

# THE KEY ELEMENTS OF CREATIVE LEARNING ENVIRONMENT: A CASE OF STUDY

FROM LATVIA, SPAIN AND THE NETHERLANDS



The final research of the project

“Looking at Learning”

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## FOREWORD

“The Key Elements of Creative Learning Environment: A Case Study from Latvia, Spain and the Netherlands” is the research done by the project “Looking at Learning” research team during the project implementation period from March, 2015 – February, 2017. The main aim of the research was to summarize the study results obtained in three research phases in each country and present the key elements of the creative learning environment, their characteristics and the best practices developed during the project.

The report consists of two main parts; the first part is a theoretical introduction that explains changes in education and why it is important to consider the creative learning environment and its different elements as a crucial part of modern education practice. The second part of the report describes the key elements of creative learning environments – the main findings from the case studies in Latvia, Spain and the Netherlands as well as the assessments of all activities implemented during the project. This part includes analysis of three separate country reports, each separate country report being found in the Annexes 2, 3 and 4 of the research. The Annex 1 of the research provides best practices developed during the project – the experience of creating physical creative learning environments and activities for youth, young people with disabilities, and children in formal and non-formal education settings.

### About the “Looking at Learning” project

The project “Looking @ Learning” aims to provide space and support for cross-sectoral cooperation of professionals in formal and non-formal education concerning innovation of education in order to create contemporary and successful learning environments for young people in their educational process.

This long-term project was developed between March 2015-February 2017 by 6 different partners: 4 non-governmental organizations including “Humana People to People from Latvia”, “Youth Exchange Service” and “Stichting Merakel” from the Netherlands, association PROMESAS from Spain as well as two governmental entities: Gulbene Municipality Council (Latvia) and Maracena Municipality (Spain).

Besides coordinating organizations, a broad range of stakeholders and educators from the Netherlands, Spain and Latvia were involved in the project to explore creative learning environments together, share good practices and implement new ideas and tools in existing structures, therefore bringing innovation to their own surroundings.

The project was financed by the EU programme for young people “Erasmus+: Youth in Action, Key Action 2: Strategic Partnership in the field of Education, Training and Youth,” administrated by the Latvian Agency for International Programs for Youth. One of the main aims of the programme was to improve skills and competences of people who work with young people - educators, youth workers, trainers, teachers, project managers – in order to improve the quality of youth work and promote international cooperation of youth and youth workers. This projects aimed to achieve above-mentioned programme aims by working together with youth workers from formal and non-formal sectors from all three project countries. For more information about research, partners and project, visit our webpage: [lookingatlearning.eu](http://lookingatlearning.eu)

## **STUDY RESULTS IN THE PROJECT “LOOKING @ LEARNING”**

### **The final report in Latvia, the Netherlands and Spain**

January 2017

#### **1. Creative learning environments**

In recent times, education and the changes that need to be made to educational systems are widely discussed topics, not only in the partner countries of the project “Looking @ Learning” but in many countries across the world. One of the most fundamental systematic changes in recent decades that has led to these discussions is the global transformation from industrial to “knowledge societies.” Knowledge has become a central driving force for economic activity in these societies; prosperity of individuals, companies and nations also increasingly depends on human and intellectual capital.<sup>1</sup>

This change has happened due to various reasons, the primary ones being the following: 1) We are living in a “global village,” and economies and societies are closely linked to each other through the process of globalisation, bringing together different cultures, views and habits.<sup>2</sup> Ken Robinson emphasizes that one of the biggest challenges for national education systems is how to educate children to have a sense of cultural identity so that they can pass on the cultural genes of our communities while still being part of the globalization process;<sup>3</sup> 2) Societies and economies have experienced a profound transformation from a reliance on industry to a reliance on knowledge as a foundation.<sup>4</sup> Therefore, national educational systems are trying to determine how to educate children so that they can find their place in the economies of the 21<sup>st</sup> century.<sup>5</sup> Educators need to prepare youth, “for jobs that do not yet exist, to use technologies that have not yet been invented, and solve problems that we don’t even know are problems yet”; 3) Rapid development has been made in the field of information and communication technologies.<sup>6</sup>

The major trends in societies and economies have become increasingly focused on the demanding kinds of learning that are called “21<sup>st</sup> century competences.” Young people should acquire a deep understanding of complex concepts, gain media literacy and have the ability to use advanced information technologies. Teamwork as well as social and communication skills are crucial.<sup>7</sup> Employers argue that the current educational system “teaches yesterday’s skills to tomorrow’s graduates.” Employers are concerned that many new job applicants lack “soft skills,” such as interpersonal communication and analytical thinking.<sup>8</sup> In the complex knowledge societies the creative fields are likely to be important sources of employment in the future, therefore the main goal of education should be the acquisition of “adaptive competences, i.e. the ability to apply meaningfully learned knowledge and skills flexibly and creatively in a variety of contexts and situations”.<sup>9</sup>

Learning is a key value of knowledge societies. As the amount of global information increases, the notion of learning reintroduces a critical dimension that allows societies to assimilate the great amount of new knowledge that they regularly produce. Learning as a phenomenon may affect all levels of our societies

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<sup>1</sup> OECD (2010), *The Nature of Learning: Using Research to Inspire Practice*, OECD Publishing, p 338

<sup>2</sup> OECD (2010), *The Nature of Learning: Using Research to Inspire Practice*, OECD Publishing, p 338

<sup>3</sup> Robinson K. (2010). Changing Education Paradigms. Retrieved:

[www.ted.com/talks/ken\\_robinson\\_changing\\_education\\_paradigms](http://www.ted.com/talks/ken_robinson_changing_education_paradigms) Accessed:01.02.2017.

<sup>4</sup> OECD (2010), *The Nature of Learning: Using Research to Inspire Practice*, OECD Publishing, p 338

<sup>5</sup> Robinson K. (2010). Changing Education Paradigms. Retrieved:

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<sup>6</sup> OECD (2010), *The Nature of Learning: Using Research to Inspire Practice*, OECD Publishing, p 338

<sup>7</sup> OECD (2010), *The Nature of Learning: Using Research to Inspire Practice*, OECD Publishing, p 338

<sup>8</sup> Broek J. (2016). Jobs in the digital era work differently. OECD Observer. No.307, Q3, p. 29

<sup>9</sup> OECD (2010), *The Nature of Learning: Using Research to Inspire Practice*, OECD Publishing, p 338

and offer a model for organizing the time, work and lives of our institutions. This is an evolution that illustrates a paradigm shift. Firstly, education and learning can no longer be confined to a fixed time and place. It is not exclusive to the early years, but develops over a lifetime. There has been an actualization of the concept of lifelong learning, meaning that learning takes place not only in schools and universities but in different formal, non-formal and non-formal learning environments. Secondly, the human learner must be put at the heart of a continuing process of knowledge acquisition and communication.<sup>10</sup>

In order to tackle the current need for new educational approaches, the project "Looking @ Learning" has identified and explored the concept of creative learning environments.

There are several definitions of learning environments. In the state of art research *"The First Looking at Learning,"* a learning environment has been defined as an environment of a particular educational establishment characterized by social components, special objects and matters as well as interpersonal relationships. These factors influence and complement each other and affect every person involved. A learning environment additionally specifies an educational environment; it always implies an organizational process. It ensures correlation of material, communicative and social conditions in the learning process and beneficial circumstances for the development of learners' creative potential. By using different sources of knowledge and various learning methods, a learner constructs his/her knowledge, skills and dispositions on his or her own.<sup>11</sup>

OECD defines "learning environment" as an organic, holistic concept - an ecosystem that includes the activity and the outcomes of the learning.<sup>12</sup> In order to understand the "learning environment," it is crucial to focus on the dynamics and interactions between four dimensions – the learner (who?), educators (with whom?), content (learning what?) and facilities and technologies (where? with what?).<sup>13</sup> In order to create a creative learning environment, it is vital to rethink and look differently at any of these 4 elements that are mentioned above.

The OECD project "The Innovative Learning Environments" (ILE) has identified principles that need to be considered in order to create effective learning environments:

- Recognise the learners as its core participants, encourage their active engagement, and develop in them an understanding of their own activity as learners ("self-regulation").
- Be founded on the social nature of learning and actively encourage group work and well-organised co-operative learning. Individual knowledge construction happens throughout the process of interaction, negotiation and co-operation. Neuroscience shows that the human brain is primed for interaction.
- Have learning professionals who are highly attuned to the learners' motivations and the key role of emotions in achievement.
- Be acutely sensitive to the individual differences among the learners in it, including their prior knowledge.
- Devise programmes that demand hard work and challenge from all without excessive overload.
- Operate with clarity of expectations and deploy assessment strategies consistent with these expectations; there should be strong emphasis on formative feedback to support learning.
- Strongly promote "horizontal connectedness" across areas of knowledge and subjects as well as to the community and the wider world.<sup>14</sup>

<sup>10</sup> UNESCO (2005), *Towards knowledge societies*. UNESCO Publishing, p 226

<sup>11</sup> Looking at Learning (2015), *State of art research "The First Looking at Learning"*, p38

<sup>12</sup> OECD (2013), *Innovative Learning Environments*, Educational Research and Innovation, OECD Publishing, p 216

<sup>13</sup> OECD (2010), *The Nature of Learning: Using Research to Inspire Practice*, OECD Publishing, p 338

<sup>14</sup> OECD (2013), *Innovative Learning Environments*, Educational Research and Innovation, OECD Publishing, p 216

- In view of the aforementioned principles and elements of a creative learning environment, during the study educators initiated and experimented with a variety of interactive learning methods, which made it possible to identify and characterize a creative learning environment in this project.

Following Key Elements characterize a creative learning environment:





## 2. Research methodology

The final study report covers the results of three research stages of the project:

- 1) Phase 1 of the project included a pilot study or state of art research "The First Looking at Learning" when the participating countries viewed the situation in the field of creative learning environment and understanding of creativity. The results of the pilot study are based on interviews with the agents of formal and non-formal education and the document analysis in each county during June-July 2015;
- 2) Phase 2 was a continuation to the state of art research "The First Looking at Learning" phase of the study about creative learning and the understanding of creative learning environment among the agents of formal and non-formal education. After the seminar of all partners in the project in August 2015 (in Latvia), the research methodology was developed in order to assess all future project activities in connection with the implementation of creative learning methods. Two research methods were chosen for the study that were used from September 2015 till May 2016:
  - analysis of qualitative type documents where the documents referred to are the diaries of project participants (hereinafter – educators/facilitators). The diaries reflect the experience of educators who implement creative learning methods in their formal and non-formal learning environment, subjective characteristics and assessment of the methods used by them;
  - a quantitative survey with questionnaires, where participants of creative workshops were asked to evaluate them. Questionnaires were distributed both directly after the workshop and electronically.
- 3) Phase 3 of the study of local activities implements the outcomes of the training course in June 2016, developing a new and innovative educational tool: The Educative Escape room – Eduesc@peroom. During the third phase, adjusted versions of the diary and questionnaire used in phase 2, focused on Eduesc@peroom as a particular interactive learning method.

The structure of the final report consists of the description of the elements of a creative learning environment and the assessment of all activities implemented in the creative learning environment within the project.

The final report includes the main findings of the most important aspects and description of a creative learning environment. For concrete examples and the results of all three phase of the study see in Annex 1.

## 3. Descriptions of a creative learning environment

Summarizing the study results obtained in all three phases in each country, the report now presents the features of creative learning environment and their characteristics.

According to theoretical notions of the creative learning environment, practical seminars, the features of a creative learning environment developed by the project partners during the seminars and educators' experience in their work with a variety of interactive teaching methods, it is possible to identify and describe the following key elements of a creative learning environment:

### *3.1. The role of educator in application of interactive learning methods*

The aspiration of an educator or facilitator to implement interactive learning methods is crucial for any educational establishment to employ creative learning approach. As demonstrated by the state of art research "The First Looking at Learning," educators' motivation, initiative and imagination are the most important factors contributing to the paradigm shift in educational institutions. Educators can rather freely manipulate the choice of learning methods, since neither national nor particular school regulations include



the specific and direct requirement of "mandatory creativity." Consequently, the use of interactive teaching methods directly depends on each individual educator's awareness and willingness to implement them.

According to survey results, active educators need support from the educational institution's management and other colleagues. The environments of education institutions differ in their internal cultures and attitudes towards creative learning methods. There are some educational institutions where creativity is being integrated in all activities or all study subjects; in others, interactive learning methods are deployed gradually, adopting the experience of good practices.

The educator's role is crucial in the initiation and utilization of creative learning methods. The educator is directly responsible for setting the learning objectives and selecting appropriate tools, making sure they are suitable for the age and level of knowledge of the target group. Research results show that proceeding further, the role of educator or facilitator is reduced as he or she transitions from being a planner and organizer of interactive methods to being a supporter and facilitator of the functions of the target groups. They must allow children and young people to express themselves freely and come to their own unique solutions, while trying not to determine whether the achieved result is "creative enough." An educator creates a targeted and sufficiently wide framework in which a learner functions. An educator draws the attention of the target audience, encourages their interest in what is happening, answers questions and creates a favourable and accepting emotional environment. In the context of creative learning, educators emphasize that the central role here is played by a learner, not an educator. As an educator in the Netherlands notes: *"Supporting of leading and sharing but not directing."* Thus, in the creative teaching approach there is a change in the educator's role and in the division of responsibilities between educators and learners. At the end of the workshops, an educator has to present an opportunity to reflect on the achieved results, including any experienced feelings and possible discoveries.

### *3.2. The division of responsibilities and decision-making process*

This is considered to be a crucial aspect in the organization of a creative learning environment. The participants of the study believe that the most important key word is 'freedom' in its various meanings – freedom to choose whether to take part in the activity, freedom to select the type of activity, suitable materials, freedom to make mistakes etc. The amount of choice participants have determines the interactive nature of a learning method and its difference from traditional approaches. The division of responsibilities between educators and learners makes the learning process more valuable; young people see it as an opportunity to learn and master something, and not the only alternative imposed by adults. Participants of the study point out that during the learning process there is a need to "be yourself," to find one's own personal views and perspective on things and not to adjust to others. On the other hand, it is essential to balance the freedom to choose with mutual cooperation possibilities and the ability to notice the needs of others and help them.

The research results reveal that in the context of creative learning, it is particularly important to present a range of options to those young people whose choices are usually rather limited, such as those with special needs. The ability to choose and what can be chosen should be adjusted to the relevant target group, and it can be about very simple everyday things, but the experience of educators reveals the effectiveness of this approach and its importance to the individual development: *"Participants understood that the way they look, or point or smile or move their eyes, had its consequence: get what you want!" (the Netherlands).*

When a person has options, they encourage him or her to take responsibility for the event, the process and their consequences. Good examples here are the experience of Latvian students equipping a room for their student self-government body and the class meeting of pupils in the Netherlands concerning jackets that are not hung in the proper place. These cases serve for the participants to discover both youth cooperation skills and the ability to express their views, to analyse, to compromise etc.

### **3.3. Learning space and materials**

For the above-mentioned options and freedoms to be able to materialize, a physically and emotionally safe environment is needed, which is primarily the responsibility of the educator. Furnishings in the activity room and available teaching materials are important in the use of creative learning methods in various ways. Any environment that is used in the learning process must ensure the individual's basic needs. However, there is no need in all cases to have a specially furnished room; there are cases and methods where traditional learning tools or traditional everyday objects can be used. Thus, space layout and materials used depend on the character of the chosen method. For example, in the case of an Eduesc@peroom, the emphasis is placed directly on the specific characteristics of room workstations, closed doors, and time-limited resources. Eduesc@peroom is the method that allows challenging creative abilities of children and young people in a concentrated and direct manner – thinking “outside the box” and looking for “new combinations.” Eduesc@peroom is also the brightest example of how an ordinary room can be viewed from a different standpoint: *“turning a well-known space into a unique space.”* More or less, changes in the environment are implemented when other interactive learning methods are introduced, usually when a familiar environment is transformed into a creativity-friendly environment. Furthermore, the educators point to the need for “transformable space”: when classroom, lecture hall or workshops space layout can be easily changed.

During the project, experience was gained arranging and using completely different rooms or conditions for various interactive learning methods. An educator from Latvia says: *“At the moment I am not afraid to organize student lessons or activities in a school hallway, in the yard, on the sports field or in the woods, because I have such an experience.”* Some rooms have been permanently arranged for creative activities that will continue to operate after the completion of the project.

In general, educators recognize that the environment needs to be challenging with a variety of options, encourage free expression of learners' thoughts and feelings, and feel safe at the same time: *“Creating a safe place where participants could feel free to feel with all their senses.”* Educators accentuate the promoting and supporting role of environment in unlocking creativity. Space must be comfortable, adequately large and one that stimulates curiosity and research.

Creativity is also promoted by a non-formal atmosphere and can be stimulated by changes in the environment, such as having a tea/coffee and snack time during theoretical classes as well as a friendly and supportive attitude: *“Good feelings in the educational process let people to acquire and to reach the objectives of the activity.”* As emphasized by the educators, it is important not to discriminate against young people according to their gender, age or other characteristics.

One of the most significant conclusions of the project participants is using environment known and friendly to the target group as the background for introducing new knowledge and implementing new techniques, since it creates a certain sense of security. At the same time, there are cases where environmental facilities are to be modified in order to encourage the next creative change. The planning and implementation of environmental changes are the areas where children and young people can be successfully involved. As mentioned previously, the opportunity to choose things like wall colour encourages accountability in young people. This is related to the need for educators to personalize the space, to inspire creativity and accountability in young people. This is encouraged by the opportunity to express themselves and to find their place in the space, taking into account their needs and wishes: *“I thought that the lesson where the 4<sup>th</sup> students were able to choose where to sit - on the carpet, under the table, at the table, on a chair – was more effective. Students felt more comfortable and free while playing the game; they learned grammar and then applied the acquired knowledge in the next game.”*

The study participants expressed similar ideas about the materials used with interactive learning methods. On the one hand, they have to present a choice, the freedom to use them or not; they must be versatile to be used in different ways, giving a chance to explore new experiences. On the other hand, there is no

need for a large number or vast diversity of materials; they do not really have to be especially selected and "creative" in themselves. Creativity can be successfully unlocked by ordinary natural materials and everyday objects. As mentioned in the state of art research "The First Looking at Learning", creativity is directly encouraged by linking theoretical knowledge to everyday life, so the objective of the environment is to promote the practical use of knowledge and learn to see ordinary things from a different point of view.

When working with some target groups, educators have come to the conviction that learning through personal experience is the most effective; children and young people remember experienced things the best. Thus, a condition for a creative learning environment is to allow the workshop topic to be physically experienced through activities, games and/or appropriate materials as much as possible.

### **3.4. Time limit**

During the study, almost all participants focused on the time scheduled for creative activities as a separate aspect of the creative learning environment. Time as an aspect of creative environment requires the most planning, because it is necessary to align target groups of different ages, interests and activities with the objective and other factors. Virtually all educators recognize that more time must be scheduled for creative activities, because they generally require some time for emotional "ice-breaking" for children and young people, time practical activities, and assessment. For creative activities to be successful, none of these phases can be skipped, so educators recommend planning a rather small amount of activities and aiming for quality. In the case of Eduesc@peroom, time limit works with the opposite goal, encouraging the team find solutions faster; however, there are some types of Eduesc@perooms and target groups where time limit must be seen as secondary to the sought-after result.

The study results also reveals a philosophical and social aspect of time. In particular, the creative activities are an opportunity to "disconnect" for a while from the demands imposed by the modern society to demonstrate continuous progress and success. Therefore, young people highly appreciate the time and the opportunity when they are free to "think" without disturbances. It helps them to become more aware of themselves, to understand themselves, their goals and values. Such self-understanding and self-acceptance helps to build better relationships with those around. We should not underestimate the importance of time spent on creative activities. One example of the "time stop" and self-reflection worthy of mentioning is the Spanish example of a meditation experience in a classroom, where young people were given the opportunity to think about themselves in silence.

Study participants also revealed another problem concerning the time aspect, which is the relatively long time required for inventing, planning and implementation of various tasks and activities. An important factor in this respect is the support and involvement of co-workers. Similarly, the planning and implementing of creative methods are considerably impacted by the number on children and young people the workshops is meant for. For example, for all children in the summer camp to gain the experience of Eduesc@peroom, the planning and actual event takes hours. Educators recognize that the implementation and assessment of creative activity tends to be more successful in small groups of students. Quite often it is necessary to work with learners individually. For example, one Dutch educator's experience shows that at the beginning a simple choice took a young person with special need about 20 minutes, but after several months of continuous operation it only took about 20 seconds.

### **3.5. Interaction and synergy**

The primary purpose of creative learning is to unlock the inner potential of every individual and to support him or her in reaching his or her goals, and it is not possible without building relationships with others as well as mutual cooperation. As stated by a Latvian educator, a creative learning environment is made of *"the opportunities to choose, create and make their own decisions, be independent and at the same time*

*work in a team.*" A creative learning environment also includes the opportunity to work together and get to know other people. As acknowledged by the study participants, it was especially activities that required working as a team that seemed the most interesting and resulted in the most positive emotions. Another aspect that was welcomed was the opportunity to work or participate in events together with family and/or the wider community. Educators describe several examples of good practice where they witnessed successful integration of marginalized groups, where during the project the target audience expanded to other generations and other social groups. In general, both young people and educators from the study have declared that cooperation provides very good results and successful solutions to problems, which indicates the presence of synergy.

These creative learning environment elements have been expressively compiled in the experience of one Spanish educator: *"In my opinion, a creative learning environment begins by giving freedom of movement to the participants and allowing them to act according to their point of view and observe others, even stimulating their mind to certain objects they are accustomed to give different uses, but to enjoy that environment of freedom of expression and action, there must be a climate of trust, be a flexible space that allows failures and experimentation in its own way and is promoted through enjoyment through playful activities. However, to stimulate creativity and challenge yourself to overcome obstacles is beneficial and almost essential for leaving one's comfort zone."*

#### 4. Assessment of activities in the creative learning environment

This part of the report analyses the collected quantitative data yielded by the survey with questionnaires in two phases in Latvia, the Netherlands and Spain (answers of the total of 1,941 respondents, for details see Table 1). The following describes and analyses the overall assessment given by the young people for all activities carried out in creative learning environment, with special emphasis on the analysis of Eduesc@peroom as an innovative learning method.

Country	I Survey	II Survey	Total
Latvia	204	128	332
Netherlands	52	95	147
Spain	1412	50	1462
<b>Total</b>	<b>1668</b>	<b>273</b>	<b>1941</b>

*Table 1: Number of respondents by the country*

In both phases of the study the first question was an open question that asked to describe activities/sessions in a creative learning environment during phase 1 and the essence of Eduesc@peroom during phase 2. Analysing the verbs used to characterize sessions, activities and Eduesc@peroom, the distribution of answers in 2 phases turned out to be different. The most typical verbs used when talking about the first phase of activities and sessions were - *"work or working in groups," "expression of an opinion on the ...", "doing tasks", "wrote about ...", "we talked about ...", "read about ...", "we learned about ...", "figure" and "photo orientation"*. In phase 2, describing Eduesc@peroom, respondents used such verbs as: *"finding out", "searching or searching for", "solving or solution", "looking for or looking around", "making or doing", "cooperating or working together", "to help," and "playing."* It seems interesting that learners describe the challenges and the process of the learning actions like exploring, finding, searching, significantly more often than the result of the learning, like solving and solution.

Such answers suggest that the activities proposed in the project have been varied and valuable to the learners in developing the knowledge, skills and attitudes that help them adapt to changes, promote cooperation, improve problem-solving skills, develop learning skills, enhance ability to take the initiative, etc.

Analysing respondents' replies to the second question about their feelings during the workshops or a course, it can be concluded that majority of respondents noted those responses that were mostly positive

(on average 70%). The participants felt good, safe, understood, inspired, self-confident, responsible, appreciated and creative, and the participants felt more engaged in the learning process.

The overall conclusion is that only a small proportion (about 7%) of participants experienced feelings that were less positive (being nervous, unsure, uninterested, indifferent), suggesting that the activities were generally interesting and engaging. Taking into account the emotional character of the assessment, it should be noted that during the activity evaluation could often be linked to how the respondents feel on that very day or how their feelings are affected by other factors which are not disclosed in this survey (e.g., relationships with friends or classmates, family, etc.).

Overall, the Eduesc@peroom approach in formal and non-formal education can be assessed as very positive, since none of the respondents gave negative appraisal to this type of activity. Although many activities linked to creative learning environment were completely new and innovative and the young people lacked any previous knowledge and experience of their possible course, emotional evaluation shows that there is significant imbalance between positive and negative feelings involved when looking at the distribution of responses (See Figure 1.).

• Safe (41.46%)	< - >	Unsafe (4.0%)
• Positive (51.6%)	< - >	Negative (0.0%)
• Self-confident (28.8%)	< - >	Unsure (2.6%)
• Interested (52.3%)	< - >	Uninterested (1.33%)
• Inspired (28.5%)	< - >	Bored (2.6%)
• Strong (24.8%)	< - >	Weak (1.7%)
• Responsible (32.1%)	< - >	Irresponsible (0.3%)

*Figure 1. Feelings about Eduesc@peroom, aggregated data of survey II (n=273)*

As shown by the distribution of answers, opinions and evaluation of Eduesc@peroom are highly positive; the young people felt safe, responsible, inspired, interested, etc., and generally liked the work of the facilitator. The role of the educator as facilitator of those learning processes and the educator's ability to generate a creative environment and use creative methods in the educational process is highly rated by the learners. Educator takes the role of an observer and a supporter, often stepping back even from the physical space where learners explore the room. This is highly relevant according to the outcomes of the questionnaires.

An important aspect that should be considered when using Eduesc@peroom is the clarity of tasks and assignments, because a relatively large number of young people point to this area as one with most confusion (20% of respondents). As shown by the survey results, 24% of the young people felt pressured by "timing" and "the fear of failure." It is possible that the answers about "the fear of failure" were caused by the lack of experience with this type of activities. Thus, the results could be different if the respondents had filled out the questionnaire after participating in Eduesc@peroom. The assessment "sometimes" was given to the criterion of "the implementation of their thoughts and ideas" (17%), which can be explained by the very idea of Eduesc@peroom, which initially contains the notion of tasks an assignments and designed tasks and as a method by its nature is different from other methods in formal and non-formal education.

There is also "added value" to Eduesc@peroom, meaning group work or team work. Comparing to the activities analysed in the 1<sup>st</sup> phase survey, Eduesc@peroom is something totally new and group work is seen in a more positive light than in the past. This type of activity is ideal in forming a team and strengthen cooperation skills.



Examining what is gained from working in a creative learning environment with a variety of interactive learning methods, after the first phase the results of the survey show that respondents in all countries note the following: I feel more confident than before (on average 70%), during the sessions I was able to dream and imagine (60%), I got to know myself and my group mates better (74%), and also many were willing to share what they gained with friends and family (50%).

