



REPORTS FROM THE TRAINING WORKSHOPS

WP4: TRAINING AND CAPACITY BUILDING

Deliverable D4.1



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OUR VOICES: Reports from the Training Workshops

WP4: Training and Capacity Building



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Executive summary

Young Carers are children and young people under the age of 18 who provide significant care and/or support to family members or friends, often because the care recipient has a physical illness, disability, mental health difficulties, substance use disorder or has other support needs. Despite their heightened vulnerability and frequent contact with healthcare, social care, and educational services, YCs often remain invisible and underrepresented in policy, practice, and decision-making processes that directly affect their lives. To address this gap, Work Package 4 in the OUR VOICES project developed and implemented a Training and Capacity Building Programme aimed at strengthening professionals' ability to identify support and promote the participation of Young Carers in decision that directly affect them.

The programme was developed through collaboration between project partners in Bulgaria, Flanders (Belgium), Italy, Slovenia, Sweden, and coordinated by Eurocarers, a European network representing informal carers and their organisations. Drawing on findings from Work Package 2 and existing training materials identified by the consortium, the programme was structured around seven themes:

- Introducing the concept of Young Carers.
- Challenges facing Young Carers.
- Identification mechanisms.
- Effective support strategies for Young Carers.
- Participation mechanisms.
- Self-advocacy strategies.
- Guidelines and techniques for creating Young Carer friendly establishments.

The training combined evidence-based knowledge with practical exercises, reflection, discussion, and examples from Young Carers' lived experiences.

While maintaining a shared framework, each country adapted the programme to national and regional contexts. Adaptations included incorporating national legislation, local research findings, existing resources and examples of good practice, as well as modifying content and delivery formats to meet local needs. The workshops were delivered both online and face-to-face and workshop duration was also adapted based on national contexts and varied from shorter sessions to longer multi-session workshops. These adaptations helped ensure contextual relevance while preserving the programme's core objectives and learning outcomes.

Across the five participating countries, 13 workshops were delivered to 116 professionals working in education, social work, healthcare, youth services, NGOs, policymaking, and related sectors. Participants demonstrated strong engagement with the training materials, particularly through discussion-based activities, practical exercises, and opportunities to reflect on their own professional contexts. Facilitators consistently reported that the combination of theoretical knowledge and interactive learning supported understanding, stimulated reflection, and encouraged participants to consider how existing practices could be improved.

Evaluation findings indicate that the programme was highly valued by participants. Of the 116 professionals who completed the training, 97 completed the evaluation questionnaire, corresponding to a response rate of 84%. The majority reported that the programme met their expectations and rated both its content and structure positively. Participants consistently indicated increased knowledge of Young Carers, greater understanding of the challenges they face, improved awareness of identification mechanisms, enhanced confidence in identifying Young Carers, and stronger knowledge of effective

support strategies. The training also increased understanding of participation, self-advocacy, and the organisational conditions required to create Young Carer friendly establishments.

Overall, the evaluation results show that the Training and Capacity Building Programme achieved its primary aims of increasing awareness, knowledge, and professional capacity regarding Young Carers. Future developments should focus on flexible delivery formats, enhanced opportunities for discussion and reflection, greater use of lived-experience examples, expanded country-specific resources, and further tailoring of content to different professional groups and organisational contexts. In addition, voluntary networks of professionals could be established in each country, enabling participants to maintain connections and share experiences with colleagues while ensuring that the support and participation of YCs remains a subject of ongoing professional dialogue. These developments have the potential to strengthen the identification, support, and meaningful participation of Young Carers across Europe.

Introduction

Young Carers (YCs) are children and young people who provide care and/or support to a family member, extended family member or friend on a level which would usually be associated with an adult (Becker, 2000) often because the care recipient has a health condition such as physical or mental illness, substance use disorder or disability. YCs are a particularly vulnerable and often overlooked group of children who face a range of social and personal challenges and are often at greater risk of experiencing difficulties related to mental and physical health, educational attainment and future opportunities (Cree, 2003; Hanson et al., 2022; Letelier et al., 2026). Taking on significant caring responsibilities during childhood can disrupt normal development and lead to poorer outcomes compared with peers who do not provide care (Janes et al., 2022; Reupert et al., 2026). Despite the known negative outcomes that are often experienced by YCs, they are rarely recognised as a distinct group with specific needs and perspectives in policy and decision-making.

Because of their caring roles, YCs frequently interact with health, social and educational services and are therefore often directly affected by public policies that govern these services. Despite this, findings from Work Package 2 in this project highlights that they often remain invisible in participatory structures aimed at influencing decision-making and policy that affects their lives (Hlebec et al., 2026). Under the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (1989), which is reinforced by EU child rights frameworks, all children have a right to express their views on matters that affect them and have these views given due weight, including in the support they receive, the delivery of care, and the design of services. Ensuring that YCs are heard not only promotes their well-being and empowerment but also contributes to the development of more effective and responsive services for both YCs and their care recipients. Participation is therefore both a fundamental right and an important pathway to increasing their visibility, recognition, and access to support. One significant barrier to participation in decision-making is the lack of identification by services and authorities. In order for YCs to participate in decision-making in matters that affect their lives, they need first to be recognised, and the awareness and understanding among professionals of YCs' situation and how to identify and support them must increase.

This report represents a key output of the OUR VOICES project, funded through the European Union's Citizens, Equality, Rights and Values (CERV) Programme. The OUR VOICES project seeks to strengthen the meaningful participation of Young Carers in decision-making processes at local, national, and EU levels and consists of five Work Packages. The project is implemented in partnership with universities and civil society organisations in five European countries:

- Social Network VESTA (VESTA), Bulgaria
- ZoJong!, Flanders (Belgium)
- Anziani e Non Solo (ANS), Italy
- University of Ljubljana, Slovenia
- Linnaeus University, Sweden,
- Eurocarers, Belgium (project coordinators)

The current report details the development, implementation, evaluation and future adaptations of the Training and Capacity Building Programme (hereafter the Training Programme) which forms Work Package 4 in the OUR VOICES project which was led by Linnaeus University, Sweden in collaboration with partners. The Training Programme aims to strengthen the capacity of professionals to identify and support YCs and, in so doing, help amplify their voices and promote their participation in matters and decisions that directly affect them. The programme is aimed at professionals from education, health

care, social services, NGOs and others who work with children and young people. The content of the workshops is based on the results of the earlier Work Package 2 Mapping of gaps and disparities and in depth needs assessment (Hlebec et al., 2026) as well as materials collected by project partners.

The first part of the report details the development of the Training Programme, national adaptations and reports from partners on the delivery of the intervention as well as facilitators' reflections and suggestions for further adaptation. The next section details the quantitative and qualitative evaluation conducted with participants in each partner country. Finally, the report outlines future adaptations to the Training Programme based on feedback from partners and participants in the workshops. This includes tailoring contents to different professional groups, closer collaboration with different sectors to aid in recruitment and establishing voluntary professional networks to enable professionals to continue to share and learn from each other.

Description of the Training Programme

The Training Programme which forms the core of Work Package 4 is intended for professionals working with children and young people in schools, social services, and healthcare, as well as for NGOs, youth workers and related sectors.

The Training Programme is structured around seven themes agreed upon within the consortium of partners:

- Introducing the concept of Young Carers.
- Challenges facing Young Carers.
- Identification mechanisms.
- Effective support strategies for Young Carers.
- Participation mechanisms.
- Self-advocacy strategies.
- Guidelines and techniques for creating Young Carer friendly establishments.

The content of the Training Programme builds on lessons learned during Work Package 2, which aimed to map existing gaps and disparities in child participation mechanisms in five partner EU Member States, with a particular focus on Young Carers (YCs). It also draws on training materials collected from all project partners, which were reviewed and used to identify the most relevant and appropriate content for inclusion in the Training Programme.

The programme was designed with the intention of combining theoretical perspectives on YCs with interactive elements that encourage participants to actively engage in discussion. At the same time, also ensuring that the content is relevant, useful, and adaptable for implementation across all partner countries. Based on the common outline that was developed, each country partner made appropriate country adaptations that are described in the next chapter.

The Training Programme was designed as a four-hour intervention, delivered with the support of a PowerPoint presentation, which could be conducted either face-to-face or online. A significant effort was made to design the programme to be engaging and to link information with practice. Participants were given the opportunity to reflect on the challenges of identifying YCs within their own workplaces or organisations, on how they could improve or develop the support provided to YCs whilst ensuring participation and self-advocacy. Face-to-face or online workshops were then held in each partner country, and all participants were asked to complete an evaluation at the end of the sessions.

In the following is a short description of each of the seven themes in the Training Model before country adaptations. The common outline of the Training Programme is presented in Appendix 3: The Training Programme.

Introducing the concept of Young Carers

This theme provides an introduction to the concept of Young Carers, including its definition and other key aspects. It aims to provide insights into how young people may regularly assume adult-level responsibilities across different areas of life. Examples of caring tasks, such as providing emotional support, household chores, personal care and financial management, are included to illustrate the diversity of caring responsibilities that YCs may have. To make these experiences more tangible, the theme includes stories inspired by real-life experiences and authentic quotes from YCs, illustrating the

physical and emotional weight that caring responsibilities can place on young people. The caring role as a potential risk to wellbeing and health is also addressed. A film clip portraying situations experienced by YCs is included, with the aim of supporting an emotional understanding of what YCs' everyday lives may be like. The often invisible nature of YCs is highlighted, along with other individual and systemic barriers they may face. The theme further addresses how YCs may frequently put their own needs aside in order to support a family member or other person close to them.

Challenges facing Young Carers

The theme explores the challenges associated with being a YC, while also acknowledging the potential positive aspects of caring. It presents how YCs may experience satisfaction through their caring role and develop qualities such as empathy, maturity, resilience and a sense of achievement. At the same time, it considers how balancing everyday life with caring responsibilities can be demanding and stressful. The potential impact of caring on education is covered, including weaker academic results, increased absence, frequent tardiness and higher dropout rates. Young Carers, particularly those with high-intensity caring responsibilities, are identified as being at greater risk of becoming NEET (Not in Education, Employment, or Training) than their peers, while early school leaving can have significant personal, social and economic consequences. The social, emotional and physical challenges associated with caring are also considered, including feeling different, exposure to bullying, less time for friends, leisure and relaxation, and limited opportunities for personal development. Potential impacts on physical and mental health are outlined, with YCs reporting lower levels of wellbeing than their peers. The pressure associated with caregiving is presented as a risk factor for mental health difficulties, including depression, anxiety and self-harm (Vandezande et al., 2021; ME-WE project, 2019a).

Identification mechanisms

This theme focuses on identifying YCs, beginning with an individual reflection on the challenges of identification in participants own workplaces or organisations, followed by small-group discussions on how these challenges could be overcome. The theme emphasises the importance of increasing awareness and knowledge among professionals and other adults, as a lack of awareness can be a major barrier to identification and support. It also considers adults' responsibility in bringing up the issue, as YCs may hesitate to talk about their situation due to stigma, shame, loyalty, or because they do not self-identify as carers. Raising caring responsibilities in everyday conversations can facilitate identification and make it easier for young people to seek support. Other approaches include outreach work and structured organisational routines, as well as formal recognition of YCs and legislation defining their rights. Possible indicators of caring are outlined, primarily for use in schools, although some may also be relevant in other settings. These include frequent absence tiredness, anxiety, difficulties concentrating or completing schoolwork, concerns about a family member, and being secretive about home life. Finally, two evidence-based assessment tools are presented: the MACA-YC18, measuring the extent of caring activities, and the PANOC-YC20, assessing the positive and negative outcomes of caring (Joseph et al., 2009).

Effective support strategies for Young Carers

The theme focuses on effective support strategies for YCs and begins with an individual network-mapping exercise *My Social Network*, which helps YCs visualise their support networks and reflect on who they can turn to for support. This is followed by YCs' own words about their support needs, presented through findings from a Swedish survey conducted as part of the ME-WE project (Brolin et al., 2022). These findings highlight YCs' needs for emotional and psychological support, recognition, support in their caring role and for the person they care for, support at school and in leisure activities, and financial support. Practical approaches to support are covered, including question forms to

facilitate conversations, individual and whole-family support, and collaboration between services. Peer support and Young Carers' groups are also presented as ways of reducing isolation and strengthening a sense of belonging. The theme further considers resilience as a protective factor and presents the ME-WE model as an approach to strengthening YCs' resilience through psychosocial and psychoeducational support (Hanson et al., 2022). The model provides tools for managing distressing thoughts, connecting with emotions and exploring personal values. The theme concludes with a group exercise focusing on existing support for YCs and how this could be further improved.

Participation mechanisms

Within this theme, meaningful and genuine participation is explored. Key conditions for meaningful participation are outlined, including challenging adult assumptions about ability, adult-child power imbalances, moving from consultation towards real influence, and adapting participation processes to each child's needs and circumstances. The importance of accessible, child-friendly information as well as feedback and complaint mechanisms is also considered, alongside the need for competent and trustworthy adults to support the process. The theme also addresses the importance of sustainable organisational and policy structures. Such sustainability requires stable fundings and legal backing. It is stated that particular attention should be given to children at risk of exclusion from participatory mechanisms, such as children with disabilities, migrant children, children living in poverty, and Young Carers. Finally, a participation ladder for children and young people is presented, demonstrating how participation progresses from symbolic involvement and consultation towards shared decision-making, young people initiating and leading activities, and ultimately partnership between young people and adults (Hart, 1992).

Self-advocacy strategies

This thematic area begins with a short film introducing the concept of self-advocacy, followed by a presentation on children's voice and agency. The importance of supporting children to have their voices heard, be taken seriously and influence decisions affecting them is emphasised in line with Article 12 of the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child (1989). The theme also considers how advocacy should be adapted to children's needs and abilities to enable meaningful participation. A toolkit developed by Gloucestershire and Sheffield Young Carers (Sheffield Young Carers, 2017) is presented as an example of how professionals can support YCs in developing self-advocacy and communication skills, with a focus on sharing personal experiences in a safe and purposeful way. The potential benefits of sharing experiences are explored, including increased empowerment and recognition, skills development and self-esteem, meaningful contributions to changes in services and policies, greater awareness and reduced stigma, and building solidarity. Practical tools include a My Story template (ibid.), exercises addressing stigma, and training in communication and managing difficult questions or responses. Finally, opportunities for YCs to influence change are outlined, including participation in decision-making and service design, contributing to strategic planning and service delivery, and sharing their experiences through conferences, workshops, media and films to educate professionals and raise awareness.

