COOP-IN

PROJECT TITLE: Social Innovation Training for Virtual Work-Based Learning
PROJECT REF. NO: 2017-1-UK02-KA202-036640

IO1:
APPLIED SOCIAL INNOVATION TRAINING COURSE DEVELOPMENT

NEEDS ANALYSIS
NATIONAL RESEARCH REPORT: CYPRUS

PRODUCED BY:
CARDET

TABLE OF CONTENTS

1. INTRODUCTION

What is COOP-IN?

The overall aim of COOP-IN is to raise awareness of the opportunities and challenges in implementing social innovation at work by developing a social innovation training kit including a digital education game, a self-assessment tool and other learning materials.

In so doing, the project will work with vocational education trainers, business support agencies, mentors and coaches and networking organisations to encourage engagement with social innovation and facilitate use of resources to assist small and medium enterprises (SMEs) in moving from idea to action in introducing social innovation.   The project consists of seven partner organisations from the UK, Cyprus, Ireland, Hungary, Portugal and Spain.

Why is COOP-IN needed?

In 1985, Peter Drucker noted that '*Today businesses, especially the large ones, simply will not survive in this period of rapid change and innovation unless they acquire entrepreneurial competence* (Drucker, 1985, p. 132). Thirty years on, many commentators would agree that this quote is still highly relevant today – the only thing that has changed is the rate of change.

This reflects the fundamental shifts which we are witnessing in economies, such as the UK, as a result of the economic recession of 2008/2009, demographic changes, technological developments and socio-cultural shifts. For example, demographic change is leading to greater age and cultural diversity within the workforce of the majority of businesses. For the first time, businesses will have staff from four different generations who have different motivations, values and expectations around working patterns and management and leadership styles. People are having to work longer and cope with personal change, such as ageing, whilst at work rather than during retirement. In turn, this creates a set of different learning and skills development needs and generates the need for innovative responses from businesses themselves, external providers of education and training and governments.

As a result, there is a growing interest in the concept of social innovation. This can be defined as '*new strategies, concepts and ideas that businesses and organisations can introduce to meet the social needs of different internal and external stakeholders*'. However, the available evidence base suggests that there are a number of "need to know's" in navigating the journey from idea to action in implementing social innovations at work.

Why a needs analysis?

COOP-IN will develop a digital education game, a set of learning materials and a self-assessment tool to assist businesses and organisations in introducing and managing social innovations at work. To ensure that these outcomes are demand-led, a needs analysis will be undertaken in each partner country. This report summarises the key outcomes to emerge from the needs analysis undertaken in Cyprus.

COOP-IN

Co-funded by the
Erasmus+ Programme
of the European Union

2. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY AND METHODS

In Cyprus a slightly different methodology for collecting data. In particular, CARDET has created an online version of the questionnaire, which was distributed widely to different stakeholders. Participants were recruited through emails, telephone calls, and several events organized by CARDET. At the same time, some hard copies of the questionnaire were distributed, however, most our participants preferred to complete the survey online.

Data were collected online, in an Excel spreadsheet. Data analysis was conducted for each question, generating a separate graph for each. This was helpful for understanding the particulars of the answers and have a detailed picture of the respondents' answers.

Descriptive statistics were applied for each of the questions and their subsections, in order to provide visual understanding of the responses participants provided. The importance of having a comprehensive understanding of the data lies in the fact that these data will guide our decisions for the development of the game later in the project, as well as of the related materials. Therefore, a visual understanding of the data is the best way to reach conclusions and facilitate decisions regarding the focus of the content of the training programme.

In the following section, the data collected and analysed for the Cyprus context are presented.

COOP-IN

Co-funded by the
Erasmus+ Programme
of the European Union

3. ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSION

3.1 Characteristics of the respondents

A total of 30 people had completed the online survey. Participants come from the following sectors:

- Business services
- Education
- Energy-Electricity
- Financial services
- Geology
- Leisure
- Manufacturing
- Mining and quarrying
- Personal services
- Public services
- Retail and wholesale
- Social services
- Youth work

Figure 1 shows a visual of the distribution based on the number of employees in the respondents' businesses/organizations.
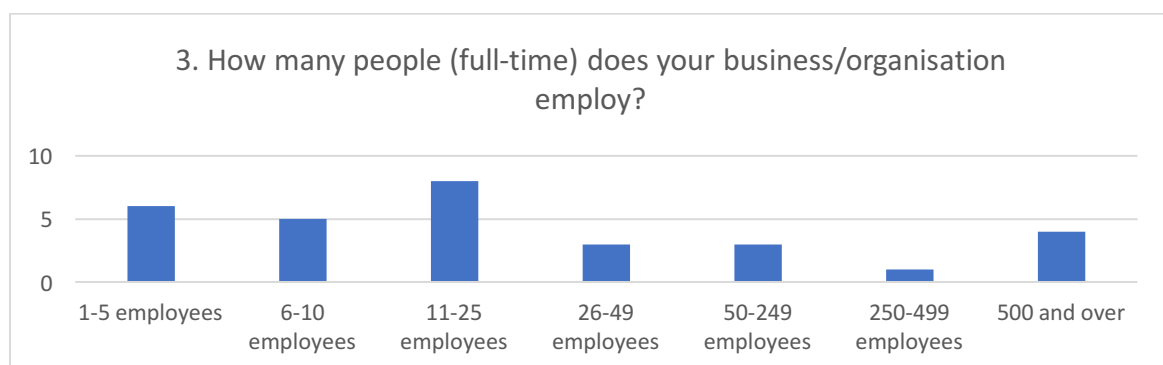
Figure 1: Size of the surveyed businesses

Figure 2 shows the number of years the participants' organizations have been operating. The majority of respondents' organizations exist for more than 15 years.

