



WOMEN LEADERSHIP AND CAPACITIES BUILDING PROGRAMME ASSESSMENT

FINAL REPORT

Led by

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1. Abstract

Context

The education department of the European Trade Union Institute (ETUI) has activated a European training program aimed at preparing women trade union leaders for the highest future responsibilities in the trade union movement for an activity that has an impact on the European dimension to strengthen the social dimension of the European Union.

Fondazione Di Vittorio, upon request of ETUI, developed this research project aimed at evaluating the relevance, coherence, efficiency, effectiveness, added value and impact of the "Women leadership and capacity building for women trade unionists" carried out by ETUI from 2018 to 2022, in which around 8787 women were trained.

Overview of methodology

The activities developed starting from the collection and systematization of all the information necessary to reconstruct the training project.

Semi-structured survey questionnaires were subsequently prepared and submitted to the participants, followed by interviews.

Key findings

The key results are reported taking into account 6 dimensions of analysis: relevance, coherence, effectiveness, efficiency, added value and impact.

The topics covered in the course meant an increase in participants' confidence and awareness of their abilities which made them feel more motivated, strong, powerful and satisfied. This personal growth has been very important for their career advancement.

The course is unique for its characteristics and complementary with other projects proposed by Etui itself. The training program of Etui, of which the course is a part, is consistent and qualitative, and according to the opinion of some participants the Etui program is very complex and the didactic methodologies are better than the national one, it should be better known in the various national contexts.

The results of the research show that the planning and delivery phases of the training activities of the course for women union leaders were carried out efficiently, paying the necessary attention to the adequacy of the logistical, organizational and training aspects.

The participants considered the objectives of the course to be clear and comprehensible, the architecture of the course was well structured in a balanced way and proposing the use of appropriate methodologies, with the support of the staff of trainers who worked with quality and competence, trying to best manage training times.

The effectiveness was measured on the basis of the aim to inspire and motivate women trade unionists to take up leadership position that characterize the course program.

Participants generally report having the courage to take on maximum responsibility. They also declare that they have acquired self-confidence and self-awareness, which is why they have now become leaders or have acquired the awareness of what it means to exercise the role of leader. The skills acquired are useful for improving one's way of working and one's current job in the Union but above all for the evolution of one's role and career, since 100% of those interviewed declared having changed role/status after starting of the course.

The added value of the course was to change the perspective and mentality of the participants regarding women's and trade union issues thanks to the exchange with different cultures, develop the ability to work in a multicultural environment and bring into their organizations the opportunity to integrate European dimension. Furthermore, it was possible to build a new network of women for the exchange of information which could lay the foundations for common projects.

Regarding the impact on the evolution of the role, all participants realized that they are leaders as they coordinate the groups. The course contributed significantly to this status by strengthening their awareness, self-confidence and motivation and teaching them the importance of resilience in achieving their goals, which they learned to plan. The participants also learned to overcome barriers by building relationships.

Regarding the impact on the way of working, it emerged that today the participants use, unlike in the past, strategic thinking, effective communication and the ability to lead groups. For many, participation in the course has changed their vision of trade union and women's issues in the labour market and in society.

Regarding the impact of the network built during the course, the questionnaires show that the interviewees maintained contact but not on a continuous basis because they don't have tools.

The course had also an impact on Unions that indirectly benefited of participants skills on negotiation, on the expansion of knowledge regarding the international situation and on new practices on women's issues. Anyway, only half of the interviewees are convinced that the union uses their new skills more, they instead think that they are useful to themselves because they feel stronger and more powerful.

The European dimension is promoted by many participants in the organizations to which they belong, even if the transfer of the contents learned during the course to colleagues is not always facilitated.

In a context of positive evaluation, the analysis made it possible to highlight some elements for reflection to be taken into consideration for future planning.

With respect to the development of the training program, participants are highly requested to have more time to discuss, practice, learn more, they would like to do a longer course and the modules should be closer together.

At the beginning of the course some participants were shy because they did not know any of the other participants nor their country of origin. This initial discomfort could be alleviated by holding an online webinar in which initial socialization takes place between the participants.

Regarding the language barrier, the non-homogeneous knowledge of the course's official languages may have created an imbalance in the possibilities for women trade unionists to actively participate in the course's work. To encourage greater integration of participants, we recommend planning preparatory English courses in e-learning format and in person. It is also recommended to raise interpreters' awareness of the correct use of the feminine in languages that include the masculine neuter.

The responses collected in relation to the new contents to be integrated into the training path highlighted a very wide range of proposals, some of which are probably already included in the catalogue of courses promoted by Etui. Therefore, considering that the participants intend to attend other Etui courses and that they suggest integrating the course for women trade union leaders with subjects contained in other courses, we recommend strengthening the advertising system of the Etui training courses at the trade union organizations of origin of the participants, adding other communication channels such as, for example, social profiles, or by delivering the course catalogue directly during the course.

Regarding the topics covered in the course, but which the participants would like to explore further, the communication theme stands out, in particular public speaking and self-esteem, but also the non-verbal

aspects of communication, conflict management and social media. Also, the topic of negotiation needs to be more explored.

It is difficult to maintain ongoing relationships between participants because, as reported they do not have tools. The consolidation of the network among the participants could be facilitated by meetings following the course, also promoted by Etui educational officers and/or tutors.

2. Background and introduction

ETUI, the European Trade Union Institute, is the independent research and training centre of the European Trade Union Confederation (ETUC) which brings together European trade unions in a single European umbrella organisation.

The ETUI Education Department is responsible for training courses, for national confederations and European federations, which have a European dimension and contribute to strengthening the social dimension of the European Union.

Among the various activities carried out, for more than a decade, the Etui education department has contributed to strengthening the skills of future trade union leaders of the national confederations and European federations through a targeted European training program for trade union leaders.

The idea of the “Women leadership and capacity building for women trade unionists” training came from the ETUC action plan on gender equality which requested to develop a leadership training programme for future leaders (see priority area 8), but also to include gender equality issues on the trade union agenda.

So, a first training idea was drafted, approved by ETUC for the 2017-2018 program. In the same year the video on women leaders in TU was created with the aim to inspire and motivate women trade unionists to take up leadership position. The idea of the video was coming to fulfil the ETUC need to confirm that we have women trade union leaders on top positions. Also, the video aimed to be a motivational one, to encourage participants to continue their leadership development and overcoming the different difficulties by getting inspiration from the women leaders’ experiences presented in the video. The video was sent to the participants together with the confirmation letter to attend the training that is aimed to develop and encourage the next generation of women leaders by contributing to the advance of gender equality in trade union context.

Participants have been identified among the one who were recently elected or appointed women trade unionists, or those considering running for a leadership position, at regional / sectoral or national level.

During the training the participants developed and strengthened their communication, negotiation and leadership skills, but also supported the growth of confidence and the realization of potential.

Each course allowed for the development of networks and sharing of experiences and learning from, as there were about 24 participants from different European trade union organisations. During the final Bootcamp, 25 women were present, chosen from among the participants in the 4 editions.

We looked to emphasis on participants’ individual development done thru the individual coaching sessions during the 2 residential weeks.

Initially the training was developed in three modules: two residential weeks, accompanied by a sort of remote work. During the pandemic, remote work was transformed into three webinars.

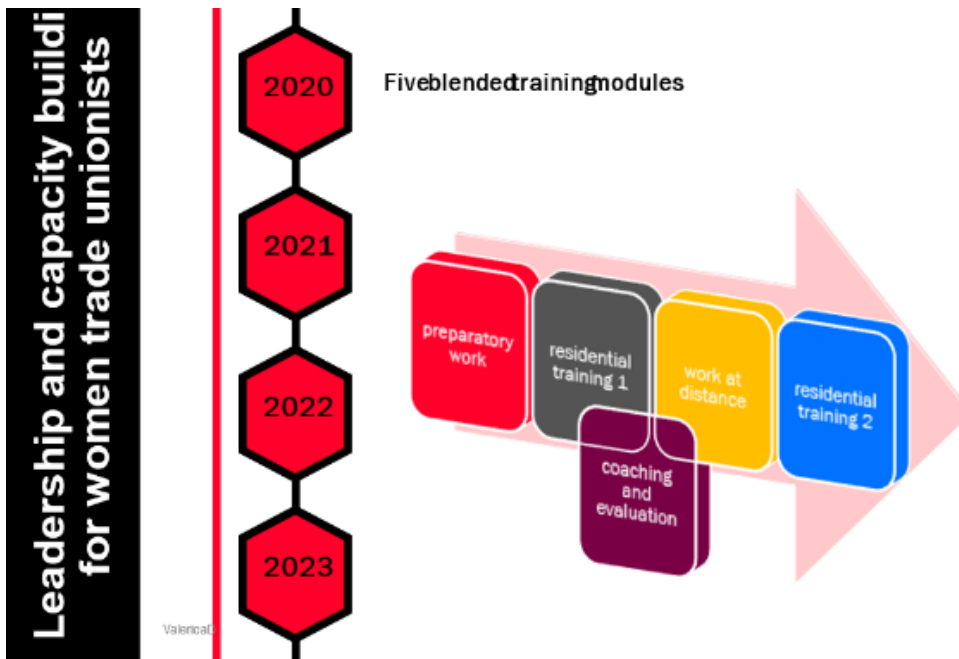


Figure 1- The first design of the project

3. Objectives of the research

Di Vittorio Foundation has developed this research project aimed at evaluating the relevance, impact and added value of the training program for women union leaders carried out by Etui over the last five years.

The specific objective of the research project is to conduct a needs assessment analysis process aimed at improving the ETUI offer for the next cycle of women leadership courses and allow quantifying the relevance of the contents, the effectiveness of the programme, coherence with other trainings proposed by the ETUI, efficiency of learning, impact (how the knowledge acquired was applied in the workplace) and added value of working in a multicultural environment.

The object of the evaluation takes into consideration the training courses for "Women leadership and capacities building" carried out in the following 4 editions:

- I edition 2018 (from February 2018 to June 2018);
- II edition 2019/20 (from October 2016 to March 2020);
- III edition 2022 (from February 2022 to May 2022);
- IV edition 2022 (from June 2022 to September 2022);

In these editions an approximate number of about 87 women were trained.

4. Methodology and work phases description

In response to the requests indicated in the contract, the research project examined the remote evaluation over time of the benefits achieved through training, but also of other changes that occurred independently of the training provided.

