanding of the nature of the activities introduced and the impact that these innovations have had on teaching and learning processes. The first case concerns the transformation of the Info Days of the European EURES TMS project into fully-fledged interactive workshops conducted on digital platforms such as Teams. In this example, the trainer replaced the traditional frontal presentation with guided data analysis activities within the EURES and European Job Days portals: actively searching for professional opportunities, comparing salaries and the cost of living in different European countries, and interpreting labour market data became tools for developing critical thinking, digital skills, and comparative analysis skills. The activity, carried out in small groups, involved over 330 participants in one year and had a measurable impact in terms of autonomy, reduction of errors and greater awareness of international professional dynamics.

A second strand concerns team problem-solving activities, often linked to real-life professional situations. One trainer developed exercises in which students had to identify a problem in the workplace, analyse its causes using objective data, assess its effects and formulate operational hypotheses, encouraging a structured approach to problem solving. These activities not only enhance analytical skills but also reinforce soft skills such as collaboration, planning and decision-making.

Another trainer used the STEAM approach to design experiences geared towards the creation of an entrepreneurial project: students were guided in developing a business idea, defining its mission and presenting it to the class, enhancing soft skills such as effective communication, time management and critical thinking. This type of highly experiential activity allows students to tackle a complex challenge that requires coordination between logical, creative and organisational components.

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Further valuable information comes from the question that investigates the areas in which trainers perceived the most significant methodological change. Here, recurring patterns emerge: many report an improvement in the design of teaching activities, others highlight progress in planning, and still others in technological integration.

The results of Questions 5 and 6 further reinforce the picture of a transformative impact. Four out of five trainers say that, after the training, the frequency with which they use active methodologies (e.g. PBL, challenge-based learning, flipped classroom) has increased. At the same time, trainers say they feel more prepared in their teaching practice after the training (Question 6). This indicates not only an increase in technical and methodological skills, but also a strengthening of professional confidence in conducting complex and multifactorial activities.

Overall, the data show a positive picture: the training has led to a real spread of the STEAM approach, improved the quality of training design, increased the use of active methodologies and made the trainers involved more prepared and aware.

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4. Soft skills: use and relevance

The analysis of the responses provided by trainers highlights an increase in awareness of the importance of soft skills in the learning process following the training received. In fact, in response to Question 7 ("*To what extent are you more aware of the importance of soft skills in the learning process after the training?*"), all trainers stated that they felt more aware of the central role of these skills, with ratings ranging from "*Quite a lot*" to "*Very much*". This data confirms that the training was not limited to providing operational tools, but also contributed to consolidating a training approach more oriented towards the development of relational, cognitive and metacognitive skills, recognised as fundamental for the integration of young people into the labour market.

A particularly relevant aspect concerns which soft skills were developed most intentionally after the training (Question 8a). Trainers indicated skills such as flexibility (4), proactivity (3), problem solving (3), conflict management (2), decision making (2), communication (2) and time management (1). These skills are fully in line with the needs expressed by the labour market, and their cross-cutting presence in training activities suggests consistency between training intentions and professional requirements.

Almost all participants responded positively to Question 8b ("*Have you noticed improvements in student participation and collaboration when working with soft skills-focused methodologies?*").

Overall, the data show that the training not only increased awareness of the importance of soft skills, but also promoted their integration into training activities. The approach adopted has therefore strengthened the role of soft skills as a pedagogical and professional lever, helping to make learning more meaningful, relevant and future-oriented.

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5. Interest and impact of collaboration with companies

The analysis of the responses provided by trainers in the section dedicated to collaboration with companies highlights a positive picture with regard to the interest and value attributed to these synergies after training. In response to Question 9, which asked whether their interest in collaborating with companies or institutions had increased thanks to the project, all trainers answered affirmatively, indicating an increase in interest ranging from "*Partially*" to "*Yes*". This result suggests that the training not only strengthened the trainers' methodological skills, but also increased their awareness of the potential offered by dialogue with the labour market. For many trainers, in fact, collaboration with companies represents an opportunity to make learning more authentic, contextualised and oriented towards the development of truly marketable skills.

The responses to Question 10 confirm this trend, showing that three out of five trainers established or strengthened contacts with companies or other organisations after the training. As regards the type of organisations involved (Question 10a), the collaboration mainly concerned local companies and, in one case, universities or research centres and public bodies, a diverse range that indicates the ability of training to activate or strengthen existing networks. The areas of collaboration (Question 10b) are varied: many trainers report activities related to educational planning, others to the implementation of internships and career guidance programmes, while some have participated in classroom activities such as workshops or company testimonials. This confirms that collaboration is not limited to standardised operational forms, but takes different forms depending on the context, training needs and opportunities offered by the local area.

Particularly relevant are the responses to Questions 10c and 10d, which asked respondents to indicate whether the collaboration had led to significant activities and, if so, to describe them. Trainers reported very concrete examples of initiatives developed thanks to partnerships established after the training. One of the most significant cases concerns the strengthening of collaboration with secondary schools: through activities carried out with students, such as role-play, soft skills exercises, career guidance sessions and the use of digital tools such as Kahoot, trainers were able to work more closely with teachers and students themselves, contributing to a more immediate and concrete understanding of the topics covered. The activities carried out enabled schools to offer more modern and interactive guidance, and trainers to work with methodologies closer to the language and interests of students.

Other examples include the co-design of project work with companies involved in training courses, which has generated internship opportunities and initiated new forms of collaboration with the training

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institution. In one case, participation in the design of the pilot projects has fostered direct interaction between students and companies, enabling practical activities linked to real professional scenarios. Personal empowerment developed in collaboration with a local company is also cited as a significant example of synergy between training and companies.

Overall, the data show that training has not only generated increased interest in collaboration with companies, but also new concrete opportunities, expanding the trainers' network of relationships and enriching their training work with more practical, current activities geared towards the needs of the labour market.