Guidelines and techniques for creating Young Carer friendly establishments

Under this theme, two examples of approaches to creating Young Carer friendly establishments are presented. The first example, the EPYC project (Empowering Professionals to support Young Carers) (EPYC project, 2018), concerns professionals who meet YCs across different settings, while the second, EDY-CARE (Johansson et al., 2020), focuses primarily on the school environment, although its guidance may also be relevant in other contexts. The EPYC project and its guidance identify several factors that can contribute to a supportive environment, including creating a positive and informal atmosphere,

respecting YCs' boundaries and needs, providing opportunities for participation and involvement, ensuring active facilitator engagement, offering flexible schedules and engaging with relevant stakeholders and policymakers. The approach also emphasises that support should not become an additional burden on YCs while ensuring that policymakers should have opportunities to hear directly from Young Carers. The EDY-CARE handbook provides guidance for school staff on creating Young Carer friendly schools. Key areas include raising awareness, providing accessible and confidential support, offering flexibility in relation to schoolwork, promoting inclusion and peer support, and strengthening collaboration with other services. The importance of actively identifying YCs and involving them in designing their support through co-design is also emphasised.

Image 1-4 shows example slides from the Training Programme; the full programme can be viewed in Appendix 3. The following chapter describes how the partner countries adapted the Training Programme to their respective local contexts and specific conditions.



Image 1-4. Example slides from the Training Programme

Country adaptations of the Training Programme

This chapter describes the adaptations made by each partner in order to make the Training Programme more relevant to participants in their local contexts. Workshop facilitators have documented the adaptations made to the Training Programme and the rationale for these adaptations which are here presented for each partner country.

Bulgaria

Country-specific adaptations added to the Training Programme

In Bulgaria, particular emphasis was placed on the theme “Introducing the concept of Young Carers”, as Young Carers (YCs) remain a largely unknown concept in Bulgaria and are not legally recognised. Information was added under this theme to outline the Bulgarian context, including the estimated proportion of YCs, comparisons with other project countries and existing support structures. As existing programmes and services in Bulgaria mainly target adults with care needs, adult informal carers or children in general rather than YCs specifically, mechanisms such as the National Child Helpline and school psychologists were presented as potential entry points for identifying and supporting YCs. The concept was also linked to de-institutionalisation reforms, family-centred approaches, children’s rights, disability and community-based care to increase its relevance within the Bulgarian policy and service context.

Other adaptations or changes made for timing or other reasons

The structure and content of the Training Programme in Bulgaria were followed closely, with only minor adaptations. Some activities were shortened to ensure that all key topics and information could be covered within the available time. Under the theme “Challenges facing Young Carers” a particular emphasis was placed on the positive aspects of the caring role. While acknowledging the challenges of caring responsibilities, the training stressed that YCs may develop valuable qualities such as responsibility, organisational skills, maturity and empathy. Professionals were encouraged to recognise these strengths while remaining attentive to the challenges and support needs that YCs may experience.

Training sections removed in the Training Programme

The Bulgarian facilitators did not remove any substantive sections of the Training Programme, as the project consortium considered all topics relevant and potentially useful, either for the current participants or for future professional practice. The materials designed for online delivery were omitted, since all workshops were conducted face-to-face. In addition, the initial check-in activity and the Mentimeter exercise were excluded due to time constraints, allowing more time for the presentation of the training content and participant discussions. Apart from these minor adjustments, the training content remained unchanged.

Other relevant information on adaptations to the Training Programme

The Training Programme and facilitator script were overall followed closely in Bulgaria, with only minor adjustments mainly involving the order of some slides to improve timing and allow greater focus on group activities and discussion exercises. These adaptations aimed to ensure a balance between content delivery and participant engagement, while maintaining the integrity of the common outline of the Training Programme. Throughout the workshops, participants were encouraged to ask questions and engage in discussion, and time was provided for clarifying concepts and to ensure that all topics

were clearly understood. This supported participants' understanding of the concept of Young Carers and helped them relate the training content to their professional experience and practice.

Flanders (Belgium)

Country-specific adaptations added to the Training Programme

In Flanders (Belgium), Wolkenkaarten (n.d.) were added under the theme "Identification mechanisms" and presented to participants as a concrete tool they could use in their own practice. These Dutch-language conversation cards were co-designed with young people and experts by experience and developed specifically as conversation starters for children of parents with mental health or substance-related problems. Under the theme "Effective support strategies for Young Carers", the *Pip & Olli* educational package developed by ZoJong! (n.d.) was shared with participants as reference material and added as an example of a Flemish initiative aimed at identifying and supporting YCs at preschool age. It demonstrates how awareness of YC can be fostered through a preventive and age-appropriate practice. Furthermore, Flemish and Dutch-language resources, including awareness materials, brochures, campaigns and local initiatives, were incorporated to familiarise participants with resources available in the Flemish context. References to Flemish research and practice examples were also added to link the training content to existing Flemish evidence and practice.

Other adaptations or changes for timing or other reasons

A limited preparation time and late recruitment process created challenges in terms of participants' availability. Therefore, the format of the Training Programme had to be adapted in Flanders. The four-hour workshop was reduced to two online sessions of one hour each. In the facilitators' experience, this would also minimise online fatigue while maintaining attention and engagement and increase accessibility. At the same time, the core themes and learning objectives were retained.

Training sections removed in the Training Programme

In the Flemish Training Programme, the story-based examples under the theme "Introducing the concept of Young Carers" were removed and replaced by a video selected by the Flemish team, which encouraged reflection on assumptions about a "good" or "normal" childhood and how these can influence the recognition and support of YCs. This adaptation was due to time constraints and also because narratives from YCs in video format was seen to be a more powerful way of promoting understanding and reflection among participants. Within the theme "Effective support strategies for Young Carers", the "My Social Network" activity was replaced. Given the shortened format, the Flemish team chose to use the available time for a focus on broader relational, organisational, and societal contexts affecting YCs rather than to focus on this activity. Discussions focused on three key recommendations identified by YCs in a large-scale longitudinal study of students in secondary school in Flanders (Vandezande et al., 2021). This enabled participants to engage more directly with Flemish YCs' perspectives and what they themselves identified as important support needs and relate this to their own professional practice. Under the same theme, information on the ME-WE model (ME-WE, 2019b) was not covered in the sessions, nor were the EPYC (2018) and EDY-CARE (Johansson et al., 2020) projects under the theme "Guidelines and techniques for creating Young Carer friendly establishments", due to the shortened format and the available time. Participants were pointed to all three as sources worth exploring further.

Other relevant information on adaptations to the Training Programme

The inclusion of Flemish examples, resources, research findings and practice-based initiatives in the Training Programme helped participants connect the training content more directly to their professional context and the existing support landscape for YCs in Flanders. Despite the changes to the format and content of the Training Programme, the facilitators aimed to encourage participants not only to increase their knowledge of YCs, but also to critically reflect on the assumptions, professional practices and organisational structures that can either facilitate or hinder the recognition and support of YCs, in line with the original aims of the Programme.

Italy

Country-specific adaptations added to the Training Programme

The Training Programme in Italy was implemented at the regional level, as it was sponsored and made in collaboration with the Emilia-Romagna Region and the Regional Health Authority. The Programme was adapted primarily to address specific content related to regional legislation, which is the only legislation in Italy that recognises the role of Young Carers (not up to 18, but 24 years of age). Further adaptations were related to the format and timing.

Other adaptations or changes for timing or other reasons

The Italian facilitators extended the Training Programme by two hours because the materials were considered rich, comprehensive, and relevant to the participating professionals.

Training sections removed in the Training Programme

In Italy, no sections were removed from the Training Programme. Most topics were explored in greater depth than originally planned, due to participants' prior knowledge and active engagement, including their comments and sharing of experiences. A few other topics, such as the themes "Self-advocacy strategies" and "Guidelines for creating Young Carer friendly establishments" were covered in less detail. For some online interactive activities and questions the facilitators did not use the Mentimeter, but the Zoom survey function and the breakout rooms.

Other relevant information on adaptations to the Training Programme

No additional relevant information regarding the adaptations of the Training Programme was identified by the Italian facilitators.

Slovenia

Country-specific adaptations added to the Training Programme

In Slovenia, the materials were adapted under the theme "Introducing the concept of Young Carers" by adding a quote from a Slovenian YC to provide a locally relevant example of lived experience. The quote illustrates how caring responsibilities can affect young people's educational and career plans. Fictional names for the YCs' stories were replaced with Slovenian names to make the stories more familiar and relatable. In addition, a "Key messages" slide was added to one of the workshops to summarise the main learning points in order to support participants retaining the key messages after a shortened and adapted version of the Training Programme.

Other adaptations or changes for timing or other reasons

The five workshops conducted in Slovenia varied in duration and the overall training time was reduced in the Slovenian Training Programme to accommodate participants' limited availability and time constraints. Participant introductions were omitted in most workshops as attendees already knew each other, and some slides were repositioned or adapted. In one workshop, the group activity under the theme "Effective support strategies for Young Carers" was adapted to focus more specifically on the participants' university setting. In the same workshop the theme "Challenges facing Young Carers" was placed before the slide on Young Carers' invisibility, allowing the difficulties to be presented before explaining why YCs may remain unseen or unidentified. In another workshop, under the theme "Effective support strategies for Young Carers", a slide on YCs' support needs was reorganised into broader support categories, such as whole-family, emotional and peer support, information about rights and services, relief from caring responsibilities, flexible school adjustments, transition support and financial support. This was considered to make the support needs clearer within a shorter format while retaining the main messages. In two workshops, video links were removed from the slides and sent to participants by email. In the final workshop, the optional film under the theme "Introducing the concept of Young Carers" was moved to follow the slide on YCs' responsibilities, bringing lived experiences into the training earlier. The quotes slide was also moved to follow the theme "Challenges facing Young Carers", reinforcing the theme with concrete examples from YCs' everyday lives.

Training sections removed in the Training Programme

Some information in the Training Programme in Slovenia was removed from the different workshops, primarily due to time constraints. The participant introduction was removed to shorten the workshop and allow more time for core content and discussion. One Young Carer story under the theme "Introducing the concept of Young Carers" was omitted to save time. Within the theme "Identification mechanisms", content on EDY-CARE (Johansson et al., 2020) indicators and the MACA-YC18 and PANOC-YC20 (Joseph et al., 2009) assessment tools was omitted to keep the identification section shorter and more focused on broader mechanisms of recognition rather than specific checklists and assessment tools. The slide on resilience as part of the theme "Effective support strategies for Young Carers" was removed due to time constraints and because the core ideas of support and coping were already addressed elsewhere within the theme. Information about the ME-WE model (ME-WE, 2019b) in the same theme was also removed because the adapted workshops focused on key messages for professionals rather than presenting a specific intervention model in detail. Finally, the film clip in the theme "Self-advocacy strategies" was omitted due to time limitations.

Other relevant information on adaptations to the Training Programme

The workshops in Slovenia showed that different target groups need slightly different emphasis, reflecting their professional contexts and roles. For example, sociology students benefited from links to the university context, social workers engaged more with systemic and institutional challenges, while school professionals focused strongly on identification, protocols and cooperation with families and centres for social work.

Sweden

Country-specific adaptations added to the Training Programme

In Sweden, country-specific adaptations included additions under the theme "Introducing the concept of Young Carers". To provide a Swedish contextual background, information on the proportion of Young Carers in Sweden and Swedish legislation concerning children as next of kin was added. It was also

noted that Sweden has no specific legislation for YCs, while approximately 70% of children as next of kin also have caregiving responsibilities (Brolin et. Al, 2022). Under the theme “Effective support strategies for Young Carers”, a link to Nka’s (The Swedish Family Care Competence Centre) website was added to provide access to information on relevant methods and tools (Nka, 2021).

Other adaptations or changes for timing or other reasons

In Sweden, no adaptations were made regarding the duration of the Training Programme. Several minor adaptations were made to improve the clarity and relevance of the training. Under the theme “Challenges facing Young Carers”, more information on the positive aspects of caregiving was added to highlight the complex balance between the positive and negative aspects of caregiving and the need to recognise both strengths and challenges in order to provide appropriate support. In this context, it was also added that some research indicates that positive experiences of caregiving may be related to the type of care provided (Svensson et al., 2026). Furthermore, the relationship between the level of caregiving responsibility and how caregiving is experienced was briefly addressed. Content under the theme “Effective support strategies for Young Carers” was adapted to emphasise protective factors related to resilience. Under the theme “Self-advocacy strategies”, the film on self-advocacy was replaced with another video due to translation issues. In addition, two project findings in the theme “Guidelines and techniques for creating Young Carer friendly establishments” were combined into a single slide due to the low number of school participants, as one of the projects was primarily aimed at school personnel, and the complementary nature of the projects.

Training sections removed in the Training Programme

Some sections were removed from the Swedish Training Programme due to time constraints following the addition of country-specific content and the need to allow more time for group discussions, as 20 participants per workshop were expected. The introduction was shortened by removing the check-in activity and the Mentimeter. Within the theme “Introducing the concept of Young Carers”, one Young Carer story and the quotes were omitted. This was compensated for by the inclusion of a very informative optional film about a YC. The individual activity “My Social Network” under the theme “Effective support strategies for Young Carers” was removed to allow more time for group activities and discussion. Within the same theme, information on individual support was omitted when describing some examples of support in order to place greater emphasis on whole-family support. However, the topic remained covered in the script and was also addressed on the previous slide, where YCs described their support needs. Finally, in the theme “Self-advocacy strategies”, the slide about voice and agency was removed to save time and because Swedish professionals are generally expected to be familiar with its content following the incorporation of the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child into Swedish law (SFS, 2018:1197).

Other relevant information on adaptations to the Training Programme

In the Swedish Training Programme some slides were repositioned to improve the flow of the training, mostly due to the addition of new content. Three slides from the theme “Introducing the concept of Young Carers” were moved to the theme “Challenges facing Young Carers” to better align with the revised structure. In one of the two workshops, the final exercise “What are your next steps?” was moved to the group activity on effective support for YCs, as participants had already discussed the topic of support during an earlier group activity.

The following chapter provides an overview of the workshops delivered in each partner country, based on the reports provided by the facilitators.

Workshops in participating countries

All partner countries have implemented the Training Programme, either face-to-face or online. The duration of the workshops has varied across countries, ranging from 1.5 to 6 hours. The Programme has reached professionals from all target sectors identified by the consortium, including education, healthcare, social work, youth work, and the voluntary sector across the partner countries. The consortium's target of reaching at least 15–20 professionals per partner country has been fully achieved. Table 1 details the number of participants, workshops and duration of workshops in each country. Table 2 details the sectors represented as reported by the facilitators of the workshops in each country.

Table 1. Workshops in each country

Workshops in each participating country	No. of participants completing the workshops	No. of workshops	Workshop duration
	N	N	Hours
All countries	116	13	
Bulgaria	29	3	4
Flanders (Belgium)	15	2	2
Italy	24	1	6
Slovenia	19	5	2,1 ¹
Sweden	29	2	4

Table 2. Sectors represented among participants as reported by facilitators

Sectors represented	Education	Social Work	Health Care	Youth Work	Voluntary Sector (NGO)	Young Carer	Other
All countries	52	42	26	5	16	2	33
Bulgaria	23	2	3	1	0	0	0
Flanders (Belgium)	5	6	2	1	2	2	17
Italy	9	19	12	3	5	0	16
Slovenia	12	5	2	0	0	0	0
Sweden	3	10	7	0 ²	9	0	0

Bulgaria

Participants in the workshops

Number of workshops and participants

The Bulgarian facilitators carried out three four-hour workshops, and a total of 29 participants attended. Participants represented all target sectors except the voluntary sector. By far the largest number of participants came from the education sector, while a smaller number came from the other sectors. One workshop leader conducted the workshops.