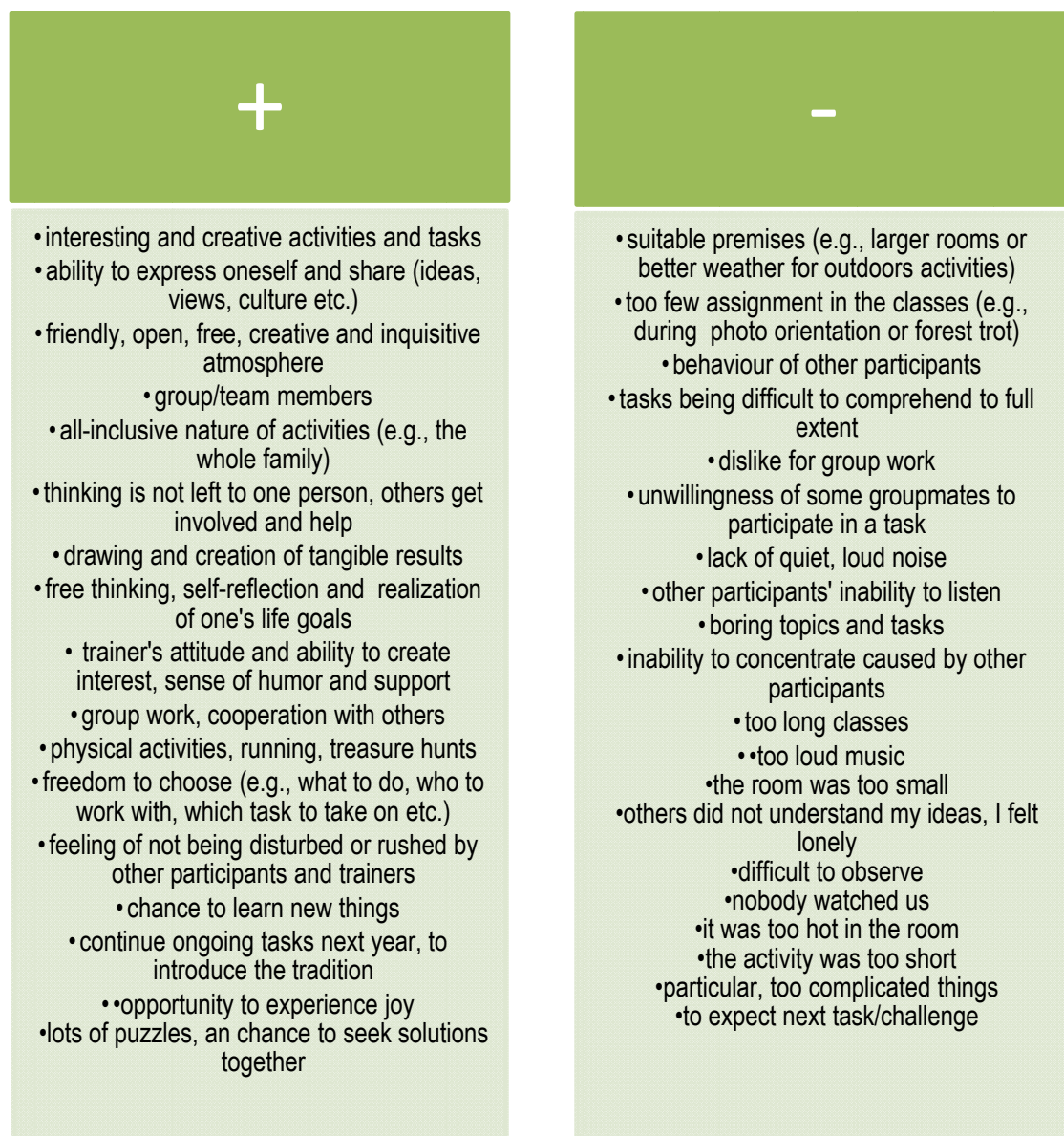
Young people's views on the various benefits from the activities show a number of significant trends: first of all, around half of all surveyed young people were willing to share what they had learned, which is very important because it contributes to the transfer of new knowledge and skills on to other agents in the educational environment and the home. It can be explained by the answers about other benefits linked to the fact that these sessions have inspired and encouraged them to think creatively and express themselves. This suggests that creative approaches and methods make educators' work more fruitful. Second, such activities contribute to young people's self-confidence and promote their trust in their own abilities; they improve understanding of the group/team members, thus potentially providing better opportunities to cooperate both in and outside of workshops. Third, the formation of understanding of things and processes on the local and global scale contributes to young people's ability to understand and act in the light of what is happening to the environment and to recognize their role in these processes. It is confirmed by several answers; for example, from Latvia, *"Along with my group mates I came up with a new idea that can be carried out with the help of school parliament,"* or *"...I was encouraged to take more active part in the work of NGO's."* Some respondents from Spain stated: *"I learned to help and ask for help, I learned to do new things, to organize my work to express my ideas and listen to the rest of people";* they also think that the freedom to choose activities and the appropriate environment reinforces the learning: *"It seems to me a pleasant environment for learning since each participant chose its role without pressure and students learn at its own pace."*

When assessing the benefits of the Eduesc@peroom and taking into account the fact that Eduesc@peroom is a new approach to education and hence an entirely new experience, the most positive are those answers where respondents from all countries declared that Eduesc@peroom had inspired them (62%) and wanted to share what they have acquired with family and friends (60.66%). Rather significant are also those benefits that are related to getting to know oneself and others (55%) and generating new ideas. Positive and motivating experiences give new ideas on how to see everyday things in a new light and use them to learn something new. 44% of surveyed young people admitted that they felt more confident than before and it would probably continue to enable them to be more daring and take initiative.

It is obvious that the Eduesc@peroom contributes significantly to (young) people's self-confidence and self-assurance, their feeling of ownership and responsibility and their ability to imagine, visualize and wonder about the world. These skills have been marked as conditions for successful creative learning environments. The method supports group cohesion as well as the understanding and equality of the group and team members, thus potentially raising their chances to better cooperate both in the educational environment and outside of it.

Respondents made comments as to continuation of the method. This is evidenced by the responses on this issue, for example, *"Build more of these escape rooms, I really enjoyed it!,"* or *"I will build one myself"* (respondent from Netherlands). We can conclude that this is an invitation to further develop the concept of this method.

Evaluating the survey results with regard to what young people enjoyed during workshops, as well as what they did not like or were bothered by, a variety of answers were given, showing a number of key positive and negative aspects (see Figure 2).



*Figure 2. Young people's assessment of what they liked and disliked during the activities and Eduesc@peroom; summative survey data (n=1942)*

In general, young people had a positive view of the creative activities, their diversity and given opportunities to cooperate with one another. It is confirmed by the following statements:



*"...I liked everything, good experience, learned a lot of good things, my eyes were opened to a different world (a world where confident people want to do something on behalf of this world, to make it sustainable)" (Latvia).*

*"...the paint on my face. After a while she wanted to take it off and she did!" (Netherlands)*

*"...We liked the sounds of birds and climbing the mountain to get the chocolates." (Netherlands)*

*"...meeting people that came to the previous session; to see them after 6 months and understand that the course in August has inspired and changed us." (Latvia.)*

Analysing the aspects that were the most disliked or interfering, respondents pointed to the lack of time to meet the challenges. One of the most hindering factors mentioned by respondents was that some participants who were not really interested in assignments stalled those that were interested.

*"...There wasn't enough time to come up with ideas, other participants were more talkative, and I could not get support from facilitators and other participants." (Latvia)*

*"...I really disliked that other classmates did not care for those doing the tasks; they were making noise instead of paying attention to others." (Netherlands)*

*"...When you are looking for a long time and you don't find anything." (Netherlands.)*

It must be concluded that in general young people appreciate these activities, but they expressed a recommendation for educators to pay more attention to issues related to noisiness during workshops and clearer explanation of assignments; facilitators need to ensure that learners understand what is required of them, making sure that they have planned enough time to perform the presented tasks and activities.

Questionnaires reveal that every Eduesc@peroom is evaluated very positively; participants liked practically everything, but also highlighted special elements, such as thread, a key piece of the puzzle, the code search and encryption that have to be solved to continue with the tasks. Here are some quotations that point towards positive benefits:

*"I liked everything, especially my team, nice experience" (Netherlands).*

*"Exciting, challenging, sometimes difficult, but I like that!" (Netherlands).*

*"I liked the story and assignments, they allowed to learn a lot of new things, test myself, think outside the box" (Latvia).*

Young people gave positive feedback to the experience gained from teamwork which allowed them to see the other team members' strengths and their resourcefulness. The need to be discerning and to "think outside the box" is the key element that offers a new perspective on a given task and its possible solutions. Consequently, the development of these skills is particularly necessary because they contribute to the ability to cooperate, to assess the situation, discern and analyse the nuances of relations.

Analysing the closing question of whether young people are ready to change something after workshops, or to do things differently, it is concluded that a rather large number of young people (71%) are prepared to act in a different way in the light of their new knowledge or experience.

*"...I understand the meaning, importance and value of the follow up meeting, I will have this type of meeting in the conclusion of the project when participants are more motivated to create and develop the activities that share about the project results in their particular areas" (Latvia).*

*".. I am willing to include more reflections.... (these sessions) increased my critical thinking, because people should not focus on themselves, but think more globally" (Latvia).*

It can be concluded that young people are ready to work more creatively and to develop cooperation with others. They want to feel confident and be more understanding and friendly towards others. It is essential that after the creative activities young people think and reflect on important issues and values, commit to being fairer, more helpful, to think more about the environment, etc.

## 5. Conclusions

In summarizing the information obtained by the qualitative and quantitative methods, the following key elements of the creative learning environment were identified and described during the study: educators' role in initiation and realization of interactive methods; division of responsibilities between educators and learners; learning space and teaching materials; timing; interaction and synergy.

During the research, it was found that educators' initiative, willingness and readiness to change his or her approach to teaching and the introduction of interactive teaching methods in formal and non-formal learning environment are directly related to the physical environment and available resources. The main keywords in the description of creative learning environments are "freedom," "choice," "opportunity to take responsibility," "cooperation," "sufficient time resources," "learning by doing," and "thinking outside the box."

Overall, the study finds that children and young people appreciate the opportunity to participate in the planning and implementation of creative activities. Young people note a growing self-confidence, the ability to take the initiative and the ability to better understand themselves and others; they are willing to share their acquired knowledge with family and friends and improve skills to work in a team.

The implemented project activities have created some prerequisites for gradual transition to an interactive and creative learning paradigm in formal and non-formal educational environments in the participating countries. The research results show that educators highlight a number of significant changes during the project: the freedom of educators to express themselves creatively; a change in the point of view and work style with regard to the training methods in their work; a better understanding of learners' needs and of cooperation with learners; a contribution to cooperation with local community (between different generations, inclusion of socially disadvantaged groups etc.). Educators observed a positive effect on learners' behaviour, attitudes, critical thinking and mutual cooperation. There is a slow but sure transfer of the knowledge and practices accumulated during the project into the formal and non-formal educational environment on a broader scale.

Generally speaking, the use of creative learning methods improves the socialization process for children and young people highlighting the questions and possible solutions in the area of values and different social problems, and also reveals the benefits that come from working in a group and cooperating.

Interactive learning methods that were implemented during the project can be considered to be the ones with the ability to change the educational paradigm in formal and non-formal educational environments and prepare children and young people to face the challenges of labour market and rapidly changing society in the 21<sup>st</sup> century.

## **Annex 1**

### **Examples of good practice implemented in the project "Looking @ Learning" developing creativity**

A wide variety of stakeholders was involved in the project "Looking @ Learning" from three project countries: Latvia, Spain and the Netherlands. Formal and non-formal education establishments and initiatives were represented, as well as different target groups – young adults, teenagers and children. Partners from the Netherlands worked specifically with youth with disabilities and learning difficulties. This broad variety of educational initiatives and target groups involved in the project ensured the cross-sectoral learning for educators – those who worked with youth could get inspired by the playful workshops implemented by pre-school teachers and the other way around. Often we as educators learn from those who work with the same target group and in the same setting, but during this project, inspiration came from leaving our regular teaching or learning comfort zones and challenging ourselves. This is how we were able to spark innovation.

Willingness to explore creative learning environments, learn from each other and experiment in our own learning spaces were the main motivators for educators to take part in this project. Great activities were implemented in schools, youth centers, libraries, nature classrooms and kindergartens. Creative learning spaces were created and complemented.

In this material, "Examples of good practice implemented in the project "Looking @ Learning" developing creativity," we would like to share with you some of the experiences developed and enriched during the project – workshops and creative learning spaces. Most of the creative learning environment elements identified in the state of art research "The First Looking at Learning" are included in the learning spaces and activities e.g. trust, supporting of leading learning and sharing but not directing; inspiration motivation and functional, flexible and diverse space; place where feel free and feel with all senses; allowed to fail/ no fear to make mistakes; playful learning and challenging, experimenting and learning by doing; development of creativity, imagination and fantasy; learners responsible for their own learning process.<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Looking at Learning (2015), *State of art research "The First Looking at Learning"*, p38

## Activities

<b>"Different 40 Minutes"</b>	
<b>Place</b>	Gulbene Secondary School No 2 ( LATVIA)
<b>Aim</b>	<p>to develop:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• students' understanding of what communication is and how it works;</li> <li>• reflection skills,</li> <li>• giving feedback,</li> <li>• self-assessment skills,</li> <li>• understanding if what one is trying to say is perceived the way it was meant to be perceived.</li> </ul>
<b>Age group</b>	13-16 year old teenagers, but the activities can be adapted to work with other age groups.
<b>Materials</b>	Blindfolds, stationery, Japanese Alphabet handouts, pictures of animals, "obstacles",
<b>Tasks implemented for achieving the aim</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• An ice-breaker activity - the Japanese Alphabet (students write their names using Japanese alphabet)</li> <li>• The Circle - students find their partner with their eyes closed.</li> <li>• Discussion - what communication is, its different types, what is important to be taken into account to make sure that a person perceives the information the way the speaker intended it to be perceived, what hinders communication;</li> <li>• Activity 1 - each pair decides who will be student 1 and who will be student 2. Student 1 is blindfolded and student 2 helps student 1 to get from point A to point B (at the other end of the room). Students have to manage overcoming the obstacles placed in their way, and while doing so they are not allowed to speak.</li> <li>• Activity 2 - Student 2 is blindfolded. Student 1 helps student 2 get from point A to point B. Students can speak but they are not allowed to touch each other.</li> <li>• Feedback. Students discuss the experiences and the roles they had.</li> <li>• Activity 3 - Student 1 is blindfolded. Student 2 has pictures of animals and has to describe them by using only geometrical figures. Student 1 draws what is described.</li> <li>• Feedback</li> <li>• Activity 4 - Snake - team and the boss. The boss has to bring the team from point A to point B without speaking and giving any instructions.</li> </ul>
<b>Conclusions and suggestions:</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Working with unknown students makes it crucial to be flexible and manage to evaluate the group dynamics properly and implement the planned activities.</li> <li>• Team building activities are essential to a secure and safe environment in which students feel free to participate actively.</li> <li>• Extra activities have to be prepared that the teacher can choose from after evaluating the group's dynamics and activity.</li> <li>• Student and teacher cooperation. The teacher has to participate together with the students, thus being an example and making it clear that the activities are meaningful and that participation in them is a valuable experience.</li> <li>• 40 Minutes is a very short period of time, in which it is quite difficult for students to open up and work with to their maximum capacity, therefore it would be advisable to plan longer lessons as it is crucial for participants to establish a safe and comfortable environment in order to implement the activities successfully.</li> <li>• The belief that non-formal education and interactive learning methods is not "just playing random games" but exploring oneself and developing one's personality</li> </ul>

<b>A Cycle of Workshops: “Dream, Play, Create”</b>	
<b>Place</b>	Library and its surroundings (Tukums district, Jaunpils, LATVIA)
<b>Aim</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• To let participants express themselves creatively while making toys,</li> <li>• To overcome stereotypes connected to sewing,</li> <li>• To learn about upcycling and environmental problems;</li> </ul>
<b>Age group</b>	Pre-school children and their parents, teenagers, although the activities can be adapted to work with any age group
<b>Materials</b>	Different second-hand materials. Participants are asked to bring an unneeded sock and/or a glove, stationery, yarn, threads, matches, buttons, hot glue, tights, etc.
<b>Tasks implemented for achieving the aim</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Getting to know each other. Participants introduce themselves while passing around a toy, saying what motivated them to come to the lesson and what extraordinary or special things had happened to them that day. The facilitator makes it clear that there are no right or wrong answers.</li> <li>• Participants are introduced with the plan of the workshop</li> <li>• Participants are not required do anything,</li> <li>• The facilitator is there to help them realise their ideas and not to force them into anything</li> <li>• In the end there is a small theatre play prepared and performed with the toys they have managed to create.</li> <li>• Participants are shown sample toys made from used materials and they have the chance to explore all the offered materials that can be used.</li> <li>• Participants make their own toys, giving them names and background stories (who they are, where they are from, what do they do, etc.)</li> <li>• Participants present their toys</li> <li>• Participants are put into two groups and prepare their small theatre plays.</li> <li>• Participants perform their plays to each other.</li> <li>• After putting the workplace in order, participants sit down in a circle while passing around a toy, giving feedback</li> </ul>
<b>Conclusions and suggestions:</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• When working with small children, it is important to make sure that their parents do not start making the toys for their children. It is essential to make it clear that there are no right or wrong ways to create the toy and each participant has to make their own.</li> <li>• If the weather conditions allow it, it is a great idea to have the workshop outside, as changing the location from the usual one gives another perspective to the whole experience and gives yet another boost of motivation and creativity.</li> <li>• Having the possibility to modify the process of creating toys makes it flexible and adaptable to any age group and desires.</li> <li>• Working with second-hand materials lessens the fear of doing something wrong, destroy, it gives the participants a chance to see ordinary everyday objects as something new and extraordinary hence boosting their creativity and imagination.</li> <li>• Working with second hand materials makes it possible for participants with financial difficulties to participate and lets them look at environmental problems and people's role in them.</li> <li>• Making toys and playing with them is very relaxing and helps participants open up; it also works well as a team building activity.</li> <li>• The activities help people overcome different biases, such as the idea of not being able to sew or play theatre or even be creative, thus boosting also participants' self-confidence and trust in their own abilities.</li> </ul>

<b>Making Choices</b>	
<b>Place</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Stichting Merakel, (Stede Broec, the NETHERLANDS)</li> </ul>
<b>Aim</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Activities addressed how to involve learners' needs and decisions when communication is very limited in order to allow children make their own choices and explore themselves more.</li> </ul>
<b>Age group</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 6-23 year olds with disabilities.</li> </ul>
<b>Materials</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Products, pictures, pictograms, little games.</li> </ul>
<b>Tasks implemented for achieving the aim</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Educators changed their approach by giving choices to participants who usually had not been given the opportunity to choose. It was long process of always giving options between two things, such as what they wanted on their sandwich, what they wanted to drink and what they wanted to play.</li> <li>• In a few months-long structural process, they found out that ability to make decisions is very much appreciated by these young people and that they were able to do so. Decision making started with 20 minutes to make a choice the first time being decreased to 20 seconds after a few months.</li> <li>• Youngsters made their own cake and they were allowed to explore the consistency of the dough and mix it themselves.</li> <li>• To extend this process, educators started letting them choose what to wear.</li> </ul>
<b>Conclusions and suggestions:</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Difficult communication is often interpreted as not being able to make choices. Educators found that this was a misperception in the context of a long-term process, and even young people with very limited communication proved to be able to make their own choices.</li> <li>• It is beneficial to give children the opportunity to learn new things and experience the smells and flavours from different products. If a cooking assignment is planned, time should be taken so that everybody can join and do their part in their own way.</li> <li>• After the whole learning process, children are happier because they are given what they want, thus making cooperation more pleasant for everybody involved.</li> <li>• Participants understood that the way they looked, pointed, smiled or moved their eyes had the consequence of them being able to get what they wanted. This resulted in the beautiful story of a boy who had always been given a sandwich with cheese, as the educators thought he did not like to eat meat. When given the chance to make a choice, he began choosing meat on his sandwich about three times a week.</li> <li>• It is also clear that they regularly chose different things, not only what is on the left or what has a certain colour or drawing.</li> </ul>

<b>Interactive English Lessons</b>	
<b>Place</b>	School MARISTA NUESTRA SEÑORA DE LA FUENCISLA (Segovia, SPAIN)
<b>Aim</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• To learn how to build knowledge through ideas and language;</li> <li>• To develop different strategies</li> <li>• To create knowledge based on an active use of the language;</li> <li>• To transform ideas into words and build ideas from words through a variety of individual and cooperative tasks.</li> </ul>
<b>Age group</b>	Young learners (first grade of primary education)
<b>Materials</b>	Pictures/ images, stationery, whiteboard
<b>Tasks implemented for achieving the aim</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Each pupil chooses a picture/image representing the starting point of their work. Pupils show their pictures and explain their reasons for having chosen it (pairs and whole group).</li> <li>• Thinking routine: I see / I think / I wonder: Pupils make a thinking routine based on their partner's picture/image (pairs).</li> <li>• Pictures and vocabulary exhibition: Each pupil writes down one or two words related to each picture and glue them under it. In pairs, they select the vocabulary they want to use for their pictures (whole group and pairs).</li> <li>• Come on! Draw it! In this new activity, each pupil chooses one picture and draws it (Individually).</li> <li>• "Words &amp; pictures have power": They classify the pictures into small groups. Each group designs a display with the pictures, drawings and words that they already have, but using new ideas from the group (small groups).</li> <li>• Share their work: The pupils share their work and explain what they have done, why they have done it, and the meaning of their display (whole group).</li> <li>• The treasure of the new ideas: Pupils analyse all the steps and write down all the new ideas/knowledge they have acquired individually and whole group).</li> </ul>
<b>Conclusions and suggestions:</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Helping each other makes the activities more enjoyable.</li> <li>• Students from different classes put together makes it more interesting for the students.</li> </ul>




## **Spider Web**

Place Kindergarten "EL BOSQUE DE DARWIN"( Maracena, Granada, SPAIN)



<b>Aim</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• To create a net in an open space and establish there a place where to get knowledge and inspiration,</li> <li>• To foster creativity and imagination,</li> <li>• To observe and experience the stimuli we receive from nature,</li> <li>• To manipulate new objects,</li> <li>• To awaken different senses, etc.</li> </ul>
<b>Age group</b>	2-3 year old children (2 groups)
<b>Materials</b>	Rattles and rings of wood, coloured threads
<b>Tasks implemented for achieving the aim</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The first part of the activity consists of the creation of a spider web outside the classroom (in the outer courtyard) and is done by the students of 2 classrooms of the school.</li> <li>• The second part of the activity involves decorating a large spider web made from coloured cords with the collaboration of the children, in which new elements such as coloured bows, wooden rings and bells are introduced.</li> <li>• Students and educators go out to the outer court and present to the students the activity to be carried out.</li> <li>• Students are shown the materials to be used and they are allowed to manipulate them.</li> <li>• Educators begin to make a spider web linking wool of different colours around the trees, leaving a considerable height so that the children can pass underneath.</li> <li>• For the second part, everybody meet again in the courtyard under the spider's web.</li> <li>• Each educator with the help of the children ties rattles and rings of wood to the ends of different coloured threads. Once the ties are completed, they are added to the large spider web.</li> </ul>
<b>Conclusions and suggestions:</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• It is considered creative since the children act freely doing the activity themselves, imitating their peers and educators in the realization.</li> <li>• Children play and interact with the different elements, thus promoting their creativity and observing the different sounds transmitted by the elements when they collide with each other in the wind or when moved by the children.</li> </ul>

## Creative learning spaces

<b>Games and Creative Environment in the Hallways of School</b>	
Place	K. Valdemara primary school. (Gulbene district, LATVIA)
	
Aim	To offer students an alternative way of spending their free time during the breaks.
Age group	7-16 years old students, but the activities can be adapted also to working with any age group.
Materials	Puzzles, board games and stationery.
How was the creative learning environment created	Different puzzles, games and stationery are placed for students to use during the breaks were placed in the hallways of the school.
How does the learning environment support creativity?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Students spend their breaks together, interacting with each other and developing their social skills.</li> <li>• When playing different games, students come up with new games and rules.</li> <li>• They create different decorations for the hallway, put their works in the little exhibition and inspire and motivate students to participate even more.</li> <li>• Students learn from each other different skills and ideas;</li> </ul>
What activities take place in the creative environment?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• During the breaks, students have the opportunity to use the games and materials available in the hallways of school. Students can draw, create and play different board games and puzzles. Students create new games from the given ones by coming up with new rules.</li> </ul>
How did the project support this creative learning environment?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Participation in the project gave lots of ideas and experience regarding how to develop a creative learning environment.</li> </ul>
Conclusions and suggestions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Students' activity in using the provided materials decreases with time when comparing their activity on the first day with that on the fifth.</li> <li>• When placing the materials, it is recommended not to place all of the available materials on the first day but to occasionally change them and/or add something new, thus keeping the element of surprise during the whole week as it keeps students motivated and excited to participate even on the last day.</li> <li>• The hallways of school thus become a creative environment inviting students to become active learners also during the breaks.</li> <li>• As the hallways were used as an art gallery for students' works, it also worked as a tool in enhancing students' imagination and creativity.</li> </ul>

## **Development of the Students Council's Workplace.**

Place K. Valdemara primary school (Gulbene district, LATVIA)



<b>Aim</b>	Students describe the ideal place for work and studies; defining the perfect workplace.
<b>Age group</b>	7-16 years old students, but the activities can be adapted also to working with any age group.
<b>Materials</b>	Stationery, music (and everything needed for playing music).
<b>How was the creative learning environment created</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Students choose their place in the room where they feel most comfortable;</li> <li>• While listening to the music, students close their eyes and try to imagine and describe what is the ideal workplace and what the room should look like in order to inspire and motivate the creativity and active participation.</li> <li>• On the given sheets of paper students wrote and drew what the room they would enjoy spending their time and working should look like</li> <li>• Students shared their ideas, decide on the best solutions and come up with an action plan for achieving the aim.</li> <li>• Students planned how to use the available finances by searching for ideas on the Internet. Students came up with different ideas on what can be created on their own by using already available resources as well.</li> <li>• Students presented their ideas to the headmaster of the school. The school provided finances for the room's refurbishment works.</li> <li>• The room was painted according to students' design.</li> <li>• Mobile desks which can be used separately or put together as one big table were ordered to keep the room creative and functional, as students had to be able to move and reorganize the room easily according to their needs and activities taking place.</li> <li>• During the school year and summer camp, students created different things that made the room even more creative and cosy. They painted old chairs and made a hanger for clothes, curtains and painted glasses. They also prepared different decor, such as bottles filled with different materials, sewed pillows, lamps, etc.</li> <li>• Different items were bought according to the design of the students, including puffs, gym mattresses, a clock, a garbage bin, pegs, stationery, carpet and board games.</li> <li>• Students came up with rules that had to be respected whilst being in the room.</li> <li>• Students organized and placed everything according to their commonly set vision and the design of the room.</li> </ul>
<b>How does the learning environment support creativity?</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Letting students be in charge of the room and its design helps them take responsibility and fosters their creativity.</li> <li>• Students seeing that their ideas are implemented and their goals achieved are even more inspired and motivated to work and set further goals and achieve them.</li> <li>• Surrounded by a self-made and self-envisioned creative environment fosters creativity, as their own work is appreciated not only by teachers but also by peers.</li> </ul>
<b>What activities take place in the creative environment?</b>	The room where Student Council has its meetings in order to discuss school related topics, share their ideas and plan activities.