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6. Conclusions and Recommendations

An overall analysis of the responses collected reveals a good level of general satisfaction among the trainers involved in the training, both in relation to the STEAM approach and in terms of opportunities for collaboration with companies and external bodies. Most trainers rate the training as "*Very much*" or "*Quite a lot*" useful and say they feel better prepared in their educational practice, confirming that the course has had a positive impact on the quality of training and perceived self-efficacy.

The comments gathered at the end of the questionnaire further confirm this perception: one trainer, for example, highlights how the training has enabled them to "*bridge the gap with the pupils*" through a more informed use of digital technology and more experiential teaching methods, recognising that these tools are not merely a technological enhancement, but become genuine pedagogical tools for making complex concepts accessible.

One of the most significant results concerns the centrality of soft skills. Almost all trainers report greater awareness of their importance in the learning process and say they have increased their commitment to developing these skills after the training. The soft skills most frequently mentioned include flexibility, proactivity and problem solving, key skills required by the labour market and fundamental to students' educational and professional success.

With regard to the STEAM approach, the training has led to a significant methodological evolution: all trainers report that they have introduced STEAM activities into their lessons, with more frequent use of active methodologies. One trainer also expressed interest in continuing this path with additional training sessions, hoping for further meetings aimed at trainers or the opportunity to participate in international training experiences "even abroad", a sign of strong involvement and a desire for continuous growth.

Finally, the data confirm the strategic importance of collaboration between training and business. Training has helped to increase both interest and concrete initiatives for cooperation with local companies, public bodies and universities. The activities created or strengthened thanks to the project, from project work to work placements, from guest talks in class to careers guidance activities, have brought the world of education closer to the labour market, improving the quality of training courses and expanding opportunities for students.

In light of these results, the main recommendation is to consolidate and expand integrated training programmes for the development of soft skills and to further support dialogue between the world of VET

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system and companies, promoting innovative educational models capable of responding to the challenges of the contemporary socio-economic context.

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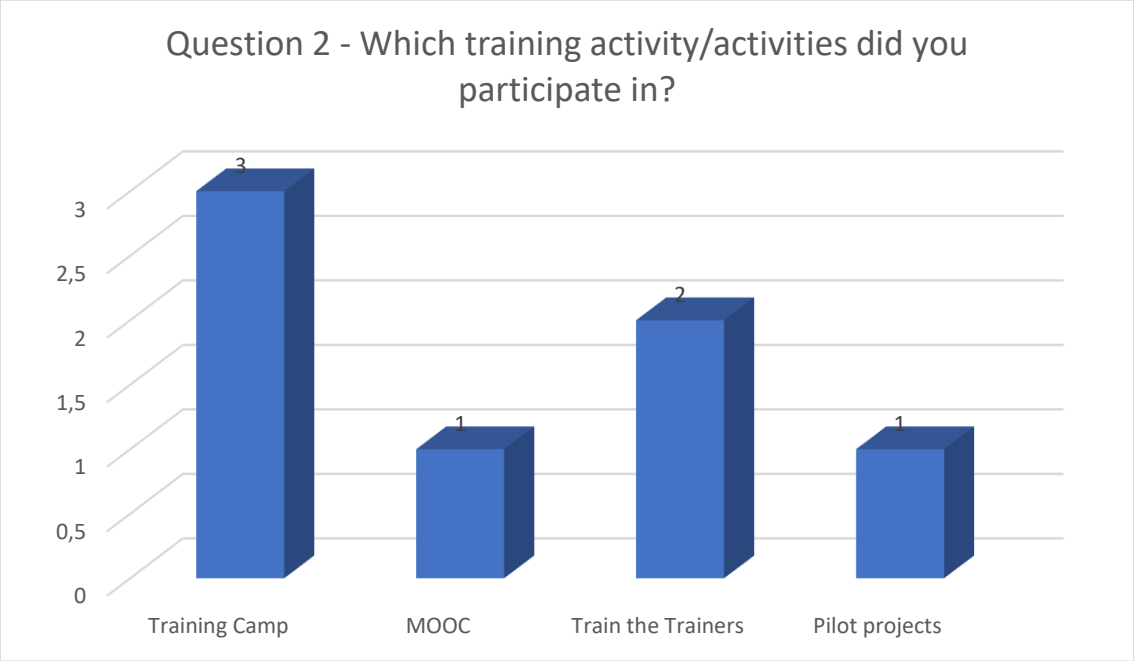
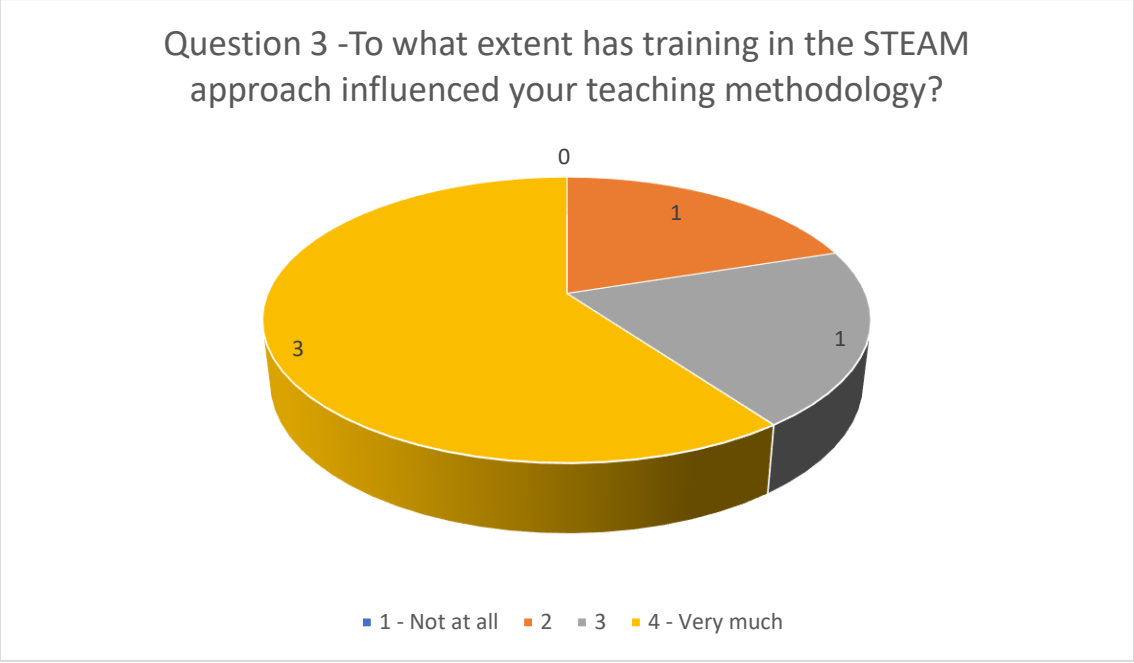
7. Appendix