The activities were carried out with an analytical approach to evaluate the elements linked to the development and consolidation of the skills of women union leaders described in the training course and the impact on the working context.

The search strategy was developed taking into account 6 analysis aspects: relevance, coherence, effectiveness, efficiency, added value and impact.

By relevance we mean the extent to which the objectives of the training activities correspond to the needs of both the participants and the trade union organizations they belong to. For this aspect, the questions included in the questionnaires revealed the general satisfaction with the course, the degree of usefulness of the knowledge and professional skills acquired in one's work and in relation to career advancement. This aspect also includes the results of open questions relating to the topics to be explored in more detail.

Consistency was assessed to the extent that the interventions strengthen the objectives and create synergies with different activities both with other training activities proposed by Etui and with other training programs aimed at training women union leaders. From the questions aimed at evaluating this aspect, it emerged that the participants are not aware of other initiatives similar to those organized by the ETUI but participate in complementary training programs at international, national or local level.

Effectiveness measures the achievement of primary objectives, the correspondence between the objectives set and the activities carried out and the degree of skill improvement. To evaluate this aspect, questions related to the various learning outcomes described in the project were included in the questionnaire.

Added value examined the value derived from participation in training activities that is in addition to what would be derived from an intervention at a national, sectoral, regional or local level. The questions constructed to evaluate this aspect examined the perception of the benefits and aspects of cultural diversity in Europe.

Impact evaluation focuses on examining the long-term effects of the training intervention on participants. To evaluate this aspect, the promotion and transfer of the European dimension in one's organization or how useful skills are for improving status, career and professional performance were considered.

The activities developed starting from the collection and systematization of all the information necessary to reconstruct the training project.

The impact assessment project of all 4 editions of the courses was developed in the following phases of activity:

1. design an online survey to be sent to the participants (August-September 2023);
2. integrate survey responses by conducting follow-up interviews with 12 Bootcamp participants on September 28-29, 2023;
3. analysis and systematization of data;
4. drafting of the final report by the end of November 2023.

In the data processing methodologies, Fondazione Di Vittorio used the results of the closed-ended questions, combined with the data of the open-ended questions.

The comments and conclusions reported in this document must therefore be considered as the reading by Fondazione Di Vittorio of the qualitative information contained in the open answers which allowed a more detailed analysis of the data.

In the process of analysing this information, a classification was constructed for each response to the open questions and a subsequent aggregation by thematic areas.

In consideration of the percentage of interviewees who provided answers to the open questions contained in the questionnaire, the data presented here cannot be considered representative of the entire sample considered nor of the entire reference population. However, it was deemed useful to analyse and highlight them to make the reading of the data more in-depth and to provide suggestions on which to reflect for a future training course.

5. The survey tools

The research project produced a questionnaire addressed to the participants developed using open questions, single and multiple closed answer questions, for which it was estimated a duration of about 15 minutes.

The questionnaire has been divided into the following sessions:

- anagraphic data;
- organization and management of the course;
- complementarity with other training courses;
- impacts;
- strenghts and weaknesses;
- elements for improvement.

The closed-ended questions were mainly structured in the form of affirmations submitted in the positive sense to which the participants were able to indicate their degree of agreement on a scale of 4 possibilities (from "strongly disagree" to "completely agree").

6. Implementation of the survey

To carry out the research, a survey system was developed based on a web application which allowed the responses of the research sample to be collected uniquely and anonymously and the data to be processed in aggregate form.

The application used is Survey monkey.

The responses of the participants were collected in the period from August to September 2023.

The analysis provided in the final report also includes responses to incomplete questionnaires, in cases where at least one response has been provided.

The link to the survey created specifically for the project by Fondazione Di Vittorio was sent by Etui via email in the body of a letter inviting participants to contribute to the respective surveys.

During the response collection phase, Fondazione Di Vittorio informed the Etui of the number of responses received and the Etui sent a reminder email which allowed the response rate to be improved.

6.1. Description of the survey sample

Of the 87 participants who completed the training, 34 questionnaires returned, with a response rate of 39%, which can be considered a good result. Based on the literature, the average expected response rate for online surveys is 33%. Among the reasons for the lack of responses, it should be considered that some participants may have changed their contact details or were employed outside the trade union sector.

All 4 editions are represented, mainly the one held in 2019/2020.

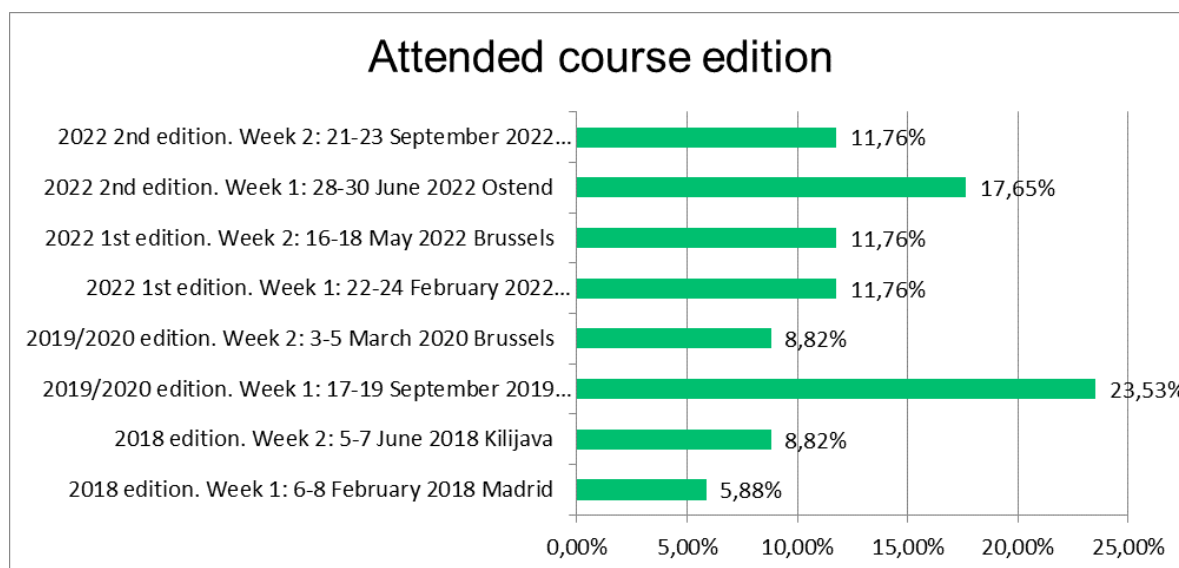


Figure 1 – Distribution of respondents among the various weeks (1 and 2) of each edition

77% of respondents have a college degree or higher, 9% are under 35, and 18% are between 35 and 40

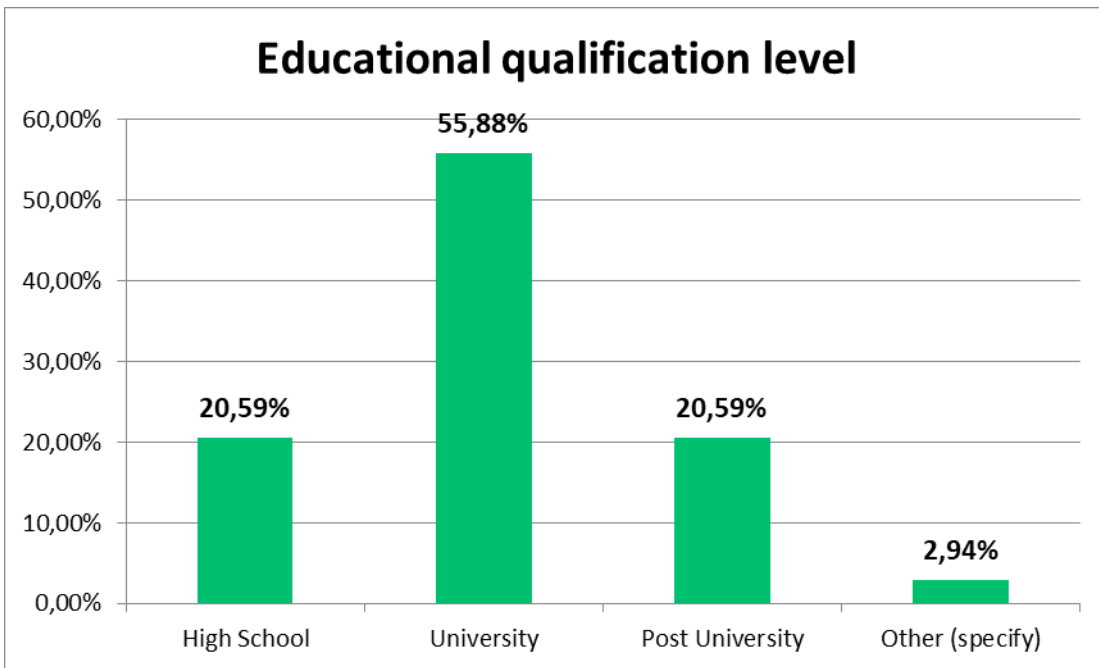


Figure 2 – Educational qualifications of the respondents

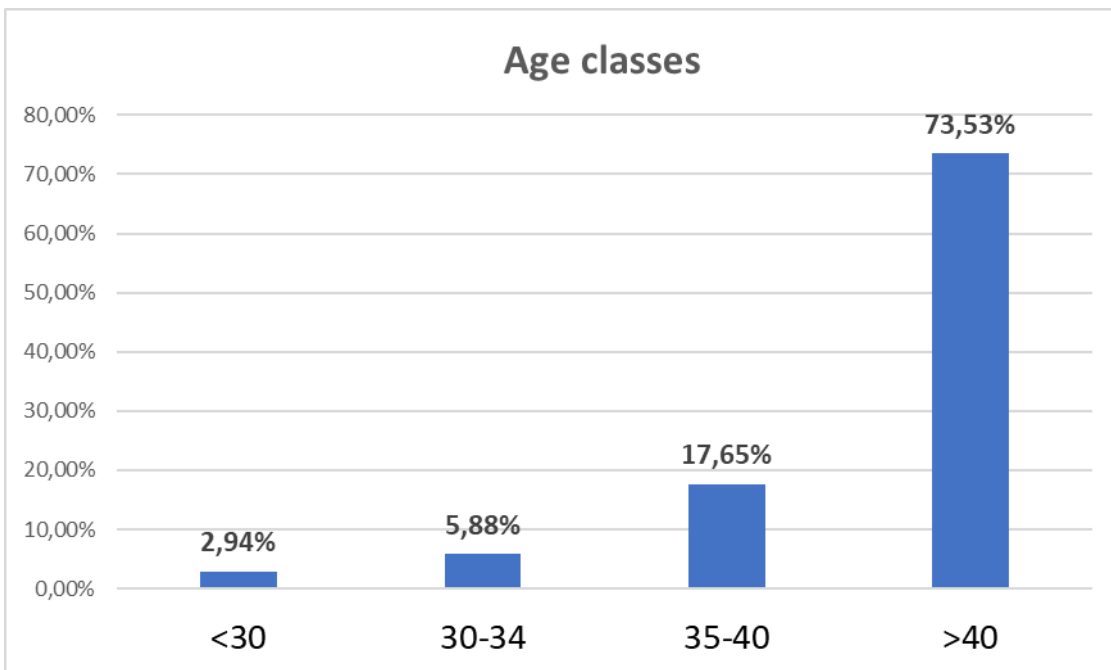


Figure 3 – Age classes of respondents

94% of respondents still work or are representatives in the union.