How did the project support this creative learning environment?	Participation in the project gave students and teacher the chance to visit, experience different creative environments, activities and solutions in the Netherlands and Latvia, thus inspiring and motivating creation of such an environment for the Student Council that would foster creativity.
Conclusions and suggestions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Students might find it difficult at first to think outside of the box and let their imagination and fantasy wander, as they are used to the idea that there is only one possible way that a school environment can look like (desks, chairs, computers).</li> <li>• To fuel students' imagination, different pictures representing possible room designs, colours etc. can be offered, thus helping them move away from the idea that the school environment is rigid and cannot be changed.</li> </ul>

## **Createctura**

Place	Santander, SPAIN
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Aim	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• To foster young people's passion for learning and their innate curiosity</li> <li>• To individualize the learning process according to the participants' needs and objectives;</li> <li>• To prioritize the process of learning about the content, i.e. teaching to learn, autonomously and from genuine interest and enjoyment.</li> </ul>
Age group	Createctura runs workshops for children ranging from 1 -12 years old
Materials	Various second hand materials, colours, brushes, nature materials etc,
How was the creative learning environment created	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The Createctura project comes from the Galatea Educational Association, a non-profit organization that was founded in 2011 to promote educational innovation and active learning.</li> <li>• Createctura creates learning spaces around diverse disciplines such as science, music, architecture and the graphic and applied arts, based on methodologies obtained from years of pedagogical research.</li> </ul>
How does the learning environment support creativity?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Usually the space is prepared so that the learners can have a starting point that determines what are they supposed to do, but nothing is completely closed to a specific way of interaction so that they feel free to create within a frame. Sometimes they are supposed to completely transform the space with the elements displayed.</li> <li>• The learning space is always active, open to changes, and different during each session. The space is supposed to offer alternatives, so that there are three different spaces to discover and interact with.</li> <li>• There is always a kind of "refuge space" where the children can hide from adults, find their own place, or simply to feel they are safe. But there is also the opposite, a</li> </ul>



	<p>place where they can move, run, destroy, so that they will be able to take out their energy. This is why the design of the space before each workshop is the key aspect of the activity.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Being able to move freely around the grounds of Createctura gives the participants the ability to interact with each other and look at different objects, materials, environment as a whole from different perspectives;</li> <li>• The holistic approach to learning promotes learners' ability to think outside the box and find creative solutions to different problems</li> </ul>
What activities take place in the creative environment?	<p>Workshops on:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Graphics and applied arts</li> <li>• Design and architecture for children</li> <li>• Rhythm and movement</li> <li>• Science and sustainability</li> </ul>

### ***Nature Classroom “Alpujarra” (Aula de la Naturaleza “La Alpujarra”)***

Place	Bérchules (Granada, SPAIN)
	
Aim	To provide students with a place of encounter with nature, where groups can experience nature and through a variety of activities and sports learn and share with each other their knowledge and experience.
Age group	80% are school groups and 20% are groups of different types: European projects groups, scouts, training courses, NGOs ...
Materials	Nature materials, stationery etc.
How was the creative learning environment created	Educational activities have been developed by the organization for many years, but facilities were being rented that were inadequate in meeting the organization's goals. Then the opportunity to visit a unique natural environment which was isolated and had a spatial distribution of equipment that avoids visual impact and could be integrated in the natural environment, while still having all the necessary resources. Potential groups might have been lost due to the distance from large cities, but it was possible to create a special place on the edge of the Natural and National Park of Sierra Nevada that met the characteristics that the organization was looking for in creating a “natural” learning environment, by feeling and living it fully.

<p><b>How does the learning environment support creativity?</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The natural environment in which the nature classroom is located is already an inspiring place in all its aspects.</li> <li>• "Isolation" in the countryside is a determining factor in promoting creativity and learning, as external factors can modify the essence of group dynamics with school groups and minors</li> <li>• Usage of mobile or digital media, and the Wi-Fi network is not available, coexistence and fellowship are encouraged as a basis for working on the different learning proposals that are being worked on.</li> <li>• The educators' team is another aspect that most valued in the areas and another fundamental factor in the development of activities. At the time of illusion and motivation in the processes of learning and creativity that are developed in the working spaces, the team is carefully selected and trained. It is critical that each person who passes through the nature classroom, takes an experience that they never forget.</li> <li>• As for resources, there is a large amount of consumable materials and resources for workshops that support creativity, such as old wood molds for cloth dyes, old Dutch wooden molds to make gingerbread, natural materials for science workshops, and work areas distributed throughout the farm (in the nursery, on the playground, ect.)</li> </ul>
<p><b>What activities take place in the creative environment?</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A fair organized by children in which there are different activities that they carry out: a laughter tunnel, makeup, massage, the whole area decorated for the fair, music, etc.</li> <li>• Fashion jewellery: pendants, bracelets, felt ...</li> <li>• Performances (dances, theatres, newspaper, songs, performances, magic, ect.)</li> <li>• Upcycling workshops (paper, purses with milk brick, ect.)</li> <li>• Cooking time with pizza, biscuits, sponge cake, kite bread, ect.</li> <li>• With each group, a story is developed day by day and the theme is intended to have educational content (Boabdil and the history of Granada, Darwin, Da Vinci, ect.)</li> <li>• The most magical moment is usually in the evenings where the staging, the special effects and the performances happen, It is essential to involve youth as characters in the story.</li> </ul>
<p><b>How did the project support this creative learning environment?</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The participation of several members of the Aula team in the "Looking @ Learning" project enriched them both personally and professionally. The experiences and knowledge from the activities carried out in centres of Netherlands and Latvia made them grow and adapt the most interesting activities to their practices.</li> <li>• After the experience and the positive results obtained with the realization of "The Traveller's Notebook" and the Escape room, the methods were included in our programs and catalogue of activities.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Conclusions and suggestions</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A team of educators, teachers, trainers with motivation and predisposition to learn and innovate is able to create environments and spaces that invite creativity and unleash the imagination and creativity of young people.</li> <li>• Located in the middle of nature, the nature classroom encourages and inspires students to use natural resources to create. Taking into account the possibilities that are offered, creativity is put into practice through workshops, actions, and upcycling activities using materials, lights, sound equipment, musical instruments, books, mirrors, paper, boxes, padlocks and natural materials.</li> <li>• Materials are needed to give free rein to the imagination and create objects, recycles, spaces, environments, performances.</li> </ul>

## Annex 2

# Study Results of the Project "Looking @ Learning" The Final Report on Latvia December 2016

## Chapter 1 Research methodology

The final study report covers the results of stages 2 and 3.

The second stage is a continuation of the state of art *"The First Looking at Learning"* research of the understanding and perception of creative learning and creative learning environments among agents of formal and non-formal education. After the seminar which was attended by all project participants in August of 2015, study methodology was developed in order to assess future activities of the project in relation to the creative teaching methods. Two research methods were chosen for the project and they were implemented from September, 2015 until May, 2016:

- analysis of documents of qualitative nature where project participants' (hereinafter - educators/facilitators) diaries are viewed as documents. Diaries reflect experience and subjective characterisation and assessment of applied creative teaching methods of the educators who implement creative teaching methods in their work in both formal and non-formal educational environments. The report uses the content of 45 diaries dealing with about 40 applied creative methods. For the structure of the diaries, see Annex 5; for the list of methods, see Annex 10.
- a quantitative survey with questionnaires where the participants of creative activities (hereinafter – trainees/youth/respondents/ learners) were asked to assess the activity/workshop/lesson. The survey was carried out both in person by distributing the questionnaire to trainees after workshops and electronically through [www.visidati.lv](http://www.visidati.lv). For the questionnaire, see Annex 6. The survey results were obtained at the end of 12 different lessons, The analysis of the questionnaire was done by evaluating answers to seven questions given by 204 respondents, and summarizes the responses in the area of the formal and non-formal environmental education activities.

The third stage of the study was carried out from June to November 2016, based on the "escape room" approach to implementation of creative learning environment created during the seminar in the Netherlands, June 2016. Study stage 3 used the improved stage 2 diary (see Annex 7) and a questionnaire (see Annex 8). During the stage 3 of the study, 5 Latvian Eduesc@perooms were implemented, each of them described in the educator's diary. Eduesc@peroom evaluation questionnaires were completed by 128 respondents - children aged 4-12 and adolescents aged 13-30, both on the website [www.visidati.lv](http://www.visidati.lv), and in person after the session. The results of stage 3 therefore reflect the educators' and young people's experiences and views on the Eduesc@peroom as one of the creative learning environment promoting approaches.



## Chapter 2. The Results of Study Stage 2

### 2.1. Document analysis

Educators' diaries reveal various methods that are used in both formal and non-formal learning environments; these methods were used with trainees of different ages, starting with pre-schoolers and ending with master's students. Since the methods and their influence on the trainees of different ages are not comparable, the interim report includes the main conclusions and trends that are revealed in the stories from educators' experiences.

Educators' diaries present different experiences of environment as a part of creative learning. Not all creative activities require specially equipped space. It is enough if there are bare necessities: a computer and office supplies. Trainees are able to express themselves creatively with minimal equipment. Educators suggest using all available facilities, such as a library, in order to undermine the belief that teaching/learning can only take place in classrooms. Moreover, traditional rooms can be made cosier in order to facilitate the comprehension of a theme. For example, learners and educators can bring coffee and refreshments to encourage non-formal discussion and sharing of experience, or learners might listen to music during creative workshops. Educators' experience has also shown the importance of certain materials (e.g., *fair trade* coffee, recycled materials) in organization of creative activities. The study results also reveal opportunities to diversify the learning environment, such as placing games, magazines and other materials in the hallways during the lesson breaks to encourage young people's interest and provide opportunity to spend their free time productively. As a positive example, we can mention classes organized in K. Valdemara elementary school to help trainees make the choice in which of the Student Council commissions to participate. Being outdoors and observing silence can be viewed as a positive factor: *"Students really liked to be outdoors. Before making their choice some of them lay down on the benches, looked into the sky and thought"*. Educator pointed out that the change of environment motivates and interests students.

Creative activities provide opportunity to see the same environment from a different point of view (in different seasons environmental objects can be used for various purposes without giving advance instructions on the use of new objects), thus encouraging cooperation (*"one realizes opportunities and shows them to others"*), trust, self-confidence and finding of "new combinations". At the same time, the room where the activity takes place must fit the number and age of participants as well as the content of the activity. For example, it should provide the chance to do something alone if that is intended in the lesson plan. According to survey results, various forms of innovation and creative expression in Latvian formal and non-formal educational institutions are currently rather topical. Educators and educational administration go on experience visits, cooperate with representatives of non-formal education and learn a variety of ideas for improvement of space and creative workshops for the organization of creative activities. One educator acknowledges that the attitude of the management of educational establishment is the crucial factor in encouraging both educators and learners.

It can be concluded on the basis of educators' diaries that having a creative, attractive learning environment is not always the main prerequisite for successful running of creative activities. Good results can be achieved with minor changes. At the same time, educational institutions pay more attention to making the environment friendly and pleasant for trainees.

Learners appreciate an opportunity to think, reflect, and speak about themselves, their goals, dreams and desires. This opportunity for learners to generate and express ideas also motivates them to present and defend them. Educators point out that some learners occasionally astonish them with their ability to present their ideas and generally participate in the activities. The creative methods that are associated with opportunities for learners to ponder about themselves, to acknowledge and formulate their feelings and ideas, are assessed as successful and expedient: *"During the learning process trainees need activities that create inner feelings, positive attitude towards something"*. Positively assessed are those

creative methods that allow learners to know one another better (e.g., hobby game, praising one another), teach cooperation, mutual trust and respect towards one another's needs.

In order to discover which methods are the most useful and effective from the youth's perspective, a survey was organized in one of the schools where youth were asked to assess the methods used in different subjects. The results of this survey revealed that young people rather dislike classical teaching methods – lectures, presentations, summaries – preferring freer methods that are closer linked to real life: discussions, museum visits, independent studies, an abundance of examples in the presentation of study materials, films, etc. It is possible that students are looking for the easiest way to learn, choosing unsophisticated teaching methods; however, it may also reflect inadequacy and ineffectiveness of the traditional teaching methods in the learning process.

It must be said that going outside the traditional framework of lessons is not easy and educators do not always gain learners' approval. There are several possible reasons: laziness, unwillingness to work hard and the fear of going beyond normal boundaries: *"Everybody remained sitting at the desks the same way as before. It was obvious that students were afraid of doing something wrong"*. A similar experience is revealed by another educator who wrote that even trying to imagine their perfect learning environment learners' ideas were rather limited: *"Very few colours, rather traditional approach to fitting-out of the room"*. Thus, the creative methods initially encounter resistance, but gradually, with support, encouragement and positive examples, learners may see their opportunities, choices and are able to look at things from a different point of view.

One thing that can contribute to creative thinking is a task where the result is be practically useful, for example, creating a bookmark or making a cuddly doll. Another motivating factor could be an opportunity to see the results of one's work in an exhibition or to incorporate initial ideas in school projects. For example, after a discussion about values, the youth in the town of Limbaži actively participated in the development of the plan to reduce specific problems in the school through the School Parliament: *"To present good example to the society and schoolmates, demonstrating that it is possible to live and behave differently, better"*. Educators also note as a positive factor the possibility of learners discussing an issue themselves and coming to their own conclusions.

Sometimes creative lessons give results that surpass the expected and lead to the so-called "synergy effect" – mutual assistance, kindness, and understanding of one another. Youth easily break stereotypes (for example, boys do not want and are not able to sew) and unleash the better part of their personalities: *"Trainees sat in a circle around the worktable, shared their impressions and childhood memories... there was an atmosphere of kindness, helpfulness and support"*.

Educators and youth see limited time as one of the factors that hinder creative activities. Educators see unwillingness of youth to get involved in the proposed activities as challenging. They attempt to solve it by dividing learners into groups so that each learner has some duties and no chance to avoid being a part. Lack of time is repeatedly mentioned in educators' diaries. Furthermore, the possibility of fulfilling the plan slowly, talking about it, explaining the process, supporting young people, is considered as one of the success factors of creative lessons. Thus several educators point out that it is better to organize a lesson where the emphasis is placed on living (experiencing) the process, instead of number of activities.

Particular emphasis should be placed on the combination of creative methods with traditional teaching methods and approaches. Educators' diary entries reveal positive experience with using creative learning methods in more difficult subjects, such as Latvian or English grammar. The experience of both educators and trainees tell of the effectiveness of the combined methods in learning of topics: *"Students liked the lesson; they often ask to repeat these types of lessons"*.

Educators' diaries also describe a situation when creative activities are less effective if youth and their educators are forced to participate in them. It means that creative activities cannot be implemented mechanically, subjecting to school administration instructions, without co-ordination with concerned educators and young people. The attitude of the colleagues is also important while implementing creative

activities. If the colleagues do not support implementation of creative activities, to youth it gives an impression that this lesson is not important. And vice versa – the involvement of educators becomes an expression of respect to their colleagues and youth. Educators' diary entries confirm the idea that the implementation of creative methods is gradual, and first of all it requires a change in thinking and attitudes of educators. Consequently, the practice of sharing of the knowledge among colleagues, playing games together and allowing for creative expression is welcome.

It is important to explain the importance of interactive learning methods and their interfaces with everyday life, as well as to allow time for reflection on the things done and experienced during the lessons: *"change the belief that this style of training is aimed at self-development, rather than „silly game playing“"*.

One of the teachers' diaries reveals a successful experience, which can be viewed as a good practice in promoting creative learning environments. Namely, children and young people (ages 7-16) were entrusted with the responsibility of organizing a Valentine's Day event at school on their own. The description of the process and results shows that youth people appreciate being entrusted with responsibility and are enthusiastic in carrying out their ideas. Responsibility also facilitates cooperation and mutual trust: *"An adult wants to control youth fearing that youth won't do things as well as an adult. But when youth are given freedom they surprise adults with interesting and sometimes extraordinary results"*. The idea of entrusting youth with more responsibility is expressed in other research diaries as well, such as assessing his or her own work and the work of others: *"Students.. believe that the teacher will do the assessing, instead of trying to evaluate their work, attitude, skill level themselves, making informed judgement"*.

A similar experience is also recounted by the representatives of Limbaži organized race "Forest trot", where the most appreciated aspect was the opportunity for individuals of all ages to participate together with classmates and family: *"I liked everything! Delicious soup and great people!"*

## **2.2. Analysis of survey results**

This part included the analysis of all of the questions except for the first, which asked to briefly describe what was done during workshops/classes. These data are collected and analysed in conjunction with the qualitative information obtained from the educators' diaries.

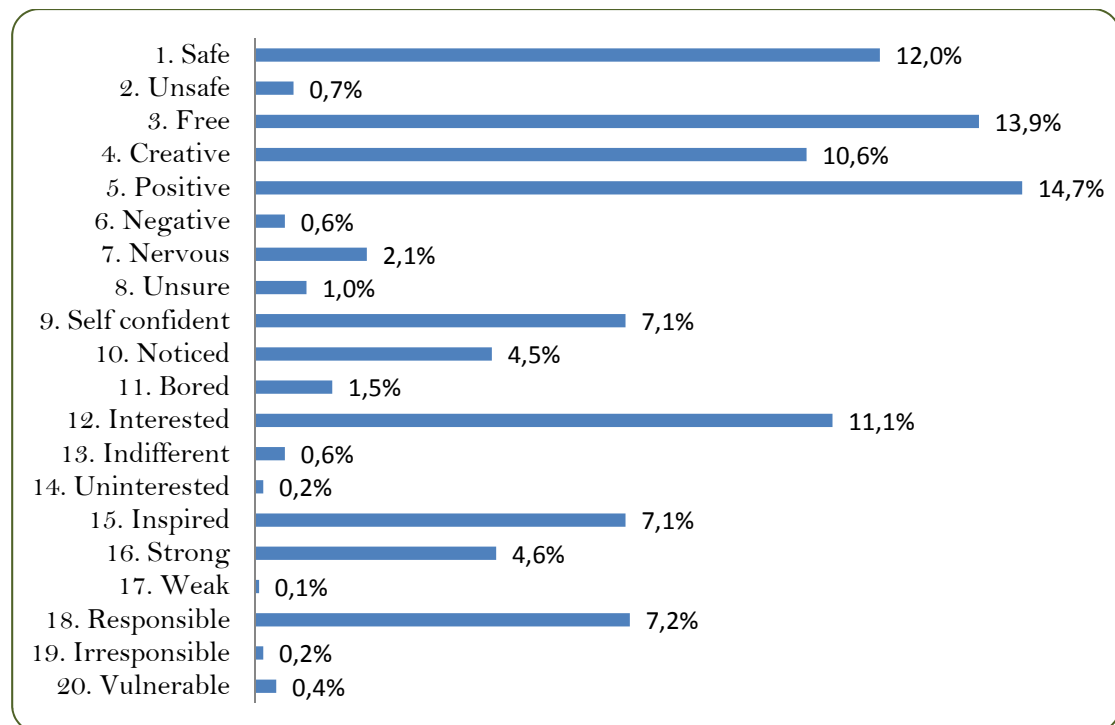
Upon analysing respondents' replies to the second question (see Figure 1) about their feelings during the workshop or a course, it can be concluded that majority of respondents marked the responses (respondents had the opportunity to mark the number of responses on this issue, which could lead to a diverse range of emotions describing how they felt during the class) that were mostly positive.

Distribution of answers about how most young people felt during the class shows a positive assessment (14.7%); young people felt free (13.9%), safe (12%), interested (11.1%) and creative (10.6%). Distribution of answers suggests that workshops are positively perceived and evaluated, so it can be assumed that if the learners feel good, understood, appreciated and creative, then the workshop process will be more manageable and it will be easier for educators to reach the workshop goal. Evaluating their experience, young people often have testified of other feelings such as responsibility (7.2%), inspiration (7.1%) and power (4.6%).

There were some less positive feelings in connection with activities, such as nervousness (2.1%), boredom (1.5%), being unsure of oneself (1%), uncertainty (0.7%) and indifference (0.6%). These responses reveal that educators often fail to sufficiently motivate and interest young people in activities if they initially do not want to get involved and participate with others.

The overall conclusion is that only a small proportion (about 7%) of young people assessed their feelings during the workshop as less positive, suggesting that the workshops are generally interesting and engaging. Taking into account the assessment of feelings, it should be noted that the rating of feelings during activities can also often be linked to how young people feel that day in general; their feelings can be

affected by a number of factors that are not identified in this survey (e.g., relationships with friends or members of the group, family, etc.).

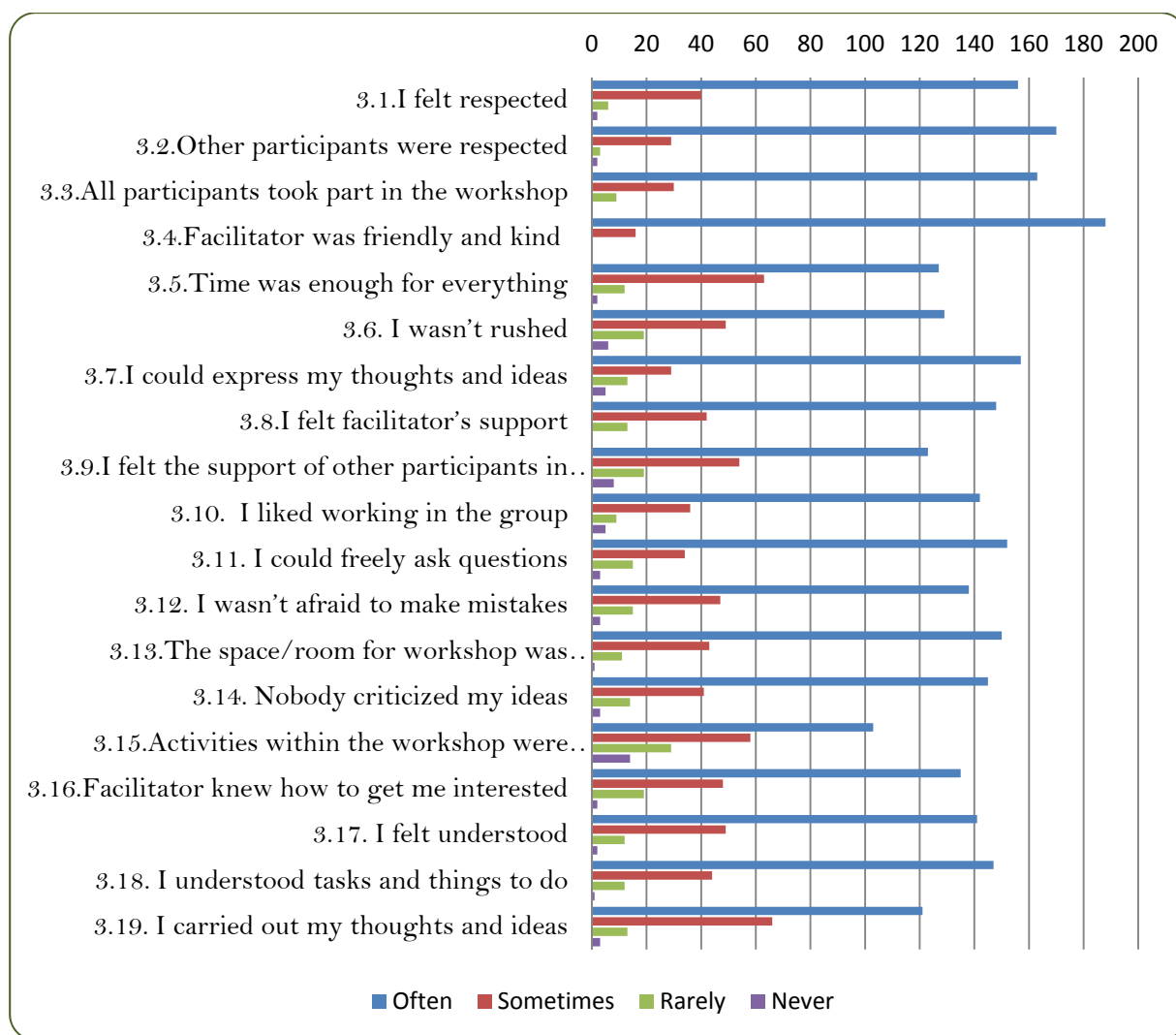


*Figure 1. Feeling of the young people during lessons/activities  
Total survey data (n=204)*

Respondents' responses about the activities in which they participated (Question 3) were evaluated according to several criteria (a total of 19, see Figure 2), where young people could express their views and assessments as to what had happened during creative sessions.

Answers as a whole show that young people's views and assessment of the activities are positive, because the response that was noted by the majority of respondents was "often." This means that throughout the lessons they had enough opportunities to get involved, participate and feel free.

The most important criteria that were marked with "often" by majority of respondents are as follows: educators' work was noted by virtually all respondents (188 respondents); respondents pointed out that the activity leader had been gracious and friendly; that the other participants were taken into account and listened to (170 respondents) and also that the respondent himself/herself was taken into account and listened to (156 respondents) during the activities. Young people noted as important that all participants were engaged in the lessons/activity (163 respondents that marked the answer "often"), and that young people were able to express their thoughts and ideas (157 respondents) and had the freedom to ask questions (152 respondents).