- Survey questionnaire submitted: https://docs.google.com/forms/d/e/1FAIpQLSeAjkGY2zerhicUdUB-c5BW0oIRXM9gIRBnry_QZJ1OKF_bCw/viewform?usp=dialog

- Detailed tables and charts





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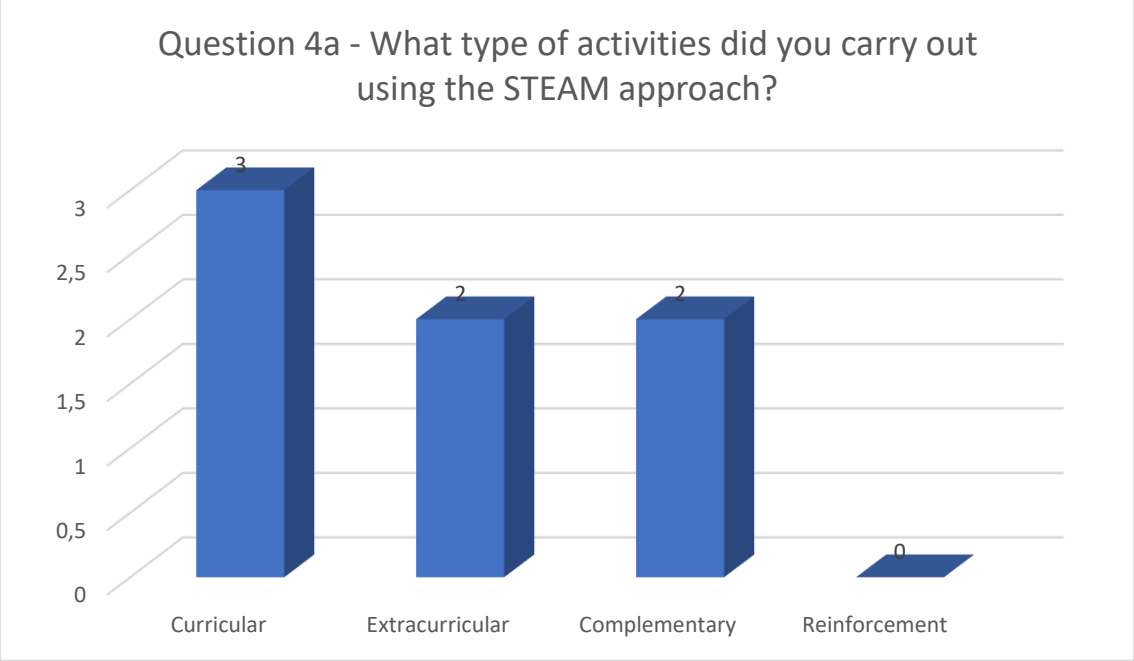