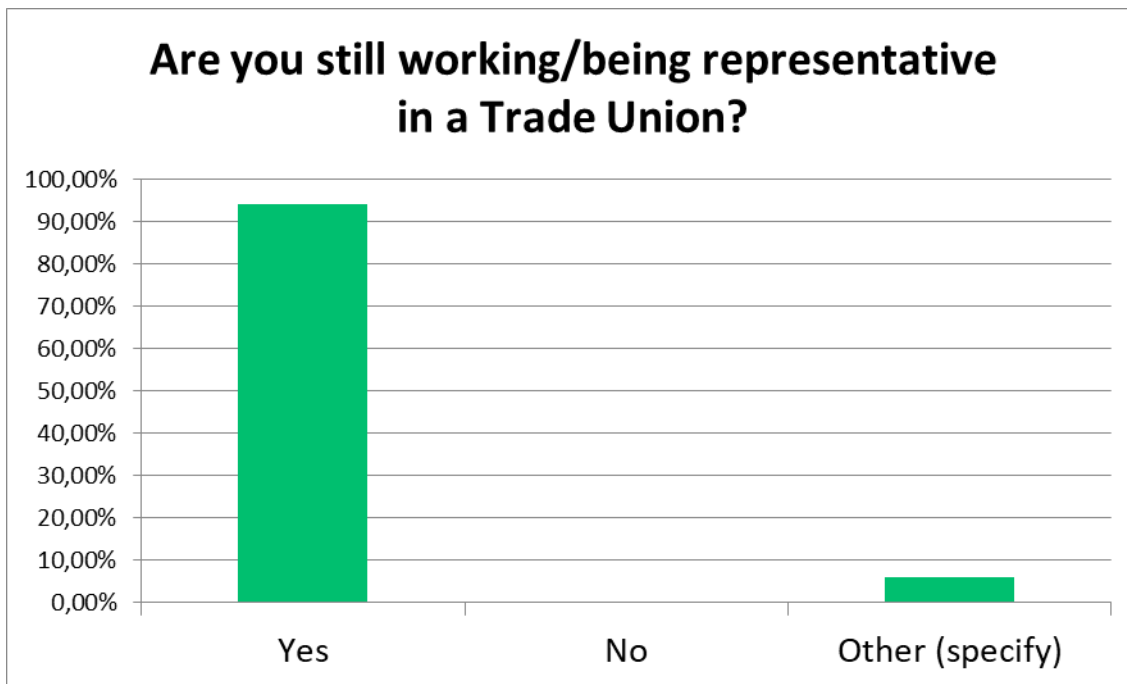


Figure 4 – Respondents still working or being representative in the union (% values)

The provenance of the respondents is spread across 17 European countries. The most represented are Spain (6), Italy (4) Finland, Serbia (3) and Malta, Croatia, Romania and Hungary (2).

Country of origin	Totale
Spain	6
Italy	4
Finland	3
Serbia	3
Romania	2
Croatia	2
Malta	2
Hungary	2
Sweden	1
Lithuania	1
Austria	1
Germany	1
Belgium	1
Poland	1
Netherlands	1
Ireland	1
UK	1
Total	33

Table 1 - Countries of origin of participants (absolute values)

7. Processing of follow-up research data addressed to participants, for the evaluation of the training program

7.1. Organization and management of the course

In relation to the general aspects of the course, the participants were asked the degree of agreement with the statements made with a positive meaning relating to the preliminary information received, the adequacy of the logistical and organizational aspects, the clarity of the training objectives, the quality and competence of the training staff, the adequacy of the methodologies and the time dedicated.

The training staff stands out: for all of the respondents (100%) they work with quality and competence.

The logistical and organizational aspects were appreciated by a number of respondents of more than 90% as well as the use of adequate methodologies which met the expectations of over 87%. Furthermore, the preliminary information received was more than 84% comprehensive.

During the development phase of the course, over 78% of respondents appreciated the clarity in defining objectives and time management in developing activities.

A slightly lower appreciation is recorded for the distribution of time dedicated to the contents of the presentation (72%).

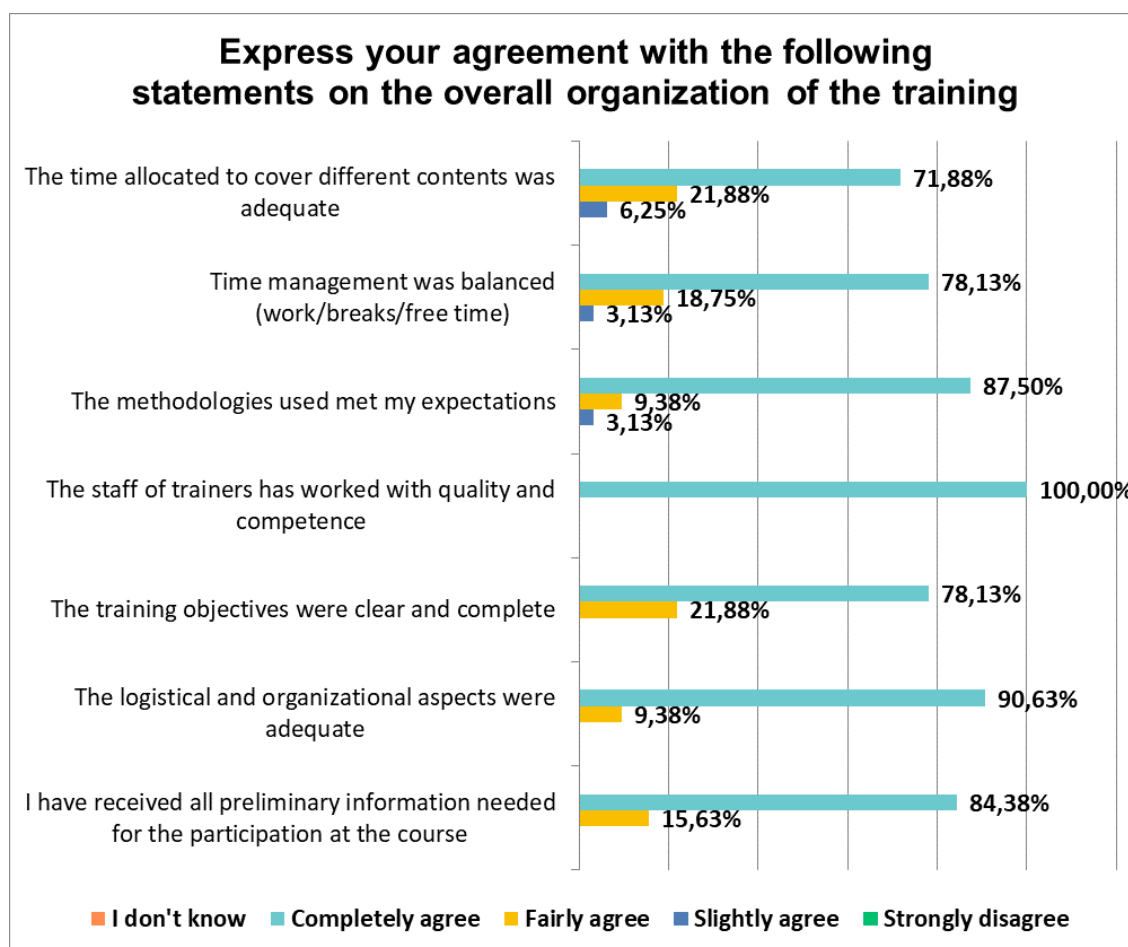


Figure 5 – degree of agreement in relation to overall organisation of the course

Again, in relation to the development of the contents, the questionnaire had the aim of evaluating the methods of presentation and the relevance with the union work of the participants.

The data shows a very positive evaluation regarding the clarity of the contents (91%), less emphasis emerges from the contextualization (relevance) of the proposed contents and especially from the exhaustiveness.

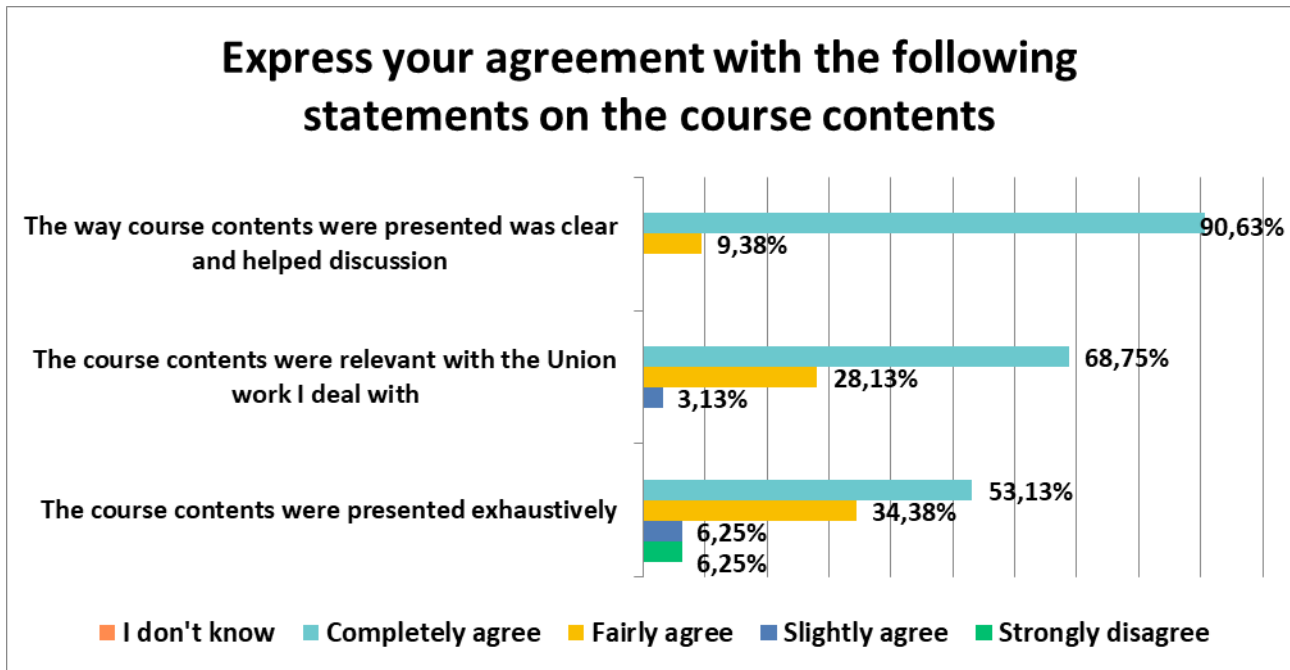


Figure 6 – Degree of agreement on the course contents

The evaluation examined how the plenary sessions were carried out in presence and, specifically, the degree of active participation, the way of contributing to the discussion and the learning climate.

