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CARING COMPASS



Empowering Support Persons in Social Sphere

Transnational study



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1 Introduction and purpose of the study



Support persons play a crucial role in empowering vulnerable individuals and fostering social inclusion across Europe. They provide vital support to diverse groups, including those facing socio-economic difficulties, new immigrants and refugees, and individuals with disabilities or special needs. However, the landscape of support person services varies significantly across countries, with differing organizational structures, training practices, and access to resources. To address this fragmentation and enhance the effectiveness of support person services, a comprehensive transnational study was conducted.

This study, forming Work Package 2 of the CARING COMPASS project, focused on understanding the needs and expectations of support persons across five European countries: Estonia, France, Italy, Latvia, and Sweden. The primary objective was to gather in-depth data on the current state of support person services, identify existing gaps and challenges, and highlight best practices. This information will serve as a critical foundation for the development of targeted training materials, handbooks, and toolkits in subsequent phases of the project.

The transnational nature of this study is crucial for several reasons. Firstly, it allows for a comparative analysis of support person services across different countries, revealing diverse approaches and highlighting areas for improvement. Secondly, it facilitates the exchange of knowledge and best practices, enabling the development of resources that are relevant and adaptable to various European contexts. Thirdly, it promotes collaboration and networking among support persons and organizations across borders, fostering a sense of community and shared purpose.

The study addresses a critical need for a comprehensive understanding of the support person landscape. Existing research and resources are often fragmented and lack a European-wide perspective. This study fills this gap by providing a detailed analysis of the challenges, needs, and expectations of support persons across different countries. The findings will inform the development of targeted interventions and resources that enhance the quality and impact of support person services.



2 Methodology

This transnational study, conducted as Work Package 2 of the project, aimed to understand the needs and expectations of support persons across five European countries: France, Italy, Sweden, Latvia, and Estonia. The core objective was to identify existing gaps in the support persons' landscape to develop targeted training materials, handbooks, and toolkits in subsequent project phases. Below are presented the phases of the methodology employed to carry out the transnational study.

2.1 Questionnaire development

The study employed a mixed-methods approach, combining quantitative and qualitative data collection to provide a robust understanding of the support persons' needs and expectations. The methodology was structured around a typical scientific process, beginning with the design and development of a questionnaire, as follows:

- Section 1: Personal data of the Respondents.
- Section 2: About the Training.
- Section 3: About the Tools and Materials.
- Section 4: About the Working Obstacles and Support Session.



2.2 Data collection

Data collection was primarily conducted through online questionnaires, a decision that was made to minimize costs and environmental impact. Each partner organization was responsible for collecting at least 20 responses from support persons within their respective countries, resulting in a total sample size of 100+ respondents. This approach facilitated a broad geographical representation and allowed for the inclusion of diverse perspectives.

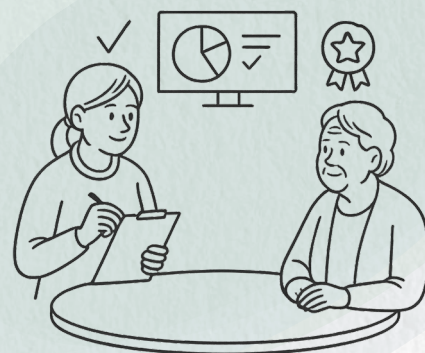
2.3 Data analysis

The collected data was then subjected to both quantitative and qualitative analysis. Quantitative data, such as response frequencies and distributions, were analyzed to identify patterns and trends. Qualitative data, including open-ended survey responses, were analyzed using thematic analysis to identify key themes and insights. This dual approach allowed for a comprehensive understanding of the support persons' experiences and needs. After that, the first version of the transnational study was developed and was ready to be evaluated.

2.4 Evaluation

A comprehensive evaluation strategy was implemented to ensure the quality and impact of the transnational study. This process involved indicators designed to assess the effectiveness of the research process and the relevance of the findings:

- **Survey Response Rate:** A minimum of 20 survey responses from each partner country was set, aiming for a total of 100+ respondents to ensure a representative sample size.
- **Study Accessibility and User-Friendliness:** The study aimed to be accessible and user-friendly for a wide range of individuals and organizations. A target was set for 75% of support persons and service provider professionals to believe that the study was user-friendly and accessible.
- **Language Availability:** The study was translated into all six project languages (English, Estonian, French, Swedish, Italian, and Latvian) to ensure accessibility and dissemination for professionals across Europe.
- **Validation of Findings:** A follow-up survey was conducted and the results of the analysis were sent back to 20% of the initial respondents, who were asked to indicate their level of agreement with the findings. The indicator of accuracy and quality was considered satisfied if at least 75% of these respondents expressed agreement with the results



3 Background Analysis



The document is structured as a comprehensive analysis of the background study on support persons, mentors, and volunteers across different countries. It is divided into eight sections, each addressing a specific aspect of their work, such as organizational frameworks, legal regulations, target groups, goals, support networks, training, and certification. Each section is further broken down into **common aspects**, **different aspects**, and **similarities between some countries**, providing a clear comparison of practices and regulations across countries like France, Italy, Sweden, Latvia, and Estonia. The analysis highlights both shared trends and unique characteristics, offering a detailed overview of how support roles are organized, regulated, and executed in various contexts. This approach shows the key factors influencing the work of support persons, mentors, and volunteers.

Topic	Common Aspects	Different Aspects	Notes
<p>Please describe the role of a support person/mentor/volunteer in your country?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • They offer emotional, practical and/or educational support to help individuals overcome difficulties and develop personal and professional skills. • They work with vulnerable groups (young people, individuals with disabilities, migrants, the elderly, families in difficulty). 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Not much difference was noted between the various countries. • Similarities between some countries: • <u>France and Sweden</u>: Targeted youth support and social integration. • <u>Italy, Sweden and Latvia</u>: Personalized practical support as well as mental support. • <u>Estonia and Latvia</u>: Prevention as a central objective. 	
<p>Are there any laws regulating their work?</p>	<p>Most countries have general or specific regulations to regulate the work of support persons/mentors/volunteers.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <u>France</u>: Mentoring is less legally framed than other forms of engagement • <u>Italy</u>: creation of RUNTS regulates Third Sector organizations; evolutionary laws for the new role of 'Youth Worker'. • <u>Sweden</u>: Focus on privacy and workplace safety. • <u>Latvia</u>: Well-detailed regulations on social services. • <u>Estonia</u>: Social Welfare Act since 1995, but there are no laws on volunteers, peer workers and mentors. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <u>France, Sweden and Latvia</u>: Strict laws and regulations to protect the rights and well-being of both the individuals they are supporting, especially children, and themselves. • <u>France and Italy</u>: More specific laws for associations and programs.
<p>In which fields (or with which target groups) do support person/mentor/volunteer work?</p>	<p>Interventions with different types of vulnerable groups and support that vary according to the different needs of the groups. For example:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <u>Young people</u>: provide guidance, support, and positive role models. • <u>Elderly</u>: help with their health conditions and autonomy. • <u>Individuals with disabilities</u>: targeted help depending on the problems they have. • <u>Migrants</u>: help in completing bureaucratic procedures, finding a job and a role in society. • <u>People in economic or social difficulty</u>: practical help such as food and necessities. 	<p>Not much difference was noted between the various countries</p>	



Topic	Common Aspects	Different Aspects	Notes
<p>Who organizes the work of a support person/mentor/volunteer?</p>	<p>Central role of NGOs, government bodies and private organisations.</p>	<p><u>France:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <u>Strong national organisation:</u> Collectif Mentorat. It was established to federate within it all general interest organisations acting in favour of mentoring. The Collectif Mentorat has also created the 'Mentorat Label' to help managers provide high quality mentoring. • For teenagers (15-17 years old) there is also the possibility of a 12-month volunteer program offered by the SNU (Service National Universel). <p><u>Italy:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Projects are managed by organizations and managers usually have different responsibilities depending on the size of the organization. There are managers who deal with goal planning, financial aspects and on the other side operational managers. <p><u>Estonia:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <u>Well-defined structure within the country apparatus:</u> Social Insurance Board, Unemployment Insurance Fund, Institute for Health Development, etc. 	<p>France, Latvia and Estonia: Special focus on the quality of the mentoring service.</p>
<p>What are the goals of a support person/mentor/volunteer?</p>	<p>Support persons have different goals, depending on who they are helping and the needs of the latter. However, there are common aspects that can be highlighted:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • giving psychological support. • helping people in disadvantaged situations to improve their lifestyle. • promoting social integration. • helping people to improve their professional situation. • The overall goal is to improve the quality of life of the assisted person. 	<p><u>Italy:</u> Volunteering is not only seen as an action done to help others but as an act of charity but as an experience, which through ups and downs, when the final goal is reached has enriched not only the person being helped but also the volunteer.</p>	

Topic	Common Aspects	Different Aspects	Notes
Do support persons/mentors/volunteers have a network or other support they can turn to if needed?	In every country there are networks, supervision or resources to provide support to volunteers but with differences.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <u>Italy</u>: There are groups of volunteers who meet periodically with professional figures such as psychologists or educators, who can provide them with feedback and advice. • <u>Latvia</u>: There is a very structured and organized system in which everybody, from the Ministry of Welfare to NGOs, provides targeted services. • <u>Estonia</u>: The level of support, help and supervision varies greatly depending on the organization. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <u>France and Italy</u>: Volunteers often help each other informally, as well as in more traditional ways.
What kind of preparation does a support person/mentor/volunteer receive for their work? How long is the training?	The training of support persons is customized according to their specific role and target audience. It is organized by public bodies and/or NGOs.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <u>France</u>: The country, through specialized offices and interaction with non-profit associations, has created several courses that vary in length from a few hours to 2 weeks. • <u>Italy</u>: It is not standardized but the volunteer is often left free to follow additional trainings. In Italy, personal experience in the field is highly valued. • <u>Sweden</u>: About 15-30 hours, with focus on active listening, conflict resolution and communication skills. Some organizations may also provide ongoing supervision. • <u>Latvia</u>: Compulsory training, often organized by the Ministry of Welfare. Includes courses on child protection if working with children. • <u>Estonia</u>: Courses of 296 hours: 184 theoretical, 80 practical, 16 first-aid training, 16 individual works. There are also lot of training courses of a few days (2-3). 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <u>Italy and France</u>: More flexible approach. • <u>Sweden and Latvia</u>: More regulated training.
Does the support person/mentor/volunteer have an occupational certificate?	At the end of the training, certificates are issued which are often useful, but not obligatory to have. These can be very helpful for support persons when they must draw up a CV, to present themselves better to organizations and so that they can make more informed choices.	<p><u>Latvia</u>: Certifications are compulsory for certain roles. For example:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Family caregivers must have at least a first-level professional higher education degree. • Other roles, such as social tutor, may require additional certifications; particularly when working with vulnerable populations or children. • Volunteers are also sometimes required to hold specific certifications. 	

3.1 Comments on findings

Regarding the organization of their work, support persons, mentors, and volunteers commonly provide emotional, practical, and educational support to individuals, often from vulnerable groups, to help them overcome difficulties and develop skills. While the core function remains consistent, some variations exist. France and Sweden focus on youth support and social integration, while Italy, Sweden, and Latvia emphasize personalized practical and mental support. Estonia and Latvia prioritize prevention as a central objective.

Legal frameworks governing their work also vary. While most countries have some form of regulation, the extent of legal framing differs. France has a less legally structured approach to mentoring compared to other engagement forms. Italy's RUNTS regulates Third Sector organizations, and evolving laws address the role of Youth Workers. Sweden prioritizes privacy and workplace safety, Latvia has detailed social service regulations, and Estonia, while having a Social Welfare Act, lacks specific volunteer, peer worker, and mentor laws. France, Sweden, and Latvia have strict laws protecting the rights and well-being of both support recipients and providers, particularly concerning children. France and Italy have more specific laws for associations and programs.

The fields and target groups served by these individuals are diverse, focusing on vulnerable populations such as young people, the elderly, individuals with disabilities, migrants, and those facing economic or social hardship. Interventions are tailored to the specific needs of each group. For instance, young people receive guidance and positive role modeling, the elderly are assisted with health and autonomy, individuals with disabilities receive targeted help, migrants are supported with bureaucratic procedures and integration, and those in economic difficulty receive practical assistance.

The organizations involved in structuring this work are primarily NGOs, government bodies, and private entities. France has a strong national organization, Collectif Mentorat, and a volunteer program for teenagers. Italy's projects are managed by organizations with varying manager responsibilities. Estonia has a well-defined structure within its public apparatus. France, Latvia, and Estonia emphasize the quality of mentoring services.

The goals of support persons, mentors, and volunteers, while varying based on the specific context, generally include providing psychological support, helping individuals in disadvantaged situations improve their lives, promoting social integration, and assisting with professional development. The overarching aim is to enhance the quality of life for those they assist. Italy emphasizes the enriching experience for the volunteer themselves.

Support systems for these individuals exist in all countries, though their structure and availability differ. Italy has volunteer groups that meet with professionals for feedback and advice. Latvia has a highly structured system involving various entities. Estonia's support levels vary depending on the organization. France and Italy see informal peer support alongside more formal mechanisms.

Training varies in content, format, and duration, often customized to the role and target audience. France offers courses from a few hours to two weeks. Italy's training is less standardized, valuing field experience. Sweden provides 15–30 hours of training focusing on communication skills. Latvia has compulsory training, including child protection courses. Estonia offers extensive courses combining theoretical and practical components. Italy and France have a more flexible approach, while Sweden and Latvia have more regulated training systems.

Certification practices also vary. While certificates are generally issued after training and can be helpful, they are not always mandatory. Latvia, however, requires certifications for certain roles, especially when working with vulnerable populations or children. This comprehensive analysis highlights the multifaceted nature of support roles and the importance of understanding the specific contexts in which they operate.



4 Transnational Study

This document gathers the analysis of the answers received by 117 respondents who work as support persons in France, Sweden, Latvia, Estonia, and Italy. The results of this study should be interpreted cautiously, as they represent only the specific groups of support persons who participated and may not accurately reflect the experiences of all support persons in the partner countries.

The analysis is divided in 4 sections, as follows:

1. Personal data of the respondents.
2. About the Training.
3. About the Tools and Materials.
4. About the Working Obstacles and Support sessions



4.1 Section 1: Personal data of the Respondents.

This chapter presents an analysis of the demographic and professional characteristics of the support persons who participated in the study across five European countries. Examining personal data provides essential context for understanding the findings related to their experiences, needs, and perspectives.



4.1.1 Age

The chart presents a visual comparison of the age distribution across five countries: France, Italy, Sweden, Latvia, and Estonia. The age groups are categorized into four bins: 18-25, 26-35, 36-50, and 50+. Each country's data is represented by a stacked bar, with the height of each segment indicating the number of individuals of the population within that age group.

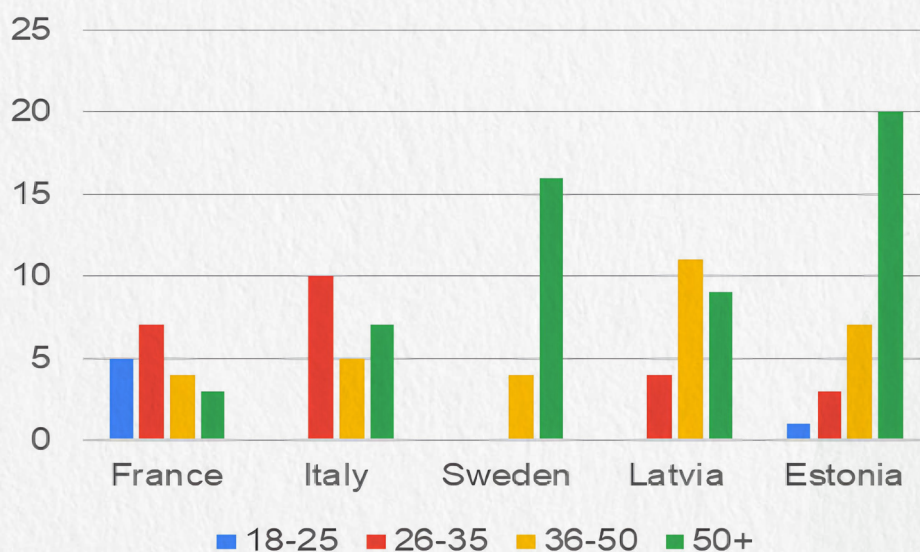


Chart 1: Age



Trends

- In Estonia and Sweden, most support persons are in the 50+ age group.
- In France and Italy, the distribution is more balanced.
- The 18-25 age group is absent in Italy, Sweden and Latvia and barely present in Estonia.



Thoughts

- This chart provides valuable insights into the age demographics of participants from different countries. This information can be crucial for understanding the target population of the project and tailoring interventions.

4.1.2 Gender

The chart presents a visual comparison of the gender distribution in these countries. It categorizes the population into three groups: Male, Female, and "I do not wish to say." Each country is represented by a stacked bar, with the height of each segment indicating the number of persons within that gender category.