COOP-IN

Co-funded by the
Erasmus+ Programme
of the European Union

Figure 2: Length of trading of the surveyed businesses

As shown in Figure 3 below (Question 5), most of the organizations were privately owned.

Figure 3: Nature of ownership of the surveyed businesses
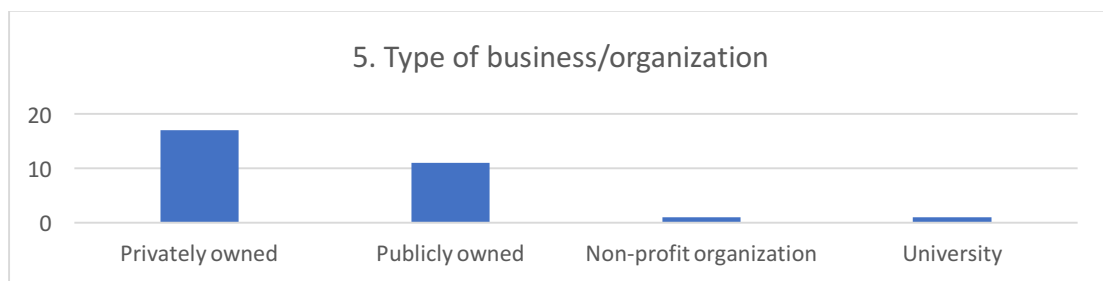
3.3   What is Social Innovation?

Overall, social innovation was defined as new ideas and concepts that are applied to a social space and with the aim of making a change and improve the community through problem solving. In particular, participants defined social innovation in the following ways (some of the most indicative responses are provided):

- "Social innovations are new concepts, ideas, organisations and strategies that aim to meet the social needs of the elements that can be anything in relation to development."
- "The ability to perform in a much bigger scale than you used to, with people working remotely and meeting the needs of your community. I don't use the word community with it's traditional meanign but more with the way it is used in social media."
- "New solutions to societal challenges/needs"
- "Social innovation includes all the activities of the organisation that are covered issues which have a social impact."
- "innovation which focuses attention on the ideas and solutions that create social value"
- «New/improved services & processes»
- «new strategies and ideas that meet the social needs of different elements- working conditions, education /community development»
- «Developing effective solutions for social issues»
- "It means being able to provide innovative tools and activities that have an impact in society"
- "Social innovations are new ideas that meet social needs, create social relationships and form new collaborations."

COOP-IN

Co-funded by the
Erasmus+ Programme
of the European Union

- "Providing new ways to help improve situations for society or create new ways that will have a value to society"
- "Bringing people in situations where they need to brainstorm and fins creative solutions together for social problems and make a change collectively"

Figure 4 below (Question 7) shows the frequency of the words/terms that participants associate with social innovation. Even though the question asks participants to pick 3 words, most participants chose more than 3 for their response. Creativity is at the first place, with "social problem solving" and "open and collaborative" following.

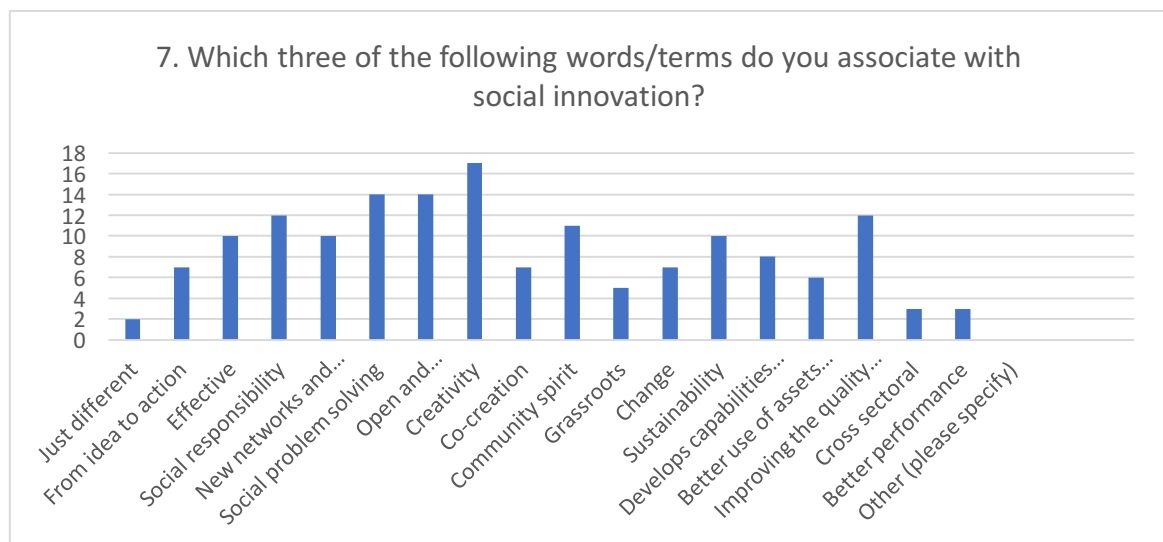**Figure 4**: Terms associated with social innovation