The analysis of the data revealed high levels of participation, debate, cooperation, planning and organization of the activities carried out with colleagues (78%), also facilitated by the good level of collaboration with the trainers (81%), also facilitated by the good level of collaboration with the trainers (81%). The individual contribution to the discussion in the plenary session was slightly lower (71%).

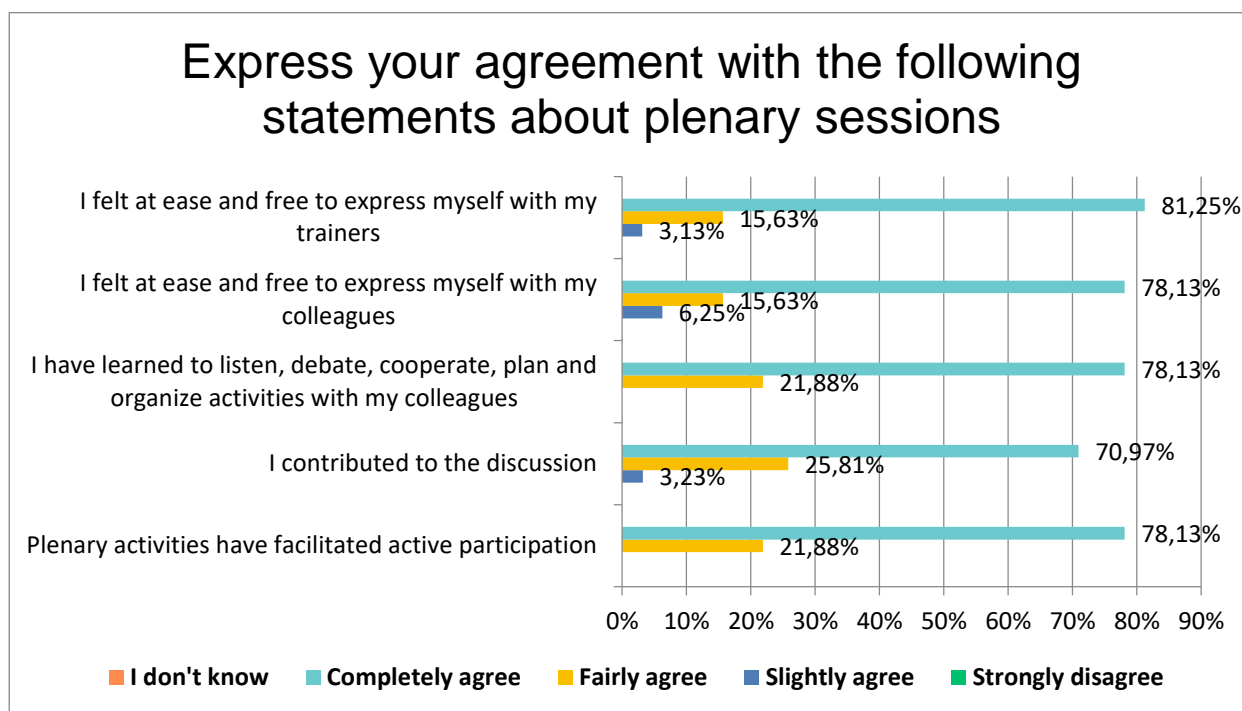


Figure 7 – Degree of agreement about plenary sessions

In the group work carried out, the analysis examined the climate, the methods of composition of the groups and the support of the tutors. The dynamics that occurred in the working groups show a consolidated appreciation for the support work carried out by the tutors (94%), thanks to which groups were built with an effective combination of different profiles (75%): it emerged that in the groups more than 87% of participants felt at ease.

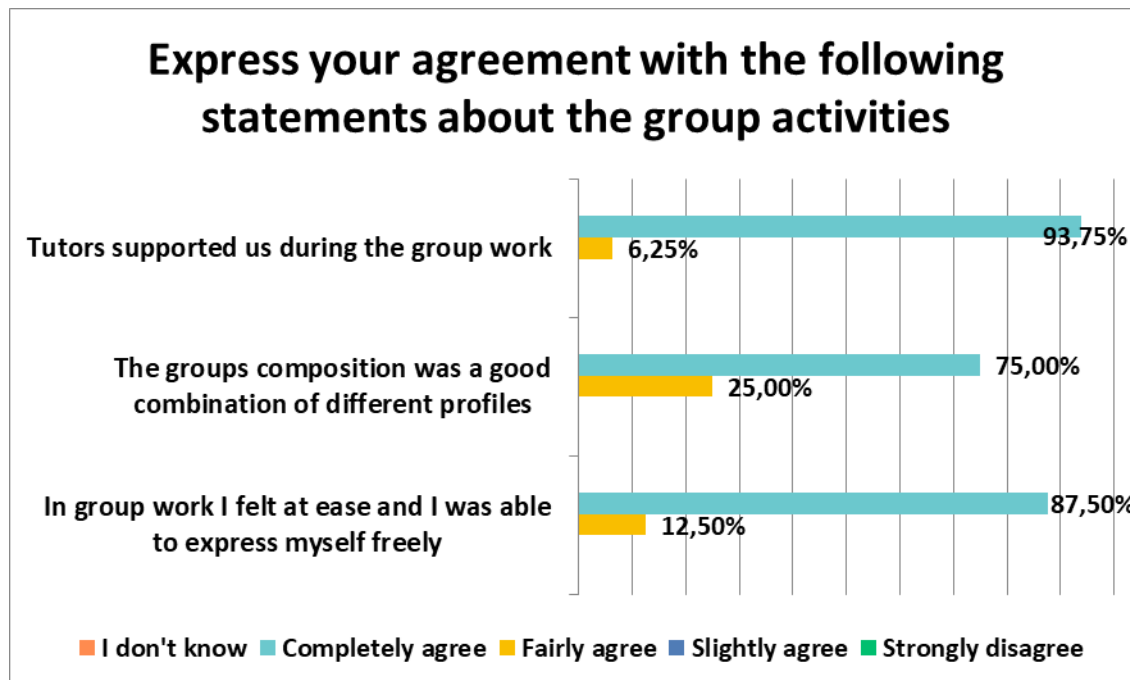


Figure 8 – Degree of agreement with the group's activities

In relation to the consistency of this training program with other similar and complementary activities, the majority of respondents are not aware of other programs similar to this one and have not attended other complementary training programs organized internationally, but have participated in complementary courses at national level (69%) or organized by the ETUI (52%).

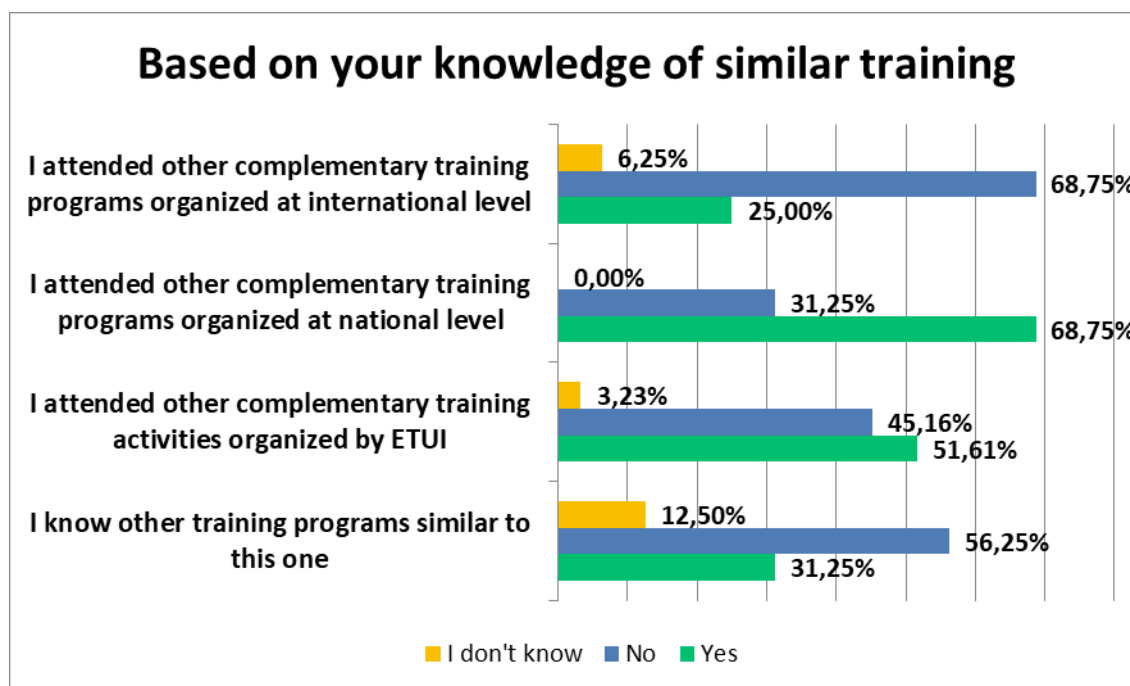


Figure 9 - Coherence with other training programmes

7.2. Follow up of the training

Regarding the evolution of one's role, the questionnaire included questions on the usefulness of professional knowledge and skills in relation to the current job in the union, on the impact on the way of working and on career progression.