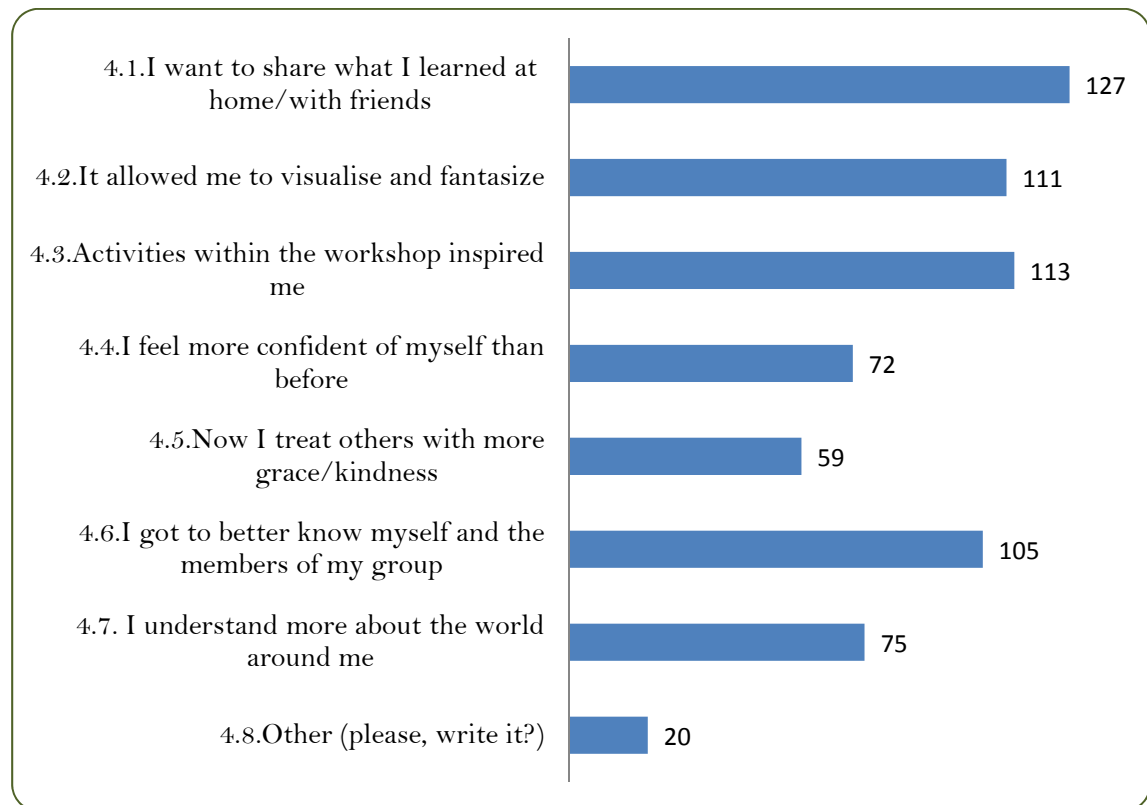
*Figure 2. Participants' opinion and assessment of the activities  
Total survey data (n=204)*

In analysing the division of the responses that were assessed with "sometimes", the following areas should be pointed out: opportunity to carry out their views and ideas during the activities (66 respondents), chance to feel the support of other participants (54 respondents) and feeling of not being rushed (49 respondents).

One very important aspect that needs further consideration is related to the length of lessons and time for activities. The results show that a third of young people experienced difficulties in this area; quite many of them did not have enough time to finish the task, and 63 respondents gave the answer "sometimes" for this criterion. A noticeable number of respondents gave the answers "rarely" (12 respondents) and "never" (2 respondents) for this criterion.

It should be said that many young people had previously encountered methods proposed by educators, as the answers "sometimes," "rarely" and "never" were given by almost half of the respondents answering the question about the lesson activities being something totally new. It leads to the conclusion that there is a sufficient number of educators in both formal and non-formal educational environments that use creative and innovative methods and indicate that great importance can be assigned to an educator's ability to generate a creative environment and use creative methods in the educational process.

Question 4 was focused on finding out what young people think about the benefits of specific classes and activities. On this issue, respondents were able to mark multiple answers to the seven offered statements (see Figure 3).



*Figure 3. Youth's opinion on the benefits from lessons / workshops  
Total survey data (n=204)*

Young people's views on the various benefits of the activity indicate several important trends. First, about half of the surveyed young people are willing to share lessons learned. This is very important because in this way, it contributes to the transference of new knowledge and skills to other agents in the educational environment and the home. It can be explained by the answers about other benefits, such as the fact that activities have inspired them and allowed them to think and express themselves in creative ways. This suggests that educators' work has been fruitful when working with creative approaches and methods. Second, such activities contribute to young people's self-confidence and self-assurance and improve their understanding of group/team members, thus potentially raising their chances to better cooperate both in classes and outside of them. Third, the development of an understanding of local and global issues and processes contributes to young people's ability to understand and act in the light of what is happening to the environment and to understand their role in these processes. This is evidenced by the responses on this issue. For example, *"Together with my group mates I came up with this new idea to carry out in the school with the help of School Parliament"*, or *"I was inspired to get more involved in the work of NGOs"*.

With regard to what young people found unpleasant, hindering or enjoyable during classes, there was a variety of answers given, which generally shows a number of key positive and negative aspects (see Figure 4).

Overall it can be concluded that there are a number of positive aspects that seem engaging and speak to young people during creative activities; many responses, including the following examples, indicate that respondents liked everything they were offered:



*“... I liked everything, good experience, I learned many new things, my eyes saw a different world (a world where self-assured people want to do something good for the world to make it a sustainable place)”.*

*“I liked the ice-breaking and games; they encouraged to read more about the topic we touched on and to use the knowledge in the everyday life”.*

*“...to meet the people that participated in the previous class, to meet them after 6 months and realize that the classes in August inspired and changed us all”.*

*“...I like the people: the trainers, the participants; the schedule was tight but the overall atmosphere was calm, the accommodations and food were perfect”.*



*Figure 4. Youth's likes and dislikes during the activities  
Total survey results (n=204)*



Analysing the aspects that were viewed as unpleasant or troublesome, the lack of time given to complete the tasks appeared in the young people's responses as an essential aspect. Another aspect that appeared to be even more significant was being disturbed by other participants less interested in completing the tasks.

*"...there wasn't enough time to come up with ideas; other participants were more talkative, and it was difficult for me to get support from trainers and other participants"*

*"..I really disliked that other classmates did not care for those doing the tasks; they were making noise instead of paying attention to others".*

It must be concluded that overall young people enjoy workshops, but the recommendation to educators is to pay attention to issues related to noisiness during workshops, to make sure the task is sufficiently explained and understood by participants, and to evaluate time limit for different tasks and activities.

Analysing answers to question 7 (see Figure 5) about willingness of young people to change things after having participated in creative activities, it can be concluded that a rather large number of young people (43%) are ready to act differently based on their newly-obtained knowledge and/or experience.

This is evidenced by the detailed answers on this matter that generally show that young people are willing to learn and explore the world, begin changes in themselves and encourage others to change, develop and create new ideas, take the initiative to build new traditions, and become more involved in activities and work in groups.

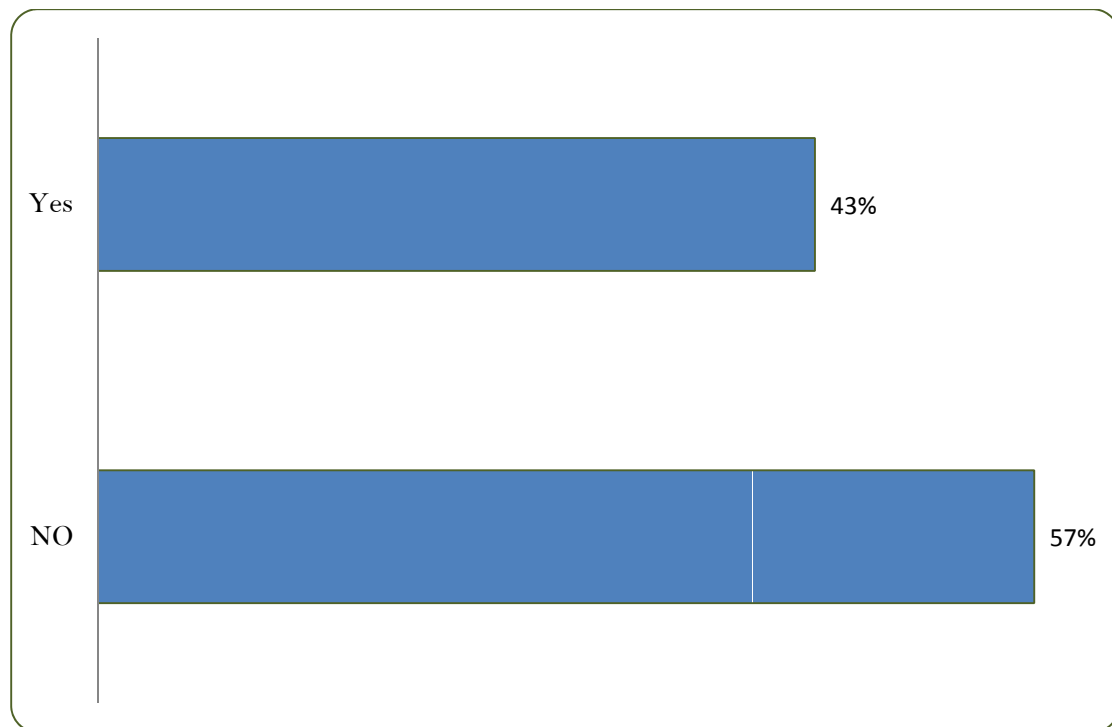
*"... I commit myself to doing and working more in order to reach my goals"*

*"...I understand the meaning, importance and value of follow up meetings; I will include this type of meeting at the end of the project when the participants will be more motivated to create and develop activities for spreading the results in their own environment"*

*"...I am willing to take initiative and be more active in the work of NGOs"*

*".. I am ready to reflect more since it helps to recall all I learned previously, to take interest in the environmental issues; the class enhanced my critical thinking; I realized that people should think globally instead of concentrating on themselves".*

Young people are willing to work more creatively and to team up with others, thus being more daring, feeling safer, and practising being more thoughtful and friendlier with others.



*Figure 5. Youth's view on their readiness to do things differently than before  
Total survey data (n=204)*

The overall conclusion is that in evaluating creative activities and workshops experienced in formal and non-formal educational settings, youth's responses point towards several trends. A majority of respondents feel positive towards creative activities and are willing to participate in the future while often stressing *"if the trainer will prepare them"*. It means that participants are not willing to take initiative in developing these types of workshops.

Young people mostly welcome creative activities, especially in a group setting. Although opposing views do appear (*"less group work, focus more on the work"*), young people appreciate the chance to express their thoughts. A very important trend is that after creative activities young people think and reflect on important issues and values, and commit to being fairer, helpful, thinking more about the environment, etc.

## Chapter 3. The Results of Study Stage 3

### **3.1. The results of document analysis**

In the period from June to November 2016, Latvian project partners implemented five different "Eduesc@perooms" (each has been used in a number of groups of young people); the results described in learners' diaries were used in the document analysis.

Eduesc@perooms were organized in the following locations:

1. in Jaunpils castle: "Mistery in Jaunpils castle";
2. in Gulbene Youth Initiative centre: "B.u.M.s." "School guard Alexander";
3. in Gulbene during the summer camp "Land of pomegranates" of K.Valdemar's elementary school "Pomegranate";
4. in Gulbene Secondary school #2: "If you have nothing to do, call me, son!";
5. in Ikšķile Free school: "Chest of light".

Objectives set by the organizers of the Eduesc@peroom organizers, in theory, can be divided into two groups:

- 1) the acquisition of individual knowledge and skills, as well as development of individual skills and character. In particular context Eduesc@peroom can be linked to specific tasks taken from a variety of subjects, such as operations with fractions, solving of puzzles, learning historical facts, etc. These tasks promote young peoples awareness of social and psychological problems, tolerance, attentiveness and ability to think outside the usual standards. Educators recognize that one of the most essential positive aspects of Eduesc@peroom is an opportunity for a young person to know oneself better. Once in a strange, uncertain situation, a person is given a chance to observe his or her own reactions and to gain awareness of his or her own personality, strengths and weaknesses;
- 2) skills that can be learned in a team setting – cooperation, collective decision-making, leadership nomination. In Eduesc@peroom young people are encouraged to cooperate and participate in team building in a practical sense, which is not always an easy and quick process. However, in collaboration, young people may discover not only their own but also other team members' characteristics, learning to trust, make joint decisions and to cooperate. As it is emphasized by educators, youth groups do not always act as one during the game, and it can certainly be concluded that mutual cooperation increases the efficiency and speed with which the team copes with challenges.

In real life, these objectives are not compartmentalized, but complement each other and are integrated into any Eduesc@peroom scenario. This is confirmed by an educator's conclusion that a creative learning environment is made of *"the opportunity to choose, create and make their own decisions, be independent and at the same time work in a team"*.

Educators recognize that Eduesc@peroom is a good learning tool that allow the tasks and topics included in the study to be learned without any special effort, simultaneously creating positive feelings about the learning process itself: *"If you ask the participants whether they believe that were studying, every one of them replies that certainly not because it was easy and fun, like a game. Because learning is associated with the difficulties and hard work"*. It is possible that this rather unusual way can generate interest in the own learning or specific topics, where the use of traditional teaching methods fail to create any interest. Educators point to the potential for Eduesc@peroom to build bridges between different subjects and strengthen experiential learning.

Eduesc@peroom is a teaching method that specifically focuses on the alternative learning environment, which in turn stimulates the creative learning process. The results of Eduesc@peroom organization during the project confirm that the environment is crucial for young people in the unlocking of their creativity. Educators stress that an important component of the learning environment is a safe and simultaneously cosy and pleasant training room equipped non-traditionally and in accordance to the target group perceptions, supplemented by elements of the game. In such an environment, it is easier to go beyond individual and collective terms, prejudice or fear, and look at things in an unusual way.

Activity leaders note that Eduesc@peroom is a multidimensional creative teaching method that includes knowledge of its layout, organization, intended results and impact on young people. Although educators admit that the implementation of this method require a lot of time and ingenuity, it cannot be considered only as a single-use method. It can be developed and changed, engaging the learners and adjusting for different purposes. The experience of "Pomegranate Eduesc@peroom" organizers indicates that the following technique can successfully gather the knowledge and skills acquired over a long period of time (during the camp), while all Eduesc@peroom organizers emphasize the positive emotions derived by both young people and their educators, since *"it is extremely exciting to see a system that works for everyone"*.

On the subject of Eduesc@peroom methodological solutions, educators argue that since the game is based on one main story or problem that can be solved by the team in several possible ways, it demonstrates a creative approach. It is indispensable to reflect upon the time in an Eduesc@peroom,

revealing the feelings experienced by building self-acceptance and acceptance of others: *"we have placed a priority on discussing the game and building the understanding of human nature and choice, as well as personal attitudes and behaviour."* It helps educators to understand which technical and content improvements their Eduesc@peroom require and in which direction (knowledge, skills) to lead the next youth team, such as the development to their attention, logical thinking by the use of specific details etc. Educators stress that the feelings obtained through the process and the ability to creatively develop their own solution to the problem are more important than conquering Eduesc@peroom in the given time.

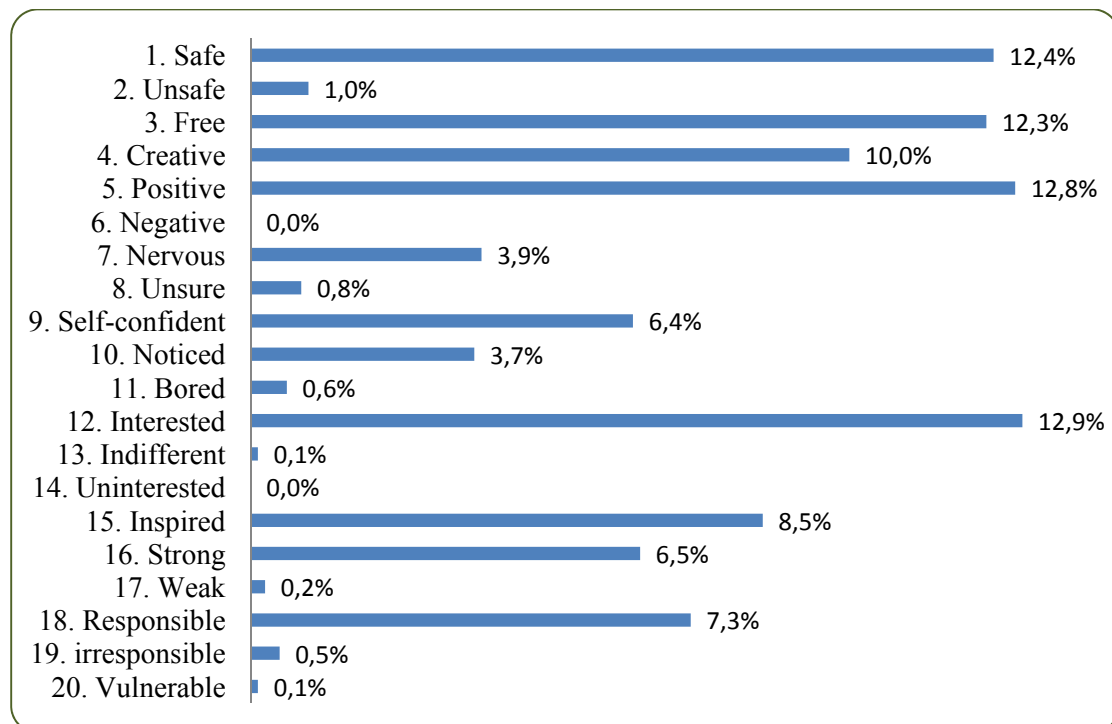
In summary, it can be concluded that the goal of Eduesc@peroom is to encourage creativity and challenge young people's personal and social qualities; this task has been accomplished in all cases implemented during the project.

### **3.2. The results of survey analysis**

Analysing the third stage of the research quantitative data, it should be noted that the questionnaire was adapted for Eduesc@peroom purposes, slightly changing the stage 2 questionnaire in the last question of the measurement scale and in the fourth question of answer distribution. Open question form has been maintained for the fifth and sixth questions, where the respondents were asked to describe their biggest likes and dislikes about the Eduesc@peroom.

In analysing the responses (see picture No. 6) about their feelings during the Eduesc@peroom at the time, it should be concluded that in general young people felt safe (12.4%), free (12.3%), positive (12.8%) and **interested** (12.9 %). The assessment of these feeling indicates that the new, unprecedented activities related to the educational process, are perceived with great interest and assessed positively. This suggests that new and innovative methods of education are needed, as they encourage educators to diversify the formal and non-formal learning environment. Analysing the other feelings, young people quite frequently noted effects like creativity (10%), inspiration (8.5%), accountability (7.3%) and self-confidence (6.5%). "Responsibility" was most frequently experienced by the young people in "Pomegranate land Eduesc@peroom". The distribution of responses shows that during Eduesc@peroom some young people felt worried (3.9%) and unsafe (1%); it could be explained as a reaction to an unknown activity that is the Eduesc@peroom because it is based on very different learning methods and tasks, and the importance of the ability to work in a team and collaborate. Often the time constraints of one of the tasks created additional anxiety.

Overall, the Eduesc@peroom approach to formal and non-formal education can be assessed as positive, because no young person has given a negative or impartial assessment of these types of activities.



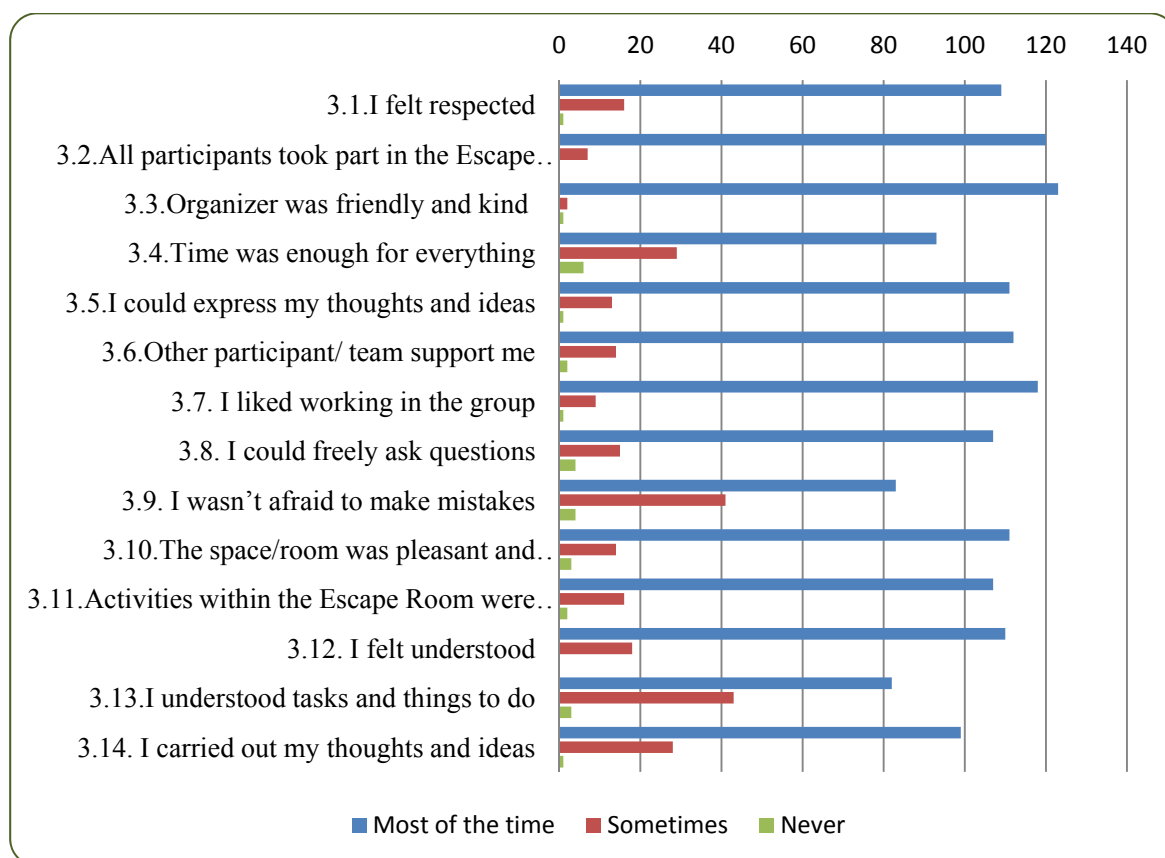
*Figure 6. Feeling of the Young people during Eduesc@peroom  
Total survey data (n=128)*

Respondents' opinions towards Eduesc@peroom were measured by slightly different criteria, comparing to the second phase of the survey (see figure # 2), which can be justified by the Eduesc@peroom specifics (see picture No. 7).

As shown by the distribution of answers, opinions and assessments of the Eduesc@peroom are very positive, because the young people liked the group leader's style and everyone felt involved in the process and was taken into account. These assessments also reveal the added value provided by this kind of group work. In contrast to the second phase of the activities, the Eduesc@peroom is something new and this particular group work is evaluated more positively than before. This type of activity is ideal for the formation of a team and strengthening the collaboration skills.

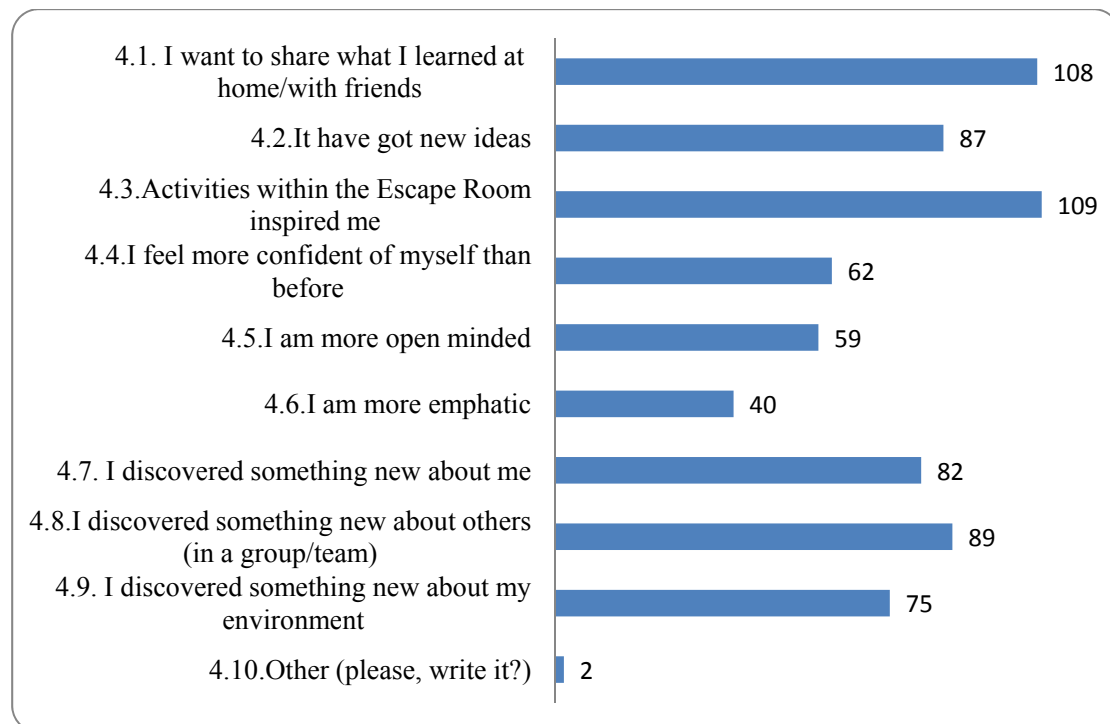
An important aspect that would have to be further reconsidered in order to use this method is the clarity of tasks and assignments, as a relatively large number of young people saw this area as the one with most uncertainty (41 respondents). As shown by the survey results, many young adults felt the pressure of 'timing' and the feeling of "not having a fear of mistake" that was noted as "sometimes" by 41 respondents. Perhaps the distribution of answers for "not having a fear of mistake" is directly attributed to the fact that young people do not have experience in such activities. Therefore, the results could be different if these young people participate in the same survey after having participated in another Eduesc@peroom. 29 respondents noted "sometimes" when asked about the implementation of their thoughts and ideas, which can be explained by the very idea of Eduesc@peroom that was initially designed as having different assignments and tasks and thus by nature is different from other methods of formal and non-formal education.





*Figure 7. Youth's opinion and assessment of the Eduesc@peroom  
Total survey data (n=128)*

One of the key questions is what the benefits (see picture No. 8) of the creative and innovative methods in working with young people are. Given the fact that the Eduesc@peroom is a new approach to education and hence it is an entirely new experience, one must appreciate the fact that 84% of all surveyed young people admit that Eduesc@perooms have been very inspiring and they would love to share their experiences with their family and friends. Equally important is that many have benefitted in getting to know themselves and others better, and the ability to generate new ideas has improved. Positive and motivating experiences offers new ideas, in particular on how to learn and use everyday things to learn something new. Half of the surveyed young people admit that they feel more confident about themselves than before and it will probably continue to allow young people be more daring and take initiative.



*Figure 8. Youth's opinion on the benefits from Eduesc@peroom  
Total survey data (n=128)*

The survey results show that young people generally enjoyed all the Eduesc@peroom activities and tasks, as many in answer to the fifth question about the elements or tasks they disliked, replied that "*I liked all of it!*"

Very few noted the answers in relation to the tasks that did not like. Mainly their aversion was associated with a difficult task that required the use of numbers, mathematical tasks, or finding a small object. Several responses were associated with aversion to group's inability to cooperate, or disputes between members which affected the team's cohesion.