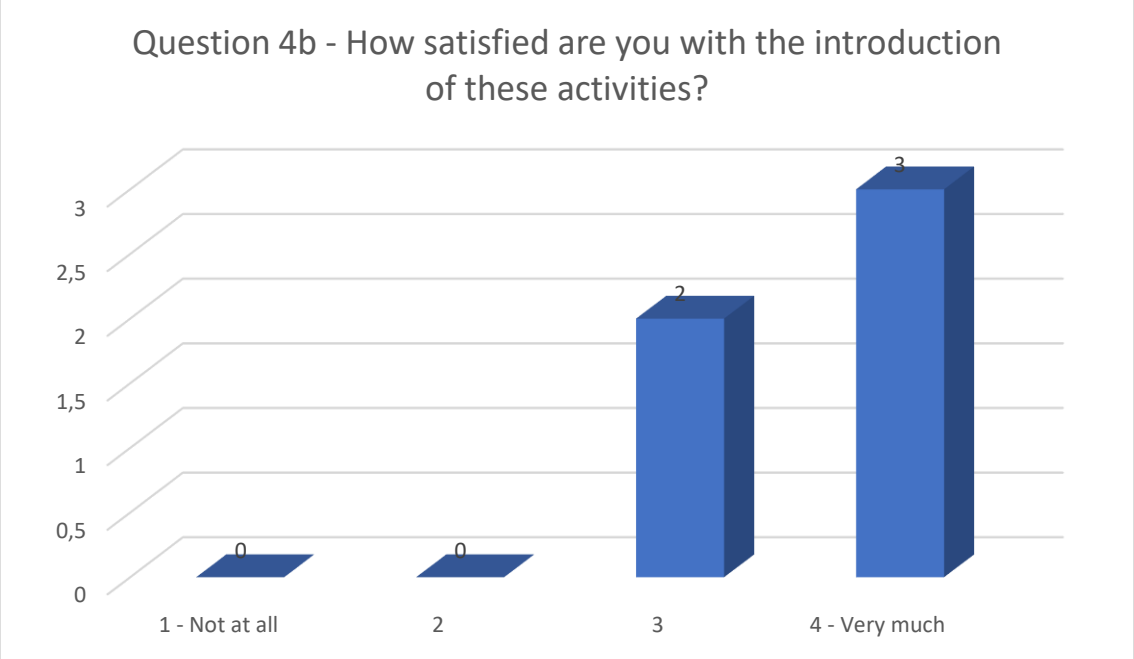

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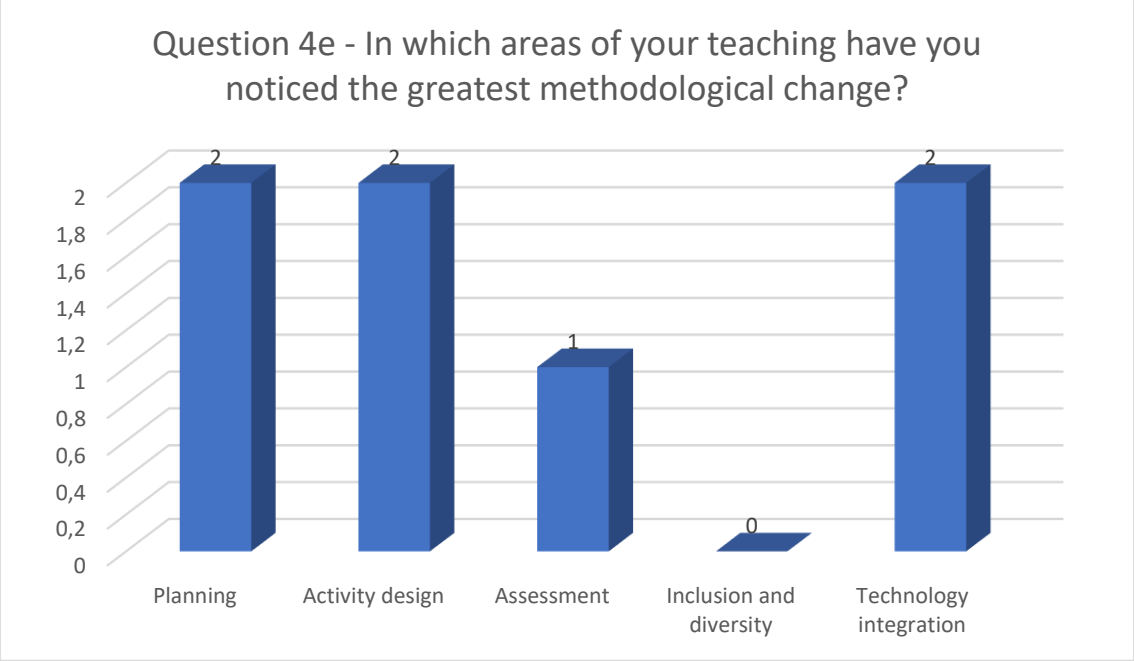