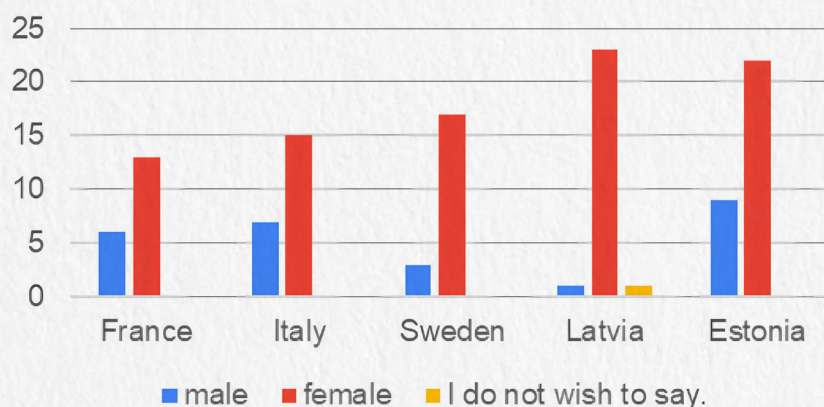


Chart 2: Gender



Trends

- All countries show a higher proportion of females compared to males. This is evident from the taller red segments in each bar.
- Latvia has the most pronounced difference between male and female populations. Their red segment is significantly taller than the blue one.
- The "I do not wish to say" category is found only in Latvia in a very small number.



Thoughts

- Social and Demographic Analysis: This data can be used to understand the gender composition of these countries and identify potential social and demographic trends. It can help researchers and policymakers analyze issues related to gender equality, workforce participation, and social development.

4.1.3 Education

The chart presents the distribution of education levels among participants from five different countries: France, Italy, Sweden, Latvia, and Estonia. The education levels are categorized into three groups: Elementary/Middle School, High School Diploma, and University Degree or More. The height of each colored bar represents the number of participants within that education level for each country.

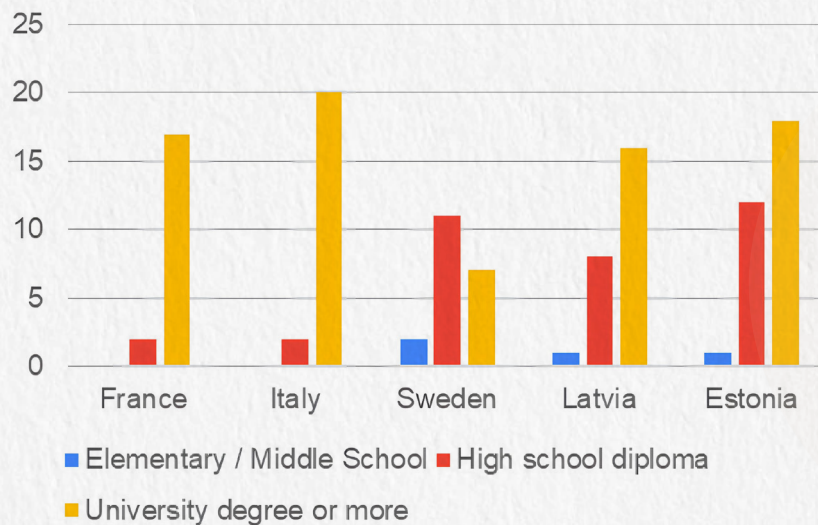


Chart 3: Education



Trends

- In France and Italy, almost all respondents have a university degree and in Latvia and Estonia they represent the majority.
- In Sweden, Latvia and Estonia there is a high percentage of support persons holding a high school diploma and in a small percentage an elementary/middle school diploma.



Thoughts

- A higher percentage of support persons with university degrees in France and Italy is notable (Estonia and Latvia have a similar number of support persons with a university degree, but a significant lower proportion with respect to their total). It might suggest a strong emphasis on higher education in these countries, in the field of support persons (which cannot be compared with other fields). This could be attributed to various factors such as government policies, cultural values, or economic opportunities.
- The educational attainment levels can help identify specific knowledge gaps or skill shortages among participants. This information can be used to develop targeted training programs that address the unique needs of each group.

4.1.4 Organization type

The chart presents the distribution of organization types among participants from five different countries: France, Italy, Sweden, Latvia, and Estonia. The organization types are categorized into five groups: "it is a hybrid form of social enterprise," "non-profit/charity organization," "Local government or governmental unit," "Social welfare institution (e.g., daycare, day center, youth home)," and "Educational facility (e.g., kindergarten/school)." The height of each colored bar represents the number of participants within that organization type for each country.

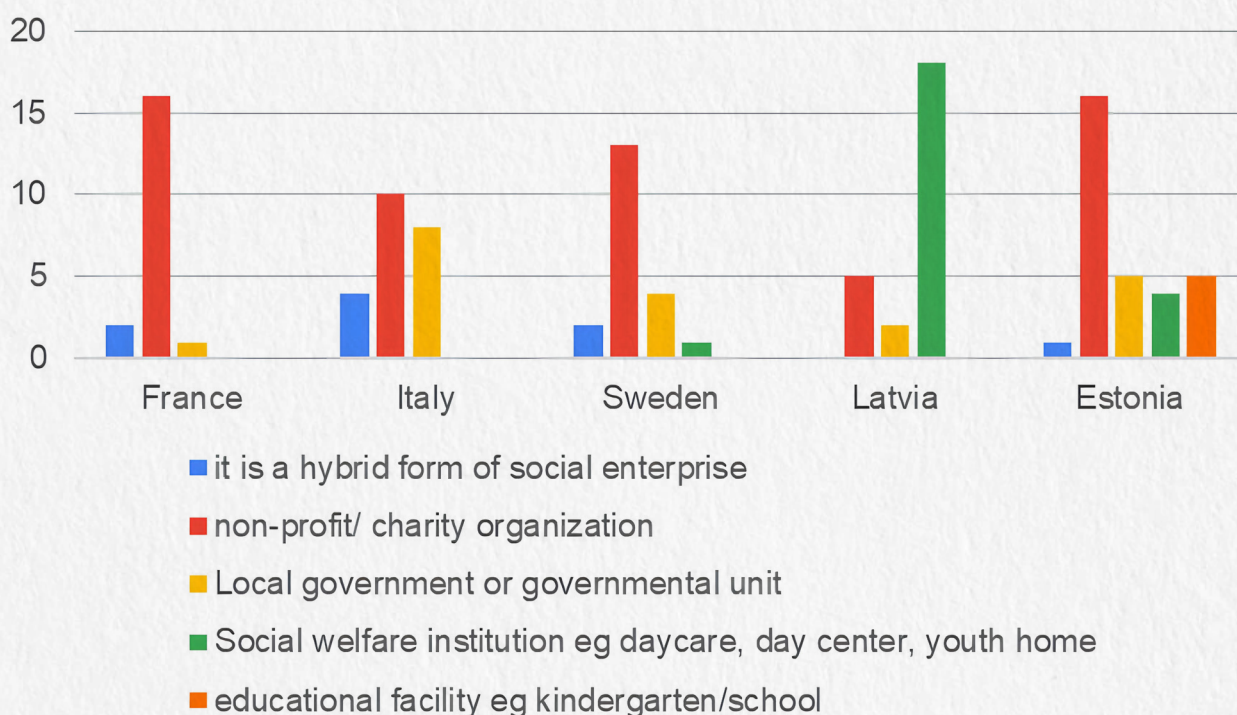


Chart 4: Organization type



Trends

- Non-profit/charity organizations are the most common type of organization across all countries except in Latvia
- Social welfare institutions are by far the most common type of organization in Latvia, while in France and Italy are absent and barely present in Sweden
- Hybrid forms of social enterprise have a small percentage in all five countries.



Thoughts

- This chart provides valuable insights with respect to the types of organizations involved in the project across different countries. This information is crucial for understanding the organizational context of the project and tailoring intervention strategies accordingly.



4.1.5 Target group

The chart presents the distribution of target groups for participants from five different countries: France, Italy, Sweden, Latvia, and Estonia. The height (or length) of each colored bar represents the number of participants working with that target group for each country.

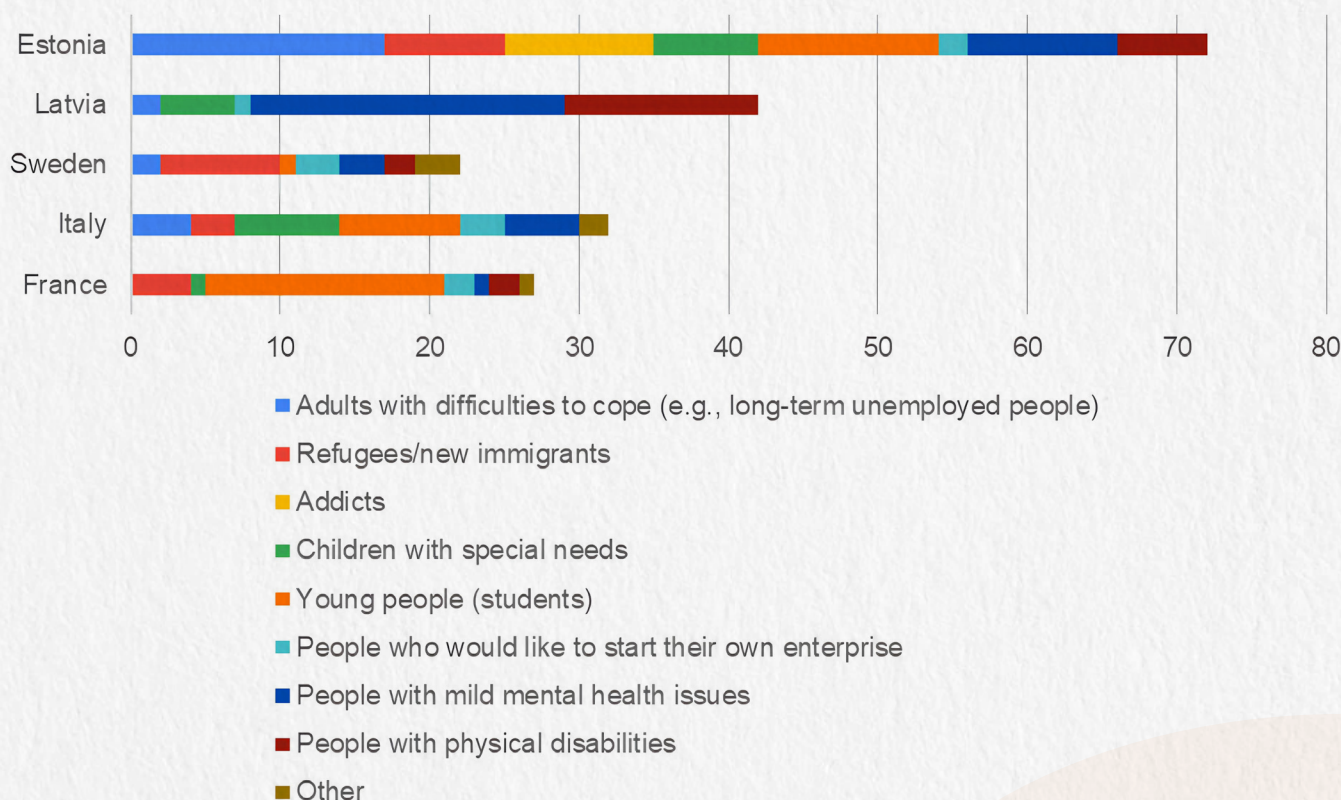


Chart 5: Target group



Trends

- People with mild mental health issues are the most common target group, followed by young people(students).
- Addicts and people who would like to start their own enterprise are the least represented groups
- In some Countries there is a particular attention for a specific target:
 - ◊ France: young people (students).
 - ◊ Latvia: people with mild mental health issues and people with physical disabilities.
 - ◊ Sweden: refugees/new immigrants

4.1.6 Annual Income

The chart presents the distribution of annual income levels among participants from five different countries: France, Italy, Sweden, Latvia, and Estonia. The height of each colored bar represents the number of participants within that income bracket for each country.

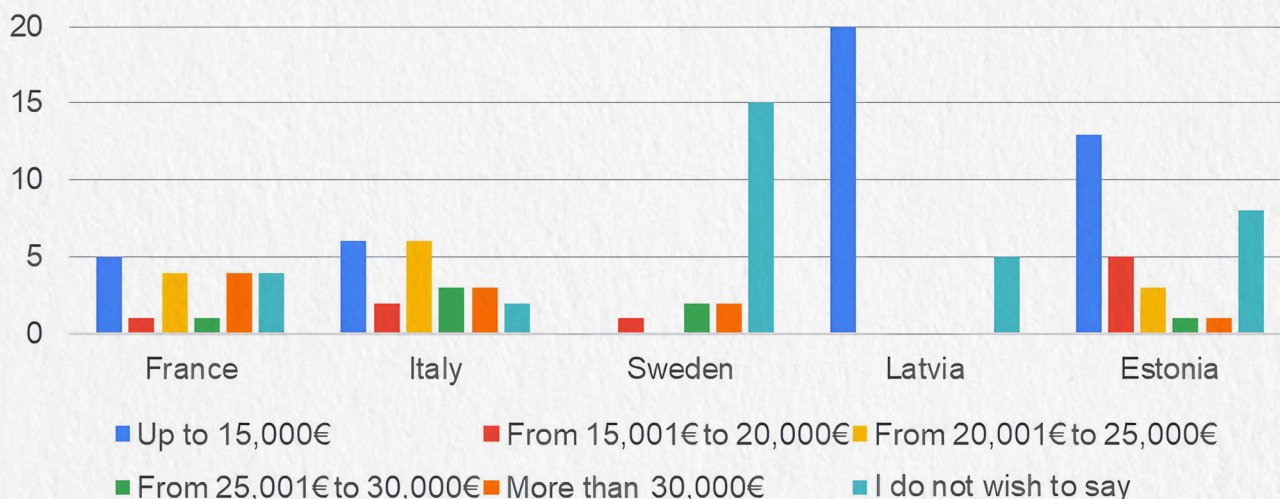


Chart 6: Annual income



Trends

- In all countries, except Sweden, the most common answer is “up to 15,000€”.
- A significant number of participants in all countries chose not to disclose their income.
- In Sweden the 75% of respondents did not wish to say their income.
- In Latvia 80% of respondents have an income “up to 15,000€”, while the remaining 20% did not wish to say their income.
- In Estonia 42% of respondents have an income “up to 15,000€”, while the 26% did not wish to say their income.



Thoughts

- The chart allows for a visual comparison of income levels across the five countries. This can help identify any significant differences or similarities in the income distribution of participants in different contexts.
- The income distribution of participants can have a significant impact on their experiences and needs. For example, participants with lower incomes might face additional challenges related to financial security, access to resources, and overall well-being. This information can be used to develop targeted support services and interventions that address the specific needs of participants from different socioeconomic backgrounds.

4.1.7 Weekly Working hours

The chart presents the distribution of weekly working hours among participants of the five countries. The working hours are categorized into four groups: "Less than 10 hours," "10–20 hours," "20–30 hours," and "I am working full time." The height of each colored bar represents the number of participants within that working hour category for each country.

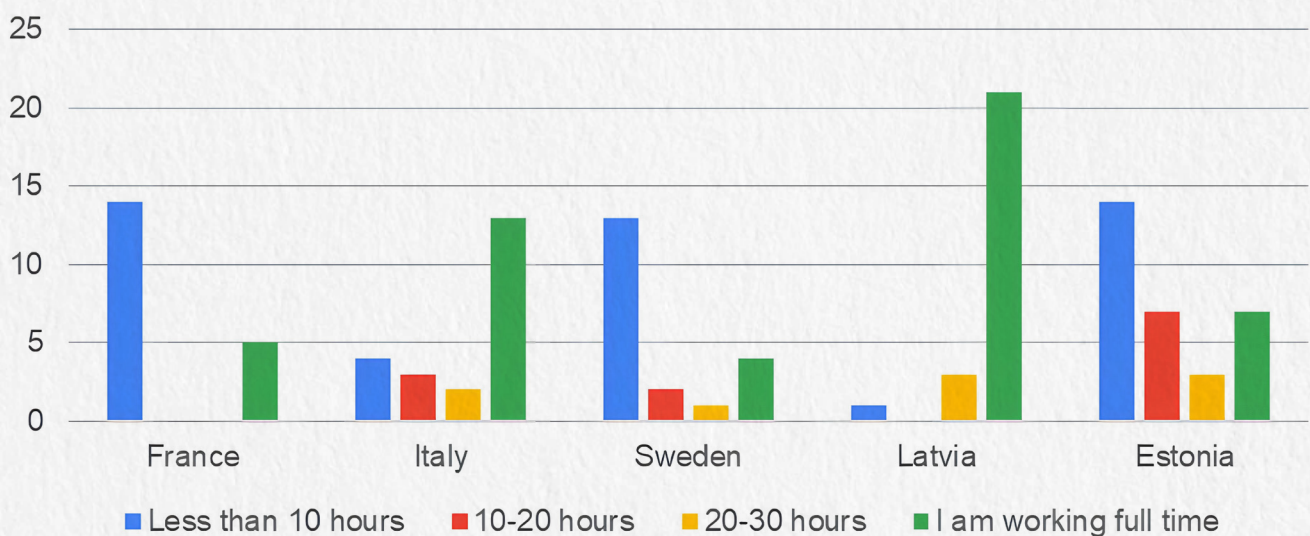


Chart 7: Weekly working hours



Trends

- The two main categories in all countries, except Latvia, are 'less than 10 hours' and 'I am working full time'
- 'Less than 10 hours' is the predominant answer in France, Sweden and Estonia.
- In Latvia almost all respondents work full time
- The '20–30 hours' category is the least represented.