The highest percentage of positive responses refers to the acquisition of self-confidence, self-awareness and motivation at work (81%) followed by the usefulness of the knowledge and skills acquired for the evolution of the participant's role and career (68%) and the ability to practice strategic thinking and foresight acquired during the course (67%). The acquired ability to lead teams effectively (61%) was also positive, as was the ability to communicate more effectively (60%). Respondents attach less importance to improving their way of working, usefulness in relation to their current work in the Union and improving negotiation skills.

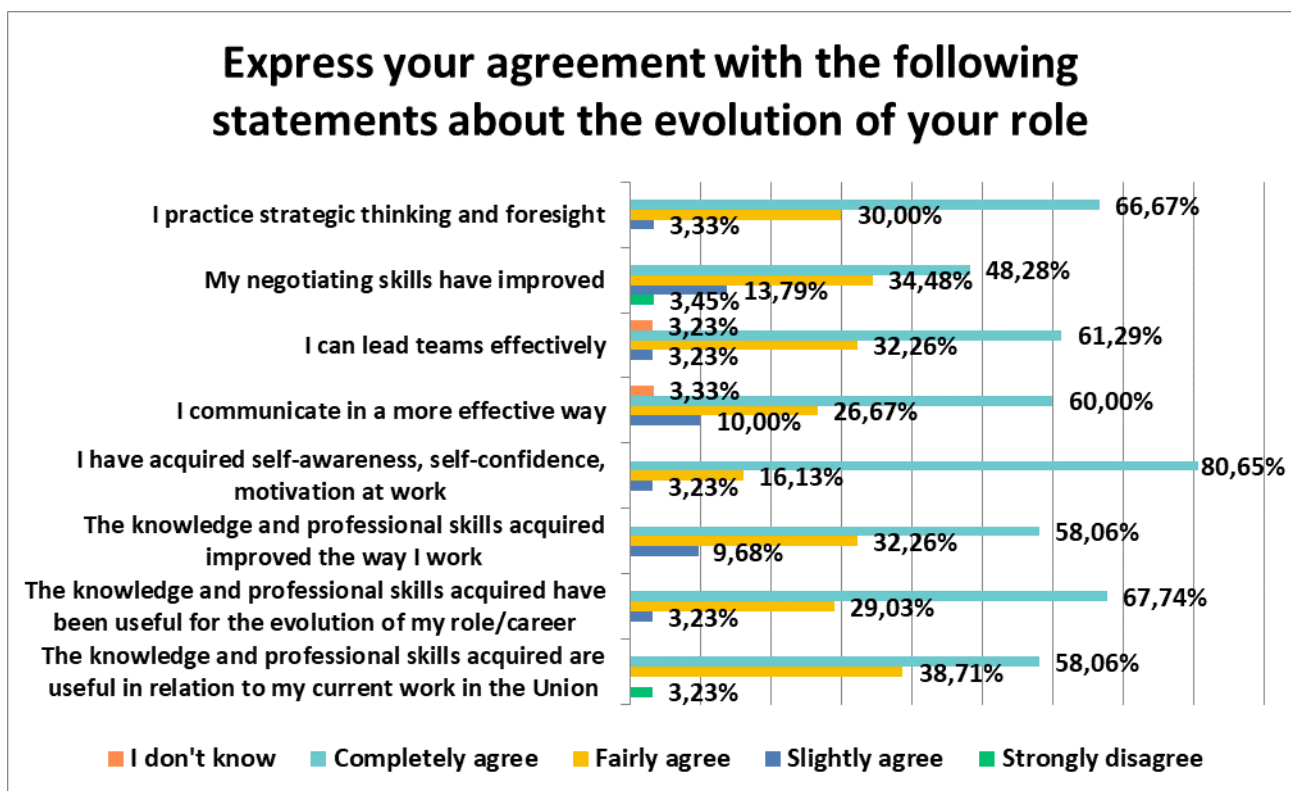


Figure 10 – Degree of agreement with the utility of the course for the evolution of the role

The questionnaire also explored the impact on the participants' way of working and on the new scenarios that participation in the course opened up, in particular on the women's issue and the European dimension.

From the analysis of the responses, it emerges that for many, participation in the course has changed their perspective and mentality regarding women's and trade union issues in other European countries (74%). The European dimension is promoted by many within the organization (58%) and the transfer of the contents learned during the course to colleagues sees the respondents divided on two levels of the scale (43.33% completely agree; fairly agree 46.67%). Same situation regarding the practice of knowledge acquired during a typical working week (completely agree 45.16%; fairly agree 48.39%).

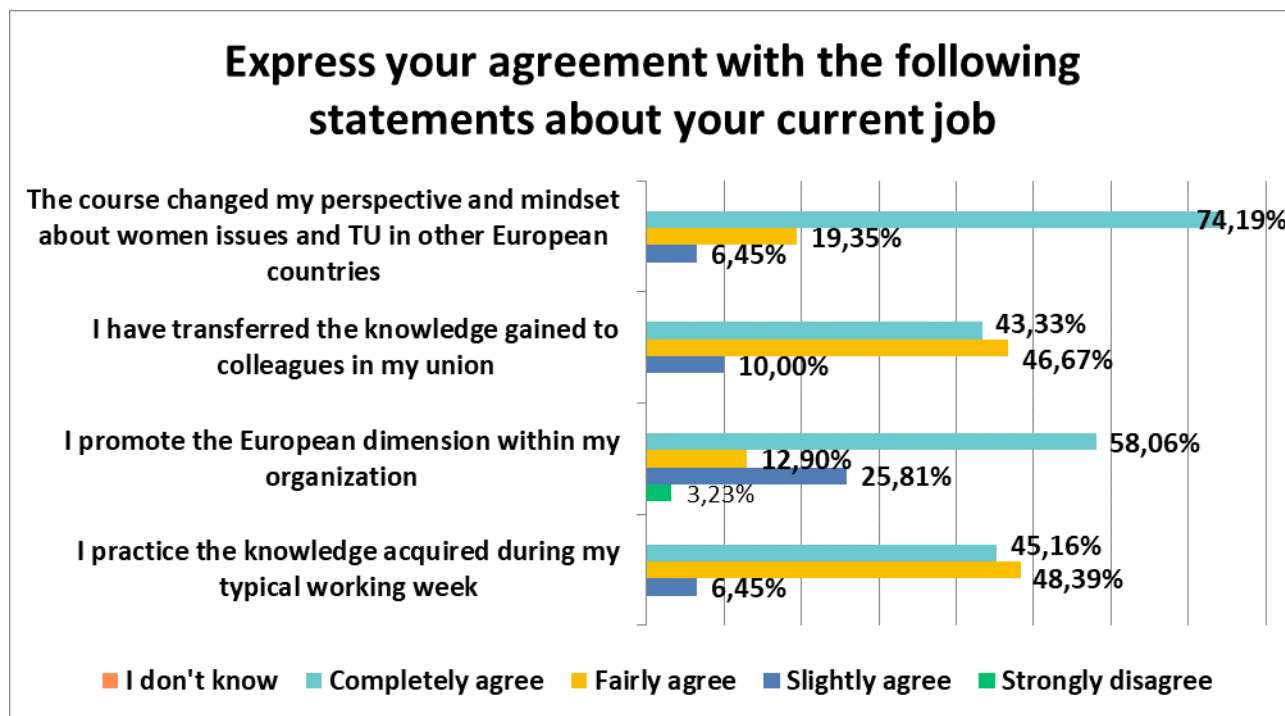


Figure 11 - The course changed my perspective and mindset about systems of Labour and TU in other European countries

Regarding networking activities, 55% maintained relationships with Etui. The network with colleagues on the course was established in the opinion of 52% of the participants who responded to the questionnaire but continuous relationships with colleagues are maintained for only 42% of the respondents.

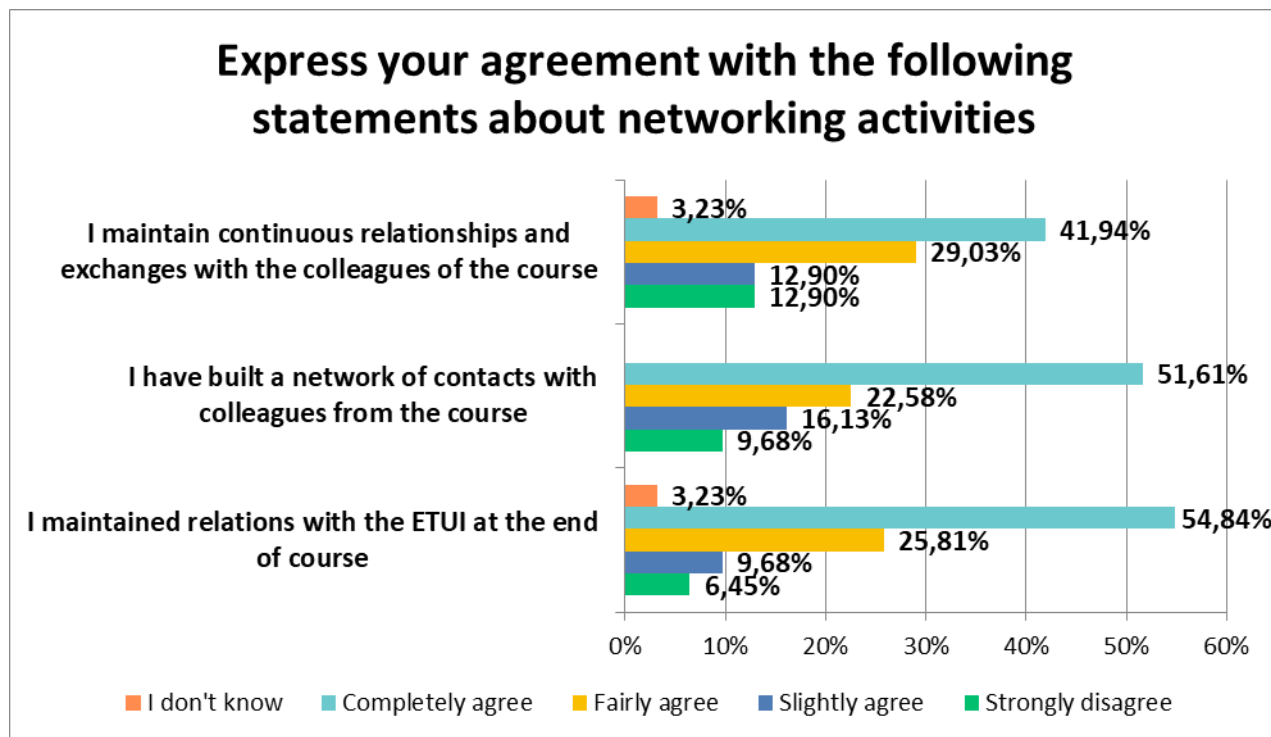


Figure 12 - Networking

Regarding the changes that have occurred in the way in which participants work with their union, the fact that they are no longer afraid of taking on top management responsibilities stands out (81%), followed by the greater attention that interviewees pay to the needs of working women (68%).