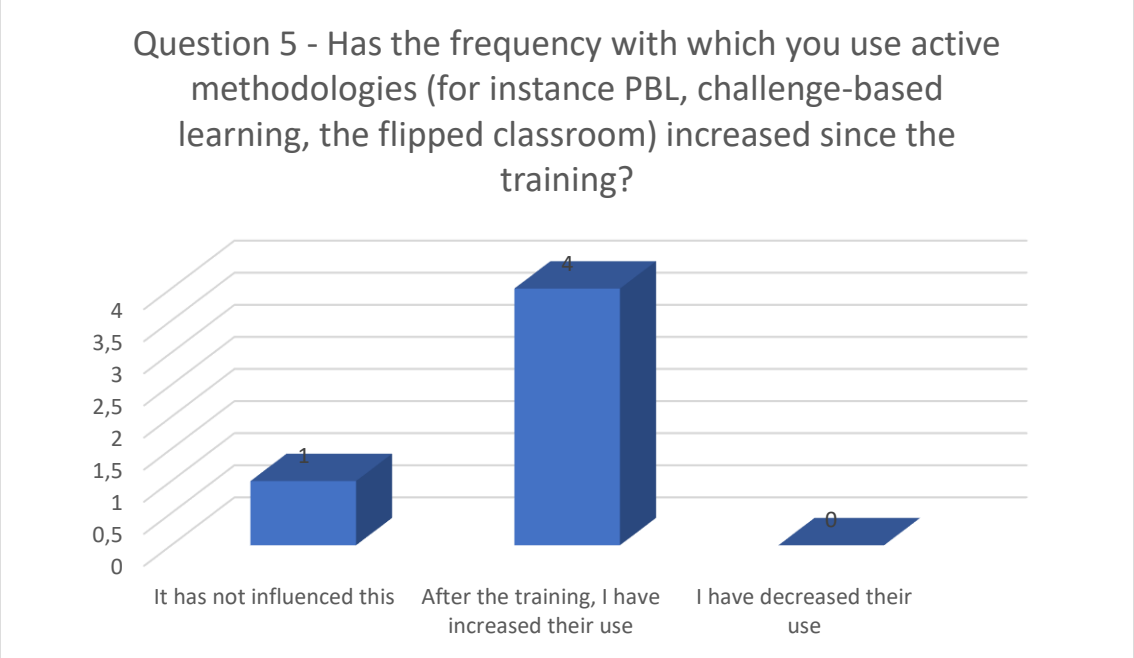

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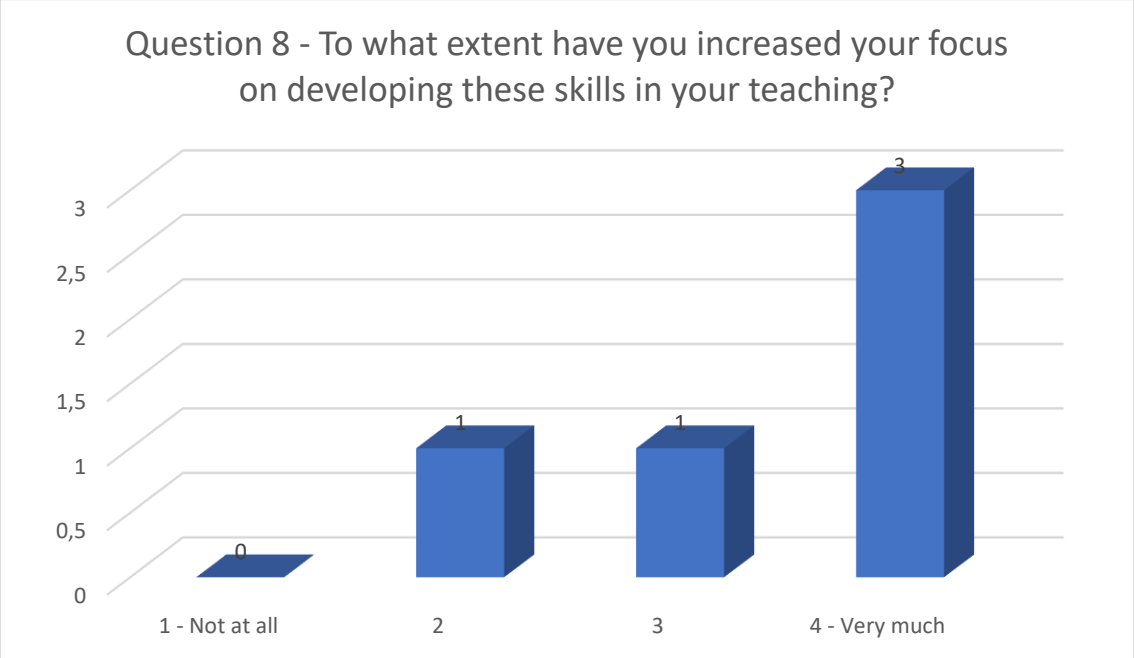

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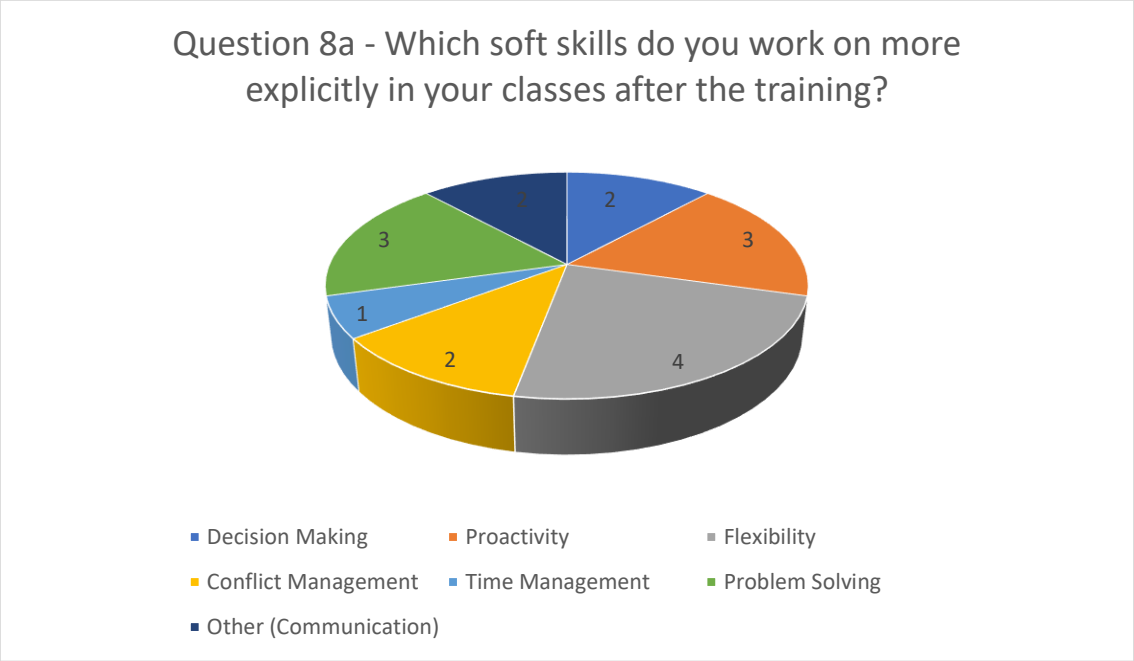