¹ Average duration. The duration of workshops in Slovenia differed from 1.5-3.5 hours based on number of participants and format of each workshop.

² Some of the other participating sectors (education, social work, NGO) also included this sector.

Description of the workshops

The recruitment process

In Bulgaria, recruitment was carried out through professional networks, colleagues, personal contacts, NGOs, local authorities, schools, and the Social Assistance Directorate in Pomorie. Invitations were widely disseminated and open to all interested participants. Recruitment was negatively affected by holidays, elections, and competing commitments. A particular challenge was explaining the concept of Young Carers (YCs), which remains largely unknown in Bulgaria. Many professionals were unfamiliar with the topic and its relevance to their work. Despite these challenges, the recruitment process successfully raised awareness among professionals across sectors and generated interest in the Training Programme.

The format of the workshops - face-to-face or online

All three workshops in Bulgaria were delivered face-to-face. This format was considered most appropriate, as most participants were based in the same or nearby area. The face-to-face setting facilitated interaction, discussion and exchange of experiences, while helping maintain engagement throughout the four-hour sessions. The workshops ran smoothly, with no technical or organisational difficulties. Although online sessions were considered for professionals from other regions, the face-to-face format proved highly effective for this type of training.

The participants engagement with the training material

Participants attending the Bulgarian workshops showed strong interest in the topic, which was new to many. They actively engaged with the training material by gaining new knowledge, sharing professional experiences, asking questions, and reflecting on the challenges of identifying and supporting YCs. Smaller groups enabled deeper discussions and reflection on the Bulgarian context, while larger groups remained engaged despite more limited opportunities for discussion. Overall, the sessions highlighted both participants' interest in the topic and the need for increased awareness and support for YCs in Bulgaria.

Other relevant information

The diverse professional backgrounds of the participants attending the workshops in Bulgaria enriched discussions and provided valuable insights into the challenges of identifying and supporting YCs. All registered participants attended and remained until the end, demonstrating a high level of interest in the topic. A particularly valuable aspect was the discussion on identifying YCs. Participants agreed that recognising YCs in practice is often difficult, especially within schools and mainstream services, and noted that professionals receive little or no training on how to identify children and young people with caring responsibilities.

Facilitators experiences and reflections

Facilitators' experiences of the balance between practical exercises and theoretical input

In Bulgaria, the facilitators experienced the balance between practical exercises and theoretical input as very good throughout the workshops. The theoretical components provided essential knowledge about YCs, their needs, and the relevant policy and practice context, while practical exercises helped participants relate this information to their professional experience and everyday work. The activities encouraged reflection, discussion and exchange of experiences with participants sharing examples from their professional and personal backgrounds. These exchanges enriched the learning process, illustrated how theoretical concepts could be applied in real-life situations, and provided insights into

national and local realities. Overall, the workshops confirmed that practical exercises are an essential complement to theoretical input.

What worked well

The topic of identifying and supporting YCs was very well received in the Bulgarian workshops. Many professionals recognised its relevance to their work and welcomed the opportunity to learn more about a group of children and young people that often remains invisible within existing support systems. The combination of theoretical information and practical exercises worked particularly well, enabling participants to reflect on how the knowledge could be applied in their own professional settings. Practical examples helped translate theory into concrete actions to better identify, understand and support YCs. Discussions and sharing of experiences were also especially valuable. Participants exchanged ideas, reflected on their own practice and considered how existing approaches could be adapted to better meet YCs' needs.

Improvements and suggestions for developments

The main area for improvement, according to the Bulgarian facilitators, relates to the duration and format of the training. While the four-hour workshop allowed sufficient time to cover all material and engage in meaningful discussions, it represented a significant time commitment for busy professionals. Some participants felt that two shorter sessions on consecutive days might be more manageable. This would allow more time to absorb and reflect on the information, although it could also increase the risk of participants being unable to attend the second session due to other commitments. Future workshops could therefore explore different formats to balance accessibility, participant engagement and learning outcomes. No major changes to the contents are recommended. The theoretical component provides essential knowledge and should be retained in full. Sharing the theoretical materials in advance could allow more time for practical exercises, discussions, sharing experiences and questions. Participants particularly valued the interactive elements, and allocating more time to these could further strengthen the learning experience.

Other reflections on the experience as facilitators

The Bulgarian facilitators found conducting the workshops was a valuable and rewarding experience. They learned not only from the training material itself but also from the participants and the discussions that took place during the workshops. As both the topic and materials were new, there was some initial uncertainty about whether participants would find the training useful and engaging, and whether the allocated time would be sufficient. However, participants responded positively to both the content and format of the workshops. Overall, the experience contributed to the facilitators' professional development and increased their understanding of the challenges faced by YCs and the importance of raising awareness of their needs among professionals.

Flanders (Belgium)

Participants in the workshops

Number of workshops and participants

In Flanders the common outline of a four-hour Training Programme was split into two online sessions of one hour each, giving a total training duration of two hours. Twenty participants attended the first session and 15 of them also attended the second session, meaning 15 participants completed the full programme. Participants represented all consortium-defined target sectors, with the largest proportion from social work and education. Two Young Carers also participated. Participants who selected "Other"

included staff from municipal local service centres, an HR manager, local government policy officers working on care, students and researchers. The sessions were conducted by either one or two facilitators.

Description of the workshops

The recruitment process

The recruitment process in Flanders was primarily conducted online through newsletters, LinkedIn, partner organisations' communication channels, and professional networks. Targeted outreach was also carried out towards specific groups, including professionals in education, social work, and student guidance services. The invitation was open to all interested participants. Although the limited preparation time and late recruitment process created challenges in terms of participants' availability, the response was positive with a good number of registrations received. Reaching professionals from the youth work sector, however, remained particularly challenging.

The format of the workshops - face-to-face or online

All workshops in Flanders were delivered online via Zoom to enable participation from professionals across different municipalities, local authorities and sectors and to make the training easier to combine with professional responsibilities. Participants were familiar with the online format, and the sessions ran smoothly with good interaction throughout. The main limitation was the reduced opportunity for informal networking with face-to-face sessions. Minor technical issues occurred with the sound of video material in the first session. This issue was resolved and did not occur in the other session.

The participants engagement with the training material

In Flanders the participants actively engaged with the training material by contributing to discussions, sharing professional experiences, and reflecting on their role in recognising and supporting YCs. The diversity of professional backgrounds enriched discussions with perspectives and examples from various sectors. Interactive elements, such as the adapted video and Flemish practice examples, supported reflection on current practices and organisational structures. Although limited time restricted opportunities for deeper discussion, participants showed strong interest in the topic and willingness to apply the knowledge gained in their professional contexts.

Other relevant information

The workshops confirmed that awareness of Young Carers is increasing in Flanders, while also highlighting that many professionals still require more knowledge, practical tools, and organisational support to effectively recognise and respond to YCs. Participants particularly appreciated the inclusion of Flemish examples, resources, and research findings, which made the training directly applicable to their professional context. Discussions sometimes took longer than anticipated, requiring some parts of the programme to be rushed. Although the shorter online sessions increased accessibility, it limited the depth of conversations and required prioritisation of certain topics. Five participants who attended the first session were unable to join the second, mainly due to professional scheduling conflicts or personal situations. Some attrition is to be expected with a programme that is spread over two dates, and this is a trade-off worth accepting, as the shortened format made participation feasible for professionals who could not have committed to a half-day programme.

Facilitators experiences and reflections

Facilitators' experiences of the balance between practical exercises and theoretical input

The facilitators in Flanders experienced the balance between practical exercises and theoretical input as appropriate for the workshop objectives. The theoretical components provided a common understanding of YCs, while practical and reflective elements helped participants connect the content to their professional practice. Given the limited time in two relatively short online sessions, the facilitators prioritised interactive discussions and reflection over practical exercises. The adapted video, case discussions and participant exchanges effectively stimulated critical reflection and helped translate knowledge into practice. Although some activities were omitted due to time constraints, the workshops maintained a good balance between evidence-based information and active engagement, with participant discussions providing valuable learning opportunities.

What worked well

According to the Flemish facilitators, the online workshop format worked well despite its challenges. Scheduling sessions during lunch breaks or after work made it easier for professionals to attend, while dividing the training into two sessions helped maintain attention and engagement. The content was well received, particularly the information on YCs, as many participants had limited prior knowledge despite recognising its relevance to their work. The focus on meaningful participation generated valuable discussions on how YCs' voices can be better included in professional practice. Practical tools and Flemish resources provided concrete examples and materials for everyday practice. Participants also appreciated the shorter sessions and the opportunity to reflect between workshops.

Improvements and suggestions for developments

As reported by the Flemish facilitators, areas for improvement include allowing more time for theoretical input, discussion, and exchange, as the shorter online sessions provided limited time for these elements. Earlier promotion could increase participation and attendance, while alternative recruitment channels and closer collaboration with youth work organisations could improve their participation. A hybrid format would be a valuable development in future workshops. It could combine the accessibility of online training with the networking, practical exercises, and deeper discussions enabled by face-to-face workshops. Extending the workshops or adding a follow-up session would provide more time to discuss challenges from participants' practice, reflect on the application of knowledge and tools, and contribute to the development of a professional network for supporting YCs. Future training could also strengthen its critical, systemic perspective by examining how policies, services structures, professional practices, and societal views contribute to the invisibility of YCs. Finally, expanding country-specific examples, resources, research, policy developments and good practices would help keep the training relevant, practical and connected to participants' professional contexts.

Other reflections on the experience as facilitators

The facilitators in Flanders observed that awareness of YCs is increasing, but that many professionals still lack the confidence, knowledge and organisational support needed to consistently recognise and respond to YCs. This confirmed the need for continued training and for embedding the topic more structurally within organisations, education and professional development, while also remaining critical of the information being disseminated. The workshops also strengthened the facilitators' conviction that discussions about YCs should extend beyond individual identification and support. Encouraging this broader perspective enriched the discussions and was also very insightful for the facilitators.

Italy

Participants in the workshops

Number of workshops and participants

The Italian facilitators conducted one workshop divided into two three-hour sessions, bringing the total workshop duration to six hours. A total of 24 participants completed the whole Training Programme. A further 9 participants attended only one of the sessions. Italy reached all consortium-defined target sectors. The largest group of participants came from social work, followed by the “Other” sector. Two workshop leaders facilitated the workshops. Participants from the “Other” sector consisted of policymakers, attended the training.

Description of the workshops

The recruitment process

Participant recruitment in Italy was conducted through targeted email invitations and with a flyer distributed via the Italian team’s social media account. Having obtained the patronage of the Emilia-Romagna Region and the Regional Health Authority, these two partners helped the facilitators to disseminate the Training Programme through their channels and with their professionals and stakeholders.

The format of the workshops - face-to-face or online

The one workshop, divided into two sessions, conducted in Italy was delivered online to facilitate participation among professionals from several provinces in the Emilia-Romagna region. The sessions were held one day apart. The experience was very positive. Participants did not report any problems, and no particular difficulties in delivering the training were encountered. The only challenge was collecting the evaluation questionnaires, which required considerable effort and several individual reminders to participants.

The participants engagement with the training material

According to the Italian facilitators, participants engaged actively with the training material, sharing personal and professional experiences primarily related to the recognition, support, and participation of Young Carers. The interactive format, including subgroup discussions during the first session, encouraged participants to explore challenges in identifying YCs within their own workplaces and identify possible solutions. Both sessions provided sufficient space for dialogue between participants, as most participants already worked with YCs or youth participation. Their professional experience contributed to meaningful exchanges, and during the second session some participants shared interesting strategies for recognising and supporting YCs.

Other relevant information

The total training time was extended in the Italian Training Programme, ensuring that all topics included in the programme could be covered.

Facilitators experiences and reflections

Facilitators’ experiences of the balance between practical exercises and theoretical input

The Italian facilitators reported that the balance between practical exercises and theoretical input was very positive. Since the online sessions were quite long, the facilitators found that interactive activities,

tools and videos were very helpful in breaking down monotony, increasing participation, and facilitating attention.

What worked well

In Italy, the collaboration with the Region and the Local Health Authority was highly useful in reaching a good number of participants from different sectors and geographical areas. The facilitators gave participants the opportunity to interact with them through both the live chat and the microphone, allowing them to ask questions and share comments, which proved very effective. The opportunity to present cases with real-life examples and quotes allowed the facilitators to engage participants much more effectively.

Improvements and suggestions for developments

No particular aspects were identified by the Italian facilitators as needing improvement. The materials provided were definitely adequate and the small adjustments made were sufficient to conduct the workshops with very positive results. The Italian facilitators considered the experience very positive.

Other reflections on the experience as facilitators

The Italian facilitators noted that online workshops run more smoothly when delivered by at least two facilitators, as one can lead the session while the other manages the chat and deals with any technical issues.

Slovenia

Participants in the workshops

Number of workshops and participants

The training in Slovenia consisted of five workshops. The duration of the workshops varied, ranging from 1.5 to 3.5 hours. Altogether 19 participants attended. Participants represented the education, social work, and healthcare sectors. The education sector accounted for the largest share of participants, followed by the social work sector. The sessions were led by one workshop leader.

Description of the workshops

The recruitment process

In Slovenia, recruitment was primarily conducted through existing professional and personal networks, facilitating access to potential participants. The limited recruitment timeframe and professionals' competing work commitments made it challenging to reach participants beyond these networks and secure attendance. Some organisations also required more time for internal coordination than was available. The main challenge was the limited time professionals had available to participate in the workshops. To address these challenges, the workshop format was adapted by offering individual sessions and smaller group workshops.

The format of the workshops - face-to-face or online

Workshops in Slovenia were delivered in both face-to-face (workshops 1, 2 and 5) and online formats (workshops 3 and 4), depending on participants' availability. To make the most efficient use of participants' limited time, video materials were emailed in advance of the online workshops rather than shown during the sessions. The face-to-face format facilitated active engagement, rich debates, reflection on professional and personal experiences. The online format enabled healthcare

professionals and university staff to participate despite limited availability. Across both formats, participants considered the workshops very interesting and useful.

The participants engagement with the training material

Participants attending the Slovenian workshops engaged well with the training material, particularly through interactive activities, discussions, and reflection exercises. The “My Social Network” activity proved particularly useful for being concrete, personal, and easy to apply in practice. The optional film clip was also well received, helping to present YCs’ experiences in an accessible and emotionally engaging way. Participants also responded positively to opportunities for discussion, reflection, and sharing professional and personal experiences. However, they found it more challenging to reflect on potential organisational changes, protocols, and next steps, likely due to limited knowledge and awareness of YCs in Slovenia.