Equally positive is the ability acquired to support and motivate others (65%), the impact that the course has had on the willingness to learn about European social policy issues and the way in which they are addressed by the European trade union (58%) and on the ability to establish priorities by focusing on the most important issues first (54%).

As regards the ability to perceive sentinel events that allow to predict future changes and prepare to manage them, respondents are divided on two levels of the scale (completely agree 42%; fairly agree 42%).

Respondents are not really convinced that they have achieved the goal of avoiding taking on too many tasks because they are now able to say no (32% completely agree; 55% fairly agree).

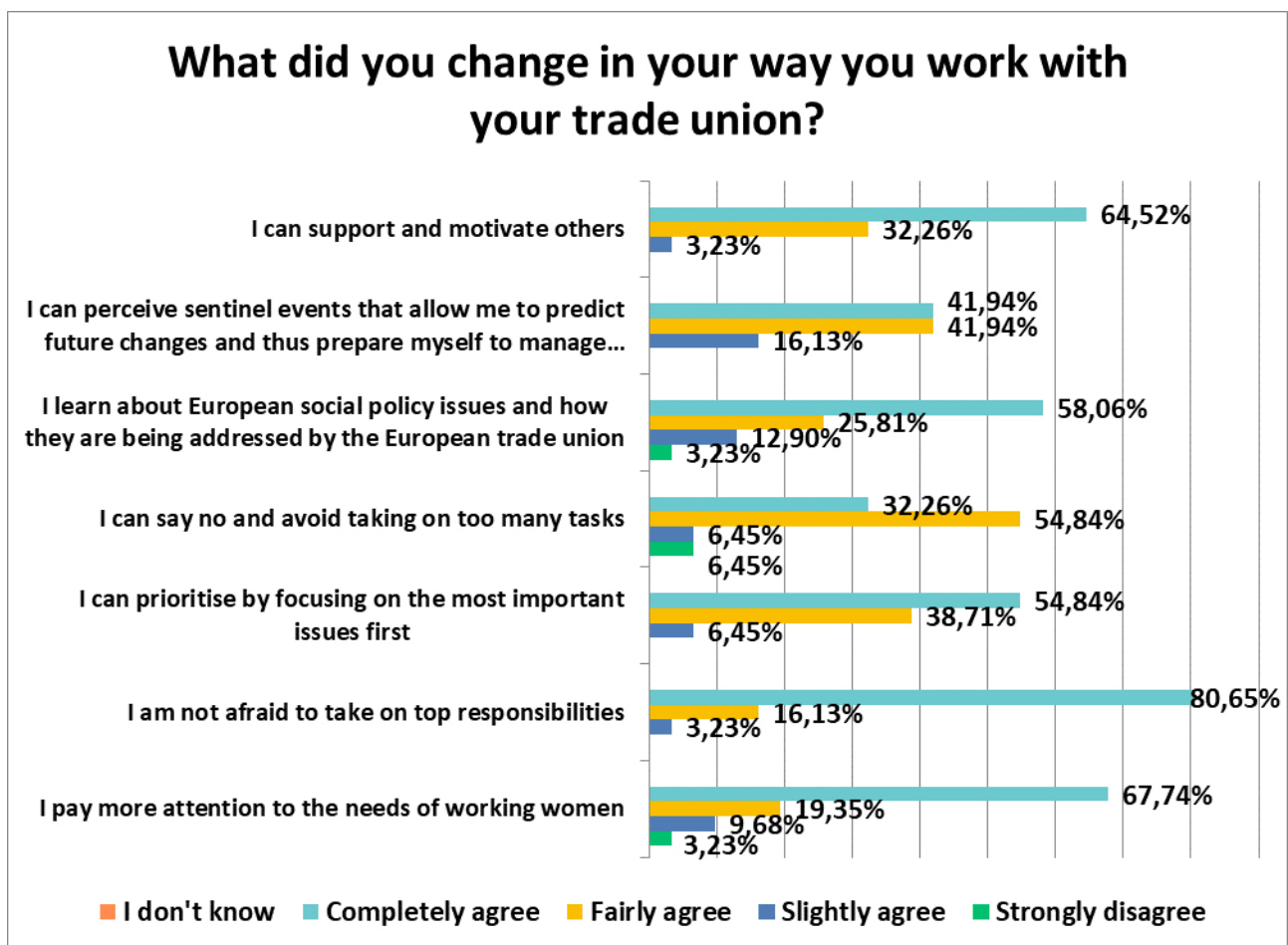


Figure 13 – Changes in the way of working with Trade Union

The survey also deepens into how others perceive and react to participants' changes.

Most of those respondents are totally convinced that because they are now more determined, others are more willing to assign them roles of responsibility (61%).

The majority of respondents are also completely or fairly agreed that, because they have more arguments to convince, others follow them in their decisions, because they have learned to share and delegate, others perceive them as more self-confident and that because they communicate more effectively, others listen to them with greater interest.

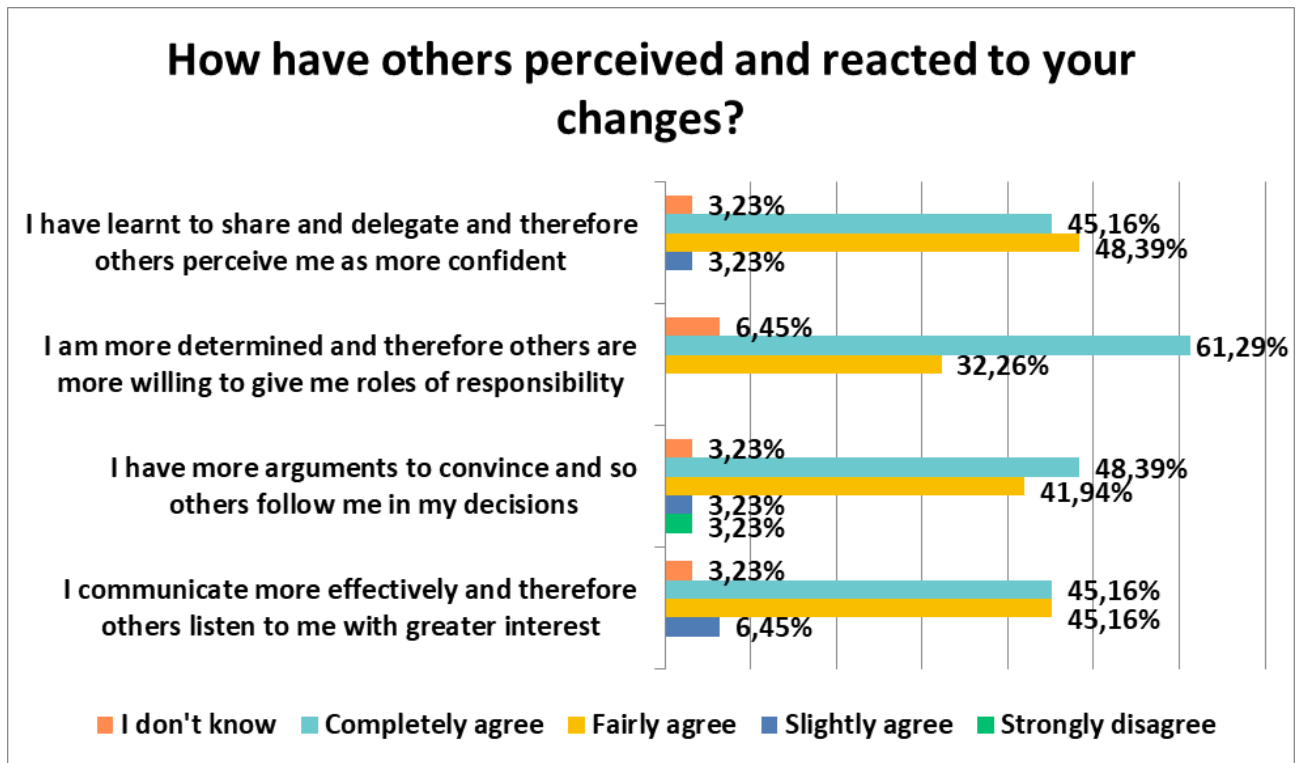


Figure 14 – Other reaction to participant’s changes

Regarding general satisfaction with the course, the respondents expressed great satisfaction with the course, all with values between 4 and 6, in a range from 1 to 6 (where 1 indicates the lowest value, 6 the highest).