Figure 5 (Question 8) show the degree to which respondents agree with each statement. It seems that there is a general agreement regarding the statements.
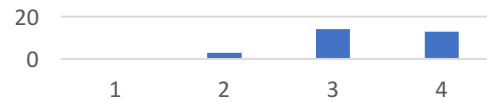
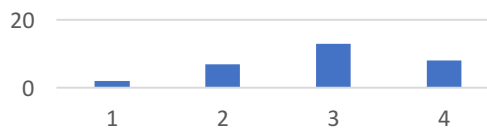**Figure 5**: The nature of social innovation

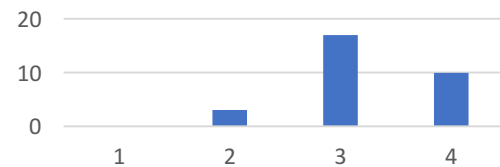## 8. There is a distinction between invention and innovation

8. Social innovations are explicitly designed to meet a recognised social need
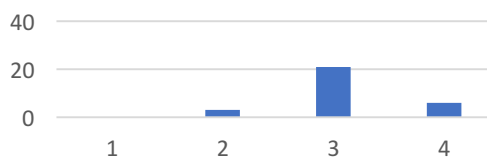

8. Social innovations are just doing the same thing but in a slightly new way
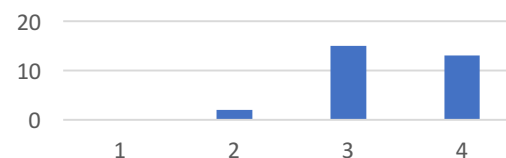

8. Social innovations are developed with and by users
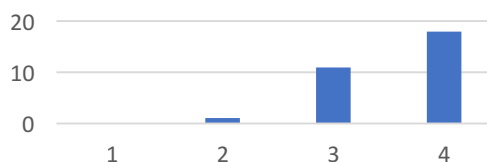

8. Social innovation occurs at the interface between different sectors

8. Social innovation involves producers and consumers working together

8. Collaboration increases the potential for social innovation

COOP-IN

Co-funded by the
Erasmus+ Programme
of the European Union

3.4 Social Innovation in Businesses and Organisations: Processes and Practices

Figure 6 below (Question 9) demonstrate the degree to which the particular organizations introduce social innovation.

Figure 6: Scope for the introduction of social innovation

COOP-IN

Co-funded by the
Erasmus+ Programme
of the European Union

Participants provided rating about their organizations regarding their management of key stages in the social innovation process. The following figures regarding Question 10 describe the ratings provided.