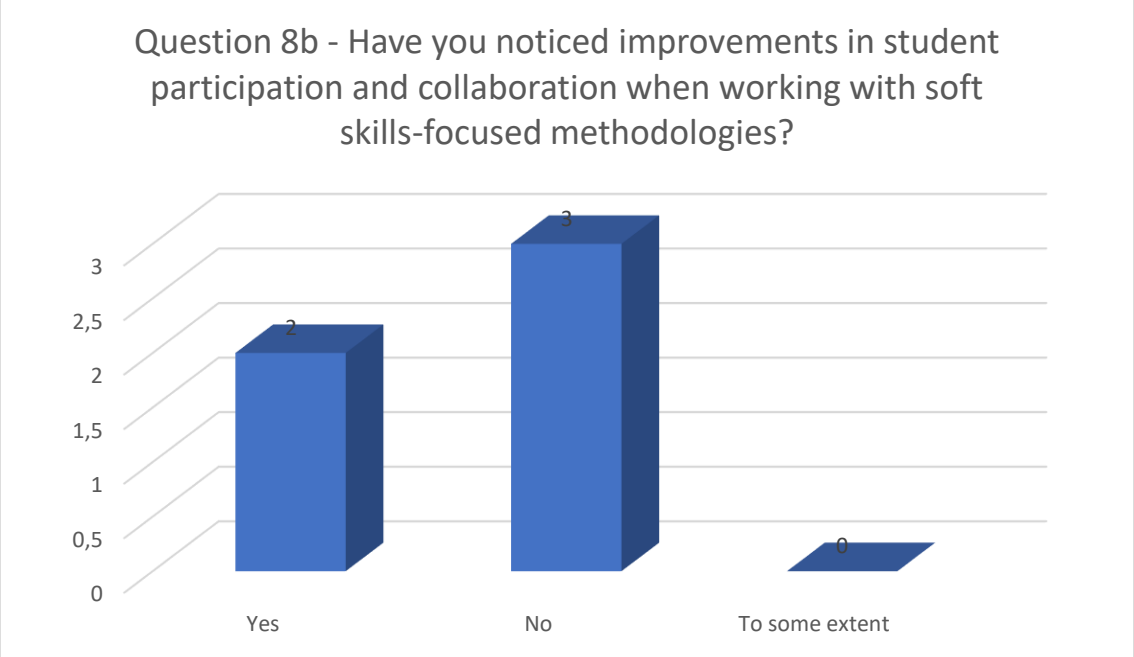

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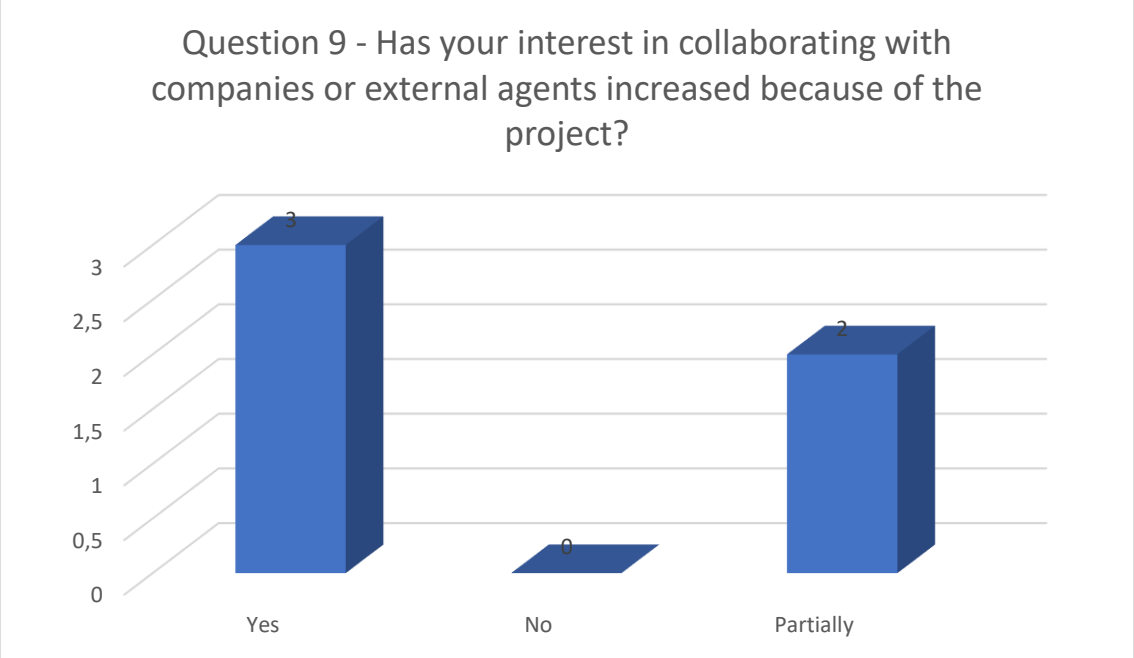