Other relevant information

In the Slovenian workshops, participants shared that YCs are present across a range of settings but often remain invisible and unrecognised as a specific group with distinct needs. The workshops also highlighted the need for clearer protocols, stronger inter-institutional collaboration, and more practical tools for identifying and supporting YCs. Overall, the workshops confirmed that the topic is highly relevant in the Slovenian context and that further training, research, and awareness-raising activities would be valuable.

Facilitators experiences and reflections

Facilitators’ experiences of the balance between practical exercises and theoretical input

The balance between practical exercises and theoretical input was important in the Slovenian workshops. The theoretical sections were necessary because the topic of YCs remains relatively unknown in Slovenia, and participants required basic information, definitions, and examples to understand the issue. At the same time, the practical exercises were essential as they enabled participants to relate the topic to their own professional context and daily work. However, some participants would have preferred more practice-based examples, particularly those grounded in lived experience rather than solely tools or methods.

What worked well

The interactive parts of the workshops worked particularly well in the Slovenian workshops, especially the “My Social Network” exercise, the film clip, and the opportunities for open discussion. These elements made the topic more concrete and encouraged reflection on YCs’ experiences in a more personal and practical way. The discussions were especially valuable when participants connected the topic to cases or situations they had encountered in their own work.

Improvements and suggestions for developments

In Slovenia, the facilitators suggest organising the training as a series of consecutive workshops, allowing participants to engage with the topic more gradually and in greater depth. A feasible option could be a workshop followed by additional readings, practical materials or short follow-up tasks, and then a subsequent session. This would support continued reflection and help participants relate the training to their professional context. For online workshops, links to video content and brief descriptions would also be beneficial. Removing information about other projects could create more time to focus on the main topic. More time should also be allocated for discussion, country-specific case studies and lived-experience examples. Mixed-sector workshops could enable participants to exchange perspectives across systems and reflect on cooperation needed to identify and support YCs.

Adapting the training to different professional groups and tailoring exercises to their professional settings could also be beneficial, however, as well as including YCs' voices and professionals' practical experiences.

Other reflections on the experience as facilitators

The facilitators in Slovenia believe the workshops provided a valuable learning experience and confirmed that YCs are a relevant but still insufficiently recognised topic in Slovenian professional practice. Once introduced to the concept, participants could relate it to situations from their own work and reflect on children and young people who may have caring responsibilities but remain invisible. The workshops demonstrated that the topic requires time, sensitivity and concrete practice-based examples, while the format needed to be adapted to participants' availability and the specific context of each group. Overall, the experience reinforced the need for continued awareness-raising, professional training and stronger cooperation between institutions.

Sweden

Participants in the workshops

Number of workshops and participants

The Swedish facilitators conducted two four-hour workshops. A total of 29 participants completed the Training Programme. Across the two Training Programmes, nine participants left early due to other work commitments. However, some of them left towards the end of the sessions and therefore only missed some part/parts. All target sectors identified by the consortium were represented. With regard to the youth work sector, this was covered through the activities of professionals from the other participating sectors. Social work was the most represented sector among participants, followed closely by the voluntary sector. Two workshop leaders facilitated the workshops.

Description of the workshops

The recruitment process

In Sweden, recruitment was carried out through established networks working with children as next of kin, coordinated by The Swedish Family Care Competence Centre (Nka) and the Swedish National Board of Health and Welfare. Professional contacts within schools, healthcare, and social services were also used to recruit participants. Information about the Training Programme was further disseminated within participants' own organisations. The recruitment process generated substantial interest in the workshops. One challenge was balancing the aim of reaching a broad audience with the need to maintain a group size that enabled interaction and active participation.

The format of the workshops – face-to-face or online

All workshops in Sweden were delivered online to facilitate participation from professionals across sectors and regions as well as ensuring accessibility. Participants were familiar with online sessions, supporting smooth implementation. The format enabled good interaction, although face-to-face sessions may have provided even greater engagement. Some minor technical challenges were addressed during the sessions. Due to prior work commitments, a few participants were unable to stay until the end, which may be a particular challenge in online formats, where participants may find it easier to attend only part of a session, whereas they are generally less likely to do so when participating in face-to-face sessions.

The participants engagement with the training material

Participants in the Swedish workshops engaged actively with the training material through individual reflection, group discussions, and the exchange of experiences on the identification and support of YCs. They identified strategies relevant to their own workplaces and shared reflections with the wider group. Following the training, participants received the presentation materials and a summary of the group discussions to support continued learning.

Other relevant information

In Sweden more than 20 professionals, including representatives from NGOs, registered for each session. However, some participants cancelled at very short notice, while others had to leave before the end due to client meetings and other previously scheduled professional commitments. As the cancellations were received too late, the places could not be offered to other interested participants in time for the workshops.

Facilitators experiences and reflections

Facilitators' experiences of the balance between practical exercises and theoretical input

The Swedish facilitators found that the combination of practical exercises and theoretical input worked well throughout the workshops. In addition to providing participants with theoretical knowledge about YCs, the workshops included two larger group exercises followed by feedback and discussion. The participants were engaged and eager to share their perspectives.

What worked well

The mix of theoretical and practical elements, along with showing films, worked particularly well in the Swedish workshops. The participants were also engaged in discussions and in sharing their reflections and experiences. Some participants even discussed opportunities for future collaboration.

Improvements and suggestions for developments

The timeframe for the workshops could be reconsidered, according to the Swedish facilitators. Shorter sessions might have been more effective, as participants also needed to manage their regular work responsibilities during the day. Shortening the training could be challenging, however, as it is difficult to identify sections that could be removed without leaving out necessary content. Alternatively, the training could be split over two days. It would also be useful to develop a plan to avoid late cancellations by registered participants. This could include introducing a cancellation deadline, asking participants to confirm their attendance closer to the start date, or slightly overbooking participants.

Other reflections on the experience as facilitators

The facilitators from Sweden suggest that conducting test runs before delivering the training could be beneficial. This would allow facilitators to become more familiar with the training materials, refine the timing and flow of the sessions, and increase their confidence before facilitating the workshops.

Evaluation of the Training Programme

Methodology

The evaluation of the Training Programme was conducted as a questionnaire with quantitative and qualitative questions. The questionnaire collected background information, opinions on the content, structure and delivery of the Programme. It also contained questions aimed at investigating the level to which knowledge and awareness about YCs, their situation, and the challenges they face was raised both in terms of information and in how this information could be practically applied within participants' own organisations.

Development of the questionnaire

The online questionnaire for the evaluation of the Work Package 4 Training Programme was adapted from a usability questionnaire developed and used to evaluate a co-designed MOOC (massive open online course) within the EU Erasmus+ funded project DI.S.C.O.P.M.B, ""Diversity Sensitive Care of Older People with Migrant Backgrounds and Their Families" (2022-2025), coordinated by Linnaeus University, Sweden, (<https://www.diversitysensitcare.eu/>). This questionnaire was adapted according to the aims of the Training Programme in terms of background data, experiences of the Training Programme and expected learning outcomes.

The questionnaire was shared with partners and discussed during a meeting of the consortium after which some additional adaptations were made. These included making the response to questions 1 (age) and 4 (years worked with children) continuous (years) as opposed to categorical and adding an "other" category to question 3 (sector) to allow for between-country differences in sector categorisation. Two questions were added: question 2 (gender) and question 26 (any other comments). In addition, in question 5 it was decided to keep four response options (to force clear positions, a four-point scale is preferred) but adjust the second option to make the response options less extreme. Finally, in questions 20-25, which originally had seven response options, it was decided to make the response options a scale from 1-6, as it was noted that the seven response options would be difficult to translate into national languages. The questionnaire was then translated by partners into national languages. The questionnaire (English version) is supplied in Appendix 1.

Data collection procedure

The questionnaire was administered primarily online through the web-based platform esMaker which is fully GDPR compliant. A unique link to the online questionnaire was created for each language. In some cases, a paper version of the questionnaire was administered during the workshop with the responses being input into esMaker by facilitators. In order to increase response rate, time had been allocated within the Training Programme to answer the questionnaire. In cases where this was not followed or where participants had technical difficulties filling in the questionnaire (for example, due to firewalls put in place by their organisations), a Word document with the questionnaire was emailed to participants, and the returned responses were input by national partners into the online platform. Partners that did not consistently administer the questionnaire during the training itself also sent out several reminders to participants encouraging them to complete the questionnaire which did increase the response rate.

Analysis

The esMaker platform offers automatic quantitative analysis of results on both a national and cross-country level. This data was downloaded and tables were constructed in Word to give an overview of the answers to each question. Additional computations were conducted in Excel. No other descriptive or statistical analysis was performed. The qualitative answers in the form of free-text answers were analysed using content analysis according to Erlingsson and Brysiewicz (2017). Responses to the free-text questions were condensed after which codes were constructed and then categorised.

Cross-country overview of evaluation results

Overall, the responses for participants were very positive, and the evaluation results show very little difference between countries on all questions in the evaluation. Time was allocated during the Training Programme to administer the questionnaire during the training itself in order to increase the response rate. This was not adhered to in all cases which did affect response rate. In total there were 116 participant who completed the entire Training Programme out of which 97 responded to the questionnaire, giving a response rate of 84%. There was no internal missing data. For responses to all quantitative questions at cross-national and partner country levels, see Appendix 2: Quantitative results of the questionnaire.

Background data

The participants that took part in the Training Programme were between 22 and 63 years old. Mean age was 44.76 (SD 11.98) overall, and there was little difference in participant age between countries. A majority of participants identified as female (N=86, 88.7%). All sectors that were targeted by the intervention were represented with most participants coming from social work (N=34, 35.1%) and education (N=32, 35.1%), see Table 3. Several participants selected more than one response to this question increasing the number of selections to N=113.

Table 3. Sectors represented among participants

What sector do you belong to?	Education	Social Work	Health Care	Youth Work	Voluntary Sector (NGO)	Young Carer	Other
	N (%)	N (%)	N (%)	N (%)	N (%)	N (%)	N (%)
All countries	32 (33)	34 (35.1)	17 (17.5)	11 (11.3)	11 (11.3)	1 (1)	7 (7.2)
Bulgaria	14 (60.9)	2 (8.7)	5 (21.7)	7 (30.4)	1 (4.3)	0 (0)	0 (0)
Flanders (Belgium)	2 (16.7)	8 (66.7)	1 (8.3)	1 (8.3)	1 (8.3)	1 (8.3)	2 (16.7)
Italy	0 (0)	10 (55.6)	2 (11.1)	2 (11.1)	0 (0)	0 (0)	4 (22.2)
Slovenia	14 (73.7)	4 (21.1)	2 (10.5)	1 (5.3)	0 (0)	0 (0)	1 (5.3)
Sweden	2 (8)	10 (40)	7 (28)	0 (0)	9 (36)	0 (0)	0 (0)

In addition, sectors not specifically targeted by the intervention also participated in the Training Programme including representatives from municipal and regional offices, as well as research. Out of the 97 respondents, N=77 (79.4%) worked directly with children and young people with a mean of 16.15 years of experience (SD 10.78), see Table 4.

Table 4. Years worked with children and young people

How many years (if applicable) have you worked with children and young people?	Have worked with children			I have never worked with children and young people
	N (%)	M (SD)	Range in years	N (%)
All countries	77 (79.4)	16.15 (10.78)	1-39	20 (20.6)
Bulgaria	19 (82.6)	16.26 (9.90)	3-39	4 (17.4)
Flanders (Belgium)	8 (66.7)	15.13 (12.86)	1-35	4 (33.3)
Italy	13 (72.2)	14.18 (10.18)	1-30	5 (27.8)
Slovenia	12 (63.2)	21.17 (14.21)	1-39	7 (36.8)
Sweden	25 (100)	15.13 (9.36)	1-30	0 (0)

The following figure (Figure 1) indicates that, out of the participants that had direct experience of working with children and young people, a majority have considerable experience. Though the range is between 1 and 39 years, few participants had very limited experience.

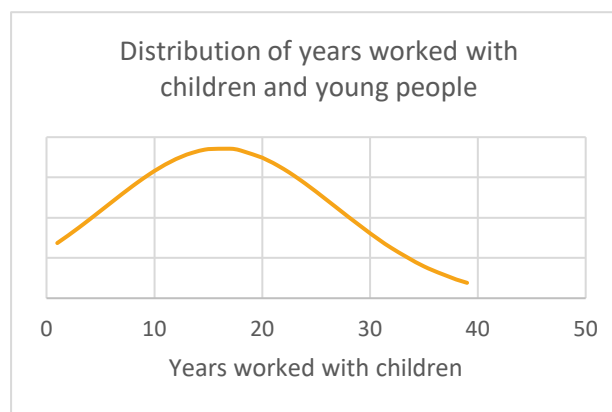
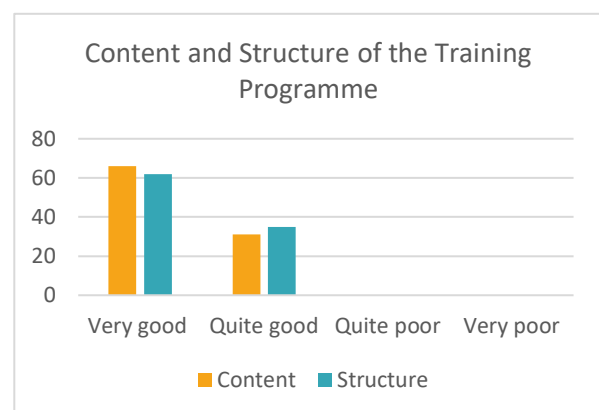
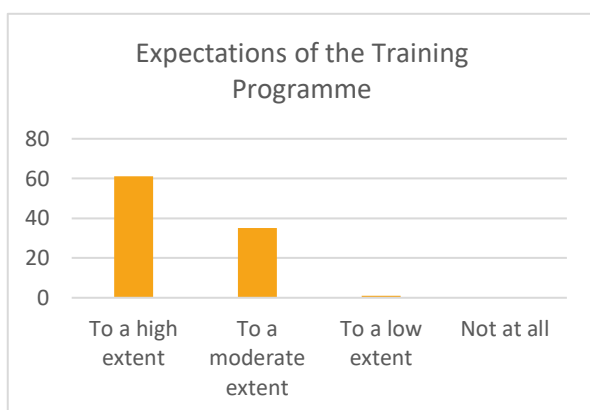


Figure 1. Distribution of number of years worked with children

Overall impressions of the Training Programme

The overall impressions of the Training Programme were high with all but one respondent answering that the Training Programme met expectations to a high or moderate extent (N=96, 99%). All respondents were of the opinion that the content and structure of the Training Programme were either very good or quite good, see Figures 2-3.



Figures 2-3. Expectations and opinions of the content and structure of the Training Programme.

When asked to describe concrete examples of what participants considered to be the best aspects of the Training Programme, few cross-national differences could be seen in the answers. Participants across the board identified several positive aspects including the delivery of the Training Programme, the information that was given and the overall structure of the workshops.