Figure 7: Assessment of effectiveness in managing social innovation
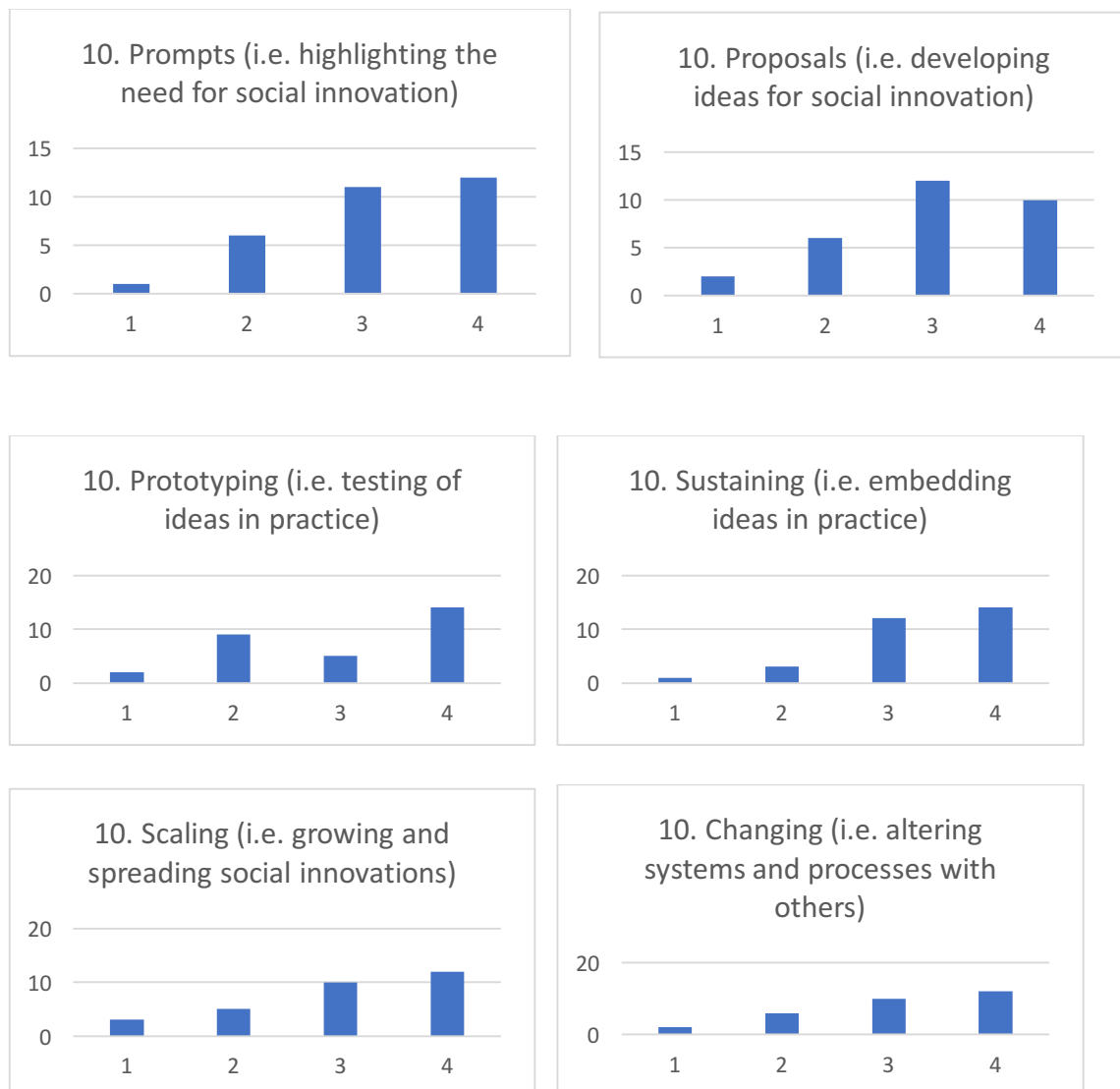
In implementing key parts of social innovation, organizations face different problems. Figure 8 (Question 11) provides a visual description of the barriers they face. Mostly, these barriers are related to financial issues, lack of government support, and access to information. Also, other barriers are marked, as shown below.

COOP-IN

Co-funded by the
Erasmus+ Programme
of the European Union

Figure 8: Barriers to introducing social innovation

11. What barriers do you think businesses/organisations face in implementing social innovation(s)?
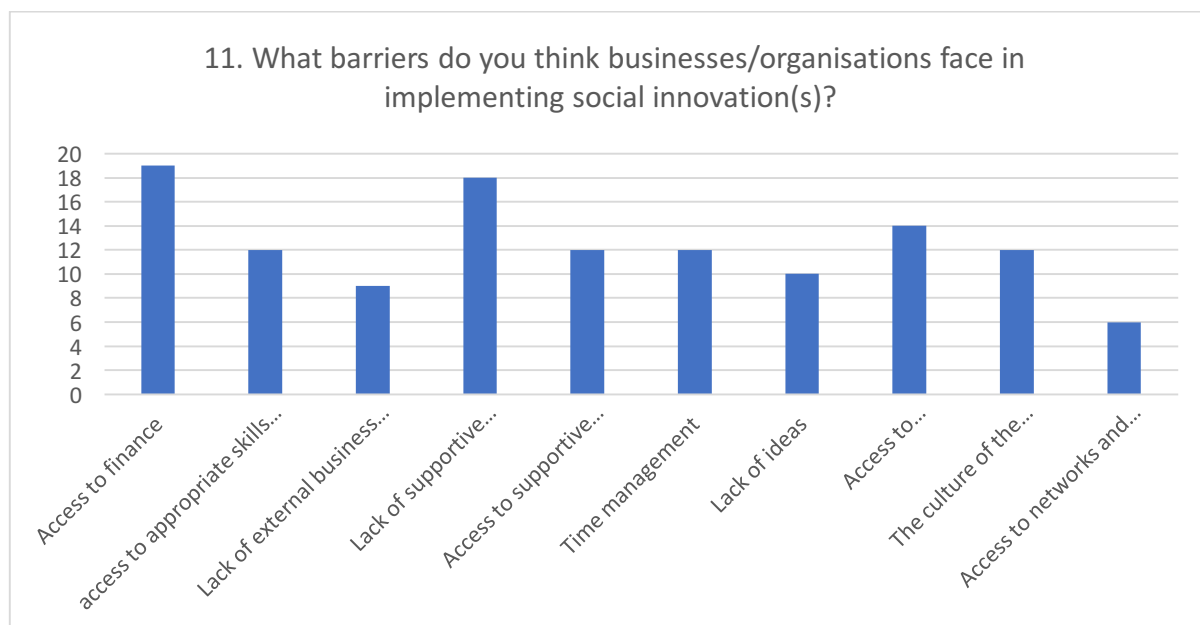
3.5   Social Innovation: Learning and Skills Development

Learning and skills development is an important aspect of progress, improvement and innovation. Participants marked the abilities and skills that think are the most important for managing the key stages in the social innovation process. Creative problem solving is the most voted skill, followed by opportunity assessment and active listening (see Figure 9).