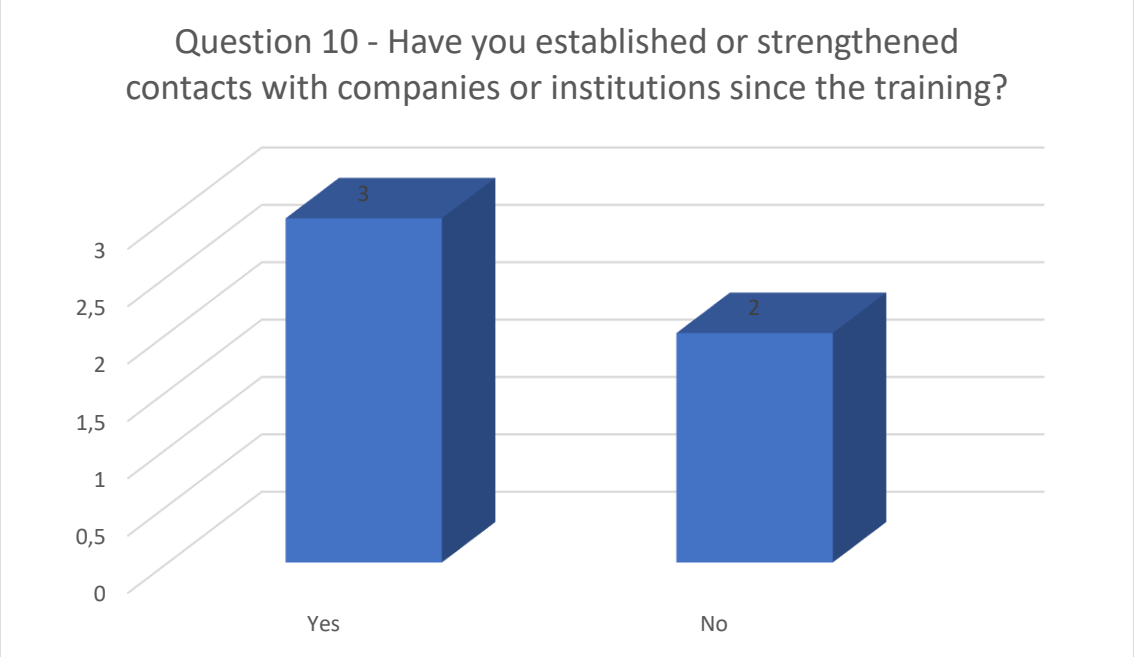

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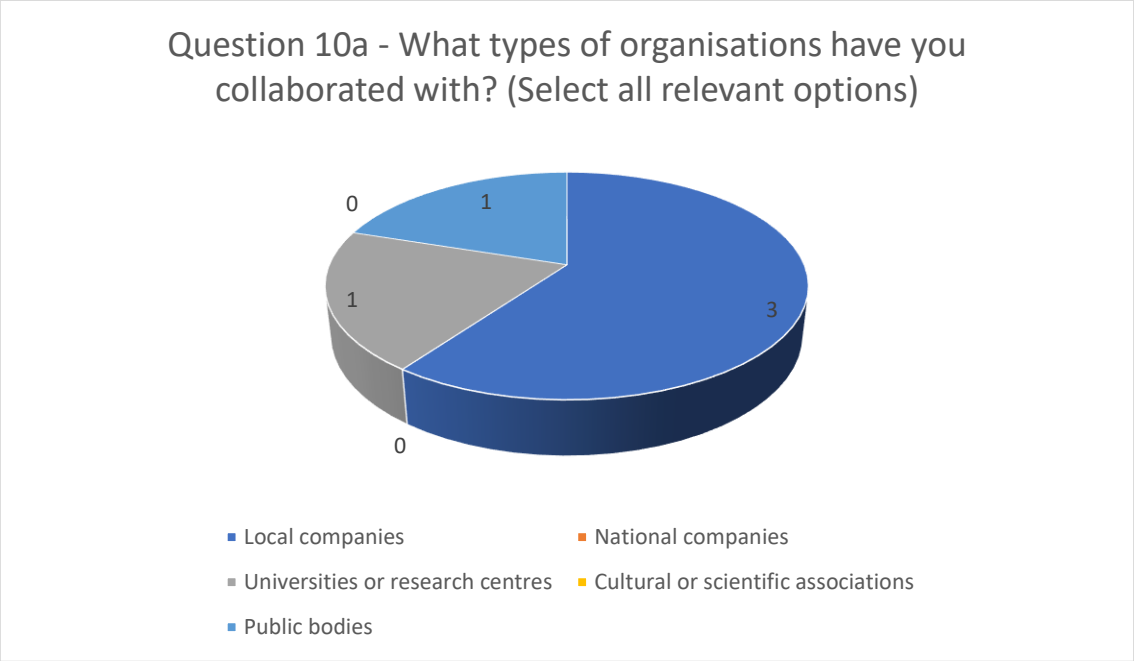