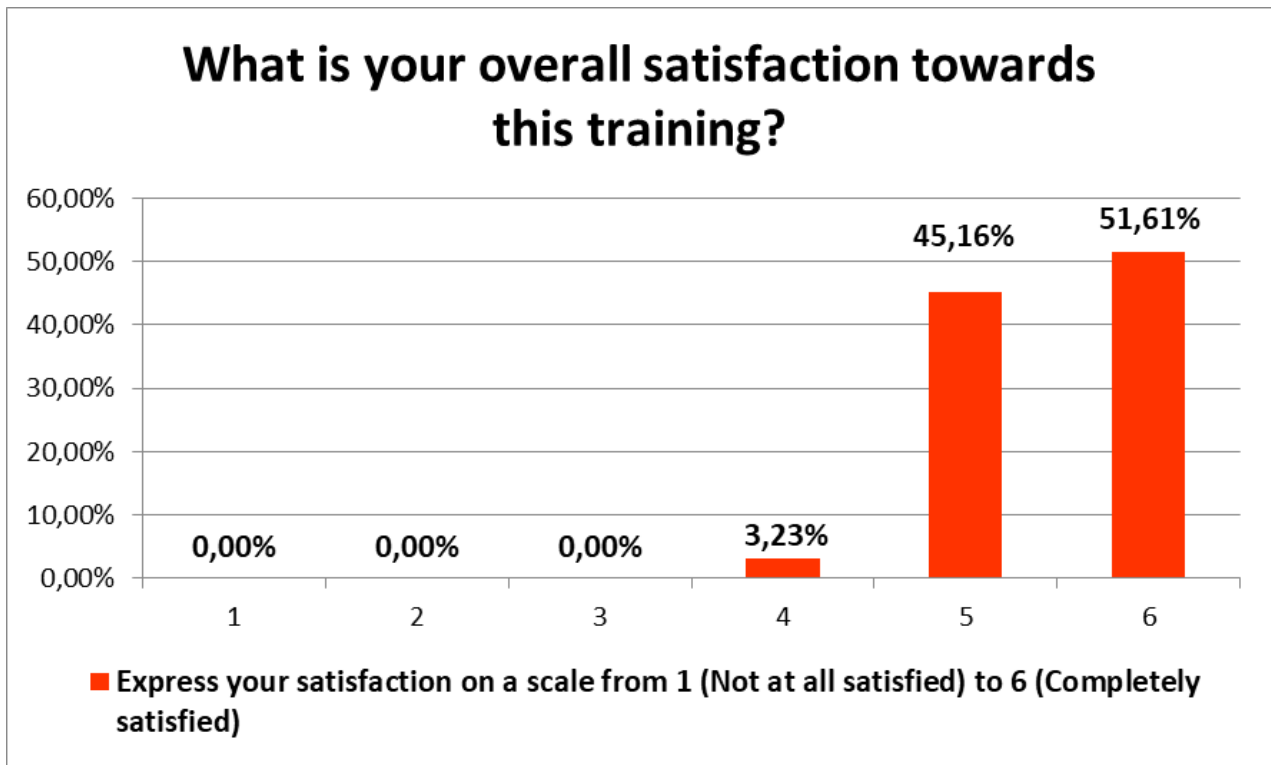


Figure 15 - What is your overall satisfaction towards this training? Express your satisfaction on a scale from 1 (Not at all satisfied) to 6 (Completely satisfied)

7.3. Analysis of open-ended questions

Open questions were included in the questionnaire in order to detect the participants' opinions on the strengths and weaknesses of the course, on the contents to be explored in greater depth and on those to be integrated. The answers to these questions are summarized and aggregated below.

Strengths

Among the strong points of the course, the acquisition of "*self-confidence, self-esteem, determination, courage and strength*" stands out.

The contents relating to "*interpersonal communication skills*" such as "*public speaking, listening and conflict management*" also have a strong weight, as do the possibility of having "*new and shared experiences*", the knowledge of "*new things, tools, methods*" and also the possibility of "*learning from other cultures*".

The participants also identified further strengths in the "*network*" created, in some acquired skills such as "*knowing how to make foresights through strategic thinking and knowing how to negotiate*", in the ability to "*motivate oneself, find solutions, be flexible and assertive*", in awareness of the importance of "*relationships and greater openness towards people*" and "*knowledge of the role of the ETUC*".

Weaknesses

Among the weaknesses noted by the people who filled out the questionnaire, the "*time*" factor is the most important one: the participants underline that the course is "*too short*", that there is a lack of "*time to discuss, practice, deepen*" and that "*the time between modules is too long.*"

Also relevant was the issue of "*lack of self-confidence and shyness because they did not know any of the other participants and countries of origin*" at the beginning of the course.

They also reported that they noticed "*no weaknesses*" and that "*the language barrier, different level of knowledge, practical experience, culture and way of life*" could be a weakness.

As regards the contents, some participants also reported as weak points "*negotiation, the common project, the practice of knowledge, the motivation of others*" as well as "*difficulties in staying in contact because they don't have tools*".

Topics to be integrated

Most advice on what to include in future courses focuses on Leadership content such as "*how to motivate others*" which seems to be the most frequent, followed by "*being a feminist leader, how to delegate, teach others, persuade women to participate*".

The need to integrate the topic of "*artificial intelligence and the consequences on workers' rights, working conditions and female employment, and how to manage professional reconversion*" is significant.

Strong and in-depth interest was also shown in the "*Union: the role, the sponsors, lobbying, visibility, how to deal with the loss of members and employers*".

Participants would like to include the topics of "*equality and fairness: differences and same characteristics*" and also "*communication: public speaking and social media*".

Someone suggested that the course address "*strategic foresight and prevention of burnout*", "*organizational and mental well-being*" and the topic of "*feminism and patriarchal reactions*", some would also like to be introduced to a "*network of European feminists and women trade unionists with mentoring at the start of the ETUI*".

Themes to deepen

To the open questions on which topics already covered in the course they would like to delve deeper into, the majority of participants suggested the topic of "communication", in particular "public speaking" and "self-confidence", but they were also interested to delve deeper into the *"non-verbal aspect of communication"*, *"communication strategies based on the context"*, *"conflict management"* and *"social media"*.

The second theme they suggest to explore further is *"negotiation: skills and strategies"*, followed by *"strategic thinking and planning needs"* and *"inclusive leadership"*.

More isolated are other requests to address topics such as *"the functioning and structure of trade unions in European countries and the role of women in trade unions, self-empowerment, unity and solidarity, the connection of worldwide networks that can be easily accessed when needed and peer support."*

8 Outcomes of interviews with participants

Interviewees were asked to reflect on their role as leaders, the obstacles/difficulties/barriers they encountered and the tools they learned and used to overcome them. They also reflect on the impact of the course on their status/role, the increased commitment to their organization, whether the union will use their newly acquired skills, and whether they will promote ideas, tools or projects from the course in their organization. Finally, participants were asked what their plans were for the future and whether they think ETUI can help them in their future development.

As regards the role, all the participants interviewed perceive themselves as leaders even if for some of them, the Italian women, the word leader is too strong to define their status. Everyone coordinates a group now or did so in the past, some lead very large groups (there are presidents of European, national or category confederations among them), some coordinate a few people. Some of them have just become leaders and declared that the course contributed a lot to this new status, others have been leaders since long time, but are now much more aware of their role even if they still have a lot to learn. Some are keen to point out that they carry out their leadership role with the support of their colleagues.

The main obstacle encountered by the women interviewed is the lack of self-confidence which in some cases leads them to consider themselves *"not enough"* because they are not perfect, perhaps also because *"women are asked to be more perfect than men for the same task"*, *"the pressure of having all eyes on you makes you make mistakes or be insecure even about things you have done many times before"*. During the course the participants learned that *"perfection is the enemy of good"* and that *"they are good enough"*, so much so that *"they learned to tolerate imperfection and began to do something new like public speaking"*. In other cases, low self-esteem materializes in the desire to *"be everywhere, to centralize all tasks"*, and this makes them *"feel oppressed"*, *"always in a hurry"*: in fact, they say they fight against themselves, remembering that *"sometimes it's better to say no, it's not my job, I don't have time, someone else will take care of it."* Another tool they learned in the course is resilience: one interviewee says she applied for a promotion twice because she learned to be resilient during the course.

Another obstacle mentioned is the perception of not being able to change the imbalance of power between men and women in the union, and this tires women, but if you see the glass half full, you realize that fighting and working hard for many years has paid off a lot, and that today there are many more women and some of them even cover the role of general secretaries of national confederations.

Other tools learned during the course and used to overcome barriers are: strategic thinking, the use of the internet, the habit of dialogue and sharing, a mentality open to new visions and new interpretations, awareness of the role of women and the needs to promote events for them, the use of leadership, collective negotiation, daily communication.

All interviewees have changed status/role since the beginning of the course except one participant who had just obtained a promotion: most were promoted, some expanded their work, some had the opportunity to move into a larger union sector.

As regards commitment and the use of new skills, half of the interviewees declared that the unions involve them more: some perceive that *"the union counts more on me, I am more appreciated, I have more consensus"*. Others said *"not yet, I don't know, in the same way"* but nevertheless *"they feel stronger, more powerful, more confident, more capable of showing their abilities, more appreciated by people"* and use the skills acquired *"to do strategic foresight, motivate volunteers, encourage colleagues, negotiate, work in groups, communicate daily to change the authoritarian modes of interaction to which the delegates were accustomed"* and feel very satisfied. They also acquired *"more awareness of trade unionism thanks to sharing with other European realities"*.

When asked how to promote ideas, projects or tools in their union, more than one interviewee responded to using the tools acquired along the way in training. A training experience promoted for members was mentioned, in which men are made aware of the stereotypes that harm women and women are taught to have more confidence in themselves. Men and women therefore find themselves in a common classroom where inclusion is taught. Some organize courses on communication, others use what they have learned about communication to be a more effective trainer. One interviewee promoted each module she participated in by presenting a report to her colleagues with links to the materials delivered during the courses, another declared that she used the online communication tool learned during the pandemic period, another promoted events to broaden the point of view of trade unionists. One interviewee was very impressed by the concept of perception and is trying to spread it in her union to encourage other trade unionists to talk to people who think differently. Finally, some have not yet promoted any ideas but intend to promote strategic foresight, equality plans, programs for the empowerment of women in negotiation.

As regards plans for the future, the positions are very different. Some interviewees see themselves in the international department, because they are convinced that *"it is important to see what is happening in Europe, we must work together in Europe"* or because *"my union wants me to grow as a point person for international projects"*. Some are thinking of applying for the position of deputy or general secretary which will be available in a few years, when the roles will be vacant because the people who fill them will retire. One interviewed would like to have more responsibilities in the Union or in another Union, another have just got her new leadership position and only think about growing in that position, another have not thought about their future yet, but know that she have to plan because she have learned to think strategically. One of the interviewees is planning to form another trade union confederation (in the private sector) that includes a strong female dimension and a youth dimension, one declared: *"I see the future as the present because I want to go where I am, in the Union"*.

Regarding the role of Etui in the future development of the interviewees, they declare that Etui has done an extraordinary job, they appreciated the methods, the level, the human approach, the communication, the programming with more than one module, so they will continue to attend courses to reach new goals because the contents of the Etui program are multiple. They think that ETUI courses are better than national ones. They wish to attend courses to disseminate the contents to other trade unionists and because they want to share with other European realities and improve international skills. Some specify that they need practical training, practical negotiation examples and courses that share outsourcing models

useful for their daily work. They also add that Etui helped them believe in themselves, which is why they advise other women who want to improve their self-esteem to follow this course.