I really appreciated the variety in the program. That it was informative, there were concrete examples, films and a lot of discussion both in small and large groups. It made time pass so fast, it was interesting all the way - nice job! It felt alive, even though the training was digital, and the teamwork between the leaders was incredibly good. I think it's a shame that more people didn't take the opportunity to take part in this training, I'm very grateful that I was there! – Participant from Sweden

In addition, many participants appreciated the inclusion of lived-experience examples from YCs themselves as well as information based in scientific research. One of the aspects mentioned most often as a positive was the inclusion of concrete tools and helpful tips that could have an application in participants' practice.

The strongest aspects of the Training Programme, in my opinion, are its practical orientation and focus on real-life situations. Particularly valuable are the interactive methods that encourage active participation, as well as the concrete tools that can be immediately applied in work with children and young people with caring responsibilities. – Participant from Bulgaria

Participants also spoke positively about the opportunity to reflect and share both personal and professional experiences with others. In particular, hearing reflections and experiences from other professions, workplaces and sectors was appreciated by many.

Sharing both personal and professional experiences. Personally, I found it very interesting to hear a colleague share practical experiences with Young Carers, which differs from my own experience and more theoretical approach, as I don't work directly in the field and don't have direct contact with users. Unlike my colleague. – Participant from Italy

Some also gave voice to the fact that the Training Programme had triggered personal memories of their own caregiving as a positive aspect of the workshop. Overall, the answers suggest that, for many participants, the structure and content of the Training Programme worked well and that the aims of the Training Programme were achieved.

The first aspect, for me, is the opportunity the programme provides for children and young people to develop leadership and self-organisation skills and to take responsibility. The second very important aspect is the provision of psychological and emotional support for young people – this helps them feel connected and understood. – Participant from Bulgaria

When asked which aspects of the Training Programme could be improved, there was more of a cross-national difference in the answers, perhaps reflecting the national adaptations that were made to content, structure and duration. Participants in Bulgaria wished for further learning and opportunities for further exchange with others. They also requested more concrete examples and case studies as well as a more focus on practical applications.

It would be useful for the Training Programme to include even more practical exercises and real-life case studies that would allow participants to apply what they have learned in specific situations. – Participant from Bulgaria

In Flanders (Belgium) many participants wished for a longer duration or follow-up sessions as they found the material important and engaging and wished for more time for participants to share and learn from each other.

Time management, but maybe next time you should just set aside a little more time than just an hour, because this is really fascinating material! – Participant from Flanders

In Italy, some participants felt that, considering the sectors represented, some of the more basic information could be omitted as they considered knowledge to be at a reasonable level already, which would then allow for more time to focus on exploring existing programmes and support services for YCs.

For those who work in social services, it's already well-trained. It might be interesting to explore existing programs for meeting and supporting Young Carers. – Participant from Italy

In Slovenia, participants wished for more information from the national context, a greater focus on the positive aspects of caregiving and had several suggestions for how the practical application of the Programme could be improved. These included active efforts to bring together institutions for collaboration, expanding recruitment to include policymakers, increased focus on how support for YCs can be improved and information on existing services as well as general awareness-raising activities.

Increased pressure on the government to provide assistance. Active efforts to bring together the various institutions that can collaborate in this case. – Participant from Slovenia

The training's target audience should be expanded to include decision-makers and policymakers. The training should begin by highlighting the positive aspects of caregiving. – Participant from Slovenia

In Sweden, the feedback focused partly on technical aspects of the delivery including greater familiarity with the technology by facilitators, which facilitators themselves also identified as a challenge. The feedback on duration was uneven, with some participants wishing for shorter workshop and others wishing for more time. One participant considered that the topic of YCs was still too advanced within some part of the healthcare sector in Sweden who still struggle to abide by the legal obligation to recognise children as next of kin.

I think the whole training was good. I joined as a representative for somatic healthcare both children and adults, but also work with other healthcare such as habilitation, psychiatry, dental care, etc. What I think is that healthcare has a big and important job ahead of it to recognise and follow the law regarding children/siblings as next of kin and YCs feels like too advanced for us right now. This is a general answer, as some parts of healthcare have come a long way and could work more aimed at YCs. – Participant from Sweden

The idea of opportunities for further learning and collaboration with others identified by participants in Bulgaria and Slovenia was also echoed by one participant from Sweden who also advocated for the establishment of networking groups post-workshop.

Have more sessions and maybe further training opportunities. A networking group would have been beneficial where you can follow up on how things have gone after a certain time or if you have started. – Participant from Sweden

However, across all countries some participants voiced that they were happy with all aspects of the Programme and wished for no further adjustments. Overall, the qualitative analysis suggests that the aims of the Training Programme were reflected in many of the answers submitted by participants and that one of the most appreciated aspects of the workshops was the opportunity to share experiences and learn from each other. When asked if there was any additional information participants wanted to share, many expressed their gratitude and interest in the topic as well as highlighting the importance of enthusiastic and engaged facilitators.

I find your enthusiasm and warm attitude so inspiring. You're doing such valuable work for Young Carers. I'll definitely email you to brainstorm. Thanks for the information during the workshop and beyond. Keep up the great work. – Participant from Flanders

Specific impressions of the Training Programme

All of the questions in this section were answered on a scale of 1-6 where 1 indicated that the participants were totally unsatisfied and 6 that they were totally satisfied. The responses show that a majority of participants were satisfied with the information provided in advance (M 5.28), the time allocated for the training (M 5.06), consistency with the aims (5.47), relevance of the content (M 5.47), the topics covered (M 5.48) and the balance between practical exercises and theoretical input (M 5.02). A very slight difference can be seen in the results from Flanders (Belgium) with participants responding slightly less favourably when it comes to the question on the balance between practical exercises and theoretical input (M 4.08) and the time allocated for training (M 4.17). This difference can perhaps be explained by national adaptations where the training workshop was significantly shortened from 4 to 2 hours. This is supported by the answers to open-ended questions where several participants from the workshop in Flanders wished for more time.

Questions related to enhanced knowledge and awareness

As with the section above, the questions in this section were answered on a scale from 1 to 6 where 1 indicated that participants strongly disagreed and 6 that they strongly agreed. The results show that respondents reported increased knowledge and awareness of YCs and the challenges they face, as well as of how to identify and support YCs within their own workplaces or organisations. The overall mean for all countries and questions in this section was 5.19. Table 5 shows the mean response for each country as well as at a cross-national level. The small differences that can be seen in this section can perhaps be explained by differences in prior awareness of YCs in each country, differences in participant background and national adaptations of the Training Programme.

Table 5. Responses related to enhanced knowledge and awareness: questions 10-19

The training I have received today has...		M
...increased my ability to explain the term 'Young Carer'.	All countries	5.44
	Bulgaria	5.57
	Flanders (Belgium)	5.5
	Italy	5
	Slovenia	5.79
	Sweden	5.36
...increased my understanding of the challenges facing Young Carers.	All countries	5.47
	Bulgaria	5.65
	Flanders (Belgium)	5.42
	Italy	5.28
	Slovenia	5.89
	Sweden	5.16
...increased my understanding of the challenges in identifying Young Carers in my workplace/ organisation.	All countries	5.23
	Bulgaria	5.7
	Flanders (Belgium)	5
	Italy	5.06
	Slovenia	5.63
	Sweden	4.72
...increased my understanding of mechanisms for identifying Young Carers.	All countries	5.07
	Bulgaria	5.48
	Flanders (Belgium)	4.92
	Italy	4.78
	Slovenia	5.37
	Sweden	4.76
...increased my confidence that I can identify Young Carers in my workplace/ organisation.	All countries	4.91
	Bulgaria	5.13
	Flanders (Belgium)	4.58
	Italy	4.72
	Slovenia	5.21
	Sweden	4.76
...increased my knowledge of which support strategies are effective for Young Carers.	All countries	5.04
	Bulgaria	5.39
	Flanders (Belgium)	5.08
	Italy	4.78
	Slovenia	5.05
	Sweden	4.88
...increased my knowledge of how support to Young Carers can be improved within my own workplace/ organisation.	All countries	5
	Bulgaria	5.3
	Flanders (Belgium)	4.92
	Italy	4.72
	Slovenia	5.26
	Sweden	4.76

The training I have received today has...		M
...allowed me to reflect on my role as a professional/volunteer in reducing the perceived access barriers to support for Young Carers.	All countries	5.33
	Bulgaria	5.52
	Flanders (Belgium)	5.17
	Italy	4.94
	Slovenia	5.37
	Sweden	5.48
...increased my understanding of the importance of participation mechanisms and Young Carer's self-advocacy when working with this group of vulnerable children and young people.	All countries	5.35
	Bulgaria	5.43
	Flanders (Belgium)	5
	Italy	5.11
	Slovenia	5.47
	Sweden	5.52
...increased my understanding of what guidelines and techniques are valuable when creating Young Carer friendly establishments.	All countries	5.05
	Bulgaria	5.3
	Flanders (Belgium)	4.75
	Italy	5
	Slovenia	5.26
	Sweden	4.84

Further developments of the Training Programme

Participants' and facilitators' suggestions for improvement or further development of the Training Programme and workshops revolved around five central themes: (1) duration and format; (2) recruitment and retainment opportunities; (3) structure of the workshops; (4) adaptations to theoretical contents, and; (5) specific tailoring of contents.

Duration and format

Though participants generally indicated that the time allocated for the workshops was sufficient in most countries, facilitators felt that the length of the workshop was a barrier to participation for some professionals. Shorter sessions, training spread over two days, or a series of workshops with follow-up activities could make participation more manageable for busy professionals while allowing more time for reflection and discussion. The wish for further learning opportunities, follow-up sessions and further networking opportunities was also echoed by participants. A hybrid format could combine the accessibility of online training with the networking and deeper interaction enabled by face-to-face sessions. In addition, in online workshops a greater familiarity with the technical aspects of delivering training online could also enhance the experience for participants and reduce time wasted on solving technical issues.

Recruitment and retainment opportunities

Though all partners met the baseline for number of participants set by the consortium and did not report any particular struggles when it comes to recruiting participants for the Training Programme, many relied on professional or personal networks in order to find and target interested parties. Earlier promotion, alternative recruitment channels and closer collaboration with youth work organisations could support participation. In addition, a more established organisational collaboration with healthcare, social care and education sectors could also boost recruitment and the inclusion of decision-makers could help affect change. Clearer arrangements for attendance confirmation and cancellations could also help reduce late cancellations, and a more flexible format could positively influence retainment as some professionals were unable to complete the full Training Programme due to other professional commitments.

Structure of the workshops

Most participants indicated that the balance between exercises, discussion and theory was good. However, facilitators and some of the participants felt that the structure of the workshops could be further improved. More time for interactive exercises, discussion, exchange of experiences, practical and country-specific examples, and lived-experience perspectives was suggested by both participants and facilitators. Sharing theoretical materials as well as video or other online content in advance could create more time for these elements. In addition, if the workshops were spread across several sessions, facilitators could share additional reading with participants in between sessions, further strengthening the theoretical basis and thus giving participants more time to consider and reflect on the material and relate it to their own professional practice.

Adaptations to the theoretical contents

Both participants and facilitators considered the relevance of the included material in the Training Programme as high, and participants also indicated that the topics covered were consistent with the aims. The results from the participant's evaluation show that the aims of the Training Programme were also met in terms of self-reported knowledge and capacity building. However, expanding country-specific resources, research, policy developments and good practice examples could further strengthen

the training in the views of facilitators. A stronger critical and systemic perspective, including how policies, service structures, professional practices and societal views contribute to the invisibility of Young Carers, could also be developed. Further, it was suggested by facilitators that the inclusion of more lived experience examples may also strengthen the impact of the training, especially if tailored to specific national contexts.

Specific tailoring of contents

Though many participants gave voice to an appreciation for the opportunity to share experiences with persons from other professions and sectors, facilitators have considered both the benefits of diverse participation from several sectors and those of adapting the materials to specific groups. In mixed workshops with participants from different sectors, the focus on cooperation could be strengthened, enabling participants to exchange perspectives from different professional and organisational contexts, and reflect on how different sectors can work together to identify and support YCs across professional boundaries. On the other hand, targeting the Training Programme to specific sectors or workplaces would perhaps enhance the support and opportunities for YCs to participate, and allow participants to focus more specifically on barriers to identification and participation within their own sectors or organisations. Further developments of the training could therefore include tailoring the content to mixed professional groups and as well as specific professional contexts in a situation-based arrangement depending on the aims of the workshop.

Conclusion

The OUR VOICES Training and Capacity Building Programme has demonstrated that targeted, evidence-informed training can significantly strengthen professionals' understanding of Young Carers and their capacity to identify, support, and engage them in meaningful participation. Across diverse national contexts, participants reported that the Programme successfully increased awareness of the realities of Young Carers, enhanced knowledge of identification and support mechanisms, and fostered greater confidence among professionals working in education, health, social care, youth services, and related sectors.

A key strength of the programme was its combination of a shared European framework with flexibility for country-specific adaptation. This approach enabled partners to address local policy, service, and cultural contexts while maintaining a consistent focus on the rights, needs, and participation of Young Carers. The positive evaluation results across all participating countries indicate that professionals valued both the content and the interactive learning methods, particularly opportunities for discussion, reflection, and engagement with real-life examples.

The findings further highlight the importance of continuing investment in educational programmes aimed at professionals to address the persistent invisibility of Young Carers. Increased professional awareness alone is not sufficient; it must be accompanied by organisational commitment, cross-sector collaboration, effective referral pathways, and opportunities for Young Carers to contribute to decisions that affect their lives.

Overall, the Programme has provided a strong foundation for building more inclusive and responsive services for Young Carers. Future developments to the Training Programme should focus on sustaining and expanding the training, tailoring content to different professional groups, strengthening the use of lived experience perspectives, and embedding Young Carer awareness within routine professional practice, organisational strategies and overall policy. Closer collaboration with different sectors could also strengthen recruitment and, by extension, increase the availability of support and participatory mechanisms for YCs. In addition, voluntary professional networks could be established in each country which would enable some participants' wishes for further exchange with other professionals and help keep the support and participation of Young Carers on professional agendas. By doing so, organisations and professionals will be better equipped to identify Young Carers early, respond to their needs effectively, and support their right to participate fully in the decisions that shape their lives. However, follow-up evaluation would be needed to assess changes in professional practice and longer-term outcomes.