Figure 9: Learning and skills development needs and requirements

12. What types of abilities and skills do you think are the most important for managing the key stages in the social innovation process

Co-funded by the
Erasmus+ Programme
of the European Union
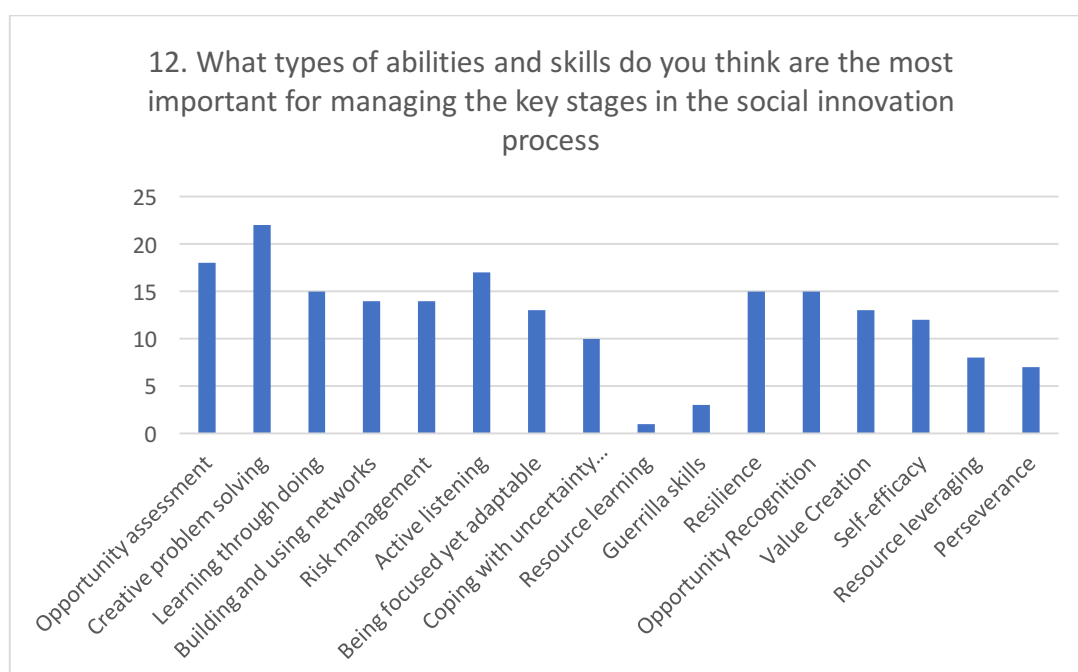
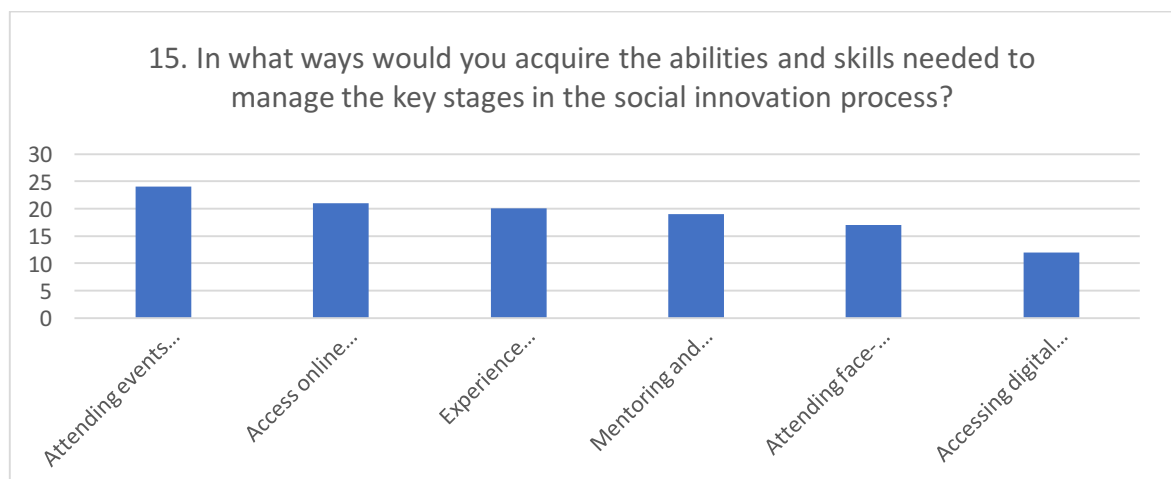Below (Question 13) is a description of how often strengths and areas for development are reviewed within each business. Participants have also described that these are reviewed through SWOT analysis, interviews and discussions.