8. Conclusions

The final considerations regarding to the evaluation of the elements relating to the development and consolidation of the skills of women trade union leaders expected from the training course and the impact on the working context are reported taking into account the 6 dimensions of analysis indicated in the methodological aspects of the research: relevance, consistency, effectiveness, efficiency, added value and impact.

Relevance

Overall, the course contents were considered very relevant by the participants. The skills that proved to be particularly relevant for the participants with respect to their needs were in particular those that concerned the field of self-confidence and personal empowerment and in particular the acquisition of knowledge and skills related to leadership: having an open mind, a strategic vision, giving importance to relationships, being able to communicate effectively especially in public situations, being an active listener, an assertive person and knowing how to manage conflicts. Knowledge of the role of trade unions at a European level, of other cultures, of new tools and methods was also important.

For the interviewees, the topics covered in the course meant an increase in confidence and awareness of their own abilities which made them feel more motivated, strong, powerful and satisfied. This develops in the ability to better lead groups, to motivate others, to promote events and training courses on the topics learned during the course in their trade union organizations.

Participants highlighted the need to further explore these themes and in particular communication, negotiation, inclusive leadership and strategic thinking skills.

Consistency

The coherence highlights the extent of the complementarity of the intervention with the other activities proposed by the Etui and with other training programs aimed at trade unionists at European and international level. As regards consistency, the majority of participants who responded to the questionnaire demonstrated that they were not aware of programs similar to this one proposed by Etui.

Most have participated in complementary courses developed at national level, less at international level. The course is unique for its characteristics and complementary with the other projects proposed by Etui itself.

The Etui training program, of which the course is part, is coherent and qualitative. According to some participants, the ETUI program is very complex and the didactic methodologies are better than the national ones.

Efficiency

The results of the research show that the planning and implementation phases of the training activities of the course for women union leaders were carried out efficiently, paying the necessary attention to the adequacy of the logistical, organizational and training aspects.

Starting from the preliminary information received, considered by many to be exhaustive, the participants considered the objectives of the course to be clear and comprehensible, the architecture of the course was

well structured in a balanced way and proposing the use of appropriate methodologies, with the support of the staff of trainers who worked with quality and competence, trying to best manage training times.

The contents were developed clearly and highlighted high levels of participation, debates and activities carried out with colleagues, also facilitated by fruitful interactions with the trainers' staff.

The group work carried out was built with an appreciated logic of heterogeneity, to enhance the diversity of characteristics, skills and backgrounds of the participants who, with the continuous support of the tutors, felt at ease.

In a general context of positive evaluations, a slight criticism emerges regarding the proposed contents, which are not always fully exhaustive, also given the diversity of the characteristics of the participants.

Effectiveness

Effectiveness was measured on the basis of the learning outcomes expected from the training course.

The perception of the skills acquired by the participants reveals a general achievement of the primary objectives, the correspondence between the set objectives and the activities carried out and the degree of improvement of the skills.

Participants generally report having the courage to take on maximum responsibility, and this was the aim of the course. They also declare that they have acquired self-confidence and self-awareness, which is why they have now become leaders or have acquired the awareness of what it means to exercise the role of leader.

The content developed enabled the acquisition of knowledge in relation to the role of women leaders by focusing on communication, negotiation, strategic thinking and supporting their potential for growth in confidence and achievement.

In carrying out their role, women trade unionists above all declare an acquired ability to effectively lead teams, to pay greater attention to the needs of working women, to support and motivate others, to practice strategic thinking, to communicate more effectively, to be more determined, to have more arguments to convince others, to share and delegate more, to establish priorities by focusing on the most important issues.

As a consequence of their new skills, others are more willing to assign roles of responsibility to them, to follow them in their decisions, to listen to them with greater interest, and they also perceive them as more confident.

These skills are useful for improving one's way of working and one's current job in the Union but above all for the evolution of one's role and career, since 100% of those interviewed declared having changed role/status after starting of the course.

A lower level of perception emerges from the skills related to improving one's negotiation skills.

Added value

One of the objectives of the European training program is to develop the ability to work in a multicultural environment to bring into their organizations the possibility of integrating the European dimension into trade union work by encouraging new networks and sharing new knowledge. This objective can be considered an added value of the course and research has shown how it was achieved by participants.

The results of the questionnaire submitted reveal a positive evaluation of the relationships maintained with Etui at the end of the course. In fact, during the interview, the relevance of the role of the ETUI for their

personal and professional growth emerges, and the intention to continue following the European courses for their quality and variety of contents, useful for achieving the new objectives that the participants set themselves.

The "multicultural" dimension was indicated as one of the strong points of the course: it gave the opportunity to create a network at European level useful both for sharing experiences on common themes and for acquiring useful information. This aspect also allowed them to acquire, through experience, an open-mindedness towards different environments and people, building a shared meaning and determining a change in the mentality and perspective of the participants on women's issues in the workplace and on trade union structures in other European countries.

Some of those interviewed also stated that in the future they would like to pursue a career in the international department of their union, confirming how much the transnational dimension has influenced their future prospects.

Impact

Impact measures the achievement of higher-level objectives. Impact evaluation therefore focuses on examining the long-term effects of the course on participants and organisations. For example, the application of skills and increasing the responsibilities of participants are aspects that concern the transferability and impact of the knowledge acquired.

Regarding the evolution of the role, all the participants interviewed declared that they consider themselves a leader as they coordinate groups. They also assert that the course contributed significantly to this new status by teaching them the importance of resilience in achieving their goals.

The questionnaire also included questions on the usefulness of professional knowledge and skills in relation to the current work in the union, the impact on the way of working and on career progression. The highest percentage of positive responses refers to the usefulness of the skills learned for the evolution of one's role/career thanks to the strengthening of self-awareness, self-confidence and acquired motivation. What emerged from the questionnaires was consistently reinforced in the interviews and in the open questions asking what the strong points of the course were.

Regarding the impact on the way of working, investigated in the questionnaire, it emerged that today the participants use, unlike in the past, strategic thinking, effective communication and the ability to lead groups. It also emerged in the interviews that they are now able to overcome the barriers and obstacles they encounter because they have new tools at their disposal. The main barrier seems to be the lack of self-confidence and the tool learned is the belief that one is good enough, that one does not need to be perfect and that one has not to centralize all tasks on oneself. They also learned to plan goals for their future and be resilient until they achieved them, to build relationships through dialogue and sharing with others, especially women, and to be open-minded to new visions.

The analysis of the responses shows that for many, participation in the course has changed their vision of trade union and women's issues in the labour market and in society.

Regarding the impact of the network built during the course, the questionnaires show that the interviewees maintained contact but not on a continuous basis. Some say there are difficulties staying in touch because they don't have tools.

From the questionnaires and interviews, the impact that the course had on the organizations to which it belongs emerged, which indirectly benefited from the skills acquired by the participants. The course had an impact on negotiation, on the expansion of knowledge regarding the international situation and on new practices on women's issues resulting from the exchange between participants from different European

contexts. Anyway, only half of the interviewees are convinced that the union uses their new skills more, they instead think that they are useful to themselves because they feel stronger and more powerful.

The European dimension is promoted by many participants in the organizations to which they belong, even if the transfer of the contents learned during the course to colleagues is not always facilitated as emerges from the answers to the questionnaire. However, some of them declared, during the interviews, to have promoted courses and events on women's issues and communication. One participant state that she disseminated the course by writing a report and sending it to colleagues together with all the teaching material.

9. Recommendations

Participation in the course for women trade unionists had a very strong impact on the participants on a personal level and consequently on their role and career in their organisations. All the interviewed have changed status/role since the beginning of the course: most were promoted, some expanded their work.

About half of the interviewees declare that they are more appreciated within the union thanks to the use of the new tools they have learned, the other half does not seem to perceive greater involvement on the part of the union, but is fully satisfied because they feel stronger, more powerful and more have the consensus of the people.

Among the methods for disseminating the tools learned, training appears to be the most used means to promote communication and issues relating to women, the latter also promoted through specific events.

With respect to the development of the training program, participants are highly requested to have **more time to discuss, practice, learn more, they would like to do a longer course and the modules should be closer together.**

At the beginning of the course some participants were shy because they did not know any of the other participants nor their country of origin. **This initial discomfort could be alleviated by holding an online webinar in which initial socialization takes place between the participants.**

For some of them the barrier of the language, the imbalance in knowledge and experience on the topics addressed, and the different culture were points of weakness in the course.

Regarding the language barrier, the non-homogeneous knowledge of the course's official languages may have created an imbalance in the possibilities for women trade unionists to actively participate in the course's work. **To encourage greater integration of participants, we recommend planning preparatory English courses in e-learning format and in person.** It is also recommended to **raise interpreters' awareness of the correct use of the feminine in languages that include the masculine neuter.**

An important aspect of the training course was the training staff who guided the participants with competence and humanity for all the respondents to the questionnaire. The interviews confirm that Etui did an extraordinary job, the participants appreciated the methods, the level, the human approach, the communication, the programming through multiple training modules. For this reason, they recommend other women to attend this course and intend to continue attending Etui courses to improve the skills necessary to pursue their future goals.

The responses collected in relation to the new contents to be integrated into the training path highlighted a very wide range of proposals, some of which are probably already included in the catalogue of courses promoted by Etui. Therefore, considering that the participants intend to attend other Etui courses and that

they suggest integrating the course for women trade union leaders with subjects contained in other courses, **we recommend strengthening the advertising system of the Etui training courses at the trade union organizations of origin of the participants, adding other communication channels such as, for example, social profiles, or by delivering the course catalogue directly during the course.**

Regarding the topics covered in the course, but which the **participants would like to explore further, the communication theme stands out, in particular public speaking and self-esteem, but also the non-verbal aspects of communication, conflict management and social media.**

The participants **interviewed suggest exploring the topic of negotiation** more specifically, strategies and skills. This suggestion reinforces the perception of not having completely improved one's negotiation skills which already emerged from the responses to the questionnaires.

During the courses, networks between participants arise spontaneously and remain active for a while after the end of the course, especially for the exchange of information. After some time, it is difficult to maintain ongoing relationships because, as reported by some respondents to the questionnaire, they do not have tools. **The consolidation of the network among the participants could be facilitated by meetings following the course, also promoted by Etui.**

10. Annexes

- Annex 1 – Questionnaire
- Annex 2 – Complete data processing and statistics of survey