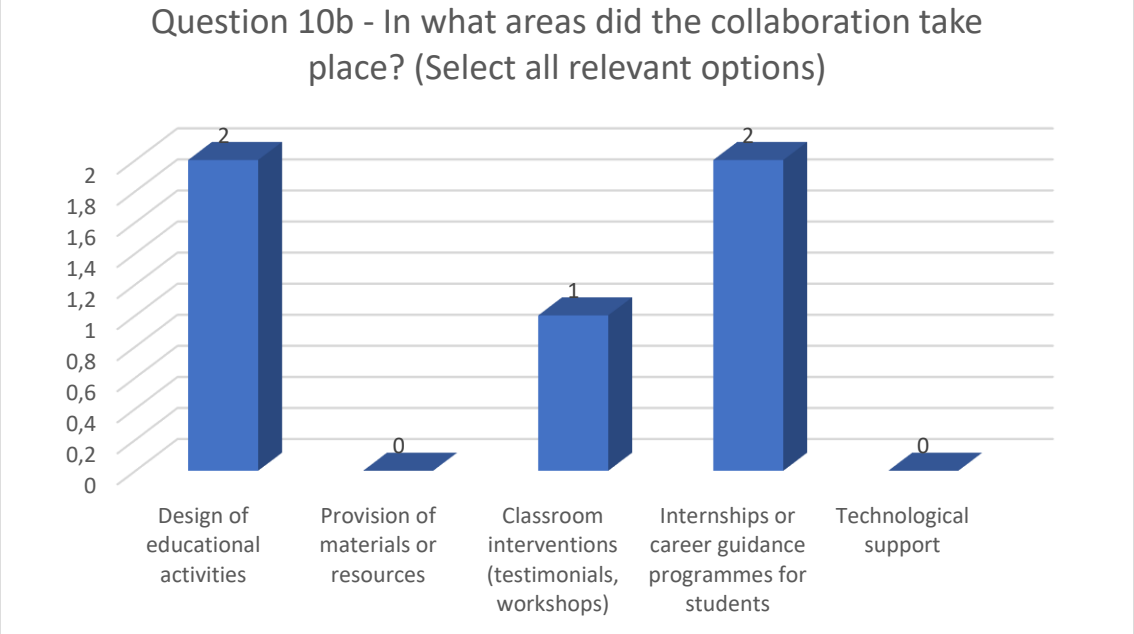

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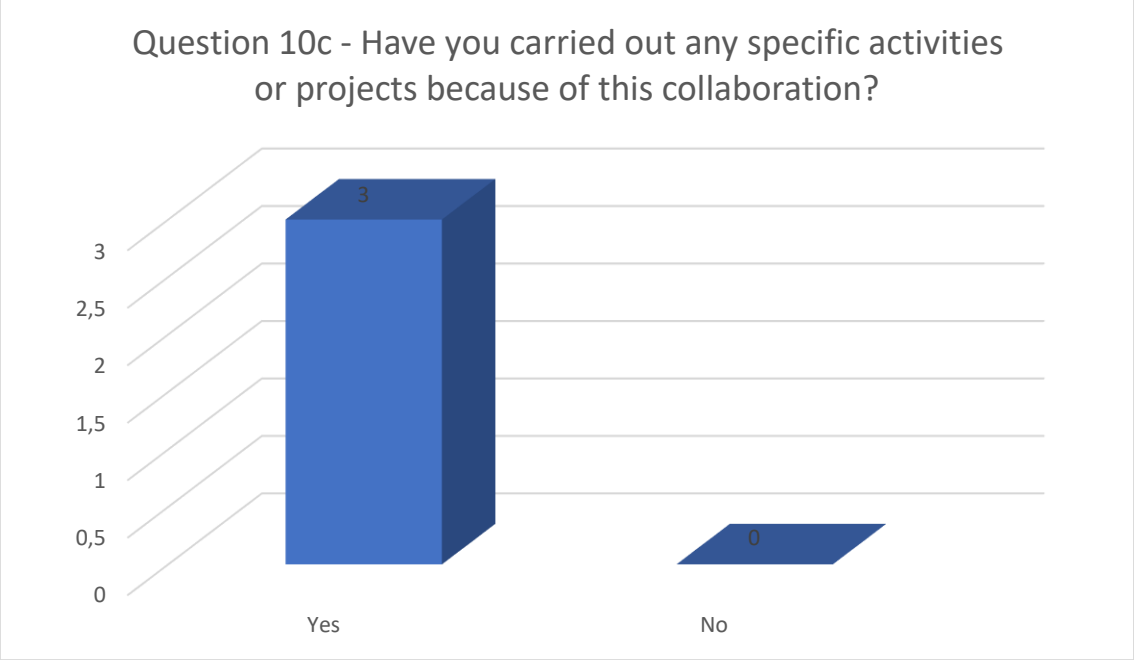

Question 10d – '*If yes, briefly describe a significant experience of collaboration with external companies or entities that arose or improved because of the project. (Open answer)*'

- Thanks to the project, I forged stronger links with secondary schools during orientation meetings. A concrete example was the use of practical activities that improved collaboration with teachers, although the main impact was on students' ability to understand complex concepts through direct experience. Specifically: -We used role-playing to demonstrate what soft skills are in concrete terms, proposing exercises such as "Shipwreck" or "River of Lava". Seeing them in action as they tried to solve the group problem, the students understood how communication and teamwork are fundamental in the labour market. - We used Kahoot to stimulate curiosity and maintain attention. The interactive quizzes served as a "forerunner" to explain possible post-diploma paths, such as IFTS training, the dual system Academy and opportunities abroad. This way of working allowed schools to offer a much more modern approach to career guidance and enabled us to connect directly with young people, speaking their language.
- Personal empowerment with ifoa
- The companies that collaborated on the design of the pilot projects have agreed to offer internships and start collaborations with our organisation.

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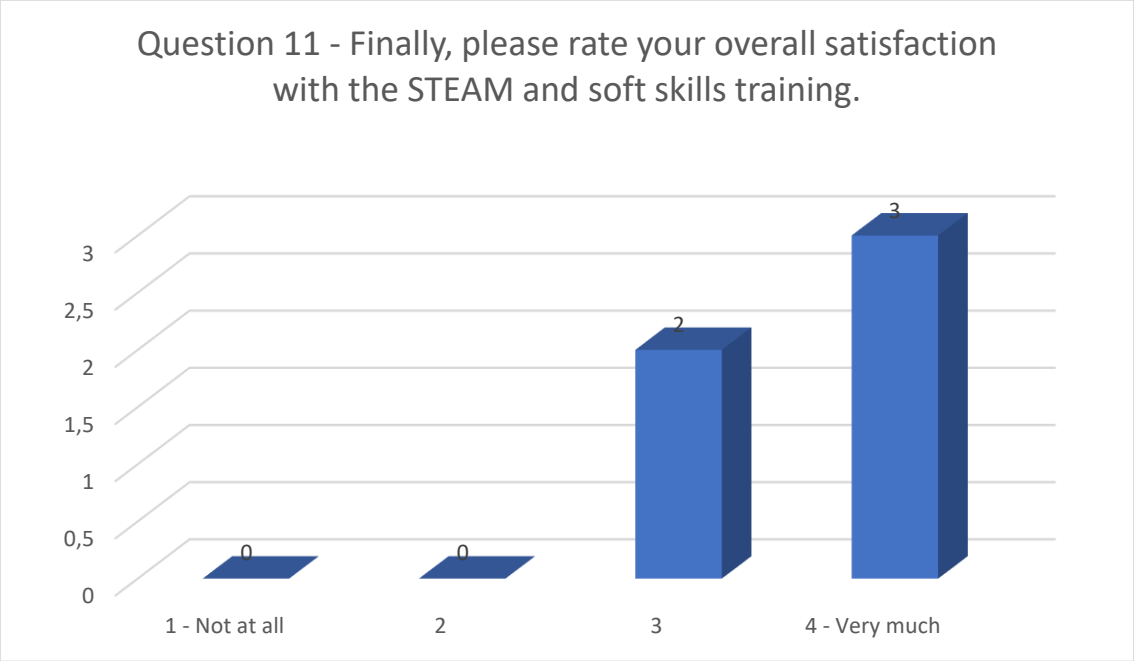

Question 12 – "*Add a comment or additional remark (optional)*"

- This training helped me understand how to further bridge the gap with students. Using digital media or games isn't just a way to use new tools, but also makes things that often seem complicated simple and practical.
- Excellent project, congratulations.
- It would be interesting to continue the process with other meetings aimed at teachers, such as in November 2024. Even abroad!

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THE BOOST THAT MAKES THE DIFFERENCE

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