Figure 10: Extent of the review of strengths and areas of development for managing social innovation

13. How often do you review strengths and areas for development in the abilities and skills needed to manage the key stages in the social innovation process in your business/organisation?
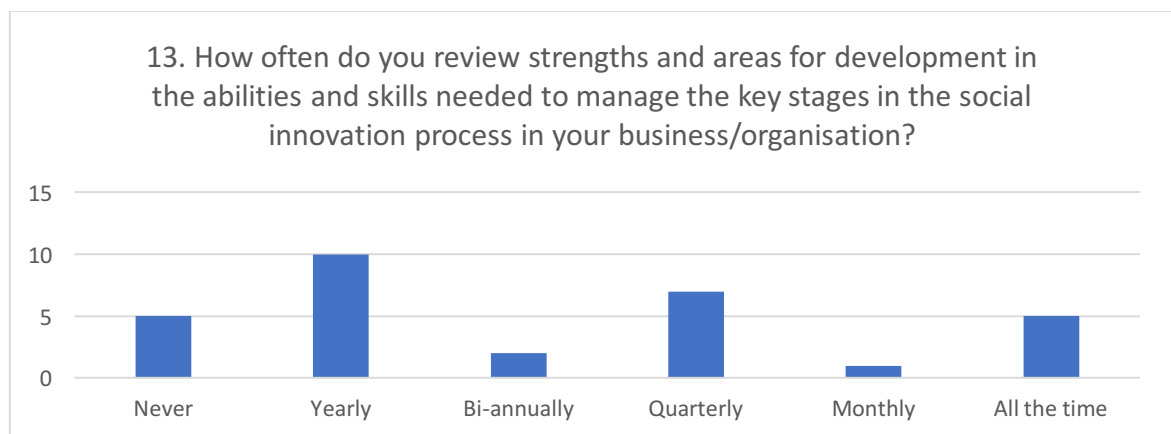

Mainly, participants attend seminars and access online information to develop their abilities. Also, as shown in Figure 11 below (Question 15), exchange of experiences with other organizations and mentoring are also popular ways of skill development.

Figure 11: Learning and skills development for social innovation – Preferred methods

15. In what ways would you acquire the abilities and skills needed to manage the key stages in the social innovation process?


Participants then assessed the usefulness of the learning and skills development resources and tools in managing the social innovation process. Figure 12 (Question 16) describes visually the ratings of the participants.

COOP-IN

Co-funded by the
Erasmus+ Programme
of the European Union

Figure 12: Learning and skilld development for social innovation – Usefulness of different methods
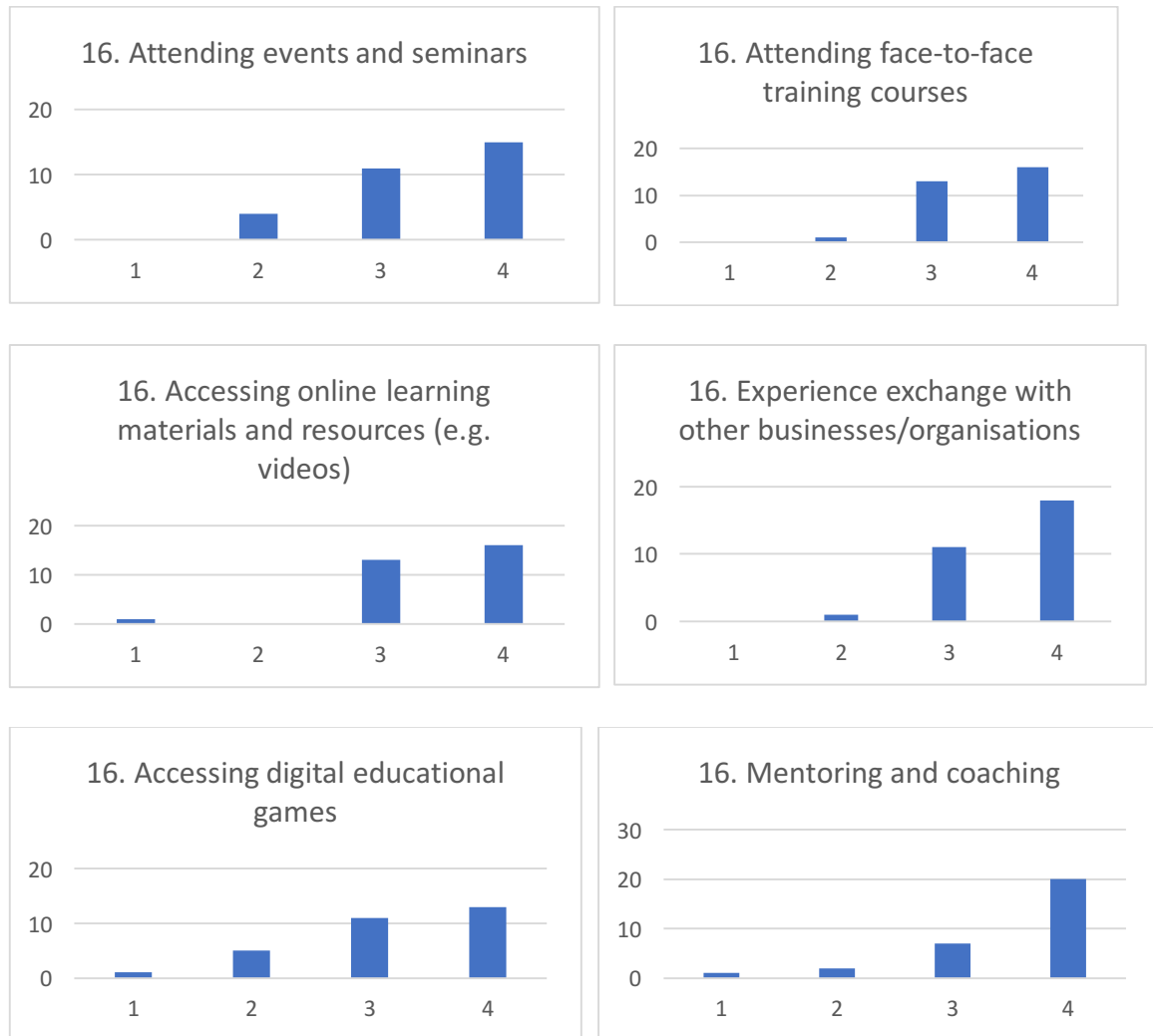
Participants have rated the importance of the following topics (Question 17) within a learning and training programme focused on social innovation for businesses. Entrepreneurship and creativity were highly rated, while other skills were rated as less important.