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Appendix 1: Participant evaluation questionnaire

Evaluation of the Training Programme, OUR VOICES

1. What age did you turn on your last birthday?

(this question is mandatory)

___ years

2. How do you identify yourself?

(this question is mandatory)

- ☐ Female
- ☐ Male
- ☐ Other
- ☐ I don't know

3. What sector do you belong to?

(this question is mandatory)

- ☐ Education
- ☐ Social Work
- ☐ Health Care
- ☐ Youth Work
- ☐ Voluntary Sector (NGO)
- ☐ I am a Young Carer
- ☐ Other Specify

4. How many years (if applicable) have you worked with children and young people?

(this question is mandatory)

___ years

- ☐ I have never worked with children and young people

5. To what extent has the Training Programme met your expectations?

(this question is mandatory)

- ☐ To a high extent
- ☐ To a moderate extent
- ☐ To a low extent
- ☐ Not at all

6. What is your opinion of the content of the Training Programme?

(this question is mandatory)

- ☐ Very good
- ☐ Quite good
- ☐ Quite poor
- ☐ Very poor

7. What is your opinion of the structure of the Training Programme?

(this question is mandatory)

- ☐ Very good
- ☐ Quite good
- ☐ Quite poor
- ☐ Very poor

8. Please describe one or more concrete examples of what you considered to be the best aspects of the Training Programme.

9. Please describe one or more concrete examples of what you considered could improve the Training Programme.

Please indicate how much you agree/disagree with the following statements on a scale from 1-6:

10. The training I have received today has increased my ability to explain the term 'Young Carer'.

	1	2	3	4	5	6	
<i>strongly disagree</i>	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	<i>strongly agree</i>

11. The training I have received today has increased my understanding of the challenges facing Young Carers.

	1	2	3	4	5	6	
<i>strongly disagree</i>	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	<i>strongly agree</i>

12. The training I have received today has increased my understanding of the challenges in identifying Young Carers in my workplace/organisation.

	1	2	3	4	5	6	
<i>strongly disagree</i>	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	<i>strongly agree</i>

13. The training I have received today has increased my understanding of mechanisms for identifying Young Carers.

	1	2	3	4	5	6	
<i>strongly disagree</i>	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	<i>strongly agree</i>

14. The training I have received today has increased my confidence that I can identify Young Carers in my workplace/organisation.

	1	2	3	4	5	6	
<i>strongly disagree</i>	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	<i>strongly agree</i>

15. The training I have received today has increased my knowledge of which support strategies are effective for Young Carers.

	1	2	3	4	5	6	
<i>Strongly disagree</i>	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	<i>Strongly agree</i>

16. The training I have received today has increased my knowledge of how support to Young Carers can be improved within my own workplace/organisation.

	1	2	3	4	5	6	
<i>Strongly disagree</i>	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	<i>Strongly agree</i>

17. The training I have received today has allowed me to reflect on my role as a professional/volunteer in reducing the perceived access barriers to support for Young Carers.

	1	2	3	4	5	6	
<i>Strongly disagree</i>	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	<i>Strongly agree</i>

18. The training I have received today has increased my understanding of the importance of participation mechanisms and Young Carer's self-advocacy when working with this group of vulnerable children and young people.

	1	2	3	4	5	6	
<i>Strongly disagree</i>	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	<i>Strongly agree</i>

19. The training I have received today has increased my understanding of what guidelines and techniques are valuable when creating Young Carer friendly establishments.

	1	2	3	4	5	6	
<i>Strongly disagree</i>	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	<i>Strongly agree</i>

Please let us know on a scale of 1-6 how satisfied you were with the following aspects of the training received:

20. Information provided in advance:

	1	2	3	4	5	6	
<i>Totally unsatisfied</i>	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	<i>Totally satisfied</i>

21. Time allocated for training:

	1	2	3	4	5	6	
<i>Totally unsatisfied</i>	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	<i>Totally satisfied</i>

22. Consistency with the aims of increased recognition and improved support for Young Carers:

	1	2	3	4	5	6	
<i>Totally unsatisfied</i>	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	<i>Totally satisfied</i>

23. Relevance of the content for learning about Young Carers:

	1	2	3	4	5	6	
<i>Totally unsatisfied</i>	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	<i>Totally satisfied</i>

24. Topics covered:

	1	2	3	4	5	6	
<i>Totally unsatisfied</i>	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	<i>Totally satisfied</i>

25. Balance between practical exercises and theoretical input:

	1	2	3	4	5	6	
<i>Totally unsatisfied</i>	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	<i>Totally satisfied</i>

26. Is there anything else you would like to share with us?

[Thank you for your collaboration!](#)

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Appendix 2: Quantitative results of the questionnaire

Table 1. Ages of participants

1. What age did you turn on your last birthday?	M (SD)	Range in years	Total N (%)
All countries	44.76 (11.98)	22-63	97 (100)
Bulgaria	50.79 (8.29)	34-62	23 (100)
Flanders (Belgium)	39.5 (12.33)	22-63	12 (100)
Italy	47.83 (11.36)	28-63	18 (100)
Slovenia	38.89 (15.14)	22-60	19 (100)
Sweden	44 (9.42)	25-60	25 (100)

Table 2. Gender of participants

2. How do you identify yourself?	Female	Male	Other	I don't know	Total
	N (%)	N (%)	N (%)	N (%)	N (%)
All countries	86 (88.7)	10 (10.3)	0 (0)	1 (1)	97 (100)
Bulgaria	19 (82.6)	4 (17.4)	0 (0)	0 (0)	23 (100)
Flanders (Belgium)	12 (100)	0 (0)	0 (0)	0 (0)	12 (100)
Italy	15 (83.3)	3 (16.7)	0 (0)	0 (0)	18 (100)
Slovenia	16 (84.2)	2 (10.5)	0 (0)	1 (5.3)	19 (100)
Sweden	24 (96)	1 (4)	0 (0)	0 (0)	25 (100)

Table 3. Sectors represented among participants

3. What sector do you belong to?	Education	Social Work	Health Care	Youth Work	Voluntary Sector (NGO)	Young Carer	Other	Total
	N (%)	N (%)	N (%)	N (%)	N (%)	N (%)	N (%)	N (%)
All countries	32 (33)	34 (35.1)	18 (17.5)	11 (11.3)	11 (11.3)	1 (1)	6 (6.2)	113 (100)
Bulgaria	14 (60.9)	2 (8.7)	5 (21.7)	7 (30.4)	1 (4.3)	0 (0)	0 (0)	29 (100)
Flanders (Belgium)	2 (16.7)	8 (66.7)	1 (8.3)	1 (8.3)	1 (8.3)	1 (8.3)	2 (16.7)	16 (100)
Italy	0 (0)	10 (55.6)	3 (16.7)	2 (11.1)	0 (0)	0 (0)	3 (16.7)	18 (100)
Slovenia	14 (73.7)	4 (21.1)	2 (10.5)	1 (5.3)	0 (0)	0 (0)	1 (5.3)	22 (100)
Sweden	2 (8)	10 (40)	7 (28)	0 (0)	9 (36)	0 (0)	0 (0)	28 (100)

Table 4. Years worked with children among participants

4. How many years (if applicable) have you worked with children and young people?	Have worked with children			I have never worked with children and young people	Total
	N (%)	M (SD)	Range in years	N (%)	N (%)
All countries	77 (79.4)	16.15 (10.78)	1-39	20 (20.6)	97 (100)
Bulgaria	19 (82.6)	16.26 (9.90)	3-39	4 (17.4)	23 (100)
Flanders (Belgium)	8 (66.7)	15.13 (12.86)	1-35	4 (33.3)	12 (100)
Italy	13 (72.2)	14.18 (10.18)	1-30	5 (27.8)	18 (100)
Slovenia	12 (63.2)	21.17 (14.21)	1-39	7 (36.8)	19 (100)
Sweden	25 (100)	15.13 (9.36)	1-30	0 (0)	25 (100)

Table 5. Expectations of the Training Programme

5. To what extent has the Training Programme met your expectations?	To a high extent	To a moderate extent	To a low extent	Not at all	Total
	N (%)	N (%)	N (%)	N (%)	N (%)
All countries	61 (62.9)	35 (36.1)	1 (1)	0 (0)	97 (100)
Bulgaria	16 (69.6)	7 (30.4)	0 (0)	0 (0)	23 (100)
Flanders (Belgium)	4 (33.3)	8 (66.7)	0 (0)	0 (0)	12 (100)
Italy	10 (55.6)	8 (44.4)	0 (0)	0 (0)	18 (100)
Slovenia	12 (63.2)	6 (31.6)	1 (5.3)	0 (0)	19 (100)
Sweden	19 (76)	6 (24)	0 (0)	0 (0)	25 (100)

Table 6. Participants opinions of the content of the Training Programme

6. What is your opinion of the content of the Training Programme?	Very good	Quite good	Quite poor	Very poor	Total
	N (%)	N (%)	N (%)	N (%)	N (%)
All countries	66 (68)	31 (32)	0 (0)	0 (0)	97 (100)
Bulgaria	19 (82.6)	4 (17.4)	0 (0)	0 (0)	23 (100)
Flanders (Belgium)	3 (25)	9 (75)	0 (0)	0 (0)	12 (100)
Italy	13 (72.2)	5 (27.8)	0 (0)	0 (0)	18 (100)
Slovenia	15 (78.9)	4 (21.1)	0 (0)	0 (0)	19 (100)
Sweden	16 (64)	9 (36)	0 (0)	0 (0)	25 (100)

Table 7. Participants opinions of the structure of the Training Programme

7. What is your opinion of the structure of the Training Programme?	Very good	Quite good	Quite poor	Very poor	Total
	N (%)	N (%)	N (%)	N (%)	N (%)
All countries	62 (63.9)	35 (36.1)	0 (0)	0 (0)	97 (100)
Bulgaria	16 (69.6)	7 (30.4)	0 (0)	0 (0)	23 (100)
Flanders (Belgium)	4 (33.3)	8 (66.7)	0 (0)	0 (0)	12 (100)
Italy	11 (61.1)	7 (38.9)	0 (0)	0 (0)	18 (100)
Slovenia	14 (73.7)	5 (26.3)	0 (0)	0 (0)	19 (100)
Sweden	17 (68)	8 (32)	0 (0)	0 (0)	25 (100)

Table 8. Participants opinions on learning outcomes: questions 10-19

The training I have received today has...							
10. ...increased my ability to explain the term 'Young Carer'.	Strongly disagree					Strongly agree	M
	1	2	3	4	5	6	
	N (%)	N (%)	N (%)	N (%)	N (%)	N (%)	
All countries	0 (0)	0 (0)	2 (2.1)	10 (10.3)	28 (28.9)	57 (58.8)	5.44
Bulgaria	0 (0)	0 (0)	0 (0)	1 (4.3)	8 (34.8)	14 (60.9)	5.57
Flanders (Belgium)	0 (0)	0 (0)	0 (0)	0 (0)	6 (50)	6 (50)	5.5
Italy	0 (0)	0 (0)	1 (5.6)	5 (27.8)	5 (27.8)	7 (38.9)	5
Slovenia	0 (0)	0 (0)	0 (0)	0 (0)	4 (21.1)	15 (78.9)	5.79
Sweden	0 (0)	0 (0)	1 (4)	4 (16)	5 (20)	15 (60)	5.36

The training I have received today has...							
11. ...increased my understanding of the challenges facing Young Carers.	Strongly disagree					Strongly agree	M
	1	2	3	4	5	6	
	N (%)	N (%)	N (%)	N (%)	N (%)	N (%)	
All countries	0 (0)	0 (0)	3 (3.1)	7 (7.2)	28 (28.9)	59 (60.8)	5.47
Bulgaria	0 (0)	0 (0)	0 (0)	1 (4.3)	6 (26.1)	16 (69.6)	5.65
Flanders (Belgium)	0 (0)	0 (0)	0 (0)	0 (0)	7 (58.3)	5 (41.7)	5.42
Italy	0 (0)	0 (0)	0 (0)	3 (16.7)	7 (38.9)	8 (44.4)	5.28
Slovenia	0 (0)	0 (0)	0 (0)	0 (0)	2 (10.5)	17 (89.5)	5.89
Sweden	0 (0)	0 (0)	3 (12)	3 (12)	6 (24)	13 (52)	5.16
12. ...increased my understanding of the challenges in identifying Young Carers in my workplace/ organisation.	Strongly disagree					Strongly agree	M
	1	2	3	4	5	6	
	N (%)	N (%)	N (%)	N (%)	N (%)	N (%)	
All countries	0 (0)	1 (1)	4 (4.1)	14 (14.4)	31 (32)	47 (48.5)	5.23
Bulgaria	0 (0)	0 (0)	0 (0)	1 (4.3)	5 (21.7)	17 (73.9)	5.7
Flanders (Belgium)	0 (0)	0 (0)	0 (0)	2 (16.7)	8 (66.7)	2 (16.7)	5
Italy	0 (0)	0 (0)	0 (0)	4 (22.2)	9 (50)	5 (27.8)	5.06
Slovenia	0 (0)	0 (0)	0 (0)	2 (10.5)	3 (15.8)	14 (73.7)	5.63
Sweden	0 (0)	1 (4)	4 (16)	5 (20)	6 (24)	9 (36)	4.72
13. ...increased my understanding of mechanisms for identifying Young Carers.	Strongly disagree					Strongly agree	M
	1	2	3	4	5	6	
	N (%)	N (%)	N (%)	N (%)	N (%)	N (%)	
All countries	0 (0)	0 (0)	3 (3.1)	24 (24.7)	33 (34)	37 (38.1)	5.07
Bulgaria	0 (0)	0 (0)	0 (0)	2 (8.7)	8 (34.8)	13 (56.5)	5.48
Flanders (Belgium)	0 (0)	0 (0)	0 (0)	2 (16.7)	9 (75)	1 (8.3)	4.92
Italy	0 (0)	0 (0)	0 (0)	7 (38.9)	8 (44.4)	3 (16.7)	4.78
Slovenia	0 (0)	0 (0)	0 (0)	4 (21.1)	4 (21.1)	11 (57.9)	5.37
Sweden	0 (0)	0 (0)	3 (12)	9 (36)	4 (16)	9 (36)	4.76
14. ...increased my confidence that I can identify Young Carers in my workplace/ organisation.	Strongly disagree					Strongly agree	M
	1	2	3	4	5	6	
	N (%)	N (%)	N (%)	N (%)	N (%)	N (%)	
All countries	0 (0)	1 (1)	7 (7.2)	21 (21.6)	39 (40.2)	29 (29.9)	4.91
Bulgaria	0 (0)	0 (0)	0 (0)	5 (21.7)	10 (43.5)	8 (34.8)	5.13
Flanders (Belgium)	0 (0)	0 (0)	1 (8.3)	4 (33.3)	6 (50)	1 (8.3)	4.58
Italy	0 (0)	0 (0)	1 (5.6)	7 (38.9)	6 (33.3)	4 (22.2)	4.72
Slovenia	0 (0)	0 (0)	1 (5.3)	2 (10.5)	8 (42.1)	8 (42.1)	5.21
Sweden	0 (0)	1 (4)	4 (16)	3 (12)	9 (36)	8 (32)	4.76