Thoughts

- The information derived from the chart can be crucial for understanding the challenges faced by participants in different contexts.

4.1.8 Organization Type vs Target Group

The chart presents the distribution of target groups across different types of organizations. Each bar represents a specific organization type (e.g., social welfare institution, non-profit/charity organization, local government, etc.). The length of each bar indicates the total number of target groups served by that organization type, with the colored segments within the bar representing the proportion of each target group served.

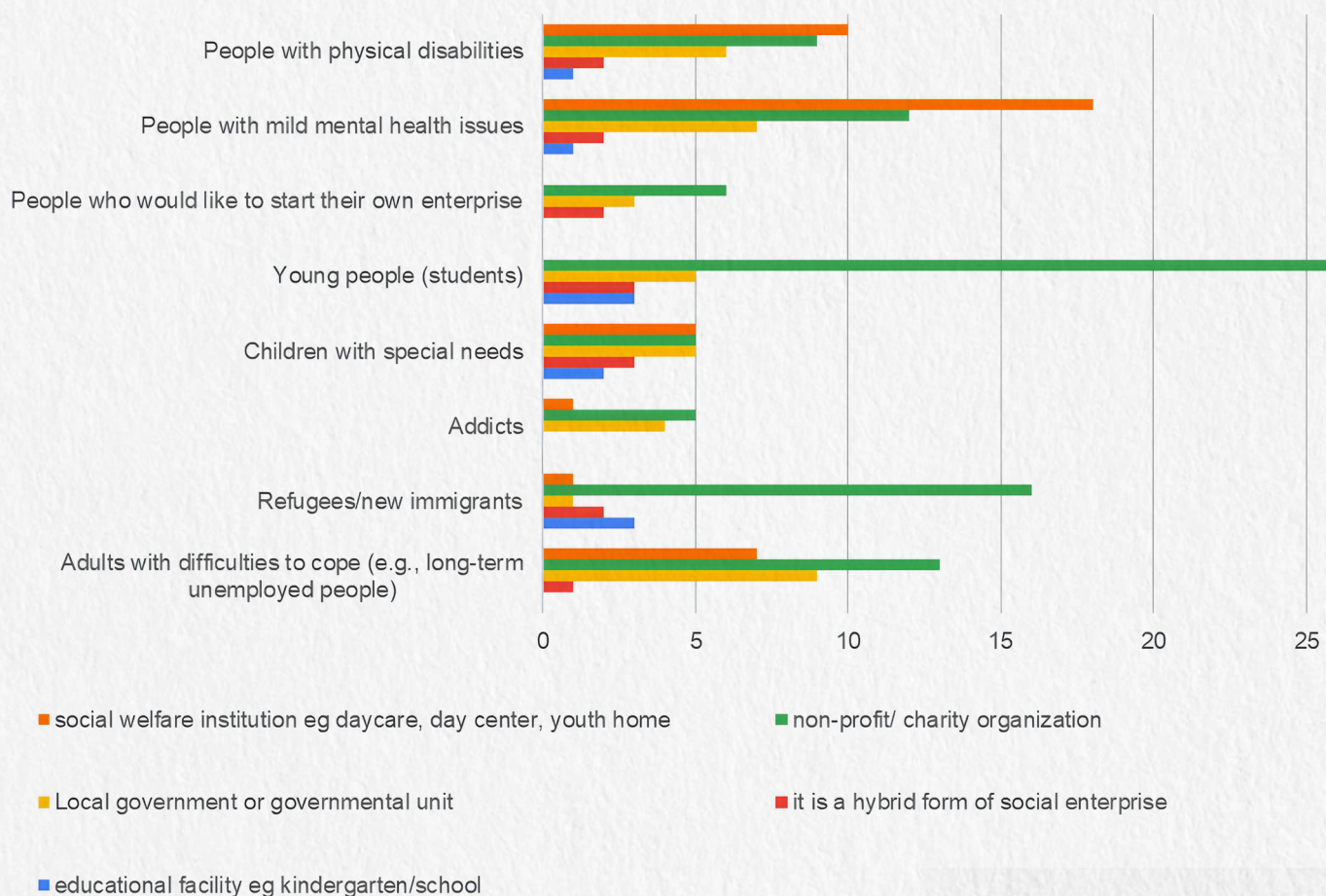


Chart 8: Organization Type vs Target Group



Trends

- Non-profit/charity organizations serve a diverse range of target groups, with a strong focus on young people (students), adults with difficulties to cope and refugees/new immigrants.
- Educational facilities: These also cover a broad range of target groups, but appear to specialize in specific groups, such as children with special needs, young people and refugees.
- People with mental health issues are helped primarily in social welfare institutions, non-profit organizations and local governments.



Thoughts

- Refugees: They seem to be the primary target group for many non-profit organizations and educational facilities. This probably reflects a growing need related to the migration crisis or unstable socio-economic situations.

4.1.9 Organization Type vs Weekly working hours

This chart appears to visualize the relationship between the type of organization and the working hours of the participants within those organizations. It uses a stacked bar chart to represent the proportion of participants working different hours within each organization type.

Each bar represents an organization type, and the different colored segments within each bar represent the proportion of participants working within each hour category for that organization type.

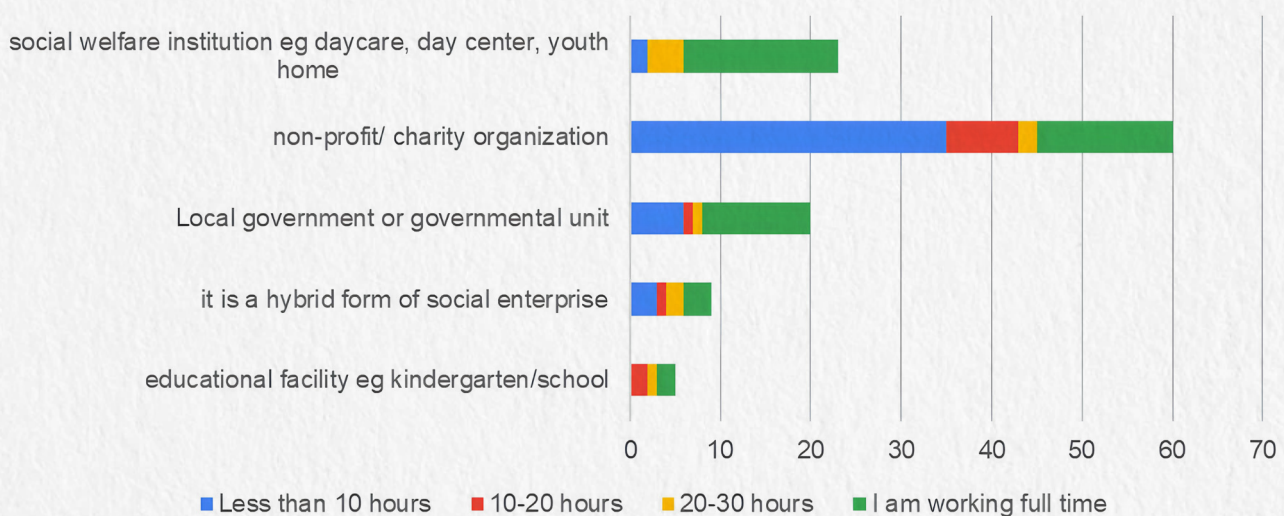


Chart 9: Organization type vs Weekly working hours



Trends

- Nonprofit/charity organizations: Most workers spend less than 10 hours per week working in these organizations, indicating a prevalence of part-time or volunteer work. However, there is a significant share of support persons who work more than 10 hours (with its majority declaring they work full-time), indicating that there are also more demanding roles. This variability reflects the flexibility that often characterizes nonprofit organizations, which combine volunteer work with full-time work.
- Local government units and social welfare institutions focus more on full-time roles. This likely reflects differences in budgets and organizational structure.



Thoughts

- The chart allows for a visual comparison of working hours across different organizations. This can help identify any significant differences or similarities in work patterns and expectations within the social service sector.



4.1.10 Organization Type vs Paid/Unpaid work

This chart appears to visualize the proportion of participants who work for pay versus on a voluntary basis across different organization types. It uses a stacked bar chart to represent the number of participants who are paid versus those who volunteer within each organization type.

Each bar represents an organization type, and the different colored segments within each bar represent the number of participants who are paid (blue) and those who volunteer (red) for that organization type.

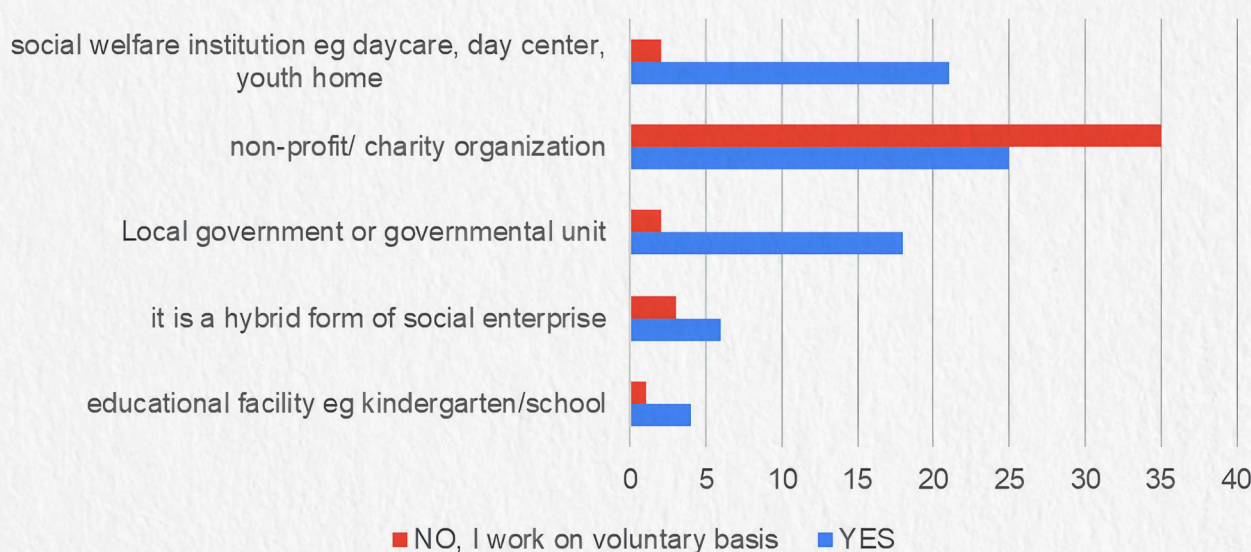


Chart 10: Organization type vs Paid/Unpaid work



Trends

- Non-profit/charity organizations: It is clear that many people work on a voluntary basis and often work less than 10 hours per week.
- Local government and social welfare institutions: Here the work is predominantly paid, as expected in a government context. This shows a more stable and formal structure than the other categories.



Thoughts

- Educational facilities (e.g. schools and kindergartens) show a significant number of paid workers, which reflects the professional and formal nature of the work in this field (beware of the low number of answers). However, the presence of volunteers indicates that there are also unpaid roles, perhaps related to support projects or additional initiatives



4.1.11 Target group vs Work appreciation

This chart appears to visualize the level of appreciation for different target groups among the participants. It uses a stacked bar chart to represent the distribution of responses regarding the appreciation level for each target group (differently from previous charts, here we show the percentages and not the numbers).

Each bar represents a target group, and the different colored segments within each bar represent the percentage of participants who selected each level of appreciation for that target group.

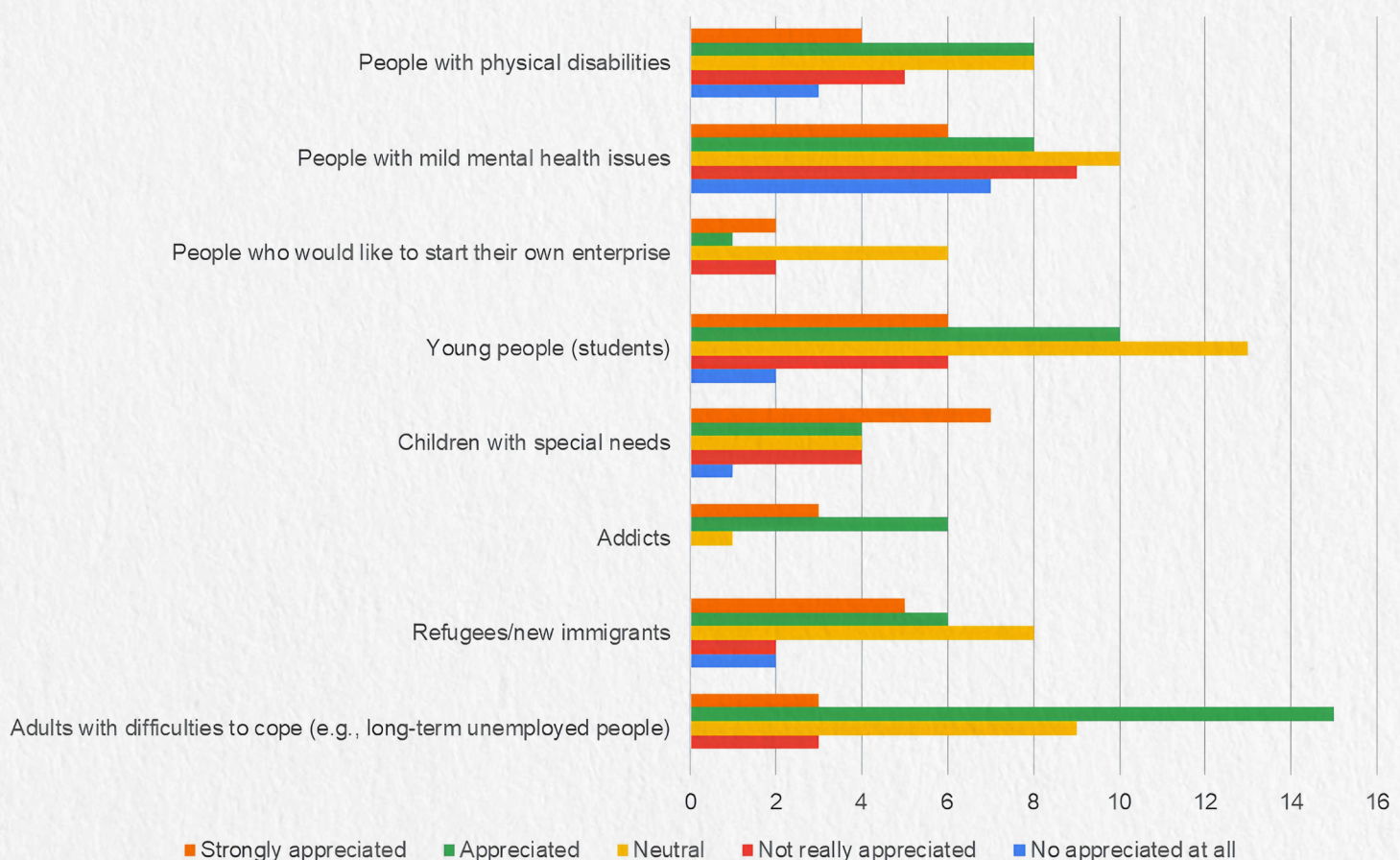


Chart 11: Target group vs Work appreciation



Trends

- The perception is that work is appreciated; however, there are some clarifications to be made:
- Support persons think their work is more appreciated if they help groups such as: addicts, adults with difficulties coping, and children with special needs (more than 50%). These groups are probably those towards which the perceived urgency of their needs is felt more.
- For some groups, the "neutral" answer occupies a significant part of the responses.



Thoughts

- Maintain a high level of appreciation for priority groups.
- Professional recognition: Implement strategies to enhance the contribution of operators who work with undervalued groups, for example by improving working conditions or promoting their role in the community.

4.2 Section 2: About the Training.

This section presents an analysis of the training curriculum and professional development experiences of the support persons who participated in the study. Understanding their training backgrounds is crucial for interpreting their perspectives on necessary tools, support structures, and challenges encountered in their daily work.



4.2.1 Official certification

The chart presents the distribution of responses to the question of whether participants possess a specific certification. The data is categorized into two groups: "Yes" and "No". The height of each colored bar represents the number of participants within that category for each country.

In the survey provided in Latvia the question about the possession of a certification was omitted therefore we do not have any answers.

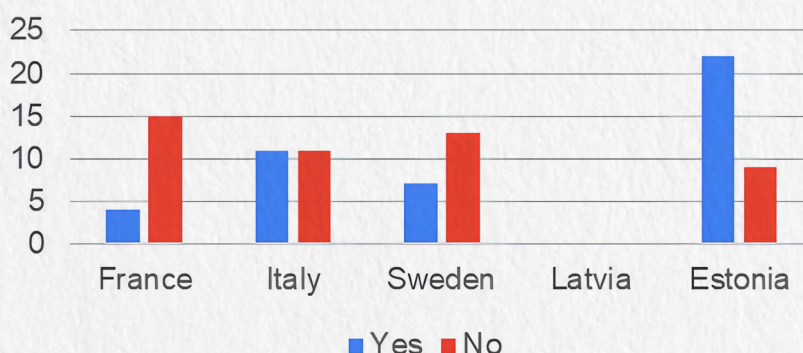


Chart 12: Official certification



Trends

- The only country in which most respondents have, by far, a certification is Estonia.
- In Italy the percentages are equally distributed.
- In Sweden and especially in France most respondents do not have a certification.



Thoughts

- This chart can help identify any significant differences or similarities in the importance or accessibility of obtaining a certification across different countries. For example, the number of support persons with a certification in Estonia might suggest a stronger emphasis within the Estonian professional landscape.

4.2.2 Initial training type

The chart presents the distribution of responses to the question regarding the type of initial training received by participants from each country. The height of each colored bar represents the number of participants who received that type of training for each country.



Chart 13: Initial training type



Trends

- In Sweden the five categories of initial training (including “I did not receive any initial training”) received by support persons are similarly distributed.
- In all other countries ‘formal training’ and ‘training on site/on the job’ are the two main answers. In some countries (France and Italy) the former is slightly more common, while in Estonia it is the more common training by far.
- In Latvia ‘training on site/on the job’ is the most common training.



Thoughts

- The chart can help identifying any significant differences or similarities in how participants receive initial training in different contexts. For example, the higher proportion of on-site training in Latvia might suggest a stronger emphasis on practical, hands-on learning in that country.
- The data can be used to implement and improve future training programs.

4.2.3 Adequacy of initial training

The chart presents the participants' perceptions of the adequacy of their initial training across the five countries. The height of each colored bar represents the number of participants who selected that response for each country.

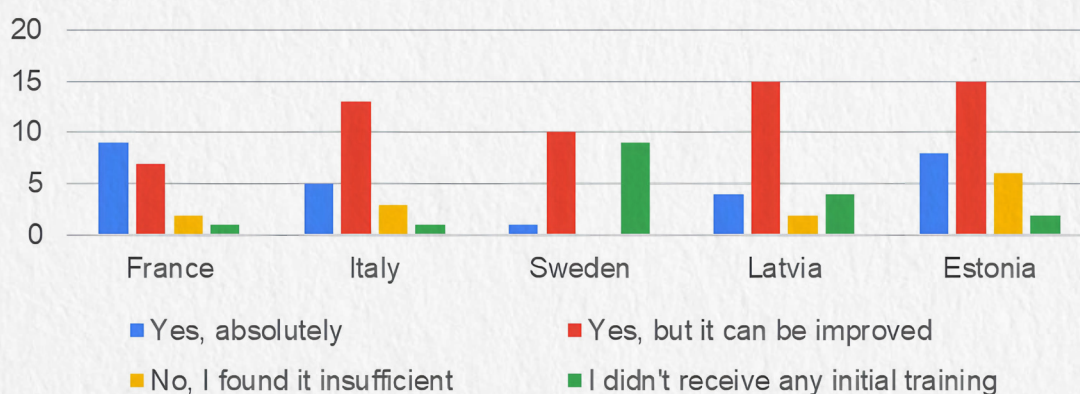


Chart 14: Adequacy of initial training



Trends

- A significant number of participants across all countries believe that the initial training could be improved.
- In Sweden almost half of participants did not receive any initial training.



Thoughts

- The chart highlights a consistent need for improvement in the initial training programs across all countries.
- The chart can help identifying any significant differences or similarities in the perceived quality and effectiveness of training programs across different contexts. For example, the higher proportion of positive responses in France might suggest that training programs in that country are generally perceived as more effective

4.2.4 Problems of initial training

The chart presents the distribution of responses to the question regarding the perceived problems of initial training among participants from different countries. The height of each colored bar represents the number of participants who selected that problem for each country.

IMPORTANT: people who answered “I didn’t receive any initial training in this question are not the same people who gave the same answer in the previous question “Adequacy of training”. This is not an error, it is just how people responded.

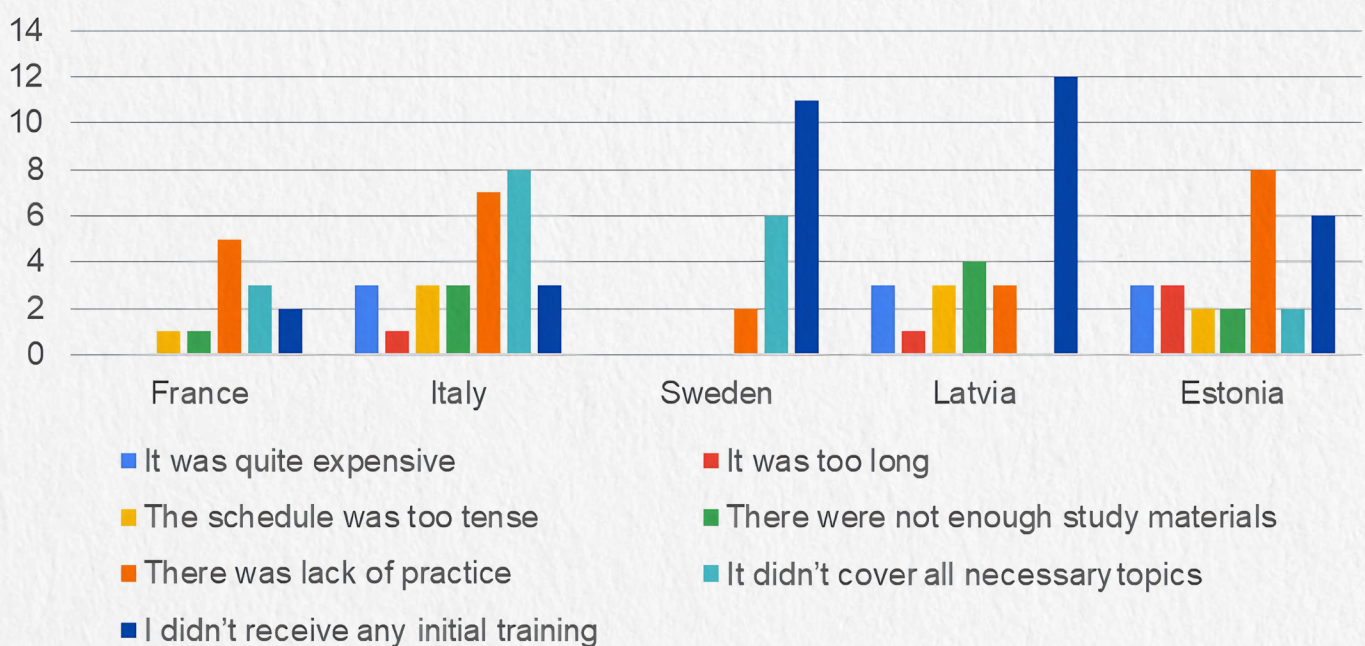


Chart 15: Problems of initial training



Trends

- The main problems through all countries are two: there was a lack of practice, and it didn't cover all necessary topics.
- No one thought it was too expensive in France and Sweden.



Thoughts

- The chart allows for a visual comparison of perceived problems across the five countries. This can help identify any significant differences or similarities in the challenges faced by participants in different contexts.
- This chart provides valuable insights about the specific problems participants encountered with their initial training programs. This information can be crucial for identifying areas where training programs can be improved to better meet the needs and expectations of participants.

4.2.5 Aspects which require more training

The chart presents the distribution of responses to the question regarding aspects of training that participants believe require more focus from the five different countries. The height of each colored bar represents the number of participants who selected that aspect as requiring more training for each country.

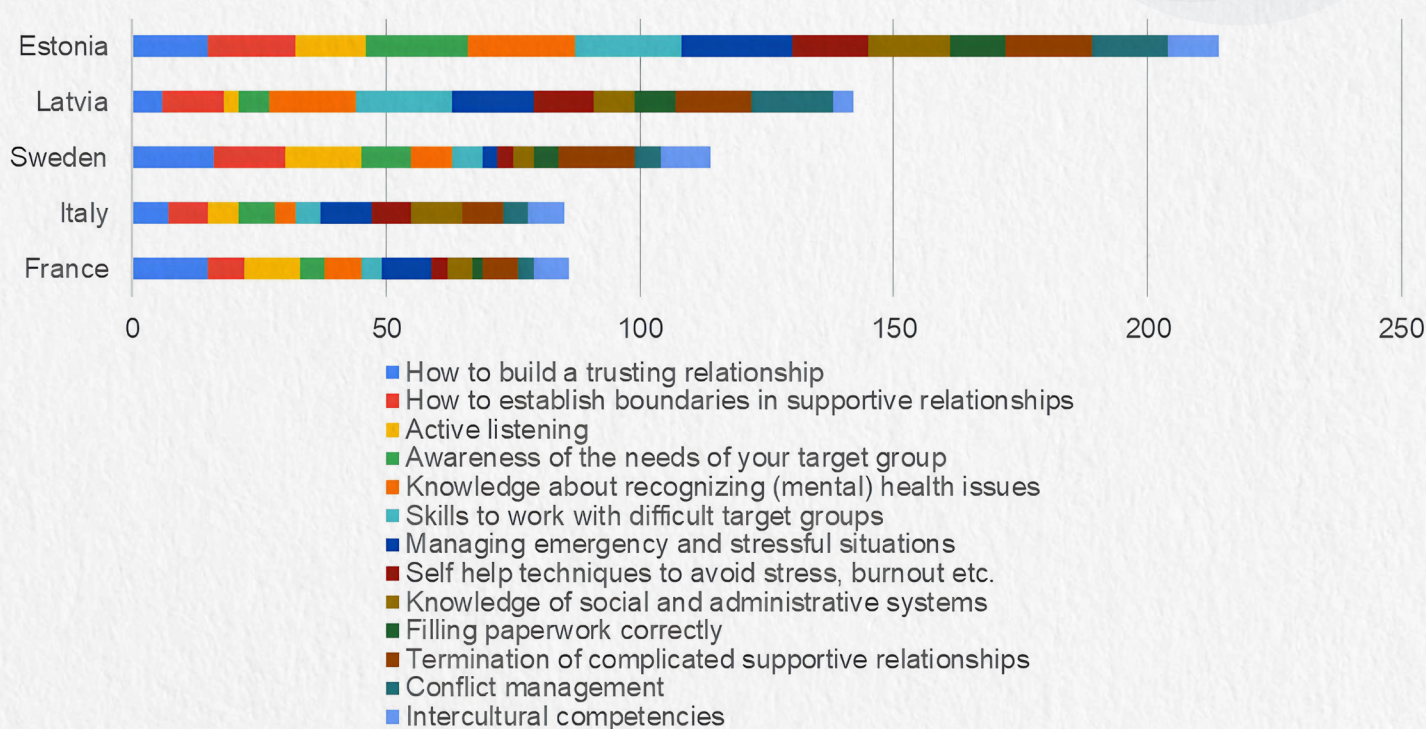
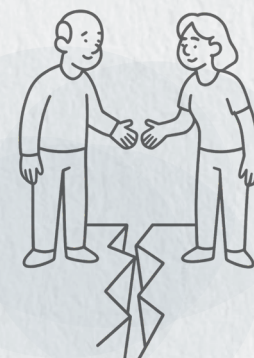


Chart 16: Aspects which require more training



Trends

- 'How to build a trusting relationship', 'active listening' and 'intercultural competencies' are consistently identified as the main areas requiring more training across all countries.
- 'Skills to work with difficult target groups' and 'conflict management' are a more prominent concerns in Estonia and Latvia.



Thoughts

- This chart provides valuable insights about the specific areas where participants feel they need more training and support. This information can be crucial for identifying gaps in current training programs and developing more effective training initiatives.

4.2.6 Skills currently used

The chart presents the distribution of responses to the question regarding the skills that participants are currently using in their work across the five different countries. The height of each colored bar represents the number of participants who reported using that skill for each country.

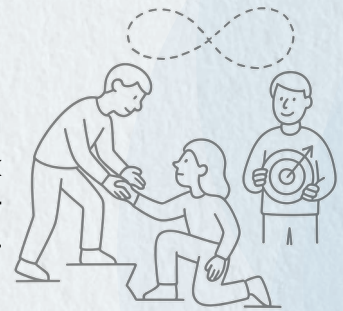


Chart 17: Skills currently used



Trends

- 'Encouraging autonomy and personal decision-making', 'providing regular emotional support' and 'helping beneficiaries set realistic short- and long-term goals' are the main three skills used across all countries.
- 'Connecting beneficiaries with support network or community services' is also very common in Italy, Sweden and Estonia.



Thoughts

- This chart provides valuable insights about the range of skills that participants are currently using in their work with beneficiaries. This information can be crucial for understanding the support approaches and strategies employed in different contexts and countries.

4.2.7 Skills willing to be acquired through additional training (open question)

This chart summarizes the key skills that support workers aim to acquire or improve through additional training, based on open-ended responses, not separated between countries. Through a thematic analysis of open-ended responses, we identified ten key skill categories that support workers seek to develop through additional training.

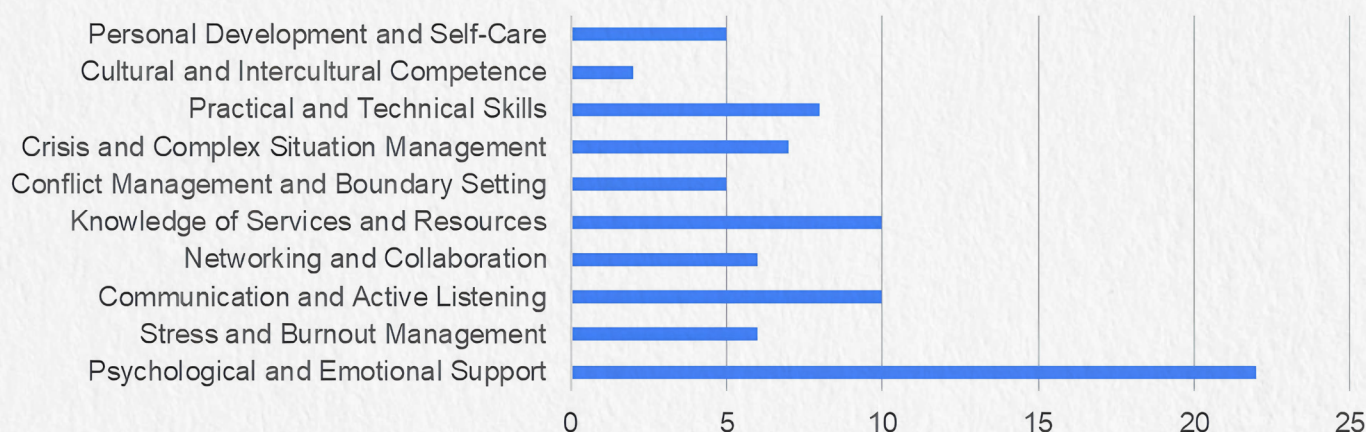


Chart 18: Skills willing to be acquired through additional training

The analysis brought up 10 categories of skills support persons are willing to acquire through additional training.

1. Psychological and Emotional Support

- Skills related to mental health, emotional management, and psychological resilience.
- Examples: "Psychological support," "Emotional management of young people," "Stress-reduction techniques," "Mental health consultations."

2. Stress and Burnout Management

- Skills to cope with stress, prevent burnout, and maintain personal well-being.
- Examples: "Stress management," "Coping with crisis situations," "Protecting yourself from burnout."

3. Communication and Active Listening

- Skills for effective communication, active listening, and building rapport.
- Examples: "Active listening," "Communication skills," "Talk therapy," "Conflict resolution."

4. Networking and Collaboration

- Skills for building professional networks, collaborating with colleagues, and connecting clients to resources.
- Examples: "Networking," "Building long-term networks," "Communication with peers."

5. Knowledge of Services and Resources

- Skills related to understanding and navigating administrative systems, local resources, and social services.
- Examples: "Knowledge of the administrative system," "Knowledge of local resources," "Familiarization with national services."

6. Conflict Management and Boundary Setting

- Skills for managing conflicts, setting boundaries, and handling difficult interpersonal situations.
- Examples: "Conflict management," "Setting boundaries," "Dealing with verbal aggression."

7. Crisis and Complex Situation Management

- Skills for handling crisis situations, complex cases, and multifactorial challenges.
- Examples: "Managing complex situations," "Crisis behavior," "Dealing with aggressive clients."

8. Practical and Technical Skills

- Skills related to specific tools, techniques, or methodologies for support work.
- Examples: "Project planning," "IT skills," "Motivational interviewing," "Behavioral techniques."

9. Cultural and Intercultural Competence

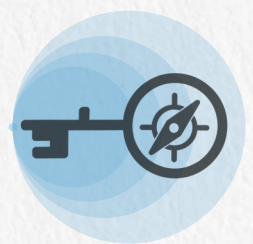
- Skills for working with diverse populations and understanding cultural differences.
- Examples: "Intercultural knowledge," "Knowledge of foreign cultural backgrounds," "Working with diverse audiences."

10. Personal Development and Self-Care

- Skills for personal growth, self-regulation, and maintaining work-life balance.
- Examples: "Setting boundaries between work and personal life," "Self-help techniques," "Emotional intelligence."

Key Insights

- ◇ Psychological and Emotional Support is the most frequently mentioned category, indicating a strong need for training in mental health, emotional management, and psychological resilience.
- ◇ Communication and Active Listening and Knowledge of Services and Resources are also highly prioritized, reflecting the importance of interpersonal skills and understanding available resources.
- ◇ Stress and Burnout Management and Crisis and Complex Situation Management highlight the challenges of working in high-pressure environments.
- ◇ Cultural and Intercultural Competence is the least mentioned, suggesting it may be a lower priority or an area that respondents feel more confident in.



4.2.8 Training type best practices (open question)

Through a thematic analysis of open-ended responses, we identified key best practices and suggestions for designing effective training courses, manuals, and toolkits, focusing on practical methods, relevant topics, and collaborative learning approaches.



Chart 19: Training type best practices

The analysis brought up 10 categories of best practices to include in training courses

1. Experiential and On-the-Job Training

- Learning through real-world practice, shadowing experienced staff, and case-based training.
- Examples: "Experiential training in the field, alongside more experienced staff," "On-the-job training on real cases," "Practice is the best way to learn."

2. Interactive and Collaborative Methods

- Use of role-playing, group discussions, and interactive tools to enhance engagement.
- Examples: "Interactive games, rooms for support," "Role-playing, videos, practical guides," "Group work, individual interviews."

3. Psychological and Emotional Support

- Training on mental health, stress management, and emotional resilience.
- Examples: "Psychological supervision," "Stress management, enhancing people's self-determination," "Mental health, stress tolerance."

4. Crisis and Conflict Management

- Skills for handling crises, conflicts, and high-pressure situations.
- Examples: "Crisis management," "Conflict management especially in environments of youth distress," "Upstream preparation, taking a step back, crisis management."

5. Resource and Knowledge Sharing

- Tools for sharing information, best practices, and resources among professionals.
- Examples: "Exchange of experiences between professionals," "Support network to exchange experiences," "Database of resources/services."

6. Legislative and Administrative Knowledge

- Understanding laws, regulations, and administrative processes relevant to the field.
- Examples: "Dealing with more in-depth legislative topics, knowledge of platforms," "Facilitation to approach legislative documents."

7. Cultural and Intercultural Competence

- Training on working with diverse populations and understanding cultural differences.
- Examples: "Interculturality concepts (e.g., iceberg model)," "Foreigners' understanding of intercultural differences."

8. Practical Tools and Guides

- Development of toolkits, worksheets, and step-by-step guides for daily tasks.
- Examples: "Toolkits, best practice experience," "A manual or toolbox could include worksheets," "Step-by-step what to do in a given situation."

9. Self-Care and Professional Development

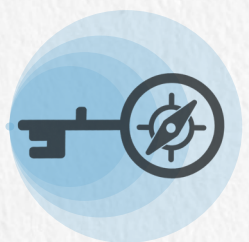
- Focus on personal well-being, burnout prevention, and continuous learning.
- Examples: "Preventing burnout," "Self-assessment test of our mental or physical health," "Regulation of own emotions."

10. Networking and Professional Collaboration

- Building networks and collaborating with peers to share experiences and resources.
- Examples: "Working together in a support network," "Joint training initially to create networks," "Face-to-face meetings of specialists."

Key Insights

- ◇ Experiential and Interactive Methods are highly valued for their practicality and engagement.
- ◇ Psychological and Emotional Support and Crisis Management are critical for handling the emotional demands of the job.
- ◇ Resource Sharing and Networking are essential for building a supportive professional community.
- ◇ Legislative Knowledge and Cultural Competence address the technical and interpersonal aspects of the role.



4.2.9 Organization Type vs Training type

This chart appears to visualize the relationship between the type of organization and the type of initial training received by the participants within those organizations. It uses a stacked bar chart to represent the proportion (or percentage) of participants who received each type of training within each organization type.

Each bar represents an organization type, and the different colored segments within each bar represent the proportion (or percentage) of participants who received each type of training for that organization type.

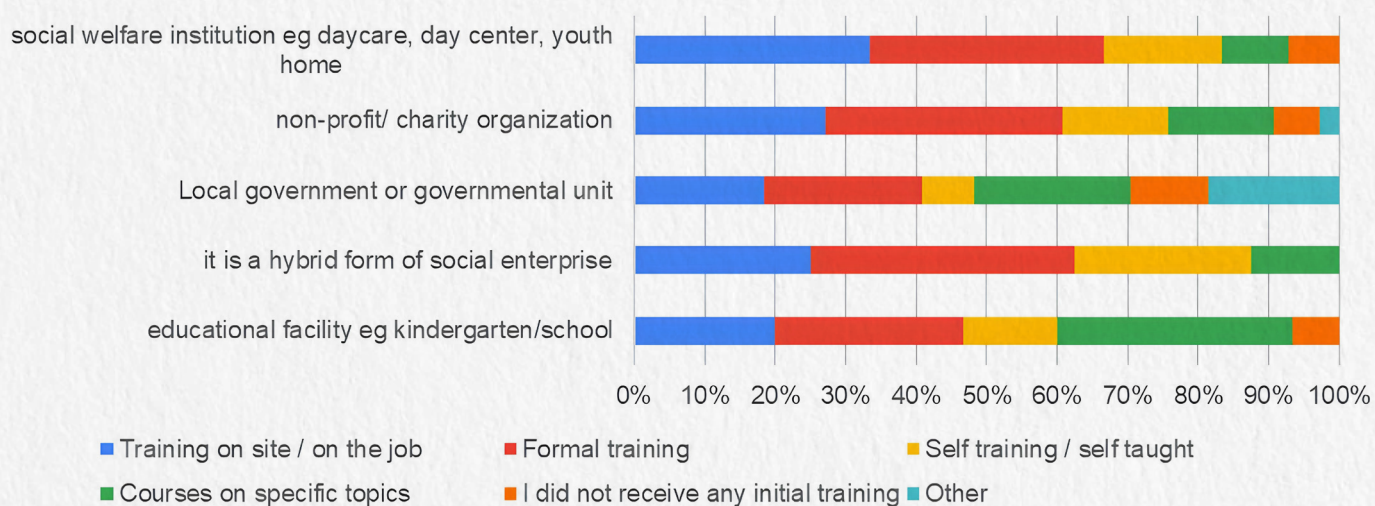


Chart 20: Organization type vs Training type



Trends

- On-site/on-the-job training together with formal training are the two most used forms of training, especially for organizations such as: social welfare institutions, non-profit and hybrid form of social enterprise (all 3 above 60%).
- Local government: Formal training is the most widespread, in line with the regulated nature of these environments.
- Hybrid forms of social enterprises: the highest percentage of people relying on self-training
- Educational facility: Highest percentage of people relying on specific courses, probably for specialized roles. Few people reported not having received any training, which shows the importance given to preparation in these structures.



Thoughts

- The use of specific courses in the educational facility sector reflects their particular training needs. This approach could also be useful in other sectors, especially for roles requiring specialized skills.
- Training gaps in non-profits and hybrid enterprises: the greater reliance on self-training and the absence of training in some cases highlight possible areas for improvement in these sectors.

4.2.10 Training type vs Training satisfaction

This chart allows to visualize the relationship between the type of initial training received and the level of satisfaction with that training among the participants. It uses a stacked bar chart to represent the distribution of satisfaction levels for each type of initial training.

Each bar represents a type of initial training, and the different colored segments within each bar represent the number of participants who selected each satisfaction level for that training type.

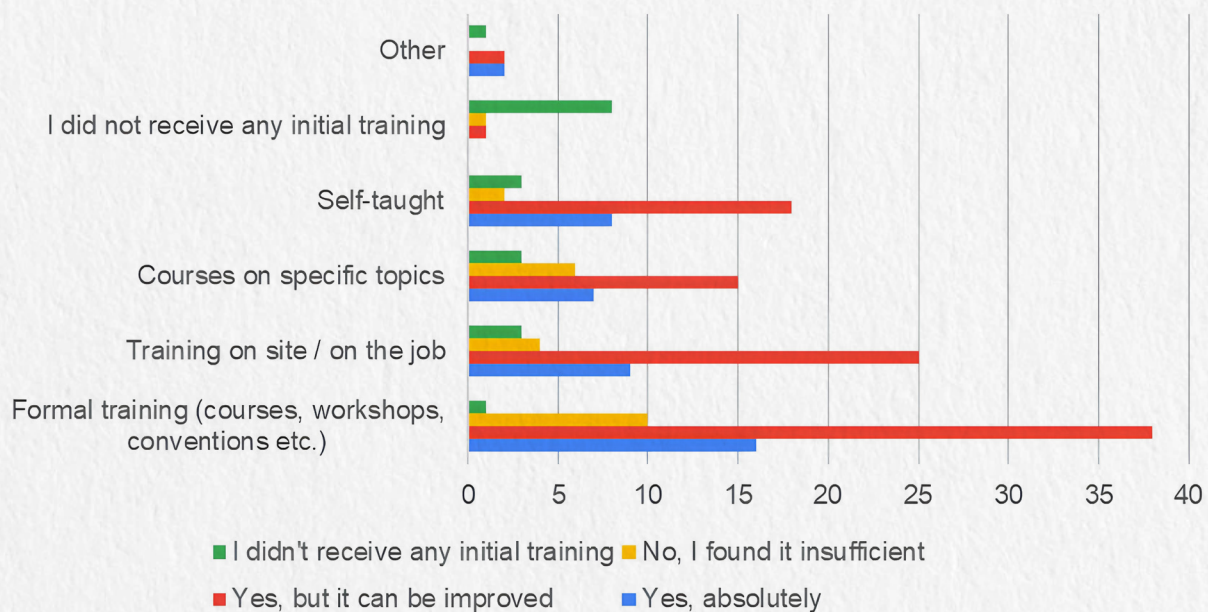


Chart 21: Training type vs Training satisfaction



Trends

- Participants who received "Formal training" have the highest overall satisfaction.
- Participants who received "Training on site/on the job" also show a moderate level of satisfaction.
- In all categories it is common the fact that the training can be improved.





Thoughts

- A significant group did not receive any training. Ensuring all employees receive at least basic or introductory training will help close this gap.
- Since many participants believe that training "can be improved," organizations should focus on tailoring training content to better match participant needs, incorporating feedback mechanisms.
- Ongoing surveys to measure satisfaction after implementing changes will help gauge improvement in training effectiveness.

4.2.11 Training type vs Training problems

This chart appears to visualize the relationship between the type of initial training received and the perceived problems associated with that training among the participants. It uses a stacked bar chart to represent the distribution of perceived problems for each type of initial training.

Each bar represents a type of initial training, and the different colored segments within each bar represent the number of participants who identified that specific problem with that training type.

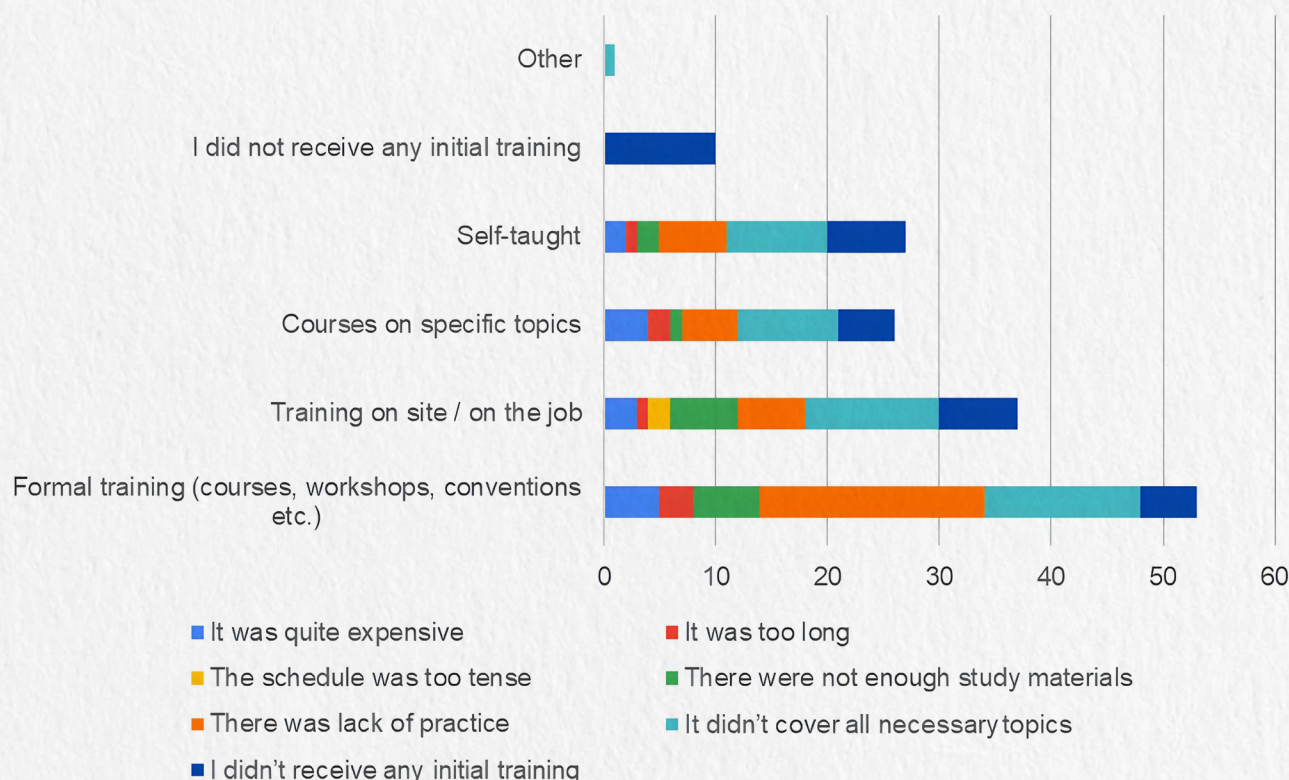


Chart 22: Training type vs Training problems



Trends

- A significant proportion of respondents indicate that the training did not cover all necessary topics.
- A notable number reports lack of practice during the training, especially in “Formal training”.
- For a very limited number of support persons the schedule was too tense and too long.
- The percentage of respondents who think their training was too expensive is always less than 10% except, who attended courses on specific topics (15%).



Thoughts

- Since many felt that necessary topics were not covered, training providers should conduct pre-training assessments to ensure the curriculum aligns with participants' needs.
- Address the "lack of practice" issue by incorporating interactive activities, case studies, and real-world exercises into training sessions.
- Consider offering tiered pricing, group discounts, or subsidies to make training more accessible, addressing concerns about high costs.

4.3 Section 3: About the Tools and Materials.

Effective support work often relies on the availability and appropriate use of tools and materials. This section examines the range of tools and materials currently employed by support persons across the five European countries, exploring their perceived effectiveness and identifying areas where additional resources or training may be needed.

4.3.1 Specific tool usage

The chart is a clustered column chart displaying the usage of specific tools across five European countries: France, Italy, Sweden, Latvia, and Estonia. The chart allows for a direct comparison of tool usage attitudes and frequency across these countries.



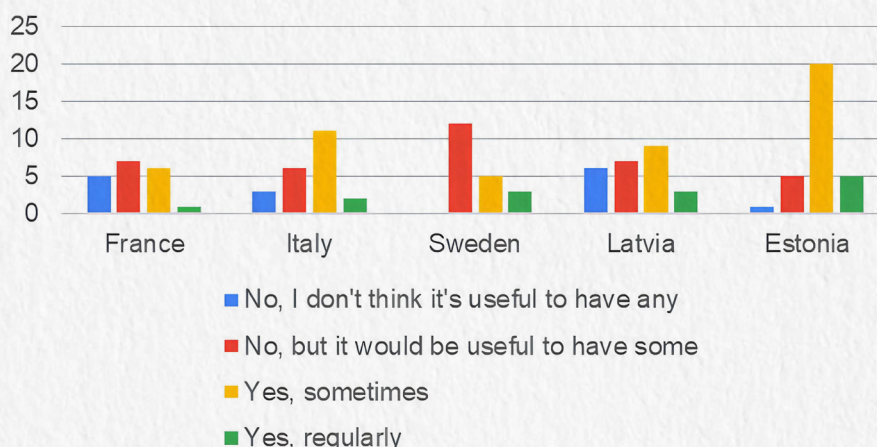


Chart 23: Specific tool usage



Trends

- Estonia shows the highest reported usage of tools: The "Yes, sometimes" response is significantly higher in Estonia than in any other country, suggesting a greater prevalence of tool usage, even if not regular.
- Sweden has the highest proportion of people who believe tools would be useful: The "No, but it would be useful to have some" response is most prominent in Sweden, indicating a perceived need for tools that is not currently being met.
- France and Latvia show relatively similar patterns: Both countries have a more balanced distribution across the four response categories, with a slightly higher proportion of "Yes, sometimes" for Latvia, and a slightly higher percentage of "No, but it would be useful" for France.
- By aggregating all the countries, few respondents believe tools are not useful.



Thoughts

- Why the disparity in tool usage? The chart raises questions about the reasons behind the differences in tool usage across countries. Are there differences in resources, training, organizational culture, or the nature of the work itself that contribute to these variations.
- Unmet needs in Sweden: The high number of respondents in Sweden who believe tools would be useful but don't have them suggests a potential area for intervention. Providing access to appropriate tools could significantly improve their work.

4.3.2 Types of promising tools

This is a clustered column chart comparing the perceived usefulness of four types of tools across five European countries: France, Italy, Sweden, Latvia, and Estonia.

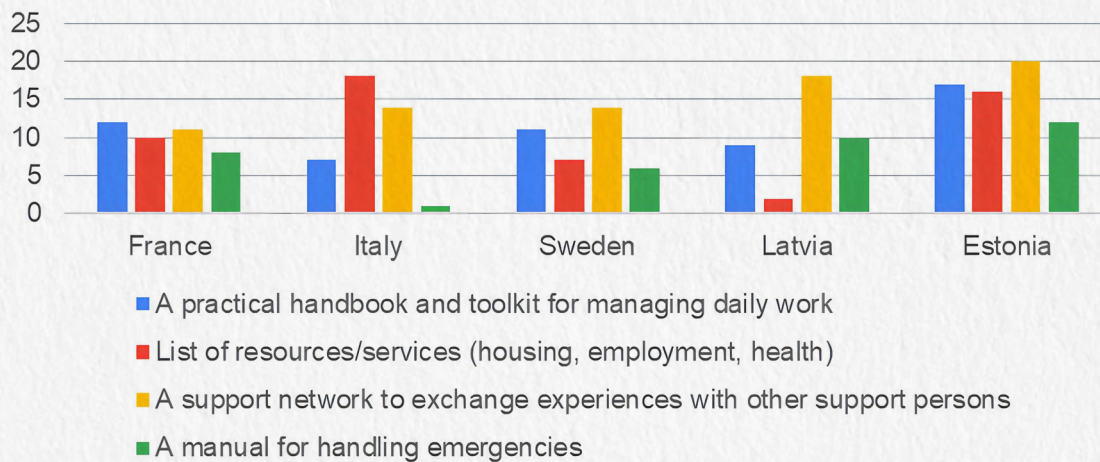


Chart 24: Types of promising tools



Trends

- "List of resources/services" is consistently highly valued: this suggests a strong need for easily accessible information on available resources.
- "A support network" is also highly valued: This tool ("A support network to exchange experiences with other support persons") is frequently ranked among the top choices, particularly in Estonia, Latvia, and Sweden where it is the most desired tool. This indicates a need for peer support and shared learning.
- "A practical handbook and toolkit" show moderate interest: This tool ("A practical handbook and toolkit for managing daily work") receives a moderate level of interest across all countries, suggesting a general need for practical materials.
- "A manual for handling emergencies" receives the least consistent interest: This tool ("A manual for handling emergencies") generally receives the lowest number of responses across most countries, with the exception of Latvia where it's the second most desirable tool.



Thoughts

- The strong and consistent demand for resource lists across all countries suggests a common challenge in accessing and navigating available services. This highlights the importance of creating comprehensive and easily accessible directories of resources.
- The varying levels of interest in "A support network" across countries could reflect cultural differences in seeking and utilizing peer support.
- The relatively low interest in "A manual for handling emergencies" could indicate that existing protocols or training already adequately address emergency situations in some countries.

4.3.3 Tools used vs Tools types

This clustered column chart shows the relationship between current tool usage and preferences for different types of tools.

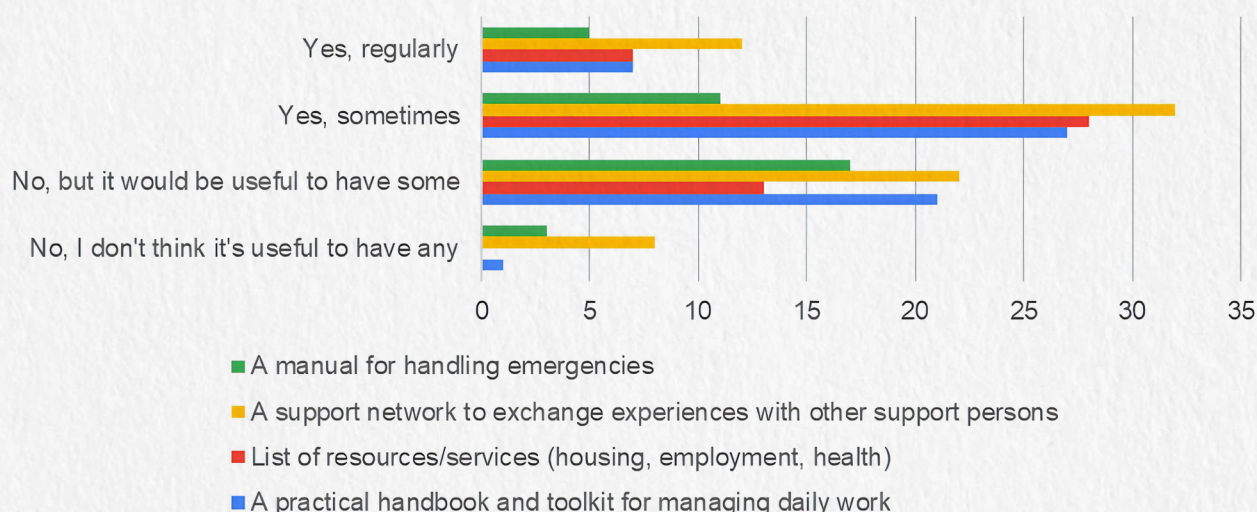


Chart 25: Tool usage vs Tool types



Trends

- The “Support Network” tool is the most commonly selected among each group of Tool usage.
- Users of tools, especially regular users, value support networks: The “Yes, sometimes” and “Yes, regularly” groups show a higher preference for “A support network to exchange experiences with other support persons” compared to those who don’t use tools. This indicates that as people gain experience and use tools, they recognize the value of peer support and knowledge sharing.
- Those who don’t see the value of tools also show little interest in any specific tool type: As expected, the “No, I don’t think it’s useful to have any” group consistently has the lowest numbers across all tool types, reinforcing their lack of perceived need.
- Resource lists have been repetitively chosen among respondents, highlighting the importance of providing access to information.



Thoughts

- The data suggests that providing practical resources like handbooks and resource lists could be a key first step in encouraging tool adoption among those who currently don’t use them.
- The strong interest in support networks among current tool users highlights the importance of creating opportunities for peer learning and mentorship. This could involve online forums, regular meetings, or peer supervision programs.



- The chart reinforces the idea that different tools cater to different needs and experience levels. A tailored approach to tool development and implementation is crucial.

4.3.4 Target group vs Desired tools

This is a clustered horizontal bar chart displaying the preferred tools for different target groups. The length of each segment within a bar indicates the number of respondents from that target group who desire that specific tool.

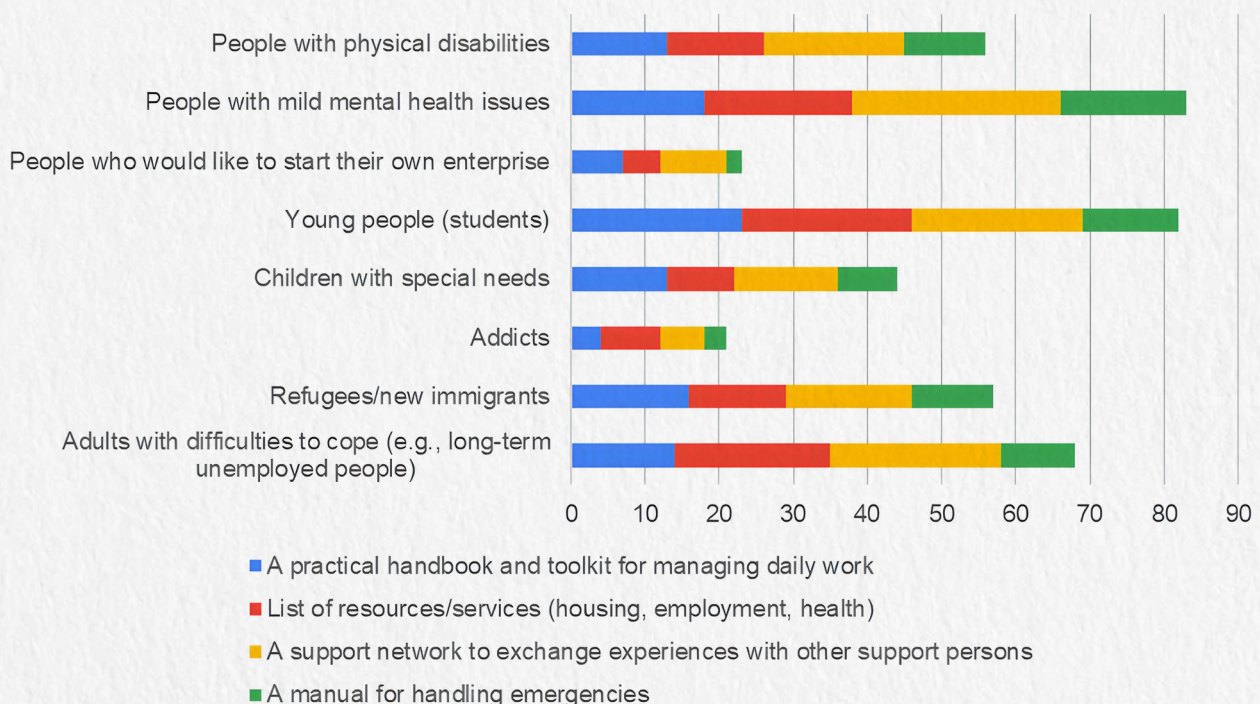


Chart 26: Target group vs Desired tools



Trends

- "List of resources/services" is consistently popular: This tool type (red bars) is consistently among the most desired across almost all target groups. This reinforces the general need for accessible information on available support services.
- "A support network" is highly desired by several groups: This tool type (yellow bars) is particularly popular. This highlights the importance of peer support and experience sharing for these groups.
- "A practical handbook and toolkit" has moderate and consistent demand: The blue bars show a relatively consistent level of interest across most target groups, indicating a general need for practical guidance and tools for daily work.
- "A manual for handling emergencies" shows varying levels of interest: The green bars show more variation, suggesting that some groups may face more frequent or complex emergencies than others.



Thoughts

- Tailored tool development: The chart strongly suggests that different target groups have different needs. Developing specialized tools or adapting existing ones to specific target groups would likely be more effective than a one-size-fits-all approach.
- Prioritization of resource lists: The consistent demand for resource lists highlights the need for centralized, up-to-date, and easily accessible information on available services. This could involve creating online databases, directories, or mobile apps.
- The importance of peer support: The strong interest in support networks, especially among certain groups, underscores the value of fostering peer-to-peer connections and creating opportunities for shared learning and support.
- Addressing the specific needs of vulnerable groups: The higher interest in emergency manuals among certain groups, suggests a need for targeted resources and training on handling specific types of emergencies they might face.

4.4 Section 4:

About the Working Obstacles and Support Session.

Building upon the analysis of target groups and their specific challenges, this section investigates the correlation between the daily obstacles encountered by support persons and their desired types of support. By examining how different obstacles, such as "client is not cooperative" or "work does not produce results," impact the need for peer support, individual coaching, stress management sessions, and access to support networks, we can gain a deeper understanding of the support needs arising from specific work-related challenges.

4.4.1 Frequency of stressful events

This is a clustered column chart that illustrates the frequency of stress events experienced by support persons in five different countries. The height of each bar within a country corresponds to the number of respondents who fall into that specific frequency category.



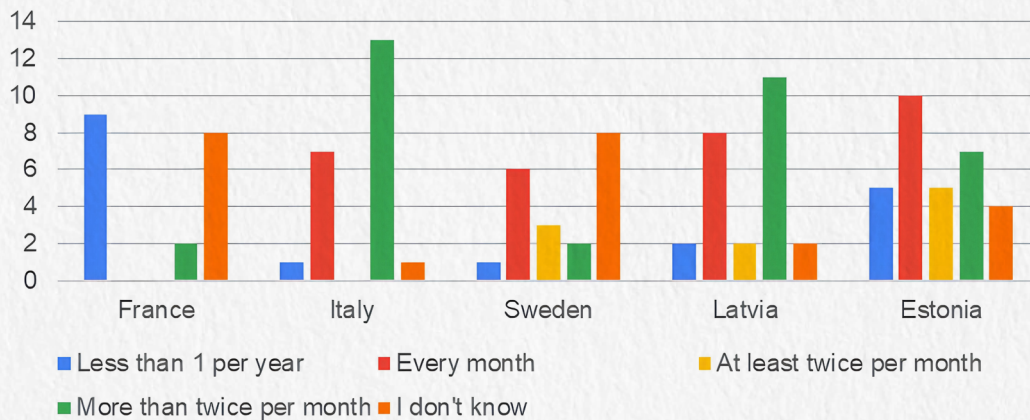


Chart 27: Frequency of stressful events



Trends

- Italy and Latvia report the highest frequency of stress events: Both countries have a significant proportion of respondents experiencing stress "More than twice per month", followed by Estonian respondents.
- France and Sweden show lower stress frequencies: These countries have a higher proportion of respondents experiencing stress "Less than 1 per year" or "Every month."
- Estonia has a more balanced distribution: Estonia shows a more even distribution across the frequency categories, with a noticeable proportion of respondents reporting stress "Every per month."
- "I don't know" responses are relatively low in Italy, Latvia, and Estonia, while in France and Sweden they occupy a considerable percentage of the answers.



Thoughts

- Are there cultural differences in how stress is perceived and reported across these countries? What focused interventions could be implemented?

4.4.2 Daily encountered obstacles during work

This is a clustered column chart depicting the frequency of various obstacles encountered daily by support persons across five European countries. The height of each bar indicates the number of respondents in that country who identified that particular obstacle.



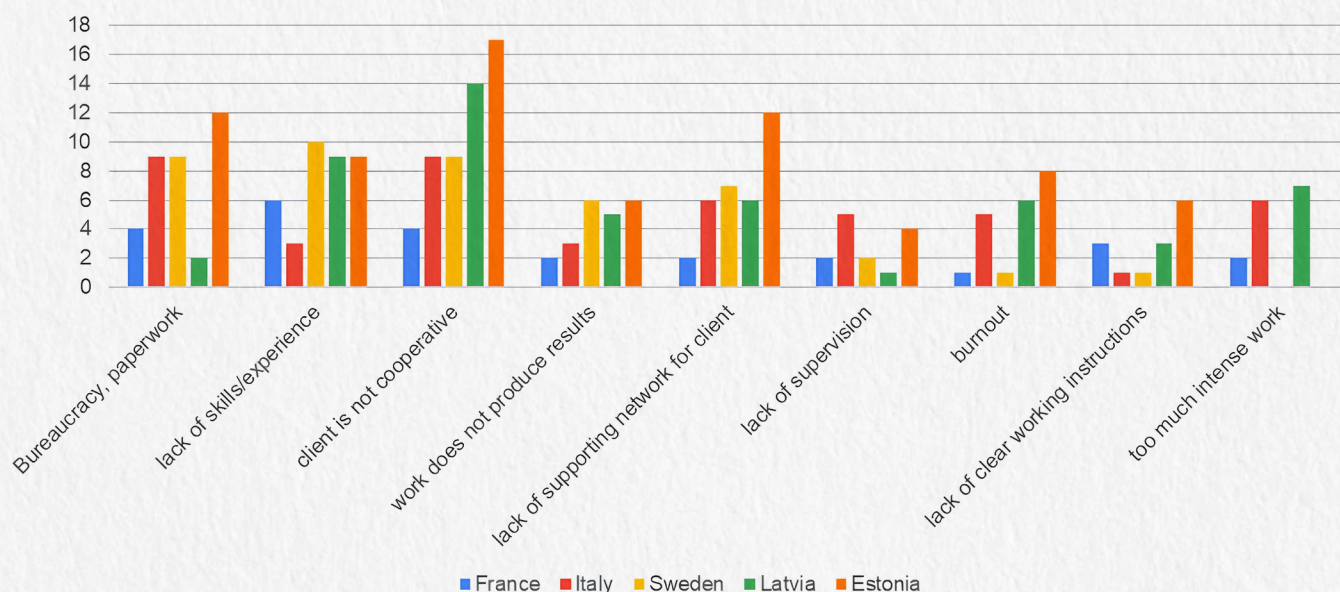


Chart 28: Daily encountered obstacles during work



Trends

- "Client is not cooperative" is the most reported obstacle: This obstacle is frequently reported across all countries, though Estonia reports it slightly more often.
- French respondents tend to report a minor frequency of response towards the overall obstacles. This is in line with the results of the charts about the stressful events occurrence where France showed the higher column in "less than one per year".
- Estonia seems to be the country facing the most stress items, but this cannot be inferred by our statistics since there have been considerably more Estonian participants (30+) with respect to the other countries (25-).
- "Lack of supervision", "Burnout", "Lack of clear working instructions," and "Too much intense work" are reported at lower frequencies and with a great amount of variability among countries. While the other stress items tend to show a similar frequency pattern between the respondents.



Thoughts

- Why is a stress item such an issue in a particular country? This finding warrants further investigation to understand the underlying causes. Are there systemic issues, resource constraints, or other factors contributing to this perception? How can the issues be related to previous analysis?
- It might be important to understand why some stress items have been commonly selected by participants and why some others have been chosen with significant frequency differences.

- **Interconnectedness of obstacles:** It's important to consider that these obstacles are likely interconnected. For example, "Too much intense work" could contribute to "Burnout," and "Lack of clear working instructions" could make it more difficult for work to produce results.

4.4.3 Support sessions availability

This is a clustered column chart comparing the availability and perceived need for support sessions among support persons in five European countries. The height of each bar corresponds to the number of respondents who selected that option.

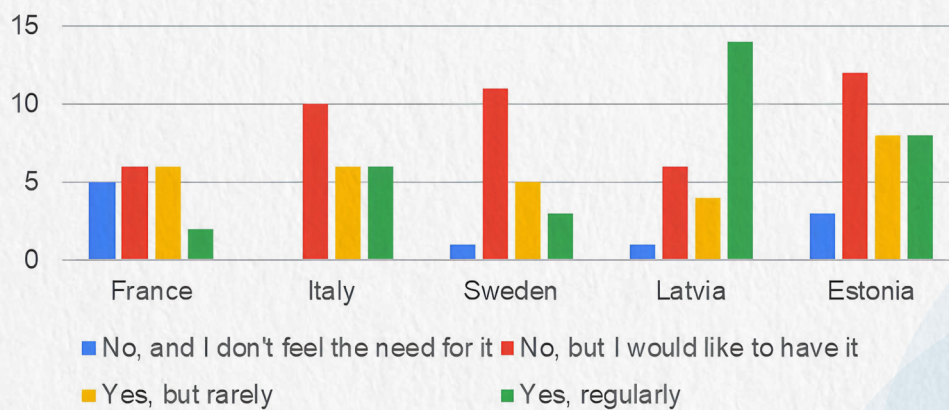


Chart 29: Support sessions availability



Trends

- Italy, Sweden, and Estonia have the highest expressed need for support ("No, but I would like to have it"), indicating a substantial unmet need for support sessions.
- Latvia has the highest proportion of regular support ("Yes, regularly"): The green bar is tallest in Latvia, showing that a larger number of support persons there have access to regular support sessions.
- France shows a higher proportion of those who don't feel a need for support ("No, and I don't feel the need for it"): The blue bars are more prominent in this country, suggesting that a significant portion of support persons there do not perceive a need for additional support.
- "Yes, but rarely" is a common response across all countries: The yellow bars show that a moderate number of support persons in all countries have access to support, but only occasionally.





Thoughts

- Why the high unmet need, especially in Italy, Sweden, and Estonia? The significant number of respondents who desire support but don't have access raises important questions. Are there resource limitations, organizational barriers, or cultural factors preventing access to support in these countries?
- Effectiveness of rare support sessions: The prevalence of "Yes, but rarely" responses suggests that the current support structures, where they exist, may not be sufficient or frequent enough to meet the needs of support persons.
- Reasons for not feeling the need for support: It's important to understand why some support persons, particularly in France, do not feel a need for support. Does this reflect a lower level of stress, more effective coping mechanisms, or a reluctance to seek help? We showed this is a repeated trend among French participants.
- Impact of regular support: The data from Latvia suggests that regular support sessions may be beneficial. Further research could explore the specific types of support offered in Latvia and their impact on the well-being and performance of support persons.

4.4.4 Type of desired additional support

This is a clustered column chart comparing the desire for different types of support across five European countries. The height of each bar corresponds to the number of respondents who expressed a desire for that specific type of support.

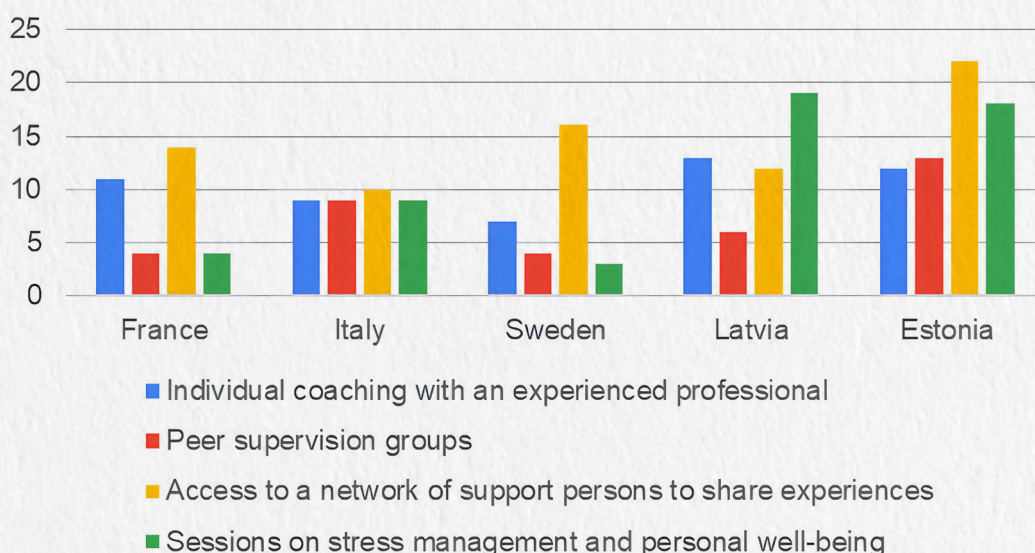


Chart 30: Types of desired additional support



Trends

- "Access to a network of support persons" is highly desired, suggesting a strong preference for peer support and networking opportunities among respondents.
- "Sessions on stress management and personal well-being" are also in high demand, particularly in Latvia and Estonia: The green bars are tallest in Latvia and Estonia, indicating a significant need for resources and training related to stress management and well-being.
- "Individual coaching" shows interest across countries as well: The blue bars indicate the level of interest in individual coaching, suggesting that this type of support is valued, but not as highly as peer support or stress management sessions in most countries.
- "Peer supervision groups" receive varying levels of interest: While generally less desired than the other options, Italy shows a comparable level of interest in peer supervision to individual coaching.
- Estonia shows the highest overall demand for support, but don't forget it is the country with the greatest number of respondents (30+).



Thoughts

- Tailoring support to specific needs: The varying preferences across countries highlight the importance of considering cultural and contextual factors when designing and implementing support programs. Furthermore, it is crucial to understand how countries currently propose their support structures.



4.4.5 Type of emotionally stressful events (open question)

This chart aims to identify the specific emotionally challenging situations that support workers face in their roles. The responses reflect a wide range of stressors, from interpersonal conflicts to systemic challenges.



Chart 31: types of emotionally stressful events

The analysis brought up 9 different categories of emotionally stressful events:

1. Client-Related Stressors:

- It consists of situations involving clients' emotional or behavioral challenges, such as aggression, mental health issues, or refusal to cooperate.
- Examples: "Suicide", "Aggression, no patience, lack of understanding", "Clients who are depressed and cry easily".

2. Interpersonal Conflicts

- Stressful interactions with colleagues, clients, or other stakeholders, including disrespect, lack of cooperation, or disagreements.
- Examples: "Clashes with colleagues," "Problems with colleagues, lack of respect for roles and tasks," "Disagreements between colleagues."

3. Systemic and Resource Challenges

- Stress caused by issues related to the systems employed, such as lack of resources, bureaucratic hurdles, or budget cuts.
- Examples: "Budget and thus resource cuts," "Bureaucracy," "Lack of support network for the customer."

4. Powerlessness and Ethical Dilemmas

- Situations where support workers feel unable to help or face ethical conflicts.
- Examples: "Powerlessness in the face of complicated situations," "Ethical dilemmas," "Feeling of inability to respond to people's requests for help."

5. Crisis and Emergency Situations

- High-stress scenarios requiring immediate intervention, such as domestic violence, self-harm, or suicide threats.
- Examples: "Suicide," "Domestic violence," "Self-harm," "Crisis of users."

6. Work Overload and Time Pressure

- Stress caused by excessive workloads, tight deadlines, or competing demands.
- Examples: "Overload of requests for help combined with bureaucratic commitments," "Stress due to urgencies and meeting deadlines."

7. Emotional Burden and Empathy Fatigue

- Emotional strain from dealing with clients' trauma, sadness, or hopelessness.
- Examples: "Emotional difficulties coping with stories of rape and death of loved ones," "Empathy with the child's emotional state."

8. Family and Child-Related Stressors

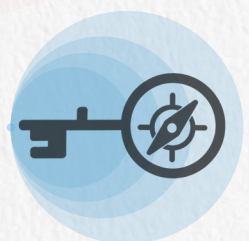
- Stressful situations involving families or children, such as parental conflicts, special needs, or custody issues.
- Examples: "Family conflicts involving children," "Parental demands that do not match the child's abilities," "Separation of children from family."

9. Unpredictable Client Behavior

- Situations where clients exhibit unexpected or challenging behaviors, such as aggression, mood swings, or non-cooperation.
- Examples: "Unexpected behavior of some clients," "Customer behavior, anxiety, sudden mood changes, aggression."

Key Insights

- ◇ Client-Related Stressors dominate the responses, highlighting the emotional toll of dealing with clients' mental health issues, aggression, and challenging behaviors.
- ◇ Crisis and Emergency Situations reflect the high-stress nature of handling urgent and traumatic cases.
- ◇ Interpersonal Conflicts and Systemic and Resource Challenges reveal organizational and relational stressors that add to the emotional burden.
- ◇ Emotional Burden and Empathy Fatigue and Family and Child-Related Stressors underscore the personal impact of working with vulnerable populations.



4.4.6 Success on the job: subjective definition (open question)

This chart aims to understand how support workers measure success in their daily work, often focusing on client outcomes, personal satisfaction, and achieving goals.



Chart 32: Success on the job: subjective definition

The analysis brought up 8 categories of success definition

1. Client Progress and Independence
 - Success is defined by clients achieving personal growth, independence, or overcoming challenges.
 - Examples: "Beneficiaries who after temporary difficulties become independent again," "The client's ability to get on with life independently."
2. Positive Client Feedback and Satisfaction
 - Success is measured by clients expressing gratitude, happiness, or satisfaction with the support received.
 - Examples: "Positive feedback from beneficiaries," "For me, a sense of achievement is when a client smiles, thanks me."
3. Achieving Goals and Targets
 - Success is tied to meeting specific objectives, whether personal, professional, or project-related.
 - Examples: "Achieving the objectives," "Achieving targets, even small ones."
4. Emotional and Psychological Well-Being
 - Success is defined by improvements in clients' emotional or mental health.
 - Examples: "When the person starts to look for and find solutions on their own," "The client feels better, helped with their goals."

5. Building Trust and Relationships

- Success is measured by the development of trust, rapport, and positive relationships with clients.
- Examples: "Clients will start to trust not strangers and dare to talk about problems," "Being very close to a child, gaining the child's trust."

6. Long-Term Impact and Sustainability

- Success is defined by long-term positive outcomes for clients, such as employment, education, or stable living conditions.
- Examples: "People helped are well integrated, have found a job," "When a young person gets to work or school with my help."

7. Team and Organizational Success

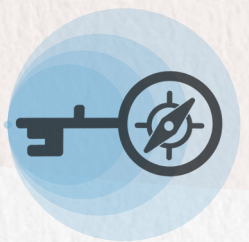
- Success is tied to collaborative efforts, team satisfaction, or organizational achievements.
- Examples: "Adherence to project timetable, well-being of beneficiaries and satisfaction of the team," "Common, effective work of a common, cohesive team."

8. Personal Fulfillment and Motivation

- Success is defined by the support worker's own sense of accomplishment, motivation, or joy in their work.
- Examples: "I am motivated by the result of my work," "I am happy if the client succeeds in completing the planned work."

Key Insights

- ◇ Client Progress and Independence is the most frequently mentioned category, highlighting the importance of clients achieving personal growth and self-sufficiency.
- ◇ Positive Client Feedback and Satisfaction and Achieving Goals and Targets are also significant, reflecting the value of measurable outcomes and client appreciation.
- ◇ Emotional and Psychological Well-Being underscores the importance of clients' mental health and happiness as indicators of success.
- ◇ Building Trust and Relationships and Long-Term Impact and Sustainability reveal the focus on lasting, meaningful connections and outcomes.



4.4.7 Stress events frequency vs Support sessions availability

This is a clustered bar chart that explores the relationship between the frequency of stress events experienced by support persons and their access to support. Each cluster of bars represents a specific stress frequency category, and the height of each bar within a cluster indicates the number of respondents who fall into that specific combination of stress frequency and support availability.

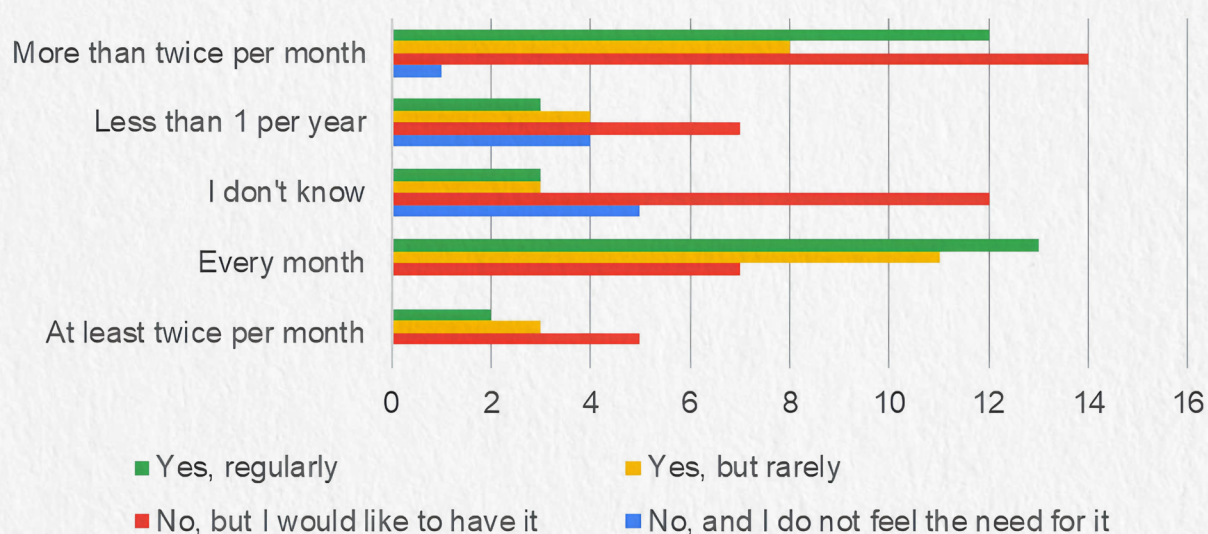


Chart 33: Stress events frequency vs Support sessions availability



Trends

- Those experiencing stress "More than twice per month" have the highest need for support: This group has the largest proportion of respondents who "No, but I would like to have it" and "Yes, regularly," indicating a strong need for support among those facing high stress levels.
- Conversely, those with "Less than 1 per year" stress frequency have a lower need for support: This group has a high proportion of respondents who "No, and I do not feel the need for it," suggesting that those with lower stress levels perceive less need for additional support.
- Respondents who "Don't know" their stress frequency show a mixed picture: This group shows a relatively even distribution across all support availability categories, except for those who don't receive support but they really would like to have it.
- "Every month" stress frequency represents the group which has the greatest satisfaction derived from the balance between their access to support sessions and their need for them.

4.4.8 Stressful events frequency vs Desired type of support

This is a clustered horizontal bar chart showing the relationship between the frequency of stressful situations experienced by support persons and the types of support they desire. The length of each bar indicates the number of respondents in that stress frequency group who desire that particular type of support.

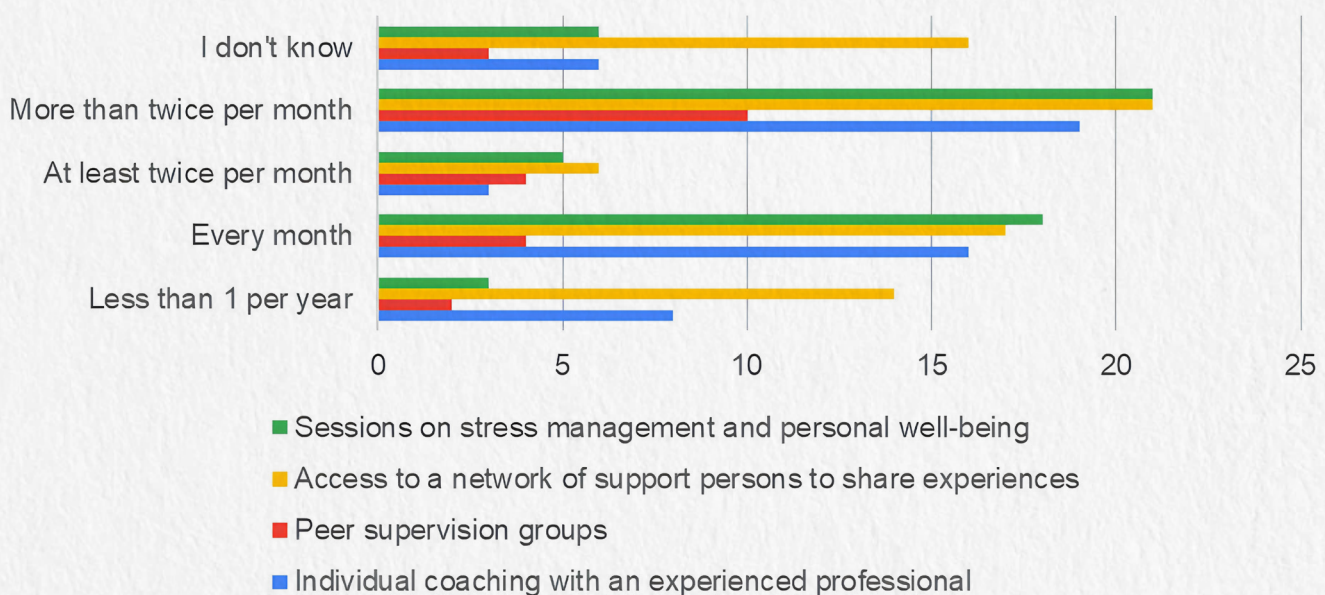


Chart 34: Stressful events frequency vs Desired type of support



Trends

- "Access to a network of support persons" is consistently highly valued across all stress frequencies: The yellow bars are generally the longest or among the longest in each cluster, indicating a strong and consistent desire for peer support regardless of how often stressful situations occur.
- "Sessions on stress management" are most desired by those experiencing stress more frequently: The green bars are tallest for the "Every month" and "More than twice per month" groups, suggesting that those facing more frequent stress are more interested in formal stress management training.
- "Individual coaching" is a commonly selected option but never the most picked one, suggesting that individual coaching might be seen as a more proactive or preventative measure, or a way to gain clarity on their needs.
- "Peer supervision groups" show a moderate level of interest across groups: The red bars show a relatively consistent but moderate level of interest across all stress frequency groups.



Thoughts

- The universal appeal of support network: The consistent high demand for "Access to a network of support persons" suggests that fostering peer connections and creating opportunities for shared experiences is a crucial support strategy for all support persons, regardless of their stress frequency.
- Targeted interventions for high-stress groups: The strong preference for stress management sessions among those experiencing stress more frequently emphasizes the need for targeted interventions for these individuals. These interventions could include training in coping mechanisms, mindfulness techniques, or other stress-reduction strategies.
- Proactive vs. reactive support: The higher interest in individual coaching among those with less frequent stress or those who are unsure about their stress levels suggests that coaching might be viewed as a more proactive approach to professional development and well-being, rather than a response to existing stress.
- The role of peer supervision: While not the most popular option, peer supervision groups still show a consistent level of interest. This suggests that there is a place for this type of support, perhaps as a complement to other interventions.



4.4.9 Daily obstacles vs Desired support type

This clustered column chart illustrates the relationship between daily obstacles encountered by support persons and the types of support they desire. The height of each bar indicates the number of respondents who experience that obstacle and desire that type of support.

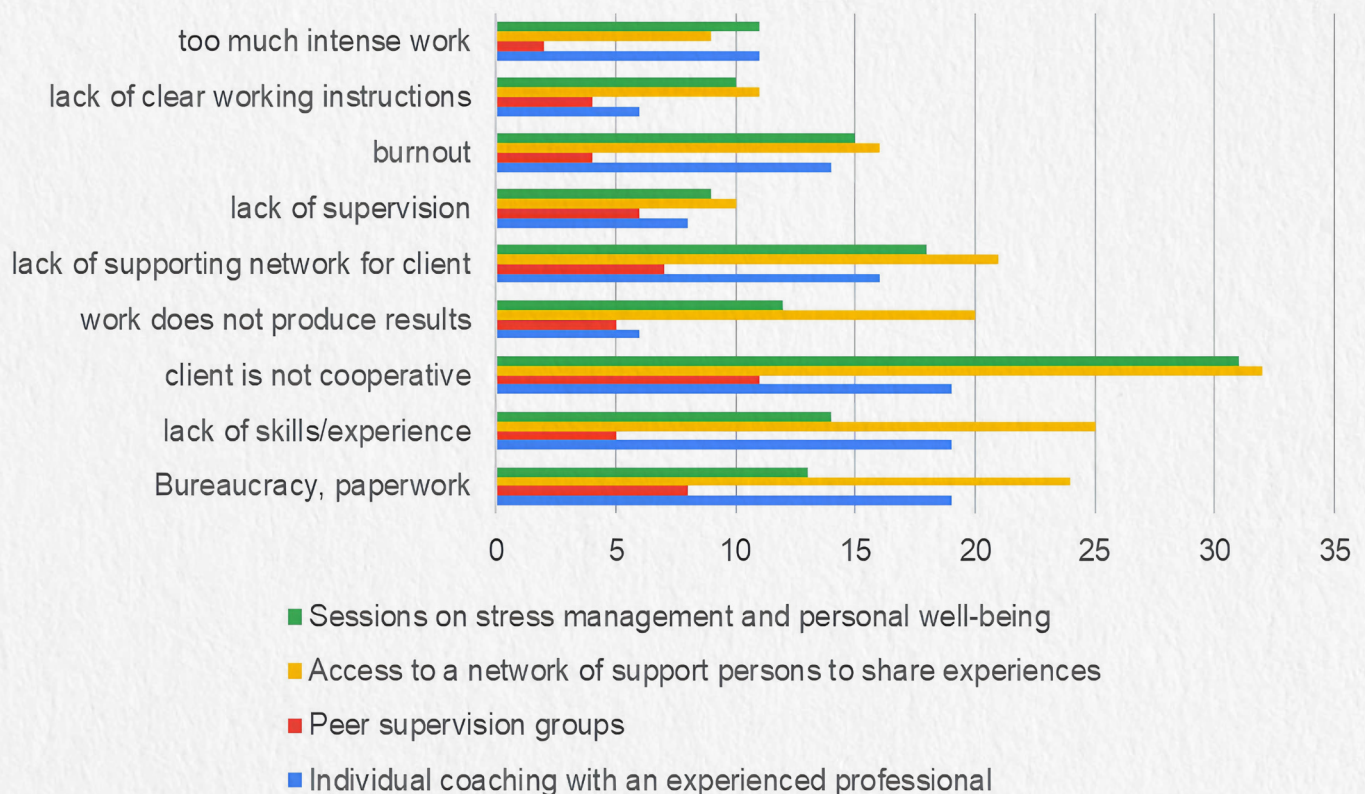


Chart 35: Daily obstacles vs Desired support type



Trends

- "Access to a network of support persons" is consistently highly desired, especially for "Client is not cooperative". The yellow bars are particularly high for that obstacle, suggesting that peer support is seen as a valuable resource for dealing with challenging clients. This type of support is also generally popular across all obstacles.
- "Sessions on stress management" and "Individual coaching" show a consistent level of interest across most obstacles. The green bars indicate a clear need for stress management resources and training, while the blue bars indicate that this type of support is generally valued but perhaps less urgent than peer support or stress management in relation to specific daily obstacles.
- "Peer supervision groups" show varying levels of interest depending on the obstacle: The red bars are somewhat higher for "Client is not cooperative" and "Bureaucracy and paperwork", suggesting that peer supervision might be particularly helpful for addressing these types of challenges.



Thoughts

- Targeted support for specific obstacles: The data strongly suggests that different types of support are more relevant for different obstacles.
- The consistent high demand for "Access to a network of support persons" highlights the value of peer support in navigating various work-related challenges. This could involve creating formal peer supervision groups, online forums, or other opportunities for connection and knowledge sharing.
- Addressing the root causes of "Work does not produce results" is important and further investigation is needed to identify the root causes and develop appropriate solutions.
- The role of supervision in addressing "Lack of supervision": The moderate interest in peer supervision related to "Lack of supervision" suggests that peer support could be a valuable complement to formal supervision, but it shouldn't replace it. Addressing the underlying issues related to inadequate supervision is crucial.
- Integrated support strategies: A comprehensive approach to supporting support persons should involve a combination of different support types, tailored to the specific challenges they face. This could include providing access to peer support networks, stress management training, individual coaching, and improved supervisory structures.



4.4.10 Target group vs Daily obstacles

This is a clustered bar chart that explores the relationship between different target groups and the daily obstacles encountered by support persons working with these groups. The length of each bar indicates the number of respondents who reported encountering that particular obstacle while working with that specific target group.

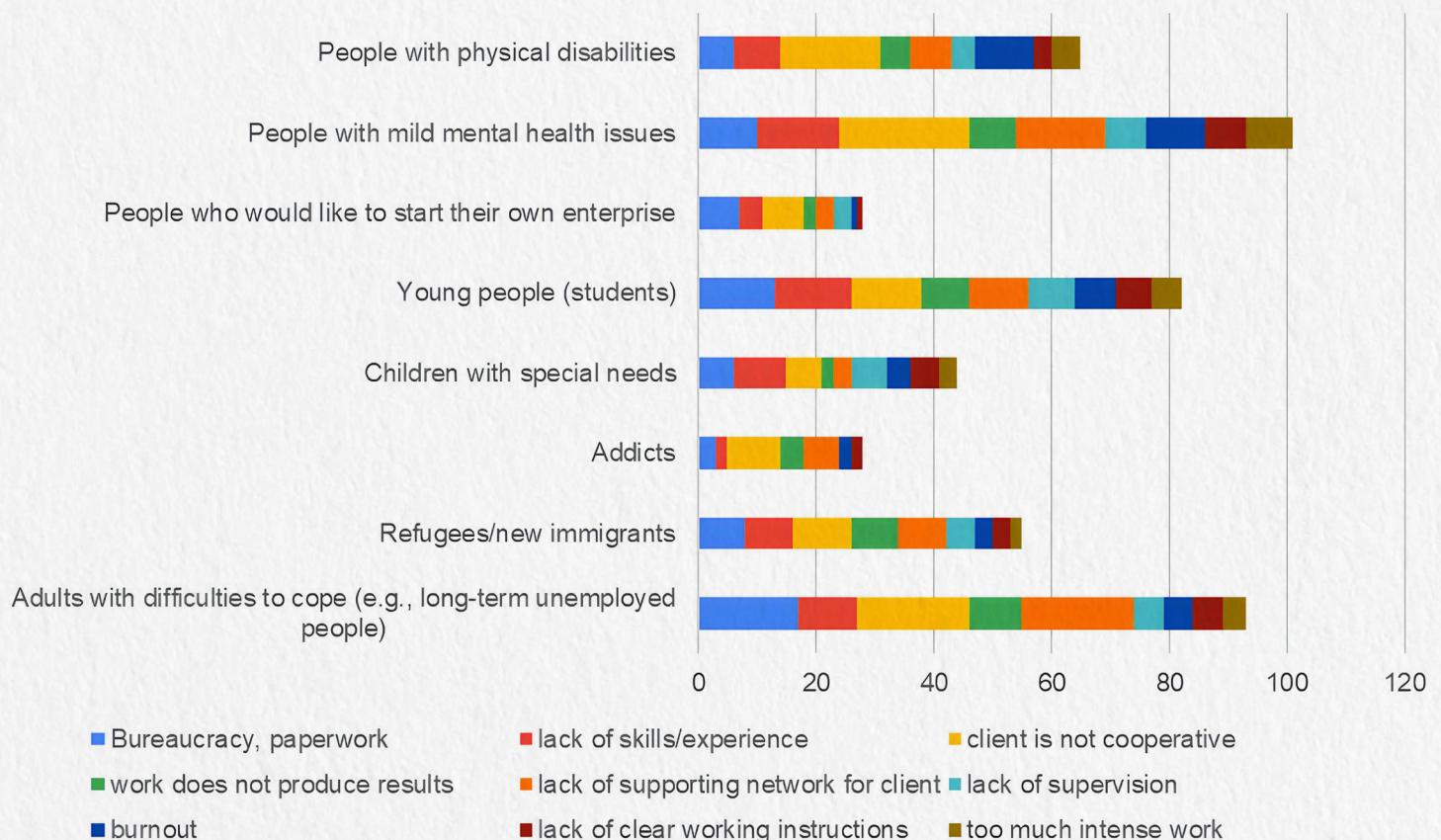


Chart 36: Target group vs Daily obstacles



Trends

- All target group present all types of obstacles, except for “People who would like to start their own enterprise” that don’t encompass “Too much intense work”, and except for “Addicts” who don’t include “Lack of supervision” and “Too much intense work”.
- The proportions of different daily obstacles within the different target group categories are similar. This allows to infer that the four most consistent obstacles are: “Bureaucracy, paperwork”, “Lack of skills/experience”, “Client is not cooperative”, and “Lack of supporting network for client”, evenly distributed among the different target groups.



Thoughts

- Tailoring support and training to specific target groups: The data highlights the need for targeted support and training programs that address the specific challenges faced by support workers with different target groups. For example, additional training on communication and de-escalation techniques could be beneficial for those working with challenging clients.
- Addressing systemic barriers: The high incidence of "Lack of skills/experience" suggests a need for improved training and professional development opportunities for support workers. Addressing "Bureaucracy, paperwork" requires streamlining administrative processes and reducing unnecessary paperwork.
- Strengthening support networks for clients: It's important to strengthening existing support networks and developing new resources for these vulnerable populations.
- Addressing the root causes of "Work does not produce results": This obstacle likely stems from a complex interplay of factors, including resource limitations, lack of client engagement, and systemic barriers. Further research and analysis are needed to identify the root causes and develop effective solutions.



5 Conclusions

This study across five European countries has given us a valuable, in-depth look at the world of support persons. By exploring different aspects of their work and lives, from their backgrounds and training to the challenges they face and the support they need, we've gathered a great amount of information. This has revealed shared experiences and highlighted the unique challenges faced by support persons in different countries.

We now have a clearer picture of who support persons are. They come from diverse backgrounds, with a range of ages, education levels, and work experiences. But there are common threads: most are women, often working in non-profits or social welfare, dedicated to helping vulnerable people like those facing hardship, mental health issues, or those who are simply young and need guidance. Yet, despite their important work, many feel they aren't recognized or appreciated enough.

Training is key to effective support, but our study shows mixed results. While formal training and on-the-job experience are common, many support persons aren't happy with their initial preparation. They point out gaps in practical skills and say crucial topics like building trust, active listening, and cultural awareness aren't covered enough. They also express a strong need for training in stress management and how to avoid burnout.

We also learned about the tools and resources support persons value most. Practical things like lists of services, strong support networks, and detailed handbooks are in high demand. Interestingly, those newer to the field tend to want practical resources, while experienced support persons put more emphasis on peer support networks. This shows how priorities might change over time, highlighting the ongoing importance of human connection and learning from each other.

Our study also revealed the tough realities of daily work. Uncooperative clients, the frustration of unproductive work, and bureaucratic hurdles are common problems. Stress levels can be high, and many support persons struggle to find the support they need. This shows a clear need for better stress management resources and stronger support networks.

Despite these challenges, support persons find deep meaning in their work. They are driven by a desire to make a real difference in the lives of those they support. They celebrate their clients' progress, value positive feedback, and work hard to achieve meaningful goals.

These findings provide a strong foundation for the next steps in our project. We'll focus on creating training programs that address the gaps identified by support persons themselves. We'll develop easy-to-access and user-friendly resources, including comprehensive handbooks and strong peer support networks. And we'll make stress management and emotional well-being a priority, ensuring support persons have the tools and support they need to thrive.

By truly listening to support persons and understanding their needs, we can empower them to better serve vulnerable individuals and create a more inclusive and supportive society. This study has given us a roadmap, and now it's time to use it to make a real difference.



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