![COOP-IN logo]

Co-funded by the
Erasmus+ Programme
of the European Union

Figure 13: Learning and skills development for social innovation: Suggested topics
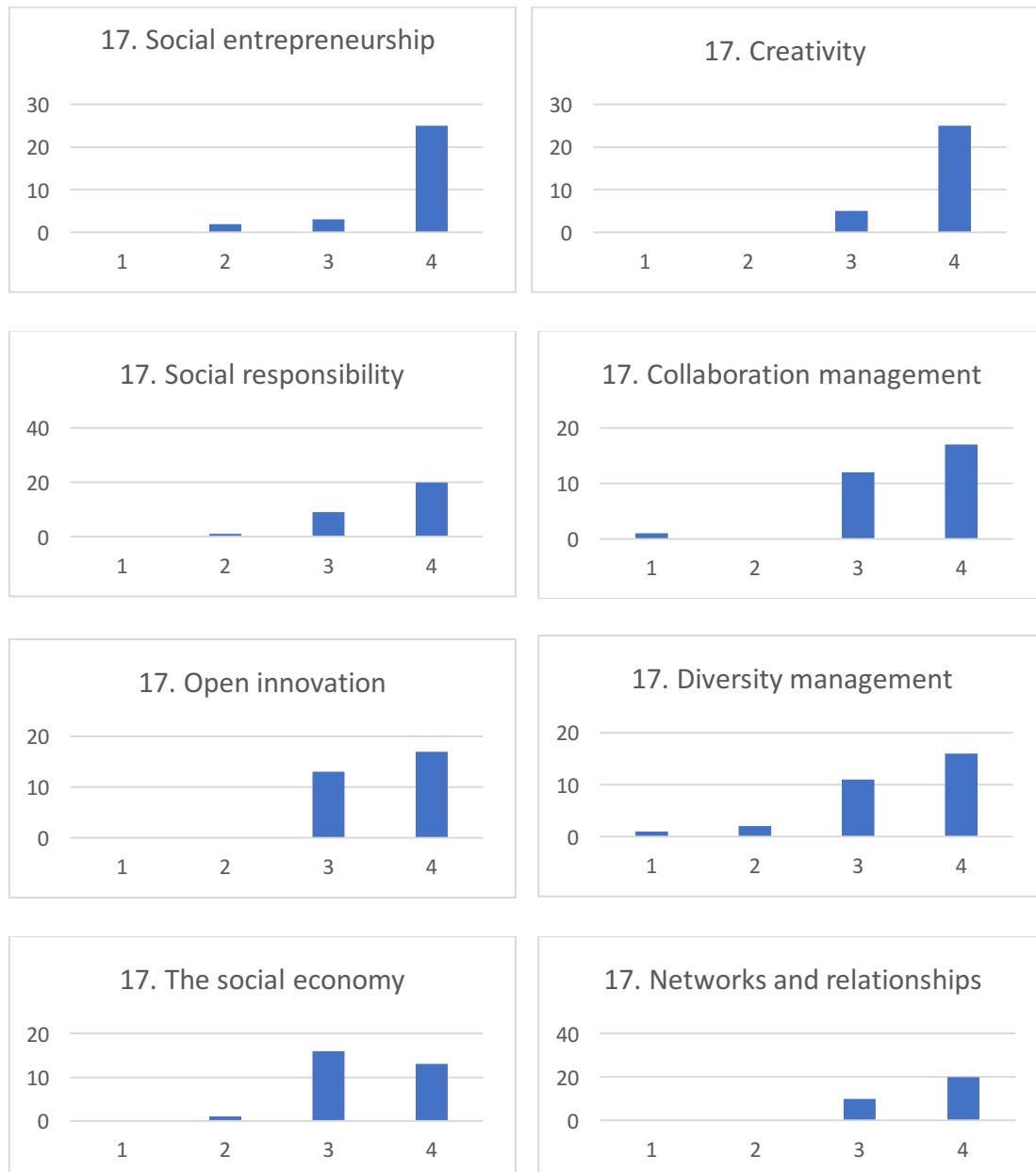
Most participants marked that they are not familiar with the European Innovation Management Standard on Collaboration Management (see Figure 14).