The training I have received today has...							
15. ...increased my knowledge of which support strategies are effective for Young Carers.	Strongly disagree						M
	1	2	3	4	5	Strongly agree 6	
	N (%)	N (%)	N (%)	N (%)	N (%)	N (%)	
All countries	0 (0)	0 (0)	7 (7.2)	16 (16.5)	40 (41.2)	34 (35.1)	5.04
Bulgaria	0 (0)	0 (0)	0 (0)	3 (13)	8 (34.8)	12 (52.2)	5.39
Flanders (Belgium)	0 (0)	0 (0)	0 (0)	2 (16.7)	7 (58.3)	3 (25)	5.08
Italy	0 (0)	0 (0)	2 (11.1)	4 (22.2)	8 (44.4)	4 (22.2)	4.78
Slovenia	0 (0)	0 (0)	2 (10.5)	3 (15.8)	6 (31.6)	8 (42.1)	5.05
Sweden	0 (0)	0 (0)	3 (12)	4 (16)	11 (44)	7 (28)	4.88
16. ...increased my knowledge of how support to Young Carers can be improved within my own workplace/ organisation.	Strongly disagree						M
	1	2	3	4	5	Strongly agree 6	
	N (%)	N (%)	N (%)	N (%)	N (%)	N (%)	
All countries	0 (0)	1 (1)	4 (4.1)	20 (20.6)	41 (42.3)	31 (32)	5
Bulgaria	0 (0)	0 (0)	0 (0)	4 (17.4)	8 (34.8)	11 (47.8)	5.3
Flanders (Belgium)	0 (0)	0 (0)	0 (0)	3 (25)	7 (58.3)	2 (16.7)	4.92
Italy	0 (0)	0 (0)	0 (0)	8 (44.4)	7 (38.9)	3 (16.7)	4.72
Slovenia	0 (0)	0 (0)	1 (5.3)	2 (10.5)	7 (36.8)	9 (47.4)	5.26
Sweden	0 (0)	1 (4)	3 (12)	3 (12)	12 (48)	6 (24)	4.76
17. ...allowed me to reflect on my role as a professional/ volunteer in reducing the perceived access barriers to support for Young Carers.	Strongly disagree						M
	1	2	3	4	5	Strongly agree 6	
	N (%)	N (%)	N (%)	N (%)	N (%)	N (%)	
All countries	0 (0)	1 (1)	1 (1)	12 (12.4)	34 (35.1)	49 (50.5)	5.33
Bulgaria	0 (0)	0 (0)	0 (0)	3 (13)	5 (21.7)	15 (65.2)	5.52
Flanders (Belgium)	0 (0)	0 (0)	0 (0)	3 (25)	4 (33.3)	5 (41.7)	5.17
Italy	0 (0)	1 (5.6)	0 (0)	3 (16.7)	9 (50)	5 (27.8)	4.94
Slovenia	0 (0)	0 (0)	0 (0)	2 (10.5)	8 (42.1)	9 (47.4)	5.37
Sweden	0 (0)	0 (0)	1 (4)	1 (4)	8 (32)	15 (60)	5.48

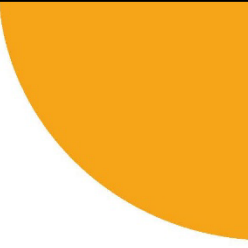
The training I have received today has...							
18. ...increased my understanding of the importance of participation mechanisms and Young Carer's self-advocacy when working with this group of vulnerable children and young people.	Strongly disagree						Strongly agree
	1	2	3	4	5	6	
	N (%)	N (%)	N (%)	N (%)	N (%)	N (%)	
All countries	0 (0)	0 (0)	0 (0)	14 (14.4)	35 (36.1)	48 (49.5)	5.35
Bulgaria	0 (0)	0 (0)	0 (0)	3 (13)	7 (30.4)	13 (56.5)	5.43
Flanders (Belgium)	0 (0)	0 (0)	0 (0)	3 (25)	6 (50)	3 (25)	5
Italy	0 (0)	0 (0)	0 (0)	3 (16.7)	10 (55.6)	5 (27.8)	5.11
Slovenia	0 (0)	0 (0)	0 (0)	2 (10.5)	6 (31.6)	11 (57.9)	5.47
Sweden	0 (0)	0 (0)	0 (0)	3 (12)	6 (24)	16 (64)	5.52
19. ...increased my understanding of what guidelines and techniques are valuable when creating Young Carer friendly establishments.	Strongly disagree						Strongly agree
	1	2	3	4	5	6	
	N (%)	N (%)	N (%)	N (%)	N (%)	N (%)	
All countries	0 (0)	0 (0)	4 (4.1)	18 (18.6)	44 (45.4)	31 (32)	5.05
Bulgaria	0 (0)	0 (0)	0 (0)	3 (13)	10 (43.5)	10 (43.5)	5.3
Flanders (Belgium)	0 (0)	0 (0)	0 (0)	5 (41.7)	5 (41.7)	2 (16.7)	4.75
Italy	0 (0)	0 (0)	0 (0)	3 (16.7)	12 (66.7)	3 (16.7)	5
Slovenia	0 (0)	0 (0)	1 (5.3)	2 (10.5)	7 (36.8)	9 (47.4)	5.26
Sweden	0 (0)	0 (0)	3 (12)	5 (20)	10 (40)	7 (28)	4.84

Table 9. Participants' opinions on other aspects of the Training Programme: questions 20-25

How satisfied you were with the following aspects of the training received:							
20. Information provided in advance	Totally unsatisfied						Totally satisfied
	1	2	3	4	5	6	
	N (%)	N (%)	N (%)	N (%)	N (%)	N (%)	
All countries	0 (0)	0 (0)	4 (4.1)	15 (15.5)	28 (28.9)	50 (51.5)	5.28
Bulgaria	0 (0)	0 (0)	0 (0)	1 (4.3)	9 (39.1)	13 (56.5)	5.52
Flanders (Belgium)	0 (0)	0 (0)	0 (0)	3 (25)	4 (33.3)	5 (41.7)	5.17
Italy	0 (0)	0 (0)	1 (5.6)	3 (16.7)	8 (44.4)	6 (33.3)	5.06
Slovenia	0 (0)	0 (0)	1 (5.3)	2 (10.5)	2 (10.5)	14 (73.7)	5.53
Sweden	0 (0)	0 (0)	2 (8)	6 (24)	5 (20)	12 (48)	5.08

21. Time allocated for training	Totally unsatisfied					Totally satisfied	M
	1	2	3	4	5	6	
	N (%)	N (%)	N (%)	N (%)	N (%)	N (%)	
All countries	0 (0)	2 (2.1)	7 (7.2)	17 (17.5)	28 (28.9)	43 (44.3)	5.06
Bulgaria	0 (0)	0 (0)	0 (0)	2 (8.7)	6 (26.1)	15 (65.2)	5.57
Flanders (Belgium)	0 (0)	2 (16.7)	1 (8.3)	4 (33.3)	3 (25)	2 (16.7)	4.17
Italy	0 (0)	0 (0)	2 (11.1)	2 (11.1)	6 (33.3)	8 (44.4)	5.11
Slovenia	0 (0)	0 (0)	2 (10.5)	3 (15.8)	3 (15.8)	11 (57.9)	5.21
Sweden	0 (0)	0 (0)	2 (8)	6 (24)	10 (40)	7 (28)	4.88
22. Consistency with the aims of increased recognition and improved support for Young Carers	Totally unsatisfied					Totally satisfied	M
	1	2	3	4	5	6	
	N (%)	N (%)	N (%)	N (%)	N (%)	N (%)	
All countries	0 (0)	0 (0)	1 (1)	7 (7.3)	34 (35.4)	54 (56.2)	5.47
Bulgaria	0 (0)	0 (0)	0 (0)	1 (4.3)	4 (17.4)	18 (78.3)	5.74
Flanders (Belgium)	0 (0)	0 (0)	0 (0)	0 (0)	9 (75)	3 (25)	5.25
Italy	0 (0)	0 (0)	0 (0)	3 (16.7)	10 (55.6)	5 (27.8)	5.11
Slovenia	0 (0)	0 (0)	1 (5.3)	2 (10.5)	4 (21.1)	12 (63.2)	5.42
Sweden	0 (0)	0 (0)	0 (0)	1 (4.2)	7 (29.2)	16 (66.7)	5.63
23. Relevance of the content for learning about Young Carers	Totally unsatisfied					Totally satisfied	M
	1	2	3	4	5	6	
	N (%)	N (%)	N (%)	N (%)	N (%)	N (%)	
All countries	0 (0)	0 (0)	1 (1)	7 (7.2)	34 (35.1)	55 (56.7)	5.47
Bulgaria	0 (0)	0 (0)	0 (0)	1 (4.3)	5 (21.7)	17 (73.9)	5.7
Flanders (Belgium)	0 (0)	0 (0)	0 (0)	0 (0)	10 (83.3)	2 (16.7)	5.17
Italy	0 (0)	0 (0)	1 (5.6)	3 (16.7)	5 (27.8)	9 (50)	5.22
Slovenia	0 (0)	0 (0)	0 (0)	0 (0)	7 (36.8)	12 (63.2)	5.63
Sweden	0 (0)	0 (0)	0 (0)	3 (12)	7 (28)	15 (60)	5.48
24. Topics covered	Totally unsatisfied					Totally satisfied	M
	1	2	3	4	5	6	
	N (%)	N (%)	N (%)	N (%)	N (%)	N (%)	
All countries	0 (0)	0 (0)	0 (0)	9 (9.3)	32 (33)	56 (57.7)	5.48
Bulgaria	0 (0)	0 (0)	0 (0)	0 (0)	6 (26.1)	17 (73.9)	5.74
Flanders (Belgium)	0 (0)	0 (0)	0 (0)	1 (8.3)	7 (58.3)	4 (33.3)	5.25
Italy	0 (0)	0 (0)	0 (0)	4 (22.2)	8 (44.4)	6 (33.3)	5.11
Slovenia	0 (0)	0 (0)	0 (0)	0 (0)	4 (21.1)	15 (78.9)	5.79
Sweden	0 (0)	0 (0)	0 (0)	4 (16)	7 (28)	14 (56)	5.4
25. Balance between practical exercises and theoretical input	Totally unsatisfied					Totally satisfied	M
	1	2	3	4	5	6	
	N (%)	N (%)	N (%)	N (%)	N (%)	N (%)	
All countries	0 (0)	2 (2.1)	7 (7.2)	19 (19.6)	28 (28.9)	41 (42.3)	5.02
Bulgaria	0 (0)	0 (0)	0 (0)	3 (13)	6 (26.1)	14 (60.9)	5.48
Flanders (Belgium)	0 (0)	1 (8.3)	1 (8.3)	7 (58.3)	2 (16.7)	1 (8.3)	4.08
Italy	0 (0)	0 (0)	0 (0)	5 (27.8)	9 (50)	4 (22.2)	4.94
Slovenia	0 (0)	1 (5.3)	3 (15.8)	1 (5.3)	4 (21.1)	10 (52.6)	5
Sweden	0 (0)	0 (0)	3 (12)	3 (12)	7 (28)	12 (48)	5.12

Appendix 3: The Training Programme



TRAINING PROGRAM

ENABLING YOUNG CARERS TO PURSUE THEIR GOALS IN
LIFE AND REACH THEIR FULL POTENTIAL!

DATE:
TIME:



Co-funded by
the European Union

Project: 101190125 — OUR VOICES — CERV-2024-CHILD



AIMS AND OBJECTIVES

- AIM OF THE PROJECT
- OBJECTIVES OF THIS TRAINING PROGRAMME
- PROCEDURE OF THIS TRAINING PROGRAMME



TODAY'S AGENDA



- Introduction
- Introducing the concept of Young Carers
- Challenges facing Young Carers
- Identification mechanisms
- Effective support strategies
- Participation mechanisms
- Self-Advocacy strategies
- Guidelines and techniques for creating Young Carers' friendly establishments
- Evaluation
- Thank you!



INTRODUCTION

NAME AND WORKPLACE/ ORGANISATION CHECK IN

MENTIMETER/ZOOM

How much knowledge do you have about Young Carers?

- ☐ No knowledge at all
- ☐ Very little knowledge
- ☐ Some knowledge
- ☐ Quite a lot of knowledge
- ☐ A great deal of knowledge



INTRODUCING THE CONCEPT OF YOUNG CARERS

WHO IS A YOUNG CARER?

A DEFINITION OF YOUNG CARERS

"Children and young persons under 18 who **provide, or intend to provide, care, assistance or support to another family member.** They carry out, often on a regular basis, significant or substantial caring tasks and assume a level of responsibility which would usually be associated with an adult. The person receiving care is often a parent but can be a sibling, grandparent or other relative who is disabled, has some chronic illness, mental health problem or other condition connected with a need for care, support or supervision."

(Becker 2000, p. 378)

YOUNG CARERS MAY UNDERTAKE NUMEROUS RESPONSIBILITIES ACROSS DIFFERENT AREAS OF EVERYDAY LIFE

Such as...

- Emotional support.
- Everyday chores.
- Household maintenance.
- Personal care.
- Financial and/or practical tasks

(ME-WE Booklet for young carers, 2019)



YOUNG CARERS - STORIES

Aisha's story

- Aisha is 17 years old.
- Caring for her dad who has Parkinson's disease.
- Helps her dad with getting dressed, eating, medication, washing, and going to the toilet.
- Has got used to the tasks.
- Tries to take on a lot of caring duties so her mum has less stress.
- Keeps her feelings inside.
- Wants to be "normal".
- Feels alone.
- Scared of the future.

YOUNG CARERS - STORIES

Rocco's story

- Rocco is 15 years old.
- Parents are divorced.
- Caring for his mum who has problems with alcohol use.
- All the responsibility falls on Rocco.
- Cooks, cleans, takes care of the bills, tries to cheer his mum up.
- Is exhausted and sometimes feels angry.
- Realises that he is actually caring for his mum.
- Does not care for himself.
- Also wants to think about himself.

YOUNG CARERS - STORIES

The caring role – a risk to wellbeing and health

- Mental health and wellbeing.
(Janes et al., 2022; Brimblecombe et al., 2024)
- Difficult or ambivalent emotions.
(Brimblecombe et al., 2024)
- Wish for normality and feeling different.
(Brimblecombe et al., 2024)
- Parentification and self-care.
(Brimblecombe et al., 2024)
- Ambivalence towards the future.
(Brimblecombe et al., 2024; Titherfus et al., 2024)
- Insufficient support.
(Brimblecombe et al., 2024)



Quotes from Young Carers

...I may have only been caring for my mum for ten minutes, but I will be worrying about her for the rest of the day...

I remember the day Dad hit Mum... I had stayed close to Mum and tried to make sure that everything was as normal as it could be...
It stays with me all day at school, and I can't stop the images in my head...I can't concentrate in class....

When I was a teenager, I kept myself back in order to let my parents devote their energy to my sister and not to me. That's why I sometimes had the feeling that I couldn't reach my own personal goals and that I hadn't enough space...

When my mother's relatively routine spinal surgery went wrong nearly seventeen years ago, leaving her in chronic pain and unable to work, my brother gave up his life as he knew it.

(ME-WF Booklet for young carers, 2019)

Optional film

Young Carers An invisible group

A silent and invisible Young Carer - Why?

- Lack of self identification.
- Stigma.
- Afraid of what will happen to them and their family.
- Fear of being judged or misunderstood.
- Do not know who to talk to etc.

An invisible group in the society - Why?

- Low awareness about the challenges facing Young Carers.
- Care services tend to centre on the individual receiving support.
- Limited awareness within the community of any specific services available for young carers
(ME-WF project, 2019, European policy brief).
- A belief that children should not be expected to take on caring responsibilities.
(Nordenforset al., 2017).

CHALLENGES FACING YOUNG CARERS

CHALLENGES FACING YOUNG CARERS

Schoolwork can be negatively affected:

- ✓ Weaker academic results.
- ✓ Absences.
- ✓ Frequent lateness.
- ✓ Higher dropout rates etc.

Social, mental and physical consequences, such as...

- ✓ A feeling of being different.
- ✓ Exposure to bullying.
- ✓ Less time for leisure and friends.
- ✓ less time for relaxation, feeling as if "the tasks will never end".
- ✓ Physical and mental health problems.

[Vandecasteele et al., 2023; ME-WF project, 2019, European policy brief]

Satisfying to help out and develop qualities, but caring responsibilities can be overwhelming and can affect various areas in life.

[ME-WF project, 2019, European policy brief]

BREAK

IDENTIFICATION MECHANISMS

IDENTIFICATION MECHANISMS GROUP ACTIVITY

WHAT ARE THE CHALLENGES OF
IDENTIFYING YOUNG CARERS IN
YOUR WORKPLACE/ORGANISATION?
THINK OF A REAL SITUATION/CASE.

HOW WOULD IT BE POSSIBLE TO
OVERCOME THESE CHALLENGES?

**What are the challenges of identifying Young
Carers in your workplace/organisation?**

Identification mechanisms

Awareness and action

- A need of increased awareness and knowledge.
(Nap et al., 2020)
- Bring it up!
(Markant Centrum voor mantelzorg, 2021)
- Outreach work, both physical and digital.
(European Commission, 2021)
- Structured routines.
(Nap et al., 2020; Barnombudsmanen, Sweden, 2020)
- Legislation that ensures rights and responsibilities.
(ME-WE Project, 2019, European policy brief)
- Formal recognition.
(Hiebec et al., 2025)
- Tools like checklists for systematic identification.



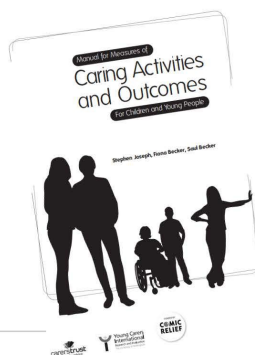
Identification mechanisms

Possible indicators that someone is a Young Carer

- Often late or missing days or weeks off school for no reason.
- Often tired, anxious or withdrawn.
- Often checking their phone or asking to call home.
- Finding it difficult to concentrate during class time and/or on their work.
- Difficulties joining in extra-curricular activities or unable to attend school trips.
- Not handing in homework on time or completing it late and to a low standard.
- Anxious or concerned about a relative.
- Secretive about home life.
(Johansson et al., 2017)

The level of caring: MACA-YC18

(Joseph et al., 2012)



The caring jobs I do

Below are some jobs that young carers do to help. Think about the help you have provided over the last month. Please read each one and put a tick in the box to show how often you have done each of the jobs in the last month. **Thankyou.**

MACA-YC18
Please complete this first
YC initials: _____
YC date of birth: _____
Today's date: _____
Name of young carer's service: _____

	Never	Some of the time	A lot of the time
1 Clean your own bedroom	☐	☐	☐
2 Clean other rooms	☐	☐	☐
3 Wash up dishes or put dishes in a dishwasher	☐	☐	☐
4 Decorate rooms	☐	☐	☐
5 Take responsibility for shopping for food	☐	☐	☐
6 Help with lifting or carrying heavy things	☐	☐	☐
7 Help with financial matters such as dealing with bills, banking money, collecting benefits	☐	☐	☐
8 Work part time to bring money in	☐	☐	☐
9 Interpret, sign or use another communication system for the person you care for	☐	☐	☐
10 Help the person you care for to dress or undress	☐	☐	☐
11 Help the person you care for to have a wash	☐	☐	☐
12 Help the person you care for to have a bath or shower	☐	☐	☐
13 Keep the person you care for company e.g. sitting with them, reading to them, talking to them	☐	☐	☐
14 Keep an eye on the person you care for to make sure they are alright or relatives	☐	☐	☐
15 Take the person you care for out e.g. for a walk or to see friends	☐	☐	☐
16 Take brothers or sisters to school	☐	☐	☐
17 Look after brothers or sisters whilst another adult is near by	☐	☐	☐
18 Look after brothers or sisters on your own	☐	☐	☐

(Joseph et al., 2012)

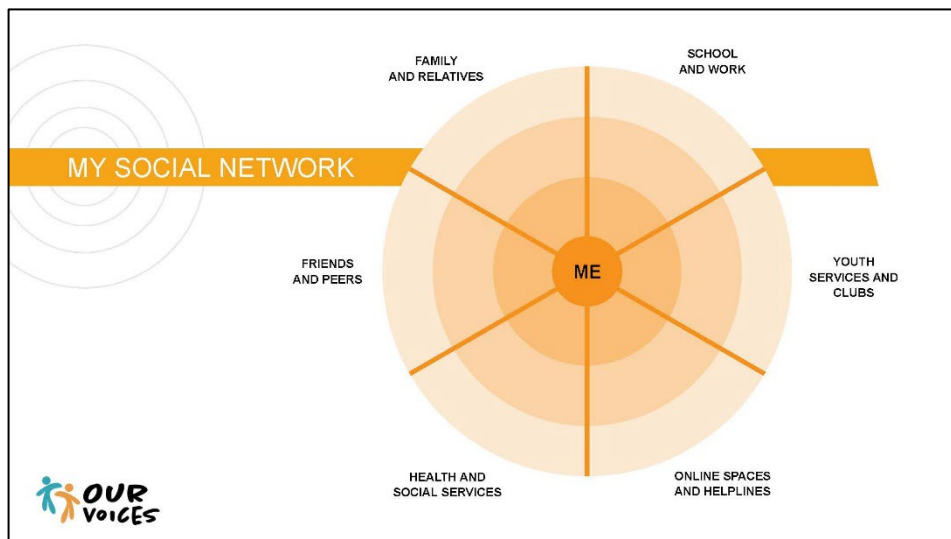


Below are some things young carers like you have said about what it feels like to look after someone. Please read each statement and tick the box to show how often this is true for you. There are no right or wrong answers. We are just interested in what life is like for you because of caring. Thank you.

PANOC-YC20
Please complete this first
YC initials _____
YC date of birth _____
Today's date _____
Name of young carers' service _____

- | | Never | Some of the time | A lot of the time |
|---|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|
| 1 Because of caring I feel I am doing something good | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ |
| 2 Because of caring I feel that I am helping | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ |
| 3 Because of caring I feel closer to my family | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ |
| 4 Because of caring I feel good about myself | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ |
| 5 Because of caring I know a lot of things that make me upset | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ |
| 6 Because of caring I feel stressed | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ |
| 7 Because of caring I feel that I am learning useful things | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ |
| 8 Because of caring my parents are proud of the kind of person I am | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ |
| 9 Because of caring I feel like running away | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ |
| 10 Because of caring I feel very lonely | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ |
| 11 Because of caring I feel like I can't cope | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ |
| 12 Because of caring I can't stop thinking about what I have to do | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ |
| 13 Because of caring I feel so sad I can hardly stand it | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ |
| 14 Because of caring I don't think I matter | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ |
| 15 Because of caring I like who I am | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ |
| 16 Because of caring life doesn't seem worth living | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ |
| 17 Because of caring I have trouble staying awake | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ |
| 18 Because of caring I feel I am better able to cope with problems | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ |
| 19 I feel good about helping | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ |
| 20 Because of caring I feel I am useful | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ |





OUR VOICES

Effective support strategies for Young Carers

Network map

"My Social Network"

Examples of questions to ask when the child/youth has filled in the network map:

- Who is important to you?
- What makes a particular person important?
- Who do you think you can turn to for help when you need it?
- Did you leave anyone out?
- Were you surprised that any of the people were placed on the edge of the circle?
- Have you previously had a closer relationship with any of the people who now seem distant? How does that feel?
- Is there anyone in your circles that you would like to place somewhere else?
- Now that you see your network, is there anyone else you wish was included?
- Is there anyone in your network that you have told that you are a young carer?

(The Mt-Wi-manual, n.d.)

OUR VOICES

Effective support strategies for Young Carers

Young Carers' own words

Young carers' needs and preferences for support:

- External personal support.
- Psychological support.
- Recognition and respect.
- Love, attention and care.
- Support for the person they care for.
- Support in their caregiving role.
- Support at school.
- Leisure and wellness activities.
- Financial support.

(Brolin et al., 2022)

Effective support strategies

Some examples

- Creating a short sheet with conversation questions.
(Markand Centrum voor mantelzorg, 2021)
- Individual support.
(Brolin et al., 2022)
- Whole-Family support.
(Carers Trust, 2024)
- Collaboration.
(Socialstyrelsen, 2023; ME-WE Project, 2019; Policy brief: United Kingdom)
- Peer support / Young Carers' groups.
(Santos-Griem, 2018)



Effective support strategies for young carers

Resilience

- Increased resilience – a protective factor.
(Messman, 2021)
- The caregiving situation can result in mental health problems.
(Carers Trust Scotland, 2023; Messman, 2021)
- Tools and support to develop effective coping strategies.
(ME-WE Project, 2019; European policy brief)

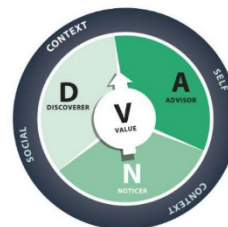
Resilience can be defined as:
"capacity to remain flexible in our thoughts, feelings, and behaviors when faced by life disruption, or extended periods of pressure, so that we emerge from difficulty stronger, wiser, and more able." (Pemberton, C., 2015, p.2)

Effective support strategies for Young Carers

The ME-WE model

Aims to strengthen Young Carers' resilience.

- For Young carers 15-17 years old.
- Based on the DNA-V model.
- Consists of ME-WE groups and a mobile app.
- The purpose of the group sessions.
- A course in the ME-WE model, in order for professionals/organisations to recruit young carers and then set up and lead a ME-WE group.
(The ME-WE manual, n.d.)



A = Adviser
N = Noticer
D = Discoverer
V = Values



EFFECTIVE SUPPORT STRATEGIES GROUP ACTIVITY

WHAT SUPPORT DO YOU CURRENTLY
PROVIDE TO YOUNG CARERS IN YOUR
PROFESSIONAL CONTEXT?

HOW COULD YOU IMPROVE OR DEVELOP
YOUR SUPPORT FOR YOUNG CARERS?

- GIVE EACH OTHER ADVICE.
- WRITE DOWN YOUR ANSWERS.

How could you improve or develop your support for young carers?



PARTICIPATION MECHANISMS



Participation mechanisms

Meaningful and real participation

What is needed for children's participation to be meaningful and real?

- Challenge adults' assumptions and power imbalances.
(Hesse et al., 2025a)
- We need to move from consultation to real influence.
- Ensure timely feedback and child-friendly complaint mechanisms.
- Build sustainable systems and organisations that support participation.
- Adapt the process to each child's needs and circumstances.
- Competent, trustworthy adults must support the process.
- Make information accessible and child-friendly.
- Pay special attention to groups at risk of exclusion.
(Hesse et al., 2025b)



Participation mechanisms

The ladder of youth's (children's) participation

1. Manipulation (Superficial inclusion).
2. Decoration (Representational presence without influence).
3. Tokenism (Symbolic participation).
4. Assigned roles but informed.
5. Consulted and informed.
6. Shared decision-making.
7. Young people initiate and lead.
8. Partnership.



(Center for Business Development and Support, n.d.)



BREAK

SELF-ADVOCACY STRATEGIES

Self-Advocacy strategies A film clip



Self Advocacy - Social Emotional Lesson - Special Education Students

Self-advocacy strategies Voice and agency

"Children's understanding of their rights, their capacity to assert their rights, and to make meaningful contributions to realising these rights are all important elements of a child-centred approach to advocacy."

[Tunney et al., 2021, p. 11]

SUPPORT CHILDREN'S VOICE AND AGENCY

The UN Convention on the Rights of the Child

[UNCRC, 1989]

Advocacy is empowering children

[Bavdek et al., 2024]

Must be adapted to children's needs and abilities

[Gill et al., 2025]



Self-advocacy strategies

Sharing personal experiences safely and purposefully

Sharing stories promotes self-advocacy by:

- Creating a sense of empowerment and recognition.
- Contributing to skills development and increased self-esteem.
- Contributing to meaningful change in services and policies.
- Increasing awareness and reducing stigma.
- Creating solidarity and showing that no one is alone.

Examples of concrete tools:

- "My Story" Template.
- Stigma Scenarios and Discussion.
- Training in Communication and Handling Questions.

Opportunities for young carers to make a difference:

- Co-design of Policy and Services
- Direct Advocacy Platforms

(Sheffield Young Carers, 2017)



GUIDELINES AND TECHNIQUES FOR CREATING YOUNG CARERS' FRIENDLY ESTABLISHMENTS

Guidelines and techniques - Young Carers' friendly establishments

ALL PROFESSIONALS THE EPYC PROJECT

- Creating a positive mood.
- Respect for boundaries and needs when providing support.
- Participation and involvement.
- Facilitators' active involvement.
- Flexible schedule.
- Networking.

(EPYC project, 2016)



Guidelines and techniques - Young Carers' friendly establishments

THE EDUCATIONAL SECTOR EDY-CARE

- Raise awareness and identify.
- Listen and lower thresholds.
- Support in school.
- Promote inclusion & peer support.
- Collaborate.

(Johansson et al., 2020)

Conclusion & Key to Success:

- ❖ We must actively LOOK for the young carers – they rarely come forward themselves!
- ❖ Involve the young carers in designing their support – co-design!



WHAT ARE YOUR NEXT STEPS

THREE CONCRETE ACTIONS YOU CAN START PUTTING INTO PRACTICE IN YOUR WORKPLACE/ORGANISATION TO IMPROVE THE SITUATION FOR YOUNG CARERS.



EVALUATION



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APPENDIX 1

Creating a short sheet with conversation questions

Examples of questions:

1. How do you feel about having a family member who needs a lot of care? How do you deal with this?
2. What do you know about the illness/disability etc?
3. Do you ever worry about home?
4. Is it easy to combine everything with school and free time?
5. Do you think about home a lot when you are away from home? Can you concentrate well?
6. Do you ever feel stressed? Is this related to home?
7. Who can you talk to? Can you always turn to that person?
8. What can help you when things are not going well at home?

[Markant, Centrum voor mantelzorg, 2021]