Other unfavourable aspects were the size of premises, its equipment and their overall mood; a number of respondents who participated in the "Mystery in Jaunpils Castle" noted that they did not like the use of electricity because it thwarted the mood created by the candlelight.

Assessing the positive aspects that have been marked by the young people in questionnaires, it should be said that in general the Eduesc@peroom experiences were evaluated very positively, especially highlighting elements such as thread, key pieces of the puzzle, the code search and encryption that had to be solved in order to move ahead.

The overall conclusion is that young people particularly accentuate the positive which results from the teamwork allowing the other team members' strengths and resourcefulness to be seen. It is the need to be clever and "think outside the box" that provides a new perspective on the given task and its possible solutions. Consequently, the development of skills is particularly necessary because it contributes to the ability to work together, assess the situation, discern the nuances, and analyse the correlations.

## **Conclusions and suggestions**

Creative methods applied by educators are diverse and cover both formal and non-formal educational spheres. It is positive that there is cooperation between formal and non-formal education agents in organizing creative workshops and exchange of experience.

Educators' experiences indicate that the environment in itself does not ensure the development of creativity. It is more motivated by adapting the environment to a given workshop, by using particular instruments and without having to wait until all the rooms are furnished 'creatively.'

According to survey results, young people appreciate methods where traditional teaching methods are interspersed with gaming elements to make the study material easier to comprehend and connected to the practicality of everyday life. The research results reveal the successes of the creative approach in mastering complex study material. However, the greatest recognition, even admiration from the viewpoint of young people is observed in cases where the workshops contributed to their reflections about their feelings, thoughts, attitudes towards various issues, their worth, etc. They need time to think, realize what is happening, formulate their attitudes towards various issues and discuss it with others. If given the chance, young people become attentive and involved, regardless of age.

The study results also reveal that young people welcome those workshops that promote mutual co-operation, making it possible to get to know one another better and make friends with other young people, educators and parents. Teamwork and co-operation is more successful and is assessed more positively if used in new and innovative ways, such as Eduesc@peroom that lead to the goal only by working together. This helps them to recognize their own strengths and weaknesses and those of others. Creative activities are also a good way for young people to talk about common human values - honesty, fairness, equality, etc.

Positive and motivating experiences for young people provide new ideas, notions on how to learn and use everyday things to learn. Young people recognize that after the activities carried out in the second and third stages of the project, they feel more confident about themselves, and this process will probably continue to enable more young people to step up and take the initiative.

It is important to stress that creative activity cannot be forced. There are cases when young people engage in them formally as educators or educational management make them do so, it however leads to hostility and resentment. Creative activities cannot be implemented formally, mechanically and using one's authority. Responsibility must be balanced out among all involved parties. The experience of individual educators shows that increasing the responsibility of young people is essential in both formal and non-formal educational environment.

The research results reveal the classic clash between the traditional and creative approach to education, where everyone involved (including young people) expects knowledge *"from the above"* instead of having to search for their own answers and solutions. Diary analysis showed some signs that educators are trying to assess which expressions are creative and which are not. This is risky, because this way creativity can be quite easily made into an ingredient of the traditional, authoritarian approach. Therefore, an important conclusion of the study is to give young people space for self-expression, waiting for their own ideas and mutual agreement and, as much as possible, present to them opportunities to carry out their independent ideas. It promotes young people's sense of belonging to the environment, which also creates a further positive effect.

Both students and educators recognize the lack of time as the most essential negative factor in creative workshops. It requires the creative activity to be well prepared; educators have to develop plan A and plan B (adjusting workshops to the age, gender of trainees, to premises and equipment, and especially to time framework), so that the situation could be adjusted if necessary. It is necessary in order to hold the students' interest and minimize the risk of them getting distracted, as well as to give students time and

opportunity to express their emotions. Perhaps it would be good to respect those who do not want to participate and express themselves.

Overall, the experience of educators and youth's rating of creative activities show that it makes sense to introduce and develop them. The emotions experienced by youth, as well as their commitment to make a difference in the future, are an essential result of both this project and the creative workshops.

The results of the implemented project activities have given proof of how useful and effective creative teaching methods and creative learning environment are in impacting personal qualities of target groups and the improvement of their cooperation skills. It is important for the future to maintain the achieved results, to advance a creative approach to learning and to share with other educators the importance of such an approach.

## **Annex 3**

### **Study Results of the Project “Looking@Learning”**

#### **The Final Report on Spain**

**January, 2017**

## **Chapter 1 Research methodology**

The 2<sup>nd</sup> stage is a continuation of the state of art “*The First Looking at Learning*” research on the understanding and perception of creative learning and creative learning environments among agents of formal and non-formal education. After the seminar, which all project participants took part in during August of 2015, study methodology was developed with a view of assessing the future activities of the project in relation to the creative teaching methods. Two research methods were chosen for the project and they were implemented from September, 2015 to May, 2016:

- A qualitative analysis of documents where project participants’ (hereinafter - educators/facilitator) diaries are viewed as documents. Diaries reflect experience and subjective characterisation and assessment of applied creative teaching methods used by educators who implement creative teaching methods in their work in both formal and non-formal educational environments. The Interim Report uses the content of 20 diaries dealing with about 20 applied creative methods. Not all of the activities lasted for two hours; some of them are considered a week process with 3 or 4 days (1 or 2 hours per day). For the structure of the diaries, see Annex 5: for a list of activities - Annex 11.
- A quantitative survey with questionnaires where the participants of creative activities (hereinafter – trainees/youth/respondents/ learners) were asked to assess the activity/workshop/lesson. The survey was carried out directly by distributing the questionnaire to trainees after lessons. For the questionnaire, see Annex 6. Analysis of the questionnaires was performed by summing up answers to seven questions given by 33 respondents, on the basis of the results obtained in the form of the survey of at the end of 20 different lessons. The questionnaire was completed by the facilitator or teacher taking into account the opinions of the participants. Summarizing the responses in the area of the formal and non-formal environmental education activities.
- The total amount of people that are involve in the research are about 1.500 people.

The 3<sup>rd</sup> stage of the study was carried out from June to November 2016, based on the “escape room” approach to implementation of the creative learning environment created during the seminar in the Netherlands. Study stage 3 used the improved stage 2 diary (see Annex 7) and a questionnaire (see Annex 8). Within the project, four Spanish escape rooms were implemented, each of them described in the educator’s diary. Eduesc@peroom evaluation questionnaires were completed by 50 participants in person after the session. The results of stage 3 therefore reflect the educators’ and young people’s experiences and views on the escape room as one of the creative learning environment promoting approaches. Five organizations from all over Spain were involved.

## Chapter 2. The Results of Study Stage 2

### **2.1. Document analysis**

#### **Outcomes**

In most of the cases, all the of diaries state that the results were positive and that the proposed objectives had been fulfilled. Those objectives had two aims: 1. The main content itself –its sustainability, the autumn characteristics, toy making, storytelling, philosophy or cloth designing-. 2. The creativity: to achieve the previously mentioned objectives with creativity.

The activities in which the students were allowed to use different materials to create a final product turned out to be a complete success as the educator's diaries show.

In many instances the participants had to build toys using natural materials – such as nuts – or recycled material. Most of them were amazed by realizing that they were capable of creating their own designs using certain elements that were never re-purposed until then – e.g. using nuts. According to the educators' diary "nearly 100 participants were involved in the activity showing interest, active participation... their creations were different and diverse."

There are certain cases in which it is not mandatory to have much space or many materials to complete a creative activity. One of the activities carried out at a nature classroom was designed to provide the leaners with an accurate representation of the autumn for which only dry leaves were used to create a collage. The educators pointed out that "there was massive participation, the children created a wide variety of compositions such as animals, mythological creatures, houses, etc. It was an easy task for the participants and the results were quite good."

As the educators stated, there is an even greater motivation when the objects used belong to adults, such as knitting needles (which had to be adapted for a safe use).

Tasks that end with a tangible result, such as creating a story with a toy and then telling it to the rest of the class or just play with it with their classmates, can contribute to creative thinking.

Another important element is the preparation for the activity carried out previous to the beginning of the activity. The nursery school educators reported how they allowed their students to freely explore the surrounding areas, touching, feeling, and experimenting with all of the previously prepared material. They stated that the children had a positive behaviour when considering the previously mentioned materials.

In another instance they also included music and certain foods in addition to those previously mentioned materials. The children participated in an active way, showing interest in the materials used, experimenting with music through movement or tasting and experimenting with food.

Experiencing the world via the senses incites the learners to discover in a parallel way to their learning. One of the workshops carried out at the nursery school was based on placing different everyday objects in a web that would be manipulated by children in order to appreciate the effect of wind on them. The educators stated that it had a great impact on them as there were unspecified rules; it was carried out outside of the classroom as it was a different and innovative activity.

The lack of rules and the ability to explore made the learners aware of their ability to make decisions. In one of the workshops the learners were provided with some materials and no further explanation was given. Instead, the educators began the activity and the learners were the ones who decided what to do and who to interact with.

The availability of open spaces and the possibility to interact with other students made it possible for the learners to motivate themselves by playing and interacting with their regular friends and new classmates.



The educators' creativity is a very important element as they present the material to their students. As we have previously mentioned, in one of the workshops – related to the autumn – the learners approached that topic by freely exploring their surrounding areas. In another workshop the learners were introduced to the same theme by singing songs in their native language, in a foreign language, and by using different content. By combining those elements, the learners were able to stay focused during the workshop.

Working in a creative learning environment can be an enriching experience as it allows us to create our own thoughts and ideas that can be freely expressed without fear of failure. One good example can be found at the vocational school of design (E.S.I.). The goal was to think about and consider the sustainability of fashion. A lot of information was available around the classroom (posters with quotes, pictures, ect), to help every student develop their own thoughts to be later shared with their classmates. The feedback provided was positive, one of the students saying that, "I didn't know the topic of the activity (that there is sustainable fashion that strongly exists now), this information really made me think." According to the educators, students were actively involved in discussion and expressing their opinions.

For the student to develop a product or to learn in a creative learning environment, it is mandatory to voluntarily take part in the project and for him or her to feel motivated by the contents. It makes no sense for an educator to exhaustively prepare an activity if the student does not agree with the materials. In one workshop the environment was established in a creative way, providing materials that can inspire students to create and think during the process. The room was also well-organized; they prepared "the cycle of chairs" as well as other warming up activities, also separating a large table for the practical part.

In another workshop, the students were told to create their own clothing by using recyclable materials. Some of them claimed that they weren't able to do so as they were not creative enough for carrying out such an innovative activity, and consequently some of them didn't understand the values of sustainable fashion.

By re-doing an activity, educators are able to improve it and provide the students with more enriching experiences. This happened with the fashion activity; the teachers repeated the activity with new students, taking into account the mistakes of the previous class. Students ended up playing more with materials and created appealing and creative costumes by using various techniques, such as bleaching, colouring and re-shaping the clothing. This experience proves the importance of the methodology used by the educators who may always experiment and try to improve the experience.

The freedom to choose what to learn and to turn learning into the main motivation requires freedom of will, freedom of choice and being provided with the specific content. There student were provided with different learning environments with different and independent contents, and it was the student's duty to choose in which one to participate. The students were happy to be able to choose what to do or not to do, and even being able to propose new activities.

In certain times, the only thing required to achieve a creative learning is a vision and imagination. One of the activities carried out with elementary school students consisted of learning how to transform ideas into words and build ideas from words through a variety of individual and cooperative tasks. "They really enjoyed the activity, especially when we mixed both classes to make them work together."

The creative learning environment is useful for meditation, as long as it is voluntary and the student is motivated enough. In one workshop a certain group of students were asked to meditate about their personal life or a historical period. It turned out to be a very positive experience, and each one decided how much time they would spend in doing so, resulting in a very quiet and peaceful atmosphere. The group relation and non-verbal communication skills were certainly improved despite some linguistic barriers.

### ***To improve / advice***

The educators stated that there are certain activities that should be more prepared and organized if we will to achieve their intended mean. For example, in the toy making workshop some participants asked for some extra explanations or instructions in the process.

Some of their advice was to increase the variety of material available to the participants so they could experiment and compare different learning processes.

Some of the educators suggested that they should show more variety of models to make, for example a toy, and they should also create more steps for making the toy.

Another suggestion was to plan more time for the activity, involving the participants in the preparation of the materials in the days before the activity instead of just providing them with the materials.

Do outdoors activities.

Use functional clothing that won't compromise the accomplishment of the proposed activity. Eliminate any distracting elements that might not be related to the activity itself (toys, posters...)

Carry out collective activities with a common objective to achieve a more enriching experience that improves the group cohesion.

Other suggestions are:

- Manage to do everything that was previously planned. It is better to plan fewer activities for the workshop.
- Promote interactivity among the students. Give them more time to create their own stories, as workshops sometimes result in a discussion format with no time and space for them to think about their ideas and create something together.
- Explain and define the main contents and elements involved in performing the activities. If the learners do not fully understand the activity or they do not agree, they won't be motivated nor creative despite the fact that they are embedded in a creative learning context.
- Provide the learners with more time to fully comprehend the different options offered.

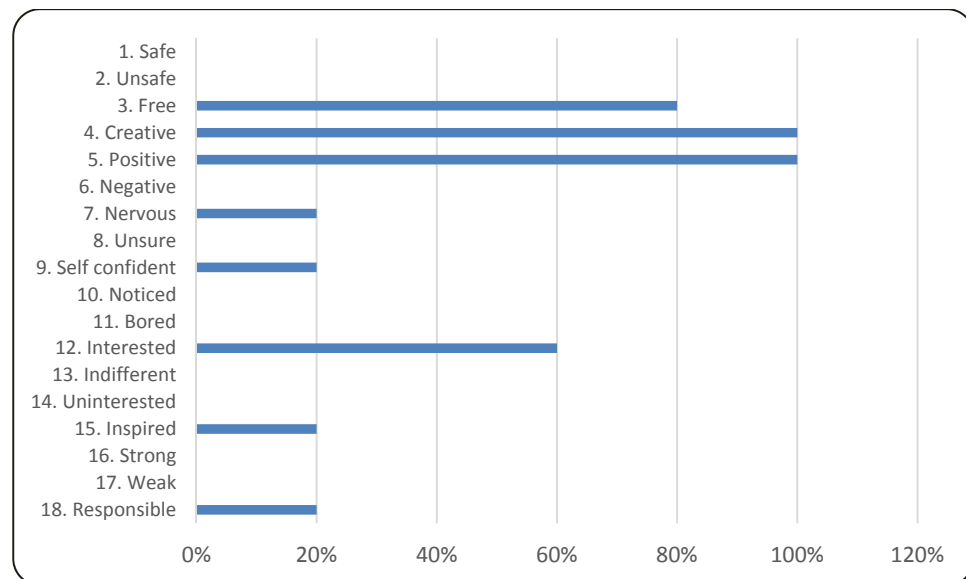
## ***2.2. Analysis of survey results***

This section includes the analysis of all questions, except the first which asked to briefly describe what was done during lessons/workshops, because this data was collected and analysed in conjunction with the qualitative information obtained from the educators' diaries.

### ***Question 2.***

In analysing the respondent's answers to the second question (Figure 1) regarding how they felt during the lesson or workshop, it can be concluded that all of the participants felt positive feelings.

Answers distribution on how most young people felt during the activity. It shows that all of participants felt positive (100%) and creative (100%). Also, the majority felt free (80%) and interested (80%). Some participants also felt nervous (20%), self-confident (20%), inspired (20%) and responsible (20%).



*Figure 1. Feeling of the young people during lessons/workshops.*

There is a direct correlation between an individual's sense of freedom, its positive thoughts and their motivation regarding the activity that is being carried out and the creativity and motivation which is produced as a result.

The sense of will and freedom does not necessarily mean that the participants will eventually lose interest in the activity. On the contrary, they are motivated, inspired and confident.

It is of great importance that the participants feel as is set out above, as the environment has an enormous influence on the participant's performance.

### **Question 3**

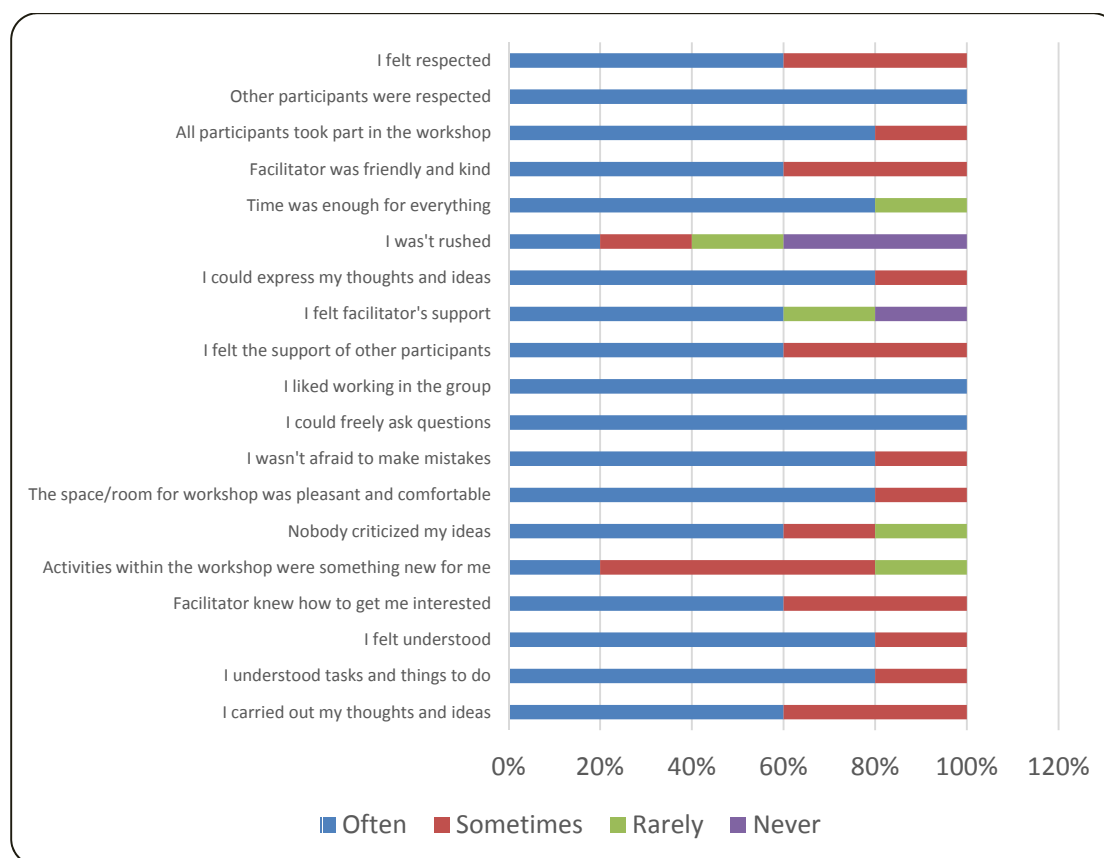
In analysing participants' responses concerning the activities in which they participated, these responses were evaluated according to several criteria (Figure 2), where young people could express their views and assess what had happened during the creative sessions.

Answers as a whole show that young people's views and assessments of the activities were positive, because the response that was noted by the majority of respondents was "often", which means that throughout the lessons they had enough opportunities to get involved, participate and feel free.

The most important criteria that were noted with "often" by all of respondents are other participants were respected, I could freely ask questions and I liked working in the group. Other opinions supported by 80% "often" of participants are I understood tasks and things to do, I felt understood, the space/room for workshop was pleasant and comfortable, I wasn't afraid to make mistakes, I could express my thoughts and ideas and all participants took part in the workshop.

The participants in the lessons and the workshops also answered "often" (60%) and "sometimes" (40%), that they felt respected, the facilitator was friendly and kind, the participants felt the support of the other participants, nobody criticized their ideas and the facilitator knew how to get the participants involved.

In terms of negative opinions, participants responded "never" (40%) and "rarely" (20%) that they weren't rushed. We can see again that the time is an important factor that can negatively influencing in the creative learning environment.



*Figure 2. Youth's opinion and assessment of the activities.*

In most of the workshops and activities carried out, the participants were able to interact among themselves, because it might be collective, because they preferred to do it collectively or because it was intended to be done collectively. This resulted that in all the interviewed students having chosen “often” when asked about group related questions. They developed a strong group bond – they stated that they love to work in groups and that they were concerned about whether all of their classmates were treated equally and respectfully during the activity.

We can also state that most of the previously mentioned criteria were satisfied “often” or “sometimes”, so they felt in a creative learning environment.

#### **Question 4**

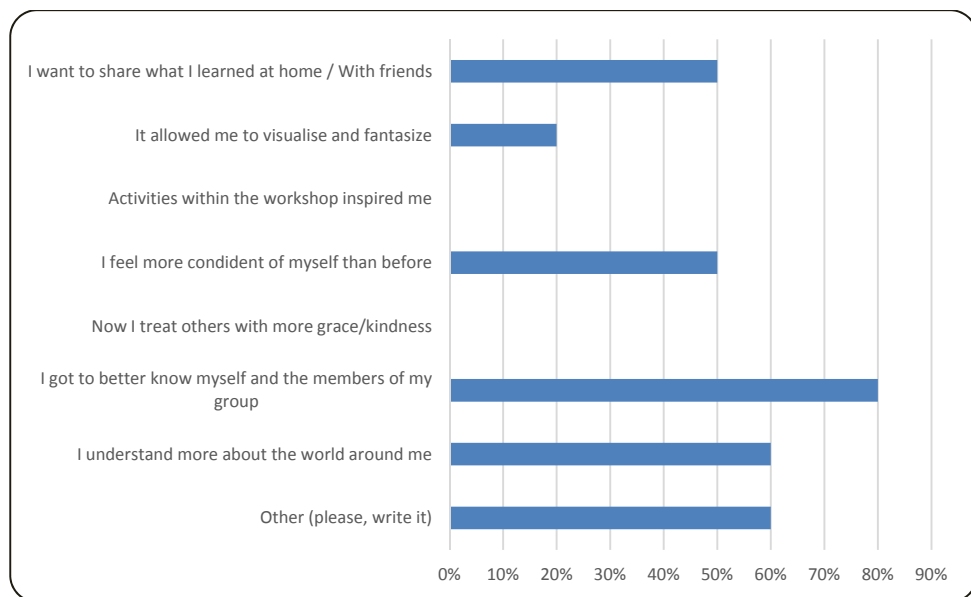
The fourth question was focused on finding out what young people thought about the benefits of specific lessons or activities. Regarding this issue, respondents were able to note multiple answers to the seven offered statements (Figure 3).

Most of the participants (80%) pointed out that I got to better know myself and the members of my group. As most of the activities were done in groups they consider that the creative learning environment facilitates the interaction among students.

The 60% of the participants stated that I understand more about the world around me. This shows how important the creative learning environment is in not only developing the creativity but also for learning.

The following answers are also considered important by the participants: I feel more confident of myself than before (50%), I want to share what I learned at home / With friends (50%) and It allowed me to visualise and fantasize (20%).

The participants said that they learned social skills improved cognitive processes: “I learned to help and ask for help, I learned to do new things, to organize my work to express my ideas and listen to the rest of people”; they also believe that the freedom to choose activities and the appropriate environment reinforces the learning. “It seems to me a pleasant environment for learning since each participant chose it role without pressure and students learns at its own pace.”

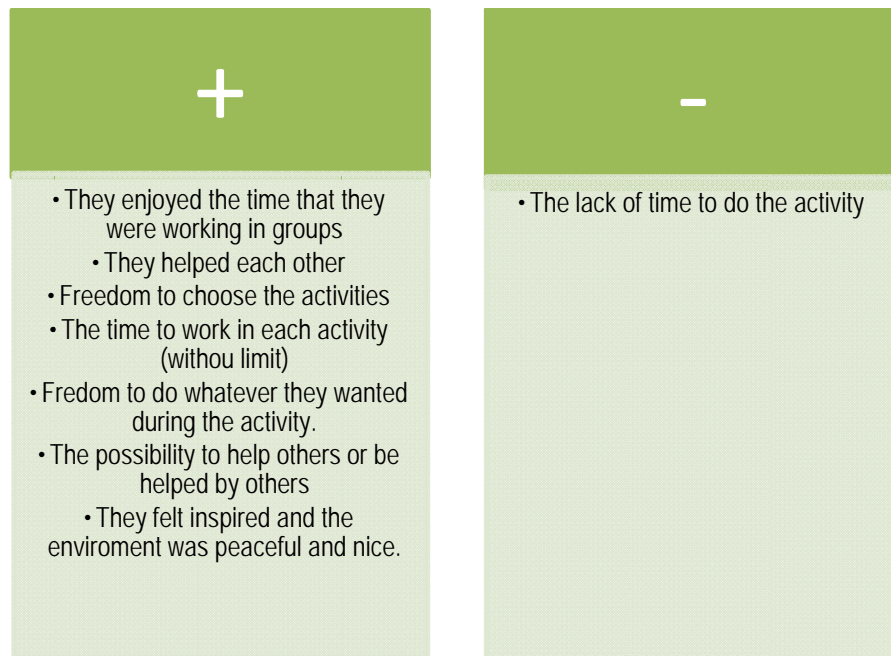


*Figure 3. Youth's opinion on the benefits from classes.*

Those opinions indicate that those environments can be used to acquire transversal skills such as team work or intrapersonal competences that are fundamental for individual development.

### **Question 5 and 6**

Evaluating the results of the survey, where the likes and dislikes are contrasted, we can see in Figure 4 that there were more likes than dislikes. In fact, we see that respondents saw the lack of time as the only negative aspect.

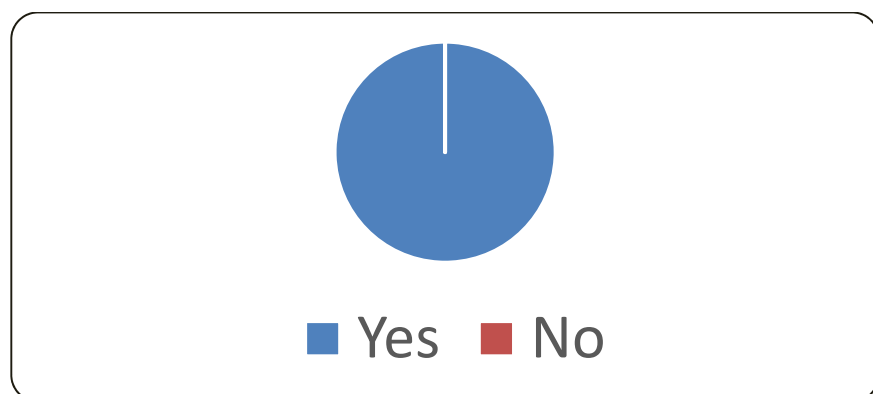


*Figure 4. Youth's likes and dislikes during the classes.*

It must be concluded that, overall, young people enjoy workshops with a peaceful and nice environment, where they can choose freely, working with others, with the possibility to help and be helped by others.

### **Question 7**

All respondents say that they were ready to do things differently after the workshop (Figure 5). There were only one or two workshops and only 2 or 4 hours per participants but they were clear that this method changed the way they do things.



*Figure 5. Youth's view on their readiness to do things differently than before.*



Some commentaries regarding the respondents state that those activities inspired them to explore what is unknown for them: "I would explore certain 'unexplored' elements of myself instead of focusing on what I thought that would have resulted more interesting." With the support of their classmates, they are disposed to do new activities that they would not previously dare to do: "I would dare to do more things, as now I know that there are lots of people that could help me. Teamwork helps."

Other participants consider the freedom they were provided with having certainly helped them to fully appreciate the positive aspects: "Now I can better express my thoughts and my creativity."<sup>4</sup>

3. The Results of Study Stage 3

## Chapter 3. The Results of Study Stage 3

### **3.1. The results of document analysis**

Following organizations developed Eduesc@perooms in Spain:

1. Spanish Culture: Residencia Universitaria Campus la Salle, BARCELONA.
2. Louise Bourgeois: Fundación Santander Creativa, Enclave Pronillo, SANTANDER.
3. Rescateen Las Montañas: Aula de la Naturaleza "La Alpujarra", BÉRCHULES (GRANADA).
4. Carmen SanDiego: Espacio Joven de Maracena, MARACENA (GRANADA).
5. Animales Granja: Escuela Infantil "El Bosque de Darwin", MARACENA (GRANADA).

### **Successful**

One of the questions in the educators' diaries was about the success of the activity itself, taking into account both the success of the Eduesc@peroom methodology and the contents that are intended to be acquired by the participants.

Most diaries pointed out that the activities had been successful referring to the content that they intended the students to assimilate and that the Eduesc@peroom has helped to assimilate them in a motivated, fun and meaningful way.

Having a good time is important for people to learn in a significant way. Good feelings during the educational process let people acquire and to reach the objectives of an activity. This is a remarkable aspect from some of the educators' input: "participants had a great time during the process," "they really enjoyed and felt good before, during and after the game," "The pupils shown enthusiasm and they keep talking about the game even when it finished."

The learning outcomes of the participants were normal according to most of the educators. Some educators reported that participants were able to find the final solution and escape of the room, finding the key or completing different steps. Moreover, educators' diaries show that the objectives planned before the activity were reached.

Instead of learning educational content, this method allowed the participants to develop transversal competences as communication, problem solving or teamwork: "they worked together and they didn't need much help," "since they worked together, they were able to reach the aim in time." This is so important that some participants were not able to escape because they did not work in group very well: "the group was composed of 5 people who have been working together only for some weeks and they were not working in a group."

It is important to adapt the riddles, puzzle, clues, etc. to the age or level of the participants. This must be taken into consideration, and sometimes it is difficult to do it well. In some of the notes, the educators told that they were able to adapt the activity to the level very well while in other cases it was so difficult and participants could not finish the game.

Educators also wrote that the Eduesc@peroom was not successful enough in some cases because it was not very well planned. In one situation the educator put in too many objects to find: "There were many objects and the riddles and the core puzzle design was difficult to connect." Other educators thought that the amount of time was a problem too: "The time was a limit because of the pressure during the activity, limiting the creative process".

### **Aspects to improve**

Taking into account educators' opinions, the main aspect to consider in order to improve the activities is related with the planning.

Some of the educators consider it better to use a bigger room: "I would use a larger room with more possibilities of hiding and puzzles." Others say that it is important to have a small group of participants, "to reduce the group to 4 participants."

The amount of time is something that most of the educators mentioned. Educators found time as a problem if it is not well adjusted to the target group and the difficulty to the activity: "More time and place to interact each other... group cooperation will increase."

Another factor that educators may improve is matching the level with the target group: "make the path to the riddle easier so I do not have to enter and stop the game to help them," "To put some riddles to make the clues easier to find."

The proper explication of the activities is a factor that can determine its success. Participants who are not familiar with this method need a complete explanation on how to do the activity well and reach the objective, such as, "giving clearer instructions before entering the room, so that you are sure that they are following the path you want."

After writing about the things they would improve, educators gave some advice to other educators who want to use this methodology.

Taking time for planning and preparation is one of the pieces of advice that educators gave. Others said that for planning the materials used in the room, it is better to think clearly and try to empty the room, then put the clues together and ignore distractions.

Matching the activity to the target group is also some of their advice: "When preparing Eduesc@peroom, think about your target group," "It is important to think about the age of the children, this is another key aspect when preparing the activity."

They also mentioned other factors like having enough time for creative thinking, letting them be free in the room and trying the activity before it starts.

### ***Educators' role / learning outcomes for educators***

Generally, educators' role is clear. They are responsible for the planning, implementation, assessment and evaluation. But the educators' final notes revealed that they put emphasis on different aspects.

Some of them know well that they had to guide the process while the participants did the activity, "giving some clues after the first minutes." This means that the participants are responsible for their knowledge, as, "the responsibility of reaching the aim was totally of the participants." However, they can have some help from the educators.

This method requires much time for the planning and preparation process because it is required that the educator has to take into consideration many aspects of the game: the number of participants, knowledge level, creative clues, a motivating story, time, ect.

For most of the educators, the learning outcomes show how participants had a positive experience, enjoying the activities while they were learning.

### ***3.2. The results of survey analysis***

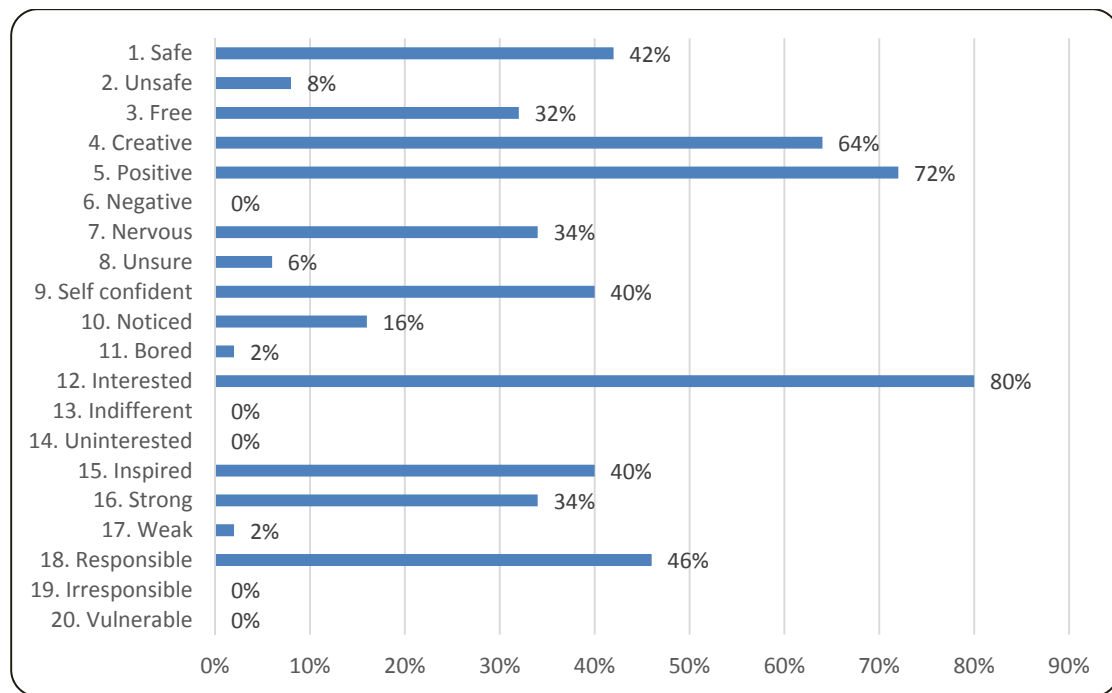
The survey consisted of 6 questions answered by participants of the Eduesc@peroom. Here it is shown the analysis of these answers except for the first question because the data was collected and analysed in conjunction with the qualitative information obtained from the educators' diaries.

#### ***Question 2***

In the second question, the participants were asked about their feelings during the activity. The 20 different feelings were offered as potential answers, and participants could choose more than one. The percentage exposed is expressed based on the 50 people who took part in the survey.

Analysing respondents' replies it can be concluded that a majority of participants had positive feeling during the activity. This answers show that a high percentage of participants felt interested (80%), with positive feelings (72%) or creativity (64%). Besides, a considerable percentage of participants felt responsible (46%), safe (42%), self-confident (40%), inspired (40%), strong (34%), nervous (34%) and free (32%).

There are also participants whose feelings were negative. Feelings such as ignored (16%), unsafe (8%), unsure (6%), bored (2%) and weak (2%). It is important to remark that nobody felt indifferent, uninterested, irresponsible, vulnerable or negative.



*Figure 6. Feeling of the participants during the Eduesc@peroom.*

### **Question 3**

The third question asked their opinion regarding the Eduesc@peroom. One of the items that less participants valued as "often" is related to the amount of time: "time was enough for everything" (30% often). Apparently, a considerable number of activities had organizational factors that could have been better managed.

The question gave 14 statements than had to be answered with four different options (often, sometimes, rarely or never). The amount of replies considered for this question is 33.

With the exception of the "I felt misunderstood," which is written in a negative way, the average number of participants who have indicated the answer "often" to the items shown in Figure 2 is clearly greater than the others, indicating that the activity had significantly positive value.

The most valued items were that the "facilitator was friendly and kind," "all participants took part in the workshop" and "felt respected." These items are very important for the activity to be successful. They are not items that are directly linked to the Eduesc@peroom methodology or to the "educational contents" that the participants should learn; however, it is shown if the participant is comfortable and willing to carry out the activity in a motivated way.

There are items that are more related to the Eduesc@peroom methodology, which are also well-valued as "I liked working in the group" (67% often), "activities within the workshop were something new for me" "I carried out my thoughts and ideas" (64% often), or "I could express my thoughts and ideas" (55% often).

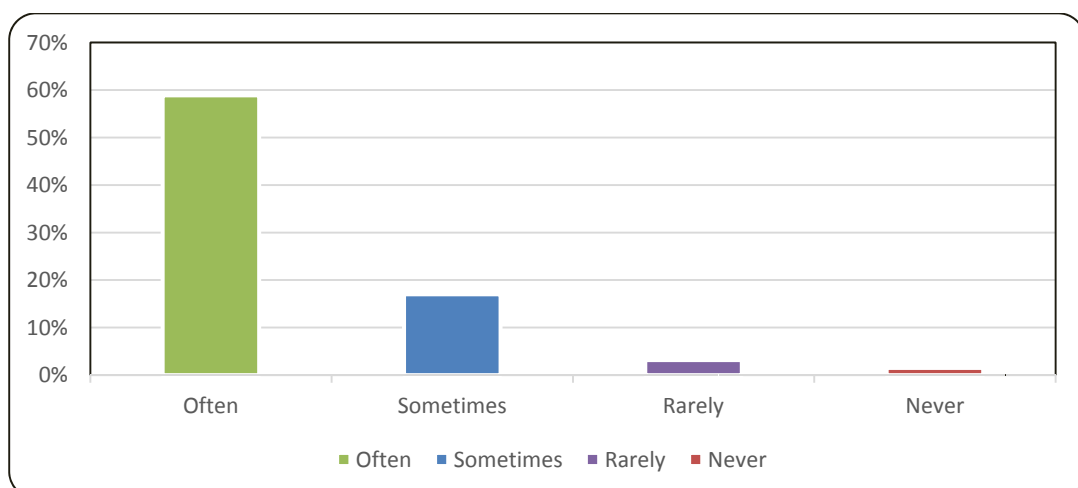
Other items also received a positive rating but they have an increase in the number of ratings like 'sometimes' and 'rarely,' indicating that these are aspects that could have been done better. These items are related to logistical aspects "the space / room for workshop was pleasant and comfortable" (55% of yesterday and 21% sometimes), or with organizational aspects "understood tasks and things to do" (54% often and 36% sometimes), "I could freely ask questions" (52% of yesterday and 15% sometimes, 4%

rarely) or "I was not afraid to make mistakes" (42% of often and 15% sometimes, 4% rarely and 12% never).

One of the items that less participants valued as "often" is related to the amount of time: "time was enough for everything" (30% often). Apparently, a considerable number of activities had organizational factors that could have been better managed.



*Figure 7. Opinion and assessment of the activities.*



*Figure 8. Average of replies related with the Figure 3.*

#### **Question 4**

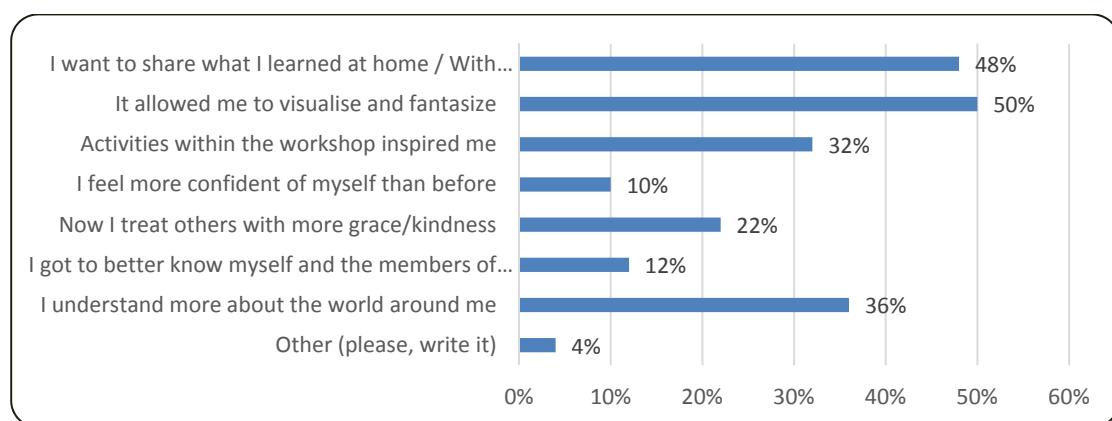
The fourth question was focused on finding out what young people thought about the benefits of specific lessons /activities. On this issue, respondents were able to note multiple answers to the seven offered statements.

We see in the figure 9 that half of the participants said that Eduesc@peroom "...allowed me to visualise and fantasize." The item, "I want to share what I learned at home / with friends" (48%) apparently doesn't have relation with this method, but it shows that people really liked the activity and it was significant for them.

Other items that were also well-valued were, "I understand more about the world around me" (36%), "activities within the workshop inspired me" (32%) and "now I treat others with more grace/kindness".

The other two items are related with interpersonal and intrapersonal competences. There are few people that consider them as benefits of the Eduesc@peroom but are also important: "I feel more confident of myself than before" with 10%, and "I got to better know myself and the members of my group" with 12%.

As others, some participants believed that this method helps people to work in team as a necessity and not as an option, and it also helps them to know more educational content, such as, "to know something new about art".

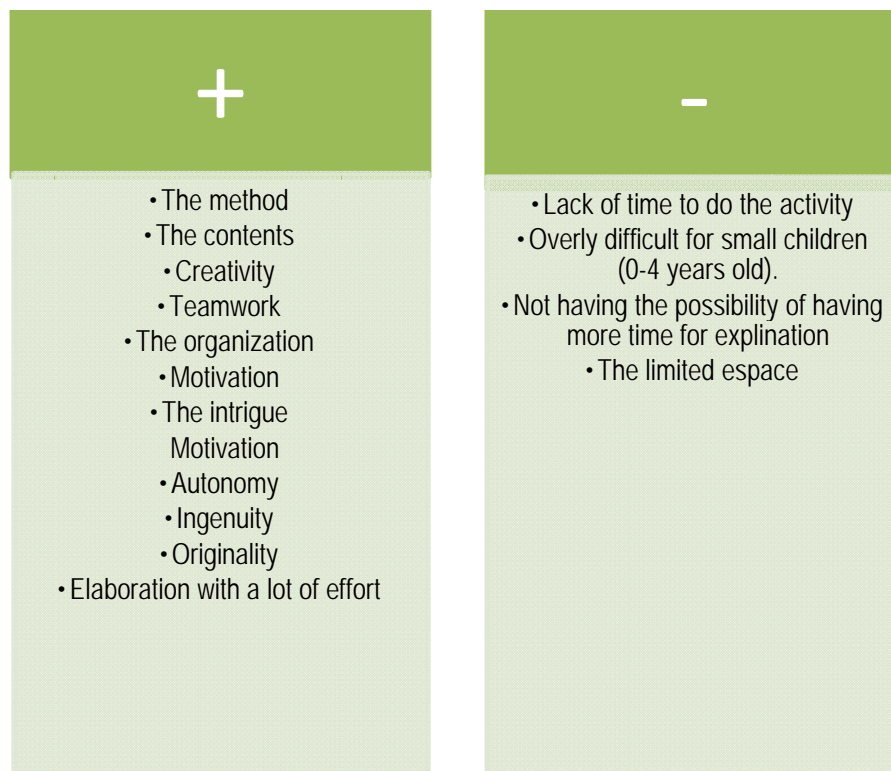


*Figure 9. Participants' opinion on the benefits from workshops.*



## **Question 5 and 6**

Evaluating the results of the survey, where the likes and dislikes were contrasted, we can see in the Figure 4 that there were more likes than dislikes. In fact, we see that respondents see the lack of time as the only negative aspect.



*Figure 10. Participant's likes and dislikes during the classes.*

## **Conclusions and suggestions**

In this part of the report we will show the main conclusions of the creative learning environment workshops and Eduesc@perooms. We have taken into account the educators' opinions and the survey completed by the participants.

Creativity is connected directly with the Eduesc@peroom methodology. Solving problems or challenges continuously in a free way allows the participant to think about the answers in a creative way.

Both educators and participants have valued the fact that it is an activity that develops creativity and problem solving abilities in a free way, without constraints.

This learning method has been used in formal and non-formal learning environments, and we could state that there was not any difference between the data provided by these two environments. There is no reference to the concepts of formal and non-formal education in the educator's diaries. Also, it can be used for people from any age.

Besides, there is a wide variety of content that can be used in a creative learning environments. Through these experiences we saw that the content is not the most important aspect of the creative learning environment. There are other facts that can limit the positive results of an activity like prior preparation, space, time, ect.

Our main conclusion is that the creative learning environment is a teaching / learning approach that teachers and students enjoy. Both of them have been quite satisfied with the activities carried out. They consider that enjoying the activity while they are learning is very important for them to learn.

The most important part of education is the learning process. There is always educational content that must be learned, and different methods for learning this content. In this case, using an Eduesc@peroom as a creative learning methodology, the educators said that the content was always learnt by the students. In addition, they also enjoyed learning in a motivated way.

The students learned the educational content as well as transversal competences such as communication, teamwork and problem solving. These competences are strongly demanded in everyday life situations and also in most jobs.

For teaching in a creative learning environment, the facilitator or educator has to take into account that it is necessary to spend some time for the prior organization and to have some knowledge of this methodology. For Eduesc@peroom activities, it was necessary to put every clue and all of the materials inside of the room before the class or activity started. It was very important for the educators to have good background knowledge and certain procedures to follow in order to establish a creative learning environment and consequently obtain the expected results from the activity.

In order to plan a workshop using this method, it is important to consider the characteristics of a creative learning environment (developed in the state of art research "The First Looking at Learning") and to know that all of them are related if we want to properly design a creative learning environment.

This methodology also promotes coordination and dialogue among the educators. Many of these activities or workshops have been designed and carried out by two or more educators, who collaborated to achieve the same goal.

One of the most appreciated elements using the creative learning environment by the students was their freedom to elaborate the final result. In the case of the Eduesc@peroom, participants are who have to take decision by themselves. To be able to find a solution in an autonomous way is very enriching for the participants.

These workshops are considered by students to be a helpful tool, as they promote cooperation among participants by fostering communication and mutual help, and establishing bonds and friendships with other children, young people and educators.

The study results also show that while doing the activity, emotions have a prominent role. As the participants are able to choose among a wide variety of options – new elements, the classmates that integrate the teamwork, etc – when performing the task or the activity they have previously taken a series of actions – or elections – that were conditioned by their personality, thoughts, personal interests and feelings. As the questionnaire revealed, the participants considered it to be adequate and convenient, having good feeling about the experience as a whole.

In order for an activity to proceed smoothly and without interruptions, the educator has to perform the preparation very well and know what to do during the lesson of the activity. Most of the educators clearly knew that they were responsible for the activity flowing without their intervention. The role of the educator during the Eduesc@peroom has been understood as guiding the process.

## Annex 4

### Study Results of the Project “Looking@Learning”

#### The Final Report of the Netherlands

January, 2017

#### 1. Study methodology:

The study is a continuation of the 1<sup>st</sup> stage: state of art research “The First Looking at Learning” of the understanding / perception of creative learning and creative learning environment among agents of formal and non-formal education. This study is divided in 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> stage.

2<sup>nd</sup> Stage is a study of local activities implementing the outcomes of the training course on creative learning environments of all project participants in August of 2015, focussing on a specific methodology as a creative learning environment, methodology was developed with a view of assessing the future activities of the project in relation to the creative teaching methods. Outcomes of this study have been reported in the mid-term study report.

This 3<sup>rd</sup> stage of the study of local activities implementing the outcomes of the training course in June 2016 in the Netherlands on the development of a new and innovative educational tool: The Educative Escape room. The development of this new tool is described in the document ‘Creating Eduesc@perooms’.

For this both stage, two basic research methods were chosen for the project and they were implemented from September 2015 till November 2016:

- analysis of documents of qualitative nature where project participants’ (hereinafter - educators/trainers) diaries is viewed as document. Diary reflects experience and subjective characterisation and assessment of applied creative teaching methods of the educators who implement creative teaching methods in their work in both formal and non-formal educational environment. Research report uses the content of 8 educators’ diaries and 3 escape room analysis. *Educator’s diary, Annex 5, Escape room analysis, Annex 7*
- a quantitative survey with questionnaires where participants of Eduesc@perooms (hereinafter – learners/youth/respondents) have being observed to assess the educational experiences. The analysis of questionnaire was done by summing up answers to seven questions given by 26 individual observations and 2 group observations, 93 questionnaires were filled in representing 141 participants. From 2 other activities, no questionnaires have been filled in. Because of the age or the intellectual and physical disabilities of the participants, some questionnaires were not filled in by participants themselves in case of the Dutch research. The questionnaires have been filled in by those support persons, who are very familiar with participant’s behaviour and reactions and were able to ‘read’ reactions of participants. In agreement with coordinating researchers, questionnaire has been adapted and developed with elements that could (easily) be observed and interpreted by support persons. The questionnaires have been filled in individually or occasionally, for the whole group. Some questionnaires have been filled in by those support persons, who are very familiar with participant’s behaviour and reactions and were able to ‘read’ reactions of participants. *Questionnaire, see Annex 6. Adapted questionnaire, see Annex 8.*

Educators’ diary reveals various methods that are used in both formal and non-formal learning environment. Since the methods and their influence on the trainees of different ages are not comparable, the second report includes the main conclusions and trends that are revealed in the questionnaires and the Target group of the Dutch educators is diverse and specific. Some activities took place with elementary school pupils, secondary school pupils, young people and adults, both with or without

disabilities. Some of the participants were youngsters with (severe) physical and intellectual disabilities. This means, that these participants were not able to express themselves verbally. For that reason, other ways of measuring the outcomes of creative learning environments had to be used (see Annex 9). In agreement with coordinating researchers, professional observation by additional educators was added.

## 2. General educational environment of the methods being studied:

The first series of activities took place within the "Looking @ Learning" (L@L) project as local activities, developed as action plans in the Training Course on 'Creative Learning Environments' in August 2015 in Gulbene, Latvia.

The second series of activities took place within the "Looking @ Learning" project as local activities, developed as action plans in the Training Course on 'Educative escape rooms' in August 2016 in Stede Broec, Netherlands. 4 escape rooms have been built by international teams:

**Merakel** is a day-care and stay-over centre for young people with disabilities. Young people are often visiting the centre for many years, some of them only as irregular visitors, some of them live there 5-days a week. Their intellectual disability level varies from medium to severe, their physical disability level from light to severe. The approach has been more with a focus on providing a good and homely space for them to enjoy and to develop themselves. In the past years, the educational value became stronger and the L@L project added to this focus on educational approach and creating better learning environments. The local activities were addressing how to involve learners needs and decisions, when communication is so limited. The methods used were very innovative and challenging for the educators.

Method used	Target group	duration	Nr. pax
Baking cake exploring sensory activity	Young people with severe intellectual and physical disabilities, age 12-23	2 hours	6
Making choices	Young people with severe intellectual and physical disabilities, age 12-23	Ongoing, 6 months	14

The first escape room has been developed in Merakel shed as an activity of the 10<sup>th</sup> anniversary. The Eduesc@peroom was aiming at all young visitors, for parents, professionals and visitors, to make a link to the international Looking at Learning project and to make people think about creative learning environments for young people with disabilities. 30 people age 5-67 took part in this escape room.

The second escape room was made by educators of Merakel with their clients, a small group of children and young people with disabilities to learn in a creative way about farm animals. 5 children/youngsters from 6 – 18 years old took part in this escape room.

In **Democratic school De Valleij** the whole educational approach is learner-based and oriented at creative learning environments. The methods studied were an extension of that approach. As a result of the Training Course, methods were new and innovative for the school.

Method used	Target group	duration	Nr. pax
Cornflour exploring sensory activity	Children 4-6 years' old	1 day	11
Democratic interior	Children 4-6 years' old	1 week	20
Jackets organized	Children 4-6 years' old	3 weeks	12

The **circus and theatre 'school' Blixem** uses an approach that involves a lot of creative activities, both physical and expressive. The local activities studied in this project were involving new methods and a new approach of self-directed learning, with more learner-based approach than they did before.

Method used	Target group	duration	Nr. pax
Acrobatic research	Youth 8-12 years' old	2 hours	31
Living-circus museum	Youth 5-11 years' old	3 hours	16
Circus Jungle	Youth 5-10 years' old (2 groups)	2* 2 hours	32

**Praktijkschool** is a secondary school for people with minor to middle learning difficulties, which sometimes is accompanied by behavioural problems. The educational approach of the school is learner-based and oriented at creating practical learning environments. The Eduesc@peroom was an extension of that approach and took place in the 'ironing room' of a 'practice model house' where pupils learn all kind of housekeeping and competences of autonomy.

**Baskuul** is an elementary school in Stede Broec, with classical educational approach with new learners-based elements where children have more freedom and influence on their learning. The Eduesc@peroom has been set up based on a children's book, by the international team. The escape room was done with 30 pupils, 11-13 years old, from group 8.

**JC. Inventas** is a youth centre in Stede Broec, with visitors from 13-25 years old youngsters. The youth centre has a special educational focus on youth participation, inclusion and dialogue about relevant topics for young people. This youth centre has a special regional function for LGTB young people. The Eduesc@peroom that was built there was focussing on creating a learning environment about this topic and understanding the coming out of young people. Target group were visitors and parents. 26 people from 13-62 years took part in this activity.

### 3. Diaries analysis

#### **General approach:**

The methods used were diverse in materials used, time and space. All educators' diaries reveal a willingness to try out something new and willingness to question their educative approach. Focus has been on the learner's need, more than the educators' need, which required a new mind-set for the educators involved. All methods have been perceived as creative and successful, as educators stated that participants were able to express their ideas, made clear what they want and act 'responsible', even with limited communication or verbal expression. Diaries made also clear that all methods used were based on exploring something new for learners. Challenge for the educators was not to provide answers, fill in, solve and judge the learner, but give learners the time to find their own solution and make their own choices.

The Eduesc@peroom method used was based on an innovative and new concept of designing an escape room as a creative learning environment, with an educative element to it. The method used was adapted to the target group (age, background, abilities, number) the educational context, the topic and the learning needs of participants.

Biggest challenge for the educators was to not just build any escape room, which had the elements for cooperation, leadership and social skills development in itself, but to include an educational dimension to the escape room and make it an eduesc@peroom.

### **Learning goals:**

In some cases, learning goals were set simple and straight forward, like in Merakel: *"Playing together, find the connections, making a puzzle"*. In Praktijkschool the learning goals were multiple and more complex *"to prepare for travelling, how to improve social skills and work together, how to connect ideas, follow instruction, to cooperate, skills for autonomy (use iron, make a bed...) and how achieve goals"*

In some cases, it was a structured and clear, like in youth centre Inventas: *"To promote team work, to promote empathy, a positive attitude and self-development of participants"*.

### **Physical Learning space:**

All methods studied were used in class rooms or usual working room, offices, sheds or usual working rooms. Changes or innovation was not caused by moving to a new physical space, but by rearranging the room, the interior, the materials and creating a new space within the well-known room. Diaries mentioned *"turning a well-known space into a unique space"*.

Also mentioned were the use of natural and local materials and resources in order to make people use all their senses. Educators stated that it is important that the environment is accepted, built by learning community and based on flexible needs, which means that all learner's needs should be taken into account when creating these educative spaces and it should be interesting and appealing to participants. In one of the diaries educators stated the importance of conscience for the things around us, the environment that surrounds us. *"Participants understood, that it is important to pay attention to environment."*

In some methods, new elements were introduced in the physical space. In the Vallei they tried out to involve the young pupils to change the interior of the classroom. This was initiated by one 6-year old, who believed she could better work if the space would change; walls would be painted and furniture would be rearranged. In a 'democratic' process, she put in a motion to change the space, using the budget the class gets and the whole group has been involved in making the changes. Space and time was created to discuss what would be the consequences of the change. The classroom got painted and the furniture got moved, together with the pupils. *"The aim was to give pupils ownership of their own leaning space."* In one of the diaries the creative learning environment was mentioned, because *"every idea is worth enough to write down as a motion for the class-meeting where decisions concerning the class are made by the pupils."*

One of the recommendations reveals the fact that the physical learning space, if well-known by educators and/or learners, gives a lot of possibilities to experiment and explore new things. It creates safety to challenge learners to try out new things, be creative and make changes. But within that safe place, educators should make it *"as flexible as possible, as interesting the results and possibilities. A space where participants feel free to move, change the space, create etc. in other words, where learners are empowered by the space."*

In questionnaires, several participants described the method of the Eduesc@peroom by mentioning the cosiness of the room, and the exciting atmosphere of the room. It was mentioned that *"it was made really nice and educators found funny places to hide things"*. In some occasions participants mentioned in their description of what they did (questionnaire question 1) specific elements of the physical space, like *"the ladder"*, *"listen to music"* or *"looking around on the ladder"*.



### **Material:**

In two methods, new sensory materials were used for sensory learning. In Merakel youngsters were making their own cake and they were allowed to explore the consistency of the dough and mix it themselves. In Vallei a similar method was used for toddlers to experiment with cornflour. In both cases educators mention in their diaries that allowing the exploration to take time for the activity was adding to the learning. Especially for the participants with physical disabilities it is a time-consuming method, but educators stated that participants took advantage of the opportunity to feel and sense. Avoiding time pressure allowed learners to take the time they need to fully explore.

Two diaries mention also that it was messy, so educators needed to let go and not step in the 'cleaning' modus and allow learning to take its course, including the mess. As the educator of the Vallei stated in her diary: *"Children explored with all their senses and did not get interrupted by a judgement of an adult"*. From Merakel diary we can see something similar: *"It is good to give our children the opportunity to learn new thing and experience the smells and flavours from different products. If you do a cooking assignment you have to take the time so everybody can join and do their part at their own way"*

### **Creative Learning space:**

The learning space as a creative space for playful learning was mentioned in all analysis. Educators stretched the importance creating a safe place for challenging and playful learning: creating a space that is challenging, experimenting and based on learning by doing. Creativity was often linked with the feeling of freedom.

One of the most important conditions for creative learning environments used was safety. This was mentioned in all diaries and analysis. What they meant with the word 'safe', was different. In one document, it was mention as a "Safe place to go out of comfort zone", which was linked to learning space that provides challenges and experimentation; a space to try out new things, to discover and dare. In other document the meaning of safety was linked to the support of wondering and using imagination: *"safety creates a solid base and sense of wondering"*. As they found wondering, as in being curious and a form of thinking and questioning, an important element of learning, this became one of the focus points of their method.

In two documents safety was linked to creating a safe space for feelings, emotions and imagination using several senses. One of the analysis states that the educators based their method of the Eduesc@peroom on *"Creating a safe place where participants could feel free to feel with all their senses"*.

In one document, creative learning space was more linked to the inviting atmosphere, and stated that the learning space was built on being inspiring, giving space to researching and discovering. One document also stated a genderless space as one of the aspects of a creative learning environment that they based their method on.

Although the method of Eduesc@peroom is based on a limited time in which participants have to finish tasks, it is not mentioned as a condition for creative learning environment. In the Merakel diary they stated the opposite. For their target group of young people with severe disabilities, time-pressure is not supporting learning and educators decided not to use deadline. As a finding, educators stated that the Eduesc@peroom without time-pressure was positive and they mentioned that timeless was a good element of their method.

In questionnaires, 4 participants stated the state of panic and chaos and losing overview as they went off too quickly. One participant mentioned 'stress' as the description of the method (question 1 in questionnaire).

## **Ownership and decision making**

In various diaries the ownership and decision making was explicitly mentioned and some methods were also focussed on this. In Merakel the educators changed their approach by giving choices to participants, who usually were not given the opportunity to choose. Difficult communication is often interpreted as not being able to make choices. In a long-term process educators found out that this was a misperception, and even young people with very limited communication proved to be able to make their own choices. It was long process of giving always options between two things, what they wanted on their sandwich, what they wanted to drink, what they wanted to play. In a few months-long structural process, they found out that decision making is very much appreciated by these young people and they were very able to do so. Decision making started with 20 minutes to make a choice the first time, to 20 seconds after a few months. Participants understood that the way they look, or point or smile or move their eyes, had its consequence: get what you want!. This resulted in a beautiful story of a boy, that was given always sandwich with cheese, because they thought he did not like to eat meat. But when it came to choices, he has been choosing about 3 times per week meat on his sandwich. It is also clear that they regularly chose different things, so not only what is on the left, or what has a certain colour or drawing. To extend this process, they started with letting them choose what to wear. Which is interesting to think about, when for 20 years you never have been asked to choose what you wear!

In Democratic school the method was aiming for more ownership of the class room and how to make young children familiar with the democratic process, learning to be critical thinkers and give their opinion. They mentioned to create an environment where all participants are equal, they are all encouraged to give their opinion, they build self-confidence and their personal leadership.

In this method, pupils are encouraged to write their ideas down in an open class book, and these ideas will be presented at the class meeting. Pupils had the right not to go, if they were not interested. But if they did, they could discuss, ask questions, be against or agree. At the end a decision was made by all pupils, together with the teacher. The method was a way to solve a problem with jackets lying around the floor and the class decided in the class meeting how to solve it. They came up with analysing the problem and finding a solution. After that, they immediately were motivated to follow agreements. No resistance, no conflicts and problem solved. Another method they used, made clear that in this learning space imperfection can be perfect. If it is what learners need, then that is perfect. When it is not good anymore, they will change it, but only in their time and way.

In the circus school, the educators experimented with leaving it up to learners to create a Christmas show for parents. They wanted not only to give value to the circus skills, but also to the capacity of learners to work together and create a show, their own environment; challenging them to look at different materials and the space; making them critical to how things 'should' be or not in their own circus. That led to learners' empowerment where children created a circus-museum and parents and teachers visited all the spaces of this museum. *"It was a successful show! You could see the reaction of parents and kids. The parents were really amazed about what kids managed to create in just 2 hours. And after the show, many kids asked their parents to play with them the tricks they learned that day."*

All Edusc@peroom diaries mentioned the word freedom. Educators stretched the importance of creating an environment where learners felt being yourself. This condition of being yourself is considered a freedom, to not having to adjust to other peoples and make choices. Educators mentioned that participants were allowed to fail and to make mistakes. For allowing these mistakes, trust is needed.

Edusc@peroom documents also reveal that educators felt strong about participants' ownership of their learning process. Learners are responsible of their own learning process. Participants were allowed to make their own choices and with this they got ownership of their learning process. Educators stated: *"They made their choices by themselves. Participants were involved in teamwork, they reached the goal and they pointed out that they need to be more organized."*

In the Eduesc@peroom descriptions, 9 participants mentioned using and or developing some of their competences or skills, like good communication, searching in a structured way, finding good solution, thinking creatively, doing many things at the same time, being attentive.

### **Attitude/ educational approach of educator:**

In the majority of the diaries educators mentioned the role and attitude of the educator. In some cases, educators changed from giving tasks, determined by the educators, to giving options according to what participants wanted to learn or to explore. In the circus school they experimented with learner oriented tasks. *"We did not know what they would learn and every child learnt something else. Instead of telling them what to do we gave them a research exercise in which they were free to move and explore"*

The position or role of the educator was mentioned several times. In the advices, it was mentioned several times to make a step back as an educator. Educators mentioned their role of raising curiosity *"I just started to put some water and cornflour in the tub. Some children saw me doing it and they got curious. After 10 minutes 9 children were around the tub, playing with the mixture, having cornflour all over their cloths, in their hair and tasting it"*.

In a creative learning environment, the learner is the central element, not the teacher. In the Democratic school this was stated explicitly: *"I was just a facilitator and acted only if children asked me to"*. Learners were very able to use the freedom of exploring. *"Children discovered that the mixture changed by adding more water. They also found out by themselves that this mixture can be soft and strong sometimes"*. In the circus school the success was related to seeing them getting into the flow and follow their interest.

In documents concerning Eduesc@peroom, we found some comments about conditions for creative learning environments linked to the attitude and educational approach of the educators. As a conclusion educators stated: *"Supporting of leading and sharing but not directing"*. The conclusion can be drawn, that this method supports educators to step back and give more space to learners to take the learning process in their own hands.

Permission and invitation to work together with community. About 75% of the participants mentioned in their description (the invitations) to search, to look, to find things together. There was a lot of emphasis on the cooperation and working together in the descriptions of the method (question 1 in questionnaire). About 18 participants stated in their questionnaire description the word cooperation or 'working together'. Some stated 'finding solutions together', which reveals educators supporting and inviting participants to 'learn with others'.

It is interesting that in the Eduesc@peroom descriptions only 5 people used the 'I'-form, 13 people used the 'we'-form. 71 people used a person-less form, link *'Find things, search for solutions, it was superchill'*. Looking at the learning outcomes and what participants liked about the method, they more often used the 'I'-form to express what they liked about it and what they took from this method. This means we can conclude that when it comes to describing the method as a whole, they tend to think in the collective, and when it comes to learning outcomes, they are able to bring it to individual level.

### **Learning outcomes:**

In all diaries educators describe learning outcomes, especially that learning outcomes have been different for all participant as a result of their learner-based approach. *"It was fun to hear afterwards what they felt and explored, to hear the different outcomes, like 'it hurts when someone stands on your belly'"*

In case of Eduesc@peroom, the learning outcomes have been described only in 2 documents. Both documents state that learning outcomes matched objectives and even exceeded expectations of both

participants and educators. Even though data are limited, it is very likely that the method of Eduesc@peroom is suiting learner's needs and is suitable to achieve learning goals.

All Eduesc@peroom documents state that the method was very successful. Being fun and achievable are mentioned in all documents as important elements of success of the method. Educators mentioned that the challenge to keep it simple and fun, avoiding to make it too complicated in order to make it successful. For participants to being able to complete the tasks were linked to being motivated to fulfil the task and therefor, being successful in learning. This learning was important, as educators stated *"Participants discovered that they need work in team to succeed. They point out that is interesting to do daily activities in this tool – escape room."*

If we look at the wording of the descriptions of participants (question 1 in questionnaires) of the local activities, it is interesting to analyse the verbs they use.

From 89 questionnaires:

- 47 participants mention the words 'finding (out)'.
- 52 participants mention the word 'searching or searching for'.
- 13 participants mentioned 'solving or solution'.
- 8 participants mentioned 'looking for or looking around'.
- 6 participants mentioned 'making or doing'.
- 9 participants mentioned 'cooperating or working together'.

It seems interesting that participants describe significantly more the challenges and the process of the learning actions, like exploring, finding, searching, than the result of the learning, like solving and solution.

### **Conclusions and advice:**

Time was often mentioned in the diaries in the conclusions and advice. *"Build up the workshop/ session slowly"* or and *"take your time if you want to involve everybody in their own time and way"*. Linked to being successful and creative, we can conclude that taking time and avoiding time-pressure is supporting the creative learning process.

Also mentioned was to stay away from judgement. Creative learning environments engages learners without the fear of failing and being wrong. In a creative learning environment, there is no right or wrong. The advice from the circus school: *"Let them be as free as possible with no rights or wrongs"*. From democratic school the following conclusion was drawn: *"Children didn't get interrupted by a judgement from an adult"*.

Educators were not expecting a predefined result and were more focussing on the learning process and creating freedom to explore: *"It is about playing. There is no right or wrong, no expectation, no focus on the result. It is about focussing on the process"*.

As the Eduesc@peroom method is still under development, educators had good feedback and proposed changes, mainly on better support for participants. Educators mentioned *'better understanding of the learning style of the target group and adding more visual support'*.

All methods of Eduesc@peroom were considered successful, as the method has proven to be adaptable to learner's needs and style. Method is considered playful and has a strong focus on exploring, often with educator only as observer and in no way transferring knowledge. Participants had the freedom to find and search, to solve and to cooperate.

Educators were not expecting a predefined result and were more focussing on the learning process and creating freedom to explore, as educators of Merakel explained: *"It is about freedom and being playful"*

## 4. Analysis of the survey data

This part included the analysis of all questions, except the first, which asked to briefly describe what was done during lessons/classes, because these data are collected and analysed in conjunction with the qualitative information obtained from the educators' diaries.

As the target groups of most of the studied methods in the Netherlands have difficulties to express their thoughts and opinion, due to their age or intellectual capacity, the questionnaires were sometimes filled in by educators. The data were in some cases collected for the whole group instead of individually. For this reason the data are just giving a general overview and researcher is not able to give clear value on the overall of these data.

In case of the circus school the questionnaire was used after the Circus Jungle. It was too difficult for the target group (children 5-10 years old) to fill in the questionnaires by themselves and for that reason filled in by the educator together with the participants. Educator read the question and explained in their own words, what the question means, and the educator filled in, what the children answered or commented. For time reasons, the educator decided to fill in one form for the whole group. The whole group agreed on the answers that were noted down.

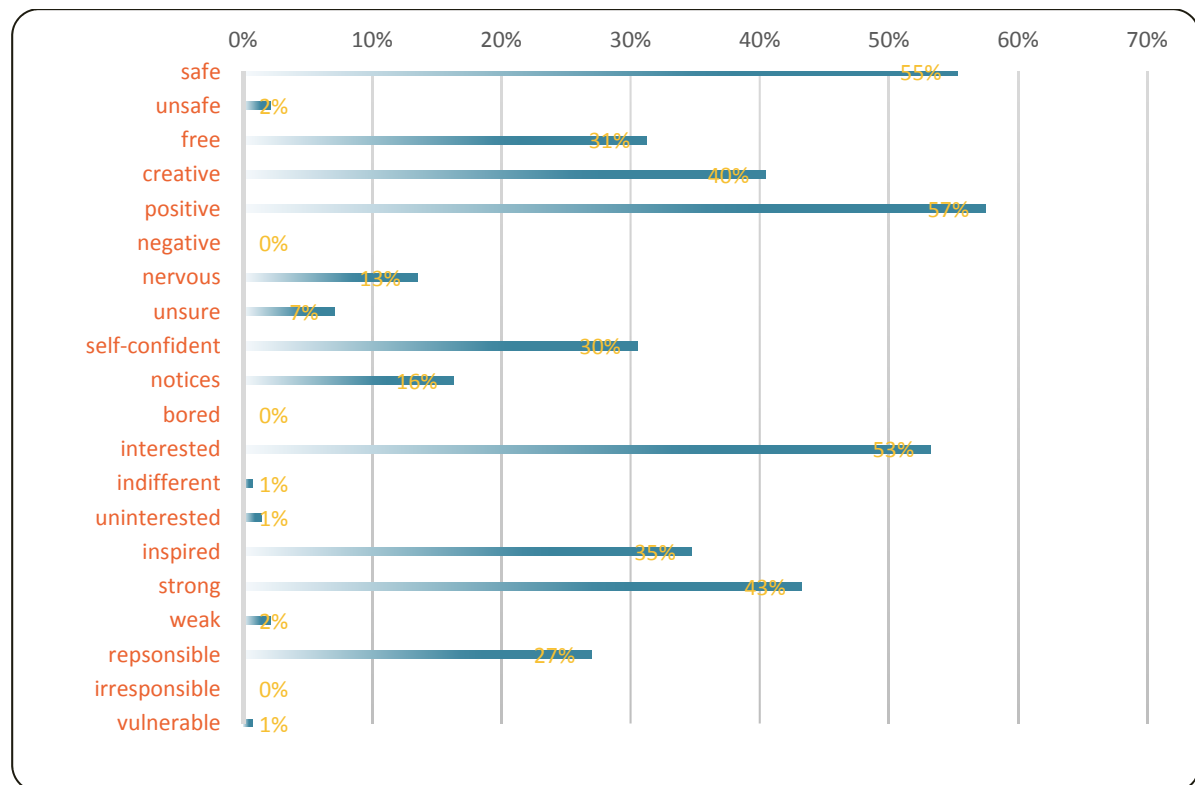
In case of Merakel care centre, the inability for the participant to read and fill in these questionnaires themselves, has been prior to the activity communicated to the coordinating researchers. The agreement was made to do the method together with an external observer, who knows the specific behaviour and reactions of the participant and therefore is able to make a reliable interpretation of this reaction. As the observation was based on those reactions, some of the feelings (question 2) or some of the statements (question 3 and 4) were marked as 'impossible to observe' and therefore should not be interpreted as part of these questionnaires.

In the Vallei no questionnaires were filled in.

All in all, 4 group questionnaires have been filled in, representing 52 participants.

For the Edusc@peroom method 89 individual questionnaires have been filled in.

Analysing respondents' replies to the second question (see Figure 1) about their feeling during the activity it can be concluded that majority of respondents noted the responses, that were mostly positive.



*Figure 1: assessment of participants on the studied method*

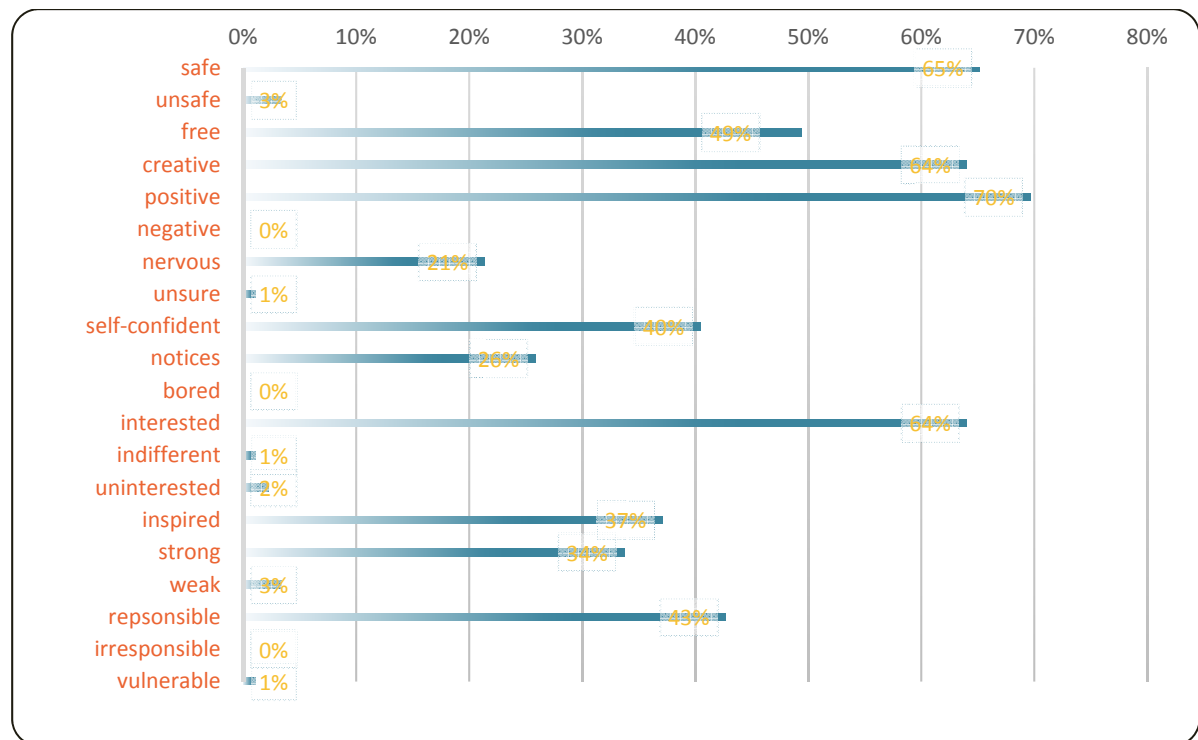
Distribution of answers about how most young people felt during the class or activity, shows a positive assessment (57%). Participants felt safe (55%), interested (53%), creative (40%), strong (43%), inspired (35%) and responsible (27%). The high percentage of strong is also caused by a considerable number of participants involved in one physical activity, where physical strength is an important element to achieve the goals. Distribution of answers suggests that methods are positively perceived and evaluated, so it can be assumed that if the participants felt good, understood, appreciated and creative, and the participants felt more engaged in the learning process. Evaluating their experience, participants added 2 extra terms: nice- in the sense of comfortable/ enjoyable (21%) and tasty (9%). The latest had to do with finding chocolate being part of the method.

There were some less positive and unclear feelings in connection with the methods, such as being nervous (13%), unsure (17%) and overstimulated (6%). The 'being nervous' cannot simply be explained as a negative feeling, because it has also been interpreted as excited and anxious.

These responses reveal that educators observed a small resistance to the new proposed methods. For some youngsters with complex disabilities, the methods were simply contained too many new stimuli, which they could not handle well. This could have been caused by the time pressure, when at a certain time the choice had to be made, or by the ambiguity of not knowing what to do or what was the consequence of their reaction.

If we zoom only into the data of the Eduesc@peroom, positive indicators are even more impressive. Distribution of answers about how most participants felt during the escae room activities, shows a very positive assessment (70%). Participants felt safe (65%), creative (64%), interested (64%) free (49%), responsible (43%), self-confident (40%) and inspired (37%). See figure 2.





*Figure 2: assessment of participants on the studied Eduesc@peroom method*

Zooming into these data of the Eduesc@peroom, there is a significant unbalance between positive and negative feelings involved, when we look at the distribution of responses:

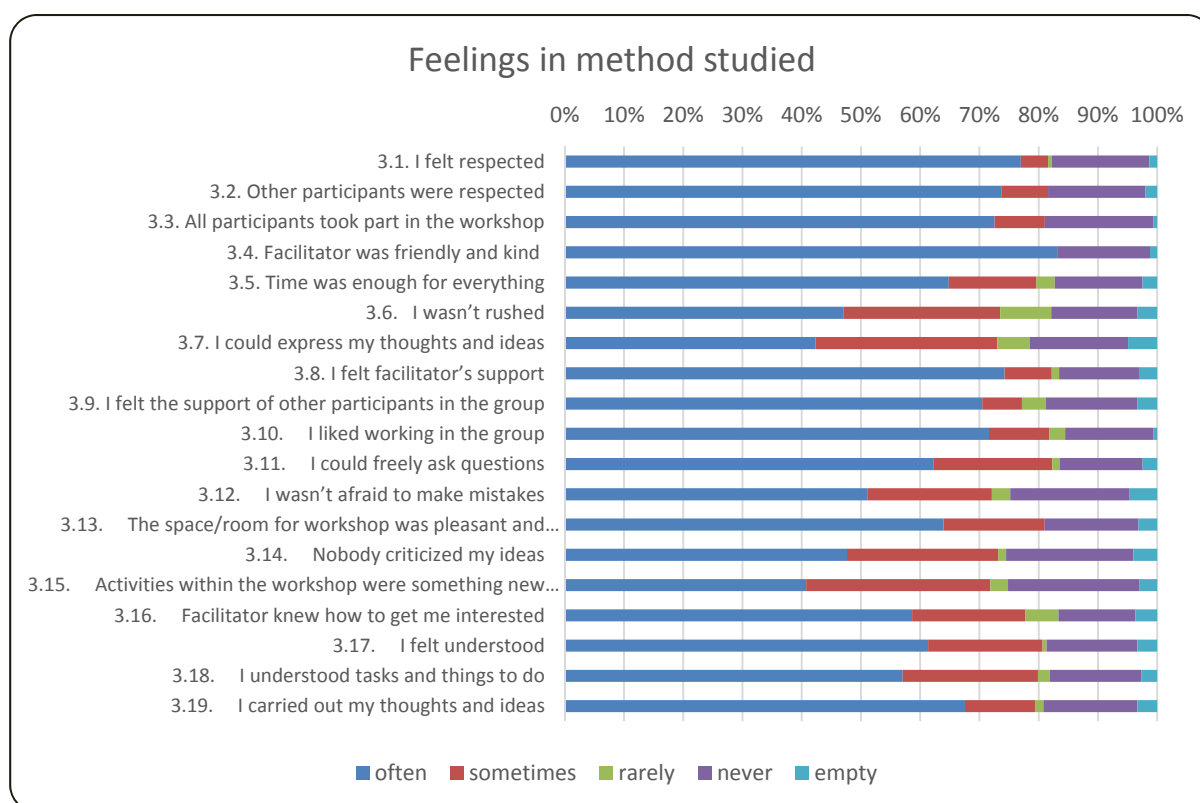
- Safe (70%) <-> Unsafe (3%)
- Positive (70%) <-> Negative (0%)
- Self-confident (40%) <-> Unsure (1%)
- Interested (64%) <-> Uninterested (2%)
- Inspired (37%) <-> Bored (0%)
- Strong (34%) <-> Weak (3%)
- Responsible (43%) <-> Irresponsible (0%)

The overall conclusion is that these creative methods studied release positive feelings in participants, which helped them to be engaged and kept them motivated to reach their goals, and with that the goals of the educators.

## **Feeling of the young people during activities**

### **Total survey data (n=141)**

Analysing respondents' responses about the on activities in which they participated (Question 3), these responses were evaluated according to several criteria (a total of 19, see Figure 3), where participants could express their views and assessments on what happened during creative sessions.



**Figure 3: Assessment of participants on the studied methods**

Answers as a whole show that participants' views and assessment of the activities are positive, because the response that was noted by the great majority of respondents was "often", which means that throughout the methods used they had enough opportunities to get involved, participate and feel free.

The most important criteria that were noted with "often" by majority of respondents were as follows: educators' work was noted virtually by all respondents. Highest score was that educator was friendly and kind (98%), supportive (86%) and motivating (67%); respect was rated high as participants felt respected (83%) and other participants were respected (79%); participants were also rating high the cooperation, as the rates for liking to work in the group (75%) and feeling the support of the group (65%), participants felt understood (65%) and were able to carry out their ideas (72%). Young people noted as important that all participants were engaged in the class/activity (79%) and had the freedom to ask questions (72%)

Important to know is that both educators and participants expressed their concern about the unclarity of one sub-question in this area. The question 3.6 'I wasn't rushed' (50% answered 'often') is not interpreted in the same way by all respondents. As we can see there is a reasonable gap between this question 3.6 and 3.5 'Time was enough for everything' (74%) The questions 3.14 'Nobody criticized my ideas' are questions has also been perceived as ambiguous for having been understood in different ways. (Not, can

be understood as 'I was not criticised', and could also be understood as 'I was not not criticized', which means they did feel criticised). The outcomes of this answer are not considered clear and do not represent the same understanding, therefore the answers given should not be interpreted as one value.

By analysing the division of the responses that were assessed with "sometimes", the following areas should be pointed out: could express their thoughts and ideas (35%), that participants weren't rushed (28%), and activities were new (30%). Although rates are not high in this segment, 35% of participants could not express fully their thoughts and ideas. This could be caused by time-pressure, or with the complexity and overwhelming feeling of much a new environment. Participants rated the being new 'sometimes' so low, because they were in a familiar space (their classroom, their living room), but the methods have been adapted to a more creative one. Nobody participated in a completely unknown situation.

In the rarely "segment", the scores are very low. Highest score was that participants weren't rushed (9%), as some of the young people and adults were familiar with the concept of the 'entertainment version' of escape room. This does not mean that they were familiar with the Eduesc@peroom and should be taken into account when interpreting these data.

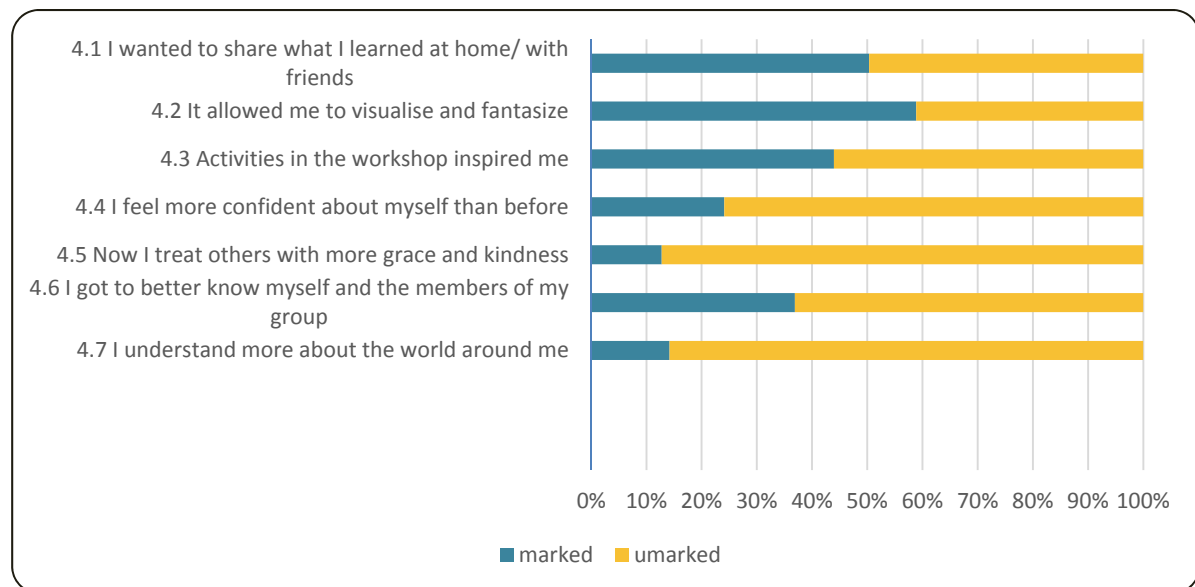
Unlike Latvian research outcomes, in this assessment we see no significant difference between the length of classes and time for activities. The results show differences, but that is more related to the type of activity (physical, democratic decision making, making choices) and the learning capacity of the participants.

Evaluating the responses allows the conclusion that the use of creative and innovative methods indicate a positive response, allowing participants to explore in a free and own way, empowered to initiate ideas and in an environment with no fear or making mistakes of being judged, is recognized and appreciated by learners. The role of the educator as facilitator of those learning processes and the educator's ability to generate a creative environment and use creative methods in the educational process is highly rated by the learners. In case of the Eduesc@peroom method, educator takes an observer and supporter role, often stepping back even from the physical space where learners discover the room. This is highly relevant according to the outcomes of the questionnaires.

## **Youth's opinion on the benefits from the studied methods**

### **Total survey data (n=141)**

Question 4 was focused on finding out what young people think about the benefits of specific classes/activities. On this issue, respondents were able to note multiple answers to the seven offered statements. (see figure 4).



*Figure 4: Assessment of participants on the studied methods*

However, educators from Merakel stated that some questions cannot be answered with a reasonable observation. Any answer given would only be based on speculation, therefore Merakel did not take into their questionnaires answers for question 4.1, 4.2, 4.3, 4.5 and 4.6 and took only 3 statements as possible responses for 5 of their participants.

Data on the benefits of these studied methods are rather difficult to use for conclusions. In the studied methods children and young people with limitations in their intellectual capacity have participated. The impact of these methods used seem too complex for these target groups to understand and respond.

The data in this area of the questionnaire are uncertain. Observing educators working with this target group, has seen a significant change in the self-confidence of this target group, especially on the long-term. Participating young people for Merakel have shown a remarkable change in the speed and certainty of making the choices and trying out new things.

In the circus school, the sharing with others what they learned is not surprising, as learning tricks is something young people like to show to others. The way the circus has designed this specific method has created a space to visualize and use imagination. This is not unlikely in the circus school, but the responses on the method used shows a 100% score, which is above the expected and can be addressed to the specific method used.

Not many conclusion can be drawn by these data, but it is very likely that benefits, such as the fact that activities have inspired them and allowed them to think and express themselves in creative ways. This

suggests that working with creative approaches and methods educators' work has been fruitful. Second, such activities contribute to young people's self-confidence and self-assurance.

Participants' understanding on the various benefits of the activity indicate several important trends: first 50% of the surveyed people are willing to share lessons learned, which is very important, because in this way, it contributes to the transference of new knowledge and skills to others in the educational environment and their social network. Other answers about benefits can also be marked as remarkable, such as the fact that activities have allowed them to visualize and fantasize (59%) and inspired them (44%). This suggests that working with creative approaches and methods educators' work has been very successful.

Treating other with grace (13%) and Understand more about the world around me (14%) scored relatively low. This might have to do with the fact that a large number of questionnaires were filled in within 30 minutes after the Eduesc@peroom activity and participants were not able to see these changes in themselves on the longer term at that moment.

It is obvious, that the studied methods contribute significantly to (young) people's self-confidence and self-assurance, their feeling of ownership and responsibility and their ability to imagine, visualize and wonder about the world, which have been marked as condition for successful creative learning environments. The methods support the cohesion in the group, the understanding and equality of group/team members, thus potentially raising their chances to better cooperate both in the educational environment and outside of them.

### ***Assessing what did participants like or not***

Evaluating the results of the survey, with regard to what young people found **unpleasant, hindering** or **enjoyable** during activities, there were given a variety of answers, which generally shows a number of key positive and negative aspects. See Figure 5.

Overall it can be concluded that there is a number of good, positive aspects that seem engaging and speak to young people during creative classes; many responses indicate that respondents liked everything they were offered. Here are some quotations that point towards positive benefits:

*'I liked everything, especially my team, nice experience'*

*'I learned many new things, working together and having fun'*

*'Exciting, challenging, sometimes difficult, but I like that'*

*'Good riddles and good story'*

*'The paint on my face. After a while she wanted to take it off and she did!'*

*'We liked the sounds of birds and to climb the mountain to get the chocolats'*

Analysing the aspects that were viewed as unpleasant or difficult, almost half of participants mentioned 'nothing'. Other things they mentioned had to do with the physical space, like the temperature of the room, or the noise. The time was mentioned various times, but only one time as lack of time, and 5 times as that they enjoyed so much they did not like that the activity was so short; they would have liked to enjoy it for longer. Negative aspects:

*'...that the lady was watching us around the corner,' and 'someone was watching us all the time through the window'*

*'...Making noise instead of paying attention to others'.*

‘...When you are looking for a long time and you don’t find anything’

For the Eduesc@perooms it must be concluded that overall people enjoyed the, but the recommendation to other educators is to pay attention to atmosphere of the room, the space, the noisiness and temperature during the activity, to make sure the materials are working and that monitoring is done properly and to clearly communicate to participants how monitoring will be done. Other aspect to take into account is: to keep it simple, to have alternatives if it is taking too long and people loose motivation. This is not contributing to learning.

Analysing answers to question 7 about willingness of young people to change things after having participated in creative activities, it can be concluded that small number of participants (4%) is ready to act differently based on their newly-obtained knowledge and/or experience. Again, this might be a consequence of the timing of the questionnaire.



Figure 5. Youth's likes and dislikes during the activities



## **Conclusions and suggestions**

Creative methods applied by educators are diverse and cover both formal and non-formal educational spheres. Education is changing, by using more and better creative learning environments to further develop learner-centred approaches, and this innovation seems meaningful for both educators as for learners.

The creative method of Eduesc@peroom has been applied by educators in diverse ways, with diverse settings and target groups within both formal and non-formal educational environments. The Eduesc@peroom is a good creative method to use and has been evaluated very positively by both educators and participants. It scored much higher than the previous creative learning activities.

Educators' experience indicates that the environment in itself does not ensure the development of creativity. It is more motivated by adapting the environmental to a given activity, by using particular instruments and without having to wait until all the rooms will be furnished 'creatively'. Creative methods used in this Looking at Learning project have proven to encourage participants to unlock and use their creativity.

According to survey results, children and young people appreciate the methods, where imagination and self-management are part of new creative methods. The research results reveal the successes of the creative approach in mastering complex social and physical learning challenges. Learners enjoyed having the opportunity to try things out, to explore freely in their own way, in their own time. Using creativity and artistic expression helps to achieve that. Focussing on the Eduesc@peroom, we can conclude that the method is strong on creating an environment for cooperation and finding solutions, individually and collectively at the same time.

The most relevant outcome of this research is the new understanding of the educators about their own role and their mind-set to focus on the learning process rather than on the result, and trust learners in their ability to turn ideas into actions. This needs a change in attitude of letting go, stepping back and change being a 'teacher' into being a facilitator. Without judgement, with no right or wrong.

The methods give educators opportunities to make a change in their educational approach. Making such a change is rewarding. In Merakel significant changes have taken place in the educational approach of the social workers, working with young people with disabilities. Next to the 'Letting learners make their own choices', they are now experimenting with the Eduesc@peroom for their target group. Their expectations have been met, and beyond. Young people with disabilities have proven to know more, express more, solve more and discover more than their surroundings expected. These methods have proven to support also young people with limited expression, with challenging communication, with learning difficulties in their discovery of the world.

This research is underlining the need for new creative learning spaces, where all educators can develop a new understanding about their own role and their mind-set to focus on the learning process rather than on the result, and trust learners in their ability to turn ideas into actions. This method has been challenging educators to let go, and to not even be in the same space as their learners. This needs a change in attitude of letting go, stepping back and change being a 'teacher' into being a facilitator and observer. Letting learners to discover, to fail and to succeed. Giving space for curiosity and support learners to find their way. This is what is needed in education now.

## Annex 5

### Local workshops and experiments in formal and non-formal education field. Diary for educators



L@L - Looking at Learning KA2 Project  
O1-A3 Local Workshops and experiments  
Diary for educators



#### O1-A3 Local workshops and experiments in formal and non-formal education field. Diary for educators. Looking at Learning KA2 Project

When the diary should be written:

- 1) *If you work with a certain group on a regular basis (every time when you use a new method or activity);*
- 2) *Every time when you work with a new group;*
- 3) *Every time when you want something to say 😊 when you want something to share with others.*

<b>General information about workshop</b>
<b>Date and Place (institution)</b>
<b>Description of used activities/methods</b>
<b>Description of classroom or any other learning space where above-mentioned activities took place (equipment, number of participants, technologies). Do you evaluate it as creative?</b>
<b>Outcomes</b>
<b>Was this activity successful enough? (Did you reach your aims? Was it clear for everybody? What was the feedback from participants?)</b>
<b>Why do you consider it successful or why not?</b>
<b>What should you do differently to improve the workshop next time?</b>
<b>Which would be the advice for other educators in similar situation?</b>

## Annex 6

### Questionnaire for participants, assessment of a workshop



#### QUESTIONNAIRE FOR PARTICIPANTS ASSESSMENT OF A WORKSHOP



Instruction for the workshop facilitator (youth worker/ teacher). Facilitator explains to participants (youth, pupils, children) what activity they should write about in this questionnaire. It is the same one that facilitators write about in their own diaries. Questionnaire can be filled out by participants; or the questions can be asked by facilitator and the participants record answers in the designated places.

<b>General information about workshop</b>
<b>Title of workshop</b>
<b>Place and date</b>
<b>1.- Describe shortly what happened during the workshop? What did you do?</b>
<b>2.- How did you feel during the workshop?</b> Please, circle all the words that describe your feeling during the activity: I felt...

3. What do you think of the workshop you participated in? Please evaluate each statement by placing an "x" in the appropriate space!				
	Often	Sometimes	Rarely	Never
3.1. I felt respected				
3.2. Other participants were respected				
3.3. All participants took part in the workshop				
3.4. Facilitator was friendly and kind				
3.5. Time was enough for everything				
3.6. I wasn't rushed				
3.7. I could express my thoughts and ideas				
3.8. I felt the facilitator's support				
3.9. I felt the support of other participants in the group				
3.10. I liked working in the group				
3.11. I could freely ask questions				
3.12. I wasn't afraid to make mistakes				
3.13. The space/room for workshop was pleasant and comfortable				
3.14. Nobody criticized my ideas				
3.15. Activities within the workshop were something new for me				
3.16. Facilitator knew how to get me interested				
3.17. I felt understood				
3.18. I understood tasks and things to do				
3.19. I carried out my thoughts and ideas				
4.- What did you benefit from the workshop? Please, place an „x" against the statements relating to you! There can be more than one!				
4.1. I want to share what I learned at home/with friends				
4.2. It allowed me to visualise and fantasize				
4.3. Activities within the workshop inspired me				
4.4. I feel more confident of myself than before				
4.5. Now I treat others with more grace/kindness				
4.6. I got to better know myself and the members of my group				
4.7. I understand more about the world around me				
4.8. Other (please, write it?)				
5.- What did you not like during the workshop? What bothered you?				
6.- What did you like during the workshop?				
7.- Are you ready to do things differently after the workshop?				
7.1. No				
7.2. Yes please, describe what would you do differently now?)				

## Annex 7

### Local workshops and experiments in formal and no formal education field. Adapted diary for educators to use for escape room



L@L - Looking at Learning KA2 Project  
O1-A3 Local Workshops and experiments  
Diary for educators



O1-A3 Local workshops and experiments in formal and non-formal education field.  
Diary for educators. Looking at Learning KA2 Project

When the diary should be written:

- 1) If you work with a certain group on a regular basis (every time when you use a new method or activity);
- 2) Every time when you work with a new group;
- 3) Every time when you want something to say ☺ when you want to share something with others.

General information about workshop
Date and Place (institution)
Description
Description of activities/methods used
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Target group</li> <li>2. Setting the learning Objectives</li> <li>3. Choosing the theme and Narrative</li> <li>4. The Pregame Room (introduction)</li> <li>5. The Room</li> <li>6. The Exit</li> <li>7. Core Puzzle Design</li> <li>8. Game Flow</li> <li>9. How to Win</li> <li>10. Test (did you test before – which changes were made?)</li> <li>11. Replayability – possibilities to use the same Escape Room again?</li> <li>12. Timing, Number of players</li> <li>13. Monitoring the game (or interaction with participant in Escape Room)</li> <li>14. Conditions of creative learning environment</li> <li>15. Challenge to make Escape Room to be educative</li> <li>16. What were the learning outcomes? Did they match your objectives?</li> <li>17. Suggestions</li> <li>18. What would you do differently?</li> </ol>
Description of the room or any other learning space where above-mentioned activities took place (equipment, number of participants, technologies). Do you evaluate it as a creative?

### Outcomes

Was this Escape Room succesful enough? (Did you reach your aims? Was it clear for everybody?)  
What was the feedback, briefing, debriefing and what were the outcomes for participants?  
Why do you consider it succesful, or why not?

What should you do differently to improve the workshop next time?  
What would be your advice for other educators in similar situation?

Outcomes for you as educator?  
In which way was your role different?  
To what extent did you give responsibility to learners?



## Annex 8

### Adapted questionnaire for participants assessment of an escape room



#### QUESTIONNAIRE FOR PARTICIPANTS ASSESSMENT OF AN ESCAPE ROOM



*Instruction for the Escape Room organizer (youth worker/ teacher).* Organizer explains to participants (youth, pupils, children) what Escape Room they should write about in this questionnaire. It is the same one that organizer writes about in his/her diary. Questionnaire can be filled out by participants; or the questions can be asked by organizer and the participants record answers in the designated places.

General information about workshop
Title of Escape Room
Place and date
1.- Briefly describe what happened during the Escape Room? What did you do?
2.- How did you feel during the Escape Room? Please, circle all the words that describe your feelings during the activity! I felt....

3. What do you think of the Escape Room you participated in? Please evaluate each statement by placing an "x" in the appropriate space!			
	Most of the time	Sometimes	Never
3.1. I felt respected			
3.2. All participants took part in the Escape Room			
3.3. The organizer was friendly and kind			
3.4. There was enough time for everything			
3.5. I could express my thoughts and ideas			
3.6. Other participant/ team support me			
3.7. I liked working in the group			
3.8. I could freely ask questions			
3.9. I wasn't afraid to make mistakes			
The space/room was pleasant and comfortable			
Activities within the Escape Room were something new for me			
I felt understood			
I understood tasks and things to do			
I carried out my thoughts and ideas			
What did you benefit from the Escape Room? Please, place an „x" against the statements relating to you! There can be more than one!			
4.1. I want to share what I learned at home/with friends			
4.2. I have got new ideas			
4.3. Activities within the Escape Room inspired me			
4.4. I feel more confident in myself than before			
4.5. I am more open minded			
4.6. I am more emphatic			
4.7. I discovered something new about others (in a group/team)			
4.8. I discovered something new about my environment			
4.9. Other (please, write it?)			
Which elements of Escape Room did you not like?			
Which elements of Escape Room did you like most?			

## Annex 9

### Adapted questionnaire for participants assessment of a workshop, used in Merakel

*Instruction for the workshop facilitator (youth worker/ teacher).* Facilitator explains to participants (youth, pupils, children) what activity they should write about in this questionnaire. It is the same one that facilitators write about in his/her diary. Questionnaire can be filled out by participants; or the questions can be asked by facilitator and the participants record answers in the designated places.

To be fill in by the observer

Title of Workshop
Place and date
1.- Describe shortly what happened during the workshop? What did you do?
2.- How did you feel during the workshop? Please, circle all the words that describe your feelings during the activity! I felt....

*NB! The grey words are not valid for us, Observers cannot make this interpretation. Blue words are added.*

1. Safe
2. Unsafe
3. Free
4. Creative
5. Positive
6. Negative
7. Nervous
8. Unsure
9. Self-confident
10. Noticed
11. Bored
12. Interested
13. Indifferent
14. Uninterested
15. Inspired
16. Strong
17. Weak
18. Responsible
19. Irresponsible
20. Vulnerable
21. Over-stimulated

3. What do you think of the workshop you participated in? Please evaluate each statement by placing an "x" in the appropriate space!				
	Often	Some times	Rarely	Never
3.1. I felt respected				
3.2. Other participants were respected				
3.3. All participants took part in the workshop				
3.4. Facilitator was friendly and kind				
3.5. Time was enough for everything				
3.6 I wasn't rushed				
3.7 I could express my thoughts and ideas				
3.8 I felt facilitator's support				
3.9 I felt the support of other participants in the group				
3.10 I liked working in the group				
3.11 I could freely ask questions				
3.12 I wasn't afraid to make mistakes				
3.13 The space/room for workshop was pleasant and comfortable				
3.14 Nobody criticized my ideas				
3.15 Activities within the workshop were something new for me				
3.16 Facilitator knew how to get me interested				
3.17 I felt understood				
3.18 I understood tasks and things to do				
3.19 I carried out my thoughts and ideas				
3.20 I was stimulated positively				
3.21 Facilitator kept things simple and clear for me				
4. What did you benefit from the workshop? Please, place an „x" against the statements relating to you! There can be more than one!				
4.1. I want to share what I learned at home/with friends				
4.2. It allowed me to visualise and fantasize				
4.3. Activities within the workshop inspired me				
4.4. I feel more confident of myself than before				
4.5. Now I treat others with more grace/kindness can the observer validate this?				
4.6. I got to better know myself and the members of my group				
4.7. I understand more about the world around me				
4.8. Other (please, write it?)				

5.- What did you not like during the workshop? What bothered you?	
6.- What did you like during the workshop?	
7.- Are you ready to do things differently after the workshop?	
7.1. No	
7.3. Yes please, describe what would you do differently now?)	

## **Annex 10**

### **List of methods mentioned in Latvian diaries:**

1. Creation of installation on certain topics (Gulbene, 2016);
2. Creation of bookmarks on the theme "My Language" (Gulbene, Latvian lessons);
3. Poppet making and writing of description of a character from a book (Gulbene, literature lesson);
4. Filling of a backpack (Limbaži, ethics lesson);
5. Values, human rights (Limbaži, culturology lesson);
6. Dictatorship, totalitarian regimes (Limbaži, history lesson)
7. Photo orientation (Liepupe, project week);
8. „Different 40 minutes" (Gulbene, cognitive training);
9. Valentine's Day (Gulbene, even organization);
10. Placing of table games, colouring pages, magazines etc. in the school hallways (Gulbene, lesson breaks);
11. Lectures to LU Master students (Rīga, promotion of non-formal learning environment);
12. "Forest trot" (Limbaži, race for the whole family);
13. Methodology of unrestricted and deliberate movements (Ikšķile, 2016);
14. Study seminar „Stories for Changes" (Jūrkalne, 2015);
15. Study seminar „Stories for Changes" follow-up meeting (Rīga, 2016);
16. Toy-making workshop (Jaunpils, 2015);
17. Participle, creative writing (Gulbene, 2015);
18. Experience tour „Setting up creative environment in school" (Gulbene, 2015);
19. "The Touch of Angel's Wing" (Gulbene, 2015);
20. Survey of pleasant and unpleasant teaching methods (Limbaži, 2015);
21. Watching of a documentary (Limbaži, 2015, history lesson);
22. The Tale of Kingdom of Feelings, text analysis (Limbaži, 2015, health education lesson);
23. College of culturology, Abramic religions (Limbaži, 2015);
24. Settle freely in the classroom (Gulbene, 2015);
25. Making of the decision about the choice of Student Council committee in which to participate (Gulbene, 2015);
26. Dreaming of the ideal classroom (Gulbene, 2015);
27. Hobby game (Gulbene, 2015);
28. Cohesion activity (Gulbene, 2015);
29. Praising of one another (Gulbene, 2015);



30. Encouragement box (Gulbene, 2015);
31. Association of different objects with Latvia (Gulbene, 2015);
32. Visualization of oneself in drawings (Gulbene, 2015);
33. Observation of students in order to offer teaching methods for easier comprehension (Gulbene, 2015);
34. "Friends' afternoon" (Gulbene, 2015);
35. Interactive learning methods for elementary students (Gulbene, 2015);
36. Games for learning English topics (Gulbene, 2016);
37. Set of activities and games for improvement of creative thinking (Gulbene, 2015);
38. "Grammar stations" (Gulbene, 2015);
39. "My communication" (Ranka, 2015);
40. Youth forum of Limbaži District (2015).

## **Annex 11**

### **List of methods mentioned in Spanish diaries:**

1. The fruits of autumn (youth centre of Maracena, 2015);
2. Autumn traditions (youth centre of Maracena, 2015);
3. Collage with leaves falling from trees (youth centre of Maracena, 2015);
4. Toys teach us to live (youth centre of Maracena, 2015);
5. Carnival (youth centre of Maracena, 2016);
6. Education for peace and love (youth centre of Maracena, 2016);
7. Intergenerational hug (youth centre of Maracena, 2016);
8. 13 tips for happiness (youth centre of Maracena);
9. Wristband Spain-Syria (youth centre of Maracena, 2016);
10. Sport games (youth centre, and sport centres of Maracena 2016);
11. Sensorial workshop related with the winter (preschool *Darwin's forest* of Maracena, 2016);
12. Sensorial workshop related with the autumn (preschool *Darwin's forest* of Maracena, 2015)
13. Spider web (preschool *Darwin's forest* of Maracena, 2015);
14. Collage made with crallons and stickes (preschool *Darwin's forest* of Maracena, 2015);
15. To raise awareness on how to communicate sustainable fashion (Vocational Fashion center);
16. ModesTalkas (fashion doTalks) are co-creativity upcycling events (Vocational Fashion center);
17. Educational Planning Session (ASDE Explorers of Castilla y León, 2016);
18. Learn how to build knowledge through ideas and language: (Marista College *Nuestra Señora de la Fuencisla*, Segovia);
19. Reflcxion about their lives (Nature Classroom Alpujarra, Bérchules, Granada, 2015);
20. Reflecion about a trainer course (Nature Classroom Alpujarra, Bérchules, Granada, 2015).