Figure 14: Awareness of the European Innovation Management Standard for Collaboration
Management amongst the surveyed businesses

18. Are you aware of the European Innovation Management Standard
on Collaboration Management (CEN/TS 16555-5)

	Yes	No	Not sure
■ Series1	5	23	2

COOP-IN

Co-funded by the
Erasmus+ Programme
of the European Union
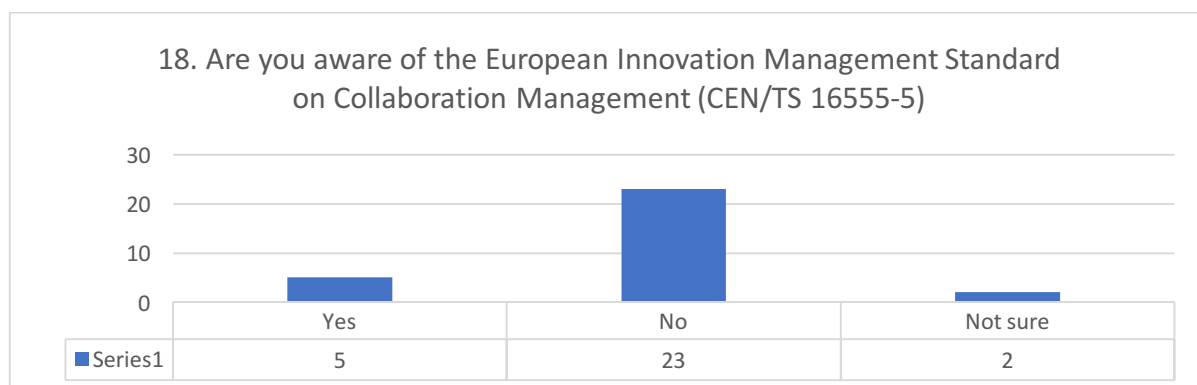
4. SUMMARY AND IMPLICATIONS

Overall, participants show a rather legitimate understanding of what social innovation is and how it can be implemented, its characteristics and importance. Social innovation is becoming a very important topic in the context of Cyprus, with people starting to act on social issues quite vividly. Especially with social media, discussions, collaborations, ideas and problem solving are becoming common practices for social innovation.

It seems that, regardless of the type and size each of organization, the understanding of social innovation is common (or similar) among all, as shown from the participants' responses. In this sense, we can infer that the majority of the users will have a common general foundation when it comes to using the learning resources later on in the project. We can also use this information when presenting the final outcomes, as well as introducing the game to our audience.

The power of social innovation was highlighted through the questionnaire, as most participants believe that social innovation is most likely more effective than economic-driven innovations. This power of social innovation is also reinforced through collaboration, according to the responses. Therefore, one thing to consider when creating the learning materials is the aspect of collaboration for social innovation and problem solving. Collaborative practices facilitate idea generation and a dynamic progress. Therefore, it is important to give voice to people.

Introducing social innovation through new services, new platforms, new organizational/legal structures, new business models were the most common channels for introducing social innovation. Further, some of the barriers that were highlighted were access to information and access to finance. Therefore, when developing materials, it is important to provide ways of searching and finding information, as well as ways to evaluate opportunities and encouraging a collaborative culture within organizations.

Creative problem solving, opportunity assessment and active learning were the three most highlighted abilities and skills that participants rated, considering them important for social innovation. Among other skills that need to be enhanced, it is important to create practices and guidelines in the materials that facilitate users to actively assess and solve problems. One example for achieving this is through providing difference scenarios that present problematic situations, where users need to actively search for information and propose solutions.

Further, it seems that evaluation of strengths and areas of development takes place yearly in most cases (some report quarterly, and fewer people for the rest – Figure for Question 13). The learning materials and training should introduce practical suggestions for evaluation and include simple templates for assessment, planning and timeframes. In this way (through such tools), users will be enabled to comprehensively evaluate situations and the progress regularly, and through simple tools. One example can be the use/application of

COOP-IN

Co-funded by the
Erasmus+ Programme
of the European Union

the SWAT (Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, Threats) analysis, that is commonly used and enables the user to identify major aspects of a situation and plan accordingly.

As shown in the previous section, participants evaluated different topics and their importance within a learning and training programme on social innovation. Social entrepreneurship, creativity, social responsibility, collaboration management, open innovation, diversity management, social economy and networks were rated highly by the Cypriot participants. The activities that will be developed within the COOPin training programme should/could be identified under these topics/categories. For example, the users should be able to apply/ conduct activities through training in the particular categories, as they are tightly related to the matters and practices towards social innovation.

Overall, the COOPin training programme should consider a participatory approach and should be developed on the basis of problem solving activities and scenarios that enable users to think, generate ideas and collaborate for